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For Immediate Release

Making Waves and Riding the Currents
Activism and the Practice of Wisdom
by Charles Halpern

**Forewords by Robert B. Reich
and His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

*“It was long believed that wisdom is to the soul what health is to the body. **Charles Halpern** has lived as if there is no distinction—that body, soul, wisdom and health are one and the same in a life fully lived with great passion. This most creative of public citizens—lawyer, educator, philanthropist, catalyst of ideas and institutions—has put into practice what he writes in these pages. A nation wandering in the wilderness, as we are, could not ask for a better guide toward clarity and compassion.” — **Bill Moyers***

One of America’s most distinguished social innovators and the founder of its first public interest law firm, Charles Halpern has been a catalyst for launching an array of enduring institutions dedicated toward enriching human lives and our world. In *Making Waves and Riding the Currents: Activism and the Practice of Wisdom*, Halpern reflects on his distinguished career—a journey that led him from career-mindedness to a life devoted to social justice and activism. But this captivating memoir is about more than even that. It’s about the inner work that makes the outer work possible.

Over the course of his remarkable career, Halpern founded the Center for Law and Public Interest, where he litigated landmark environmental protection and constitutional rights cases; was the founding dean of the City University of New York School of Law, where he initiated a program for training public interest attorneys; was president of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, where he launched an innovative grant program, supporting new programs that drew together social justice advocacy with meditation and spiritual inquiry; and was a founding board member of the progressive-think tank Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action. Throughout these endeavors, he sought ways to develop inner resources that complemented his cognitive and advocacy skills. These explorations led him to the conviction that what he calls “the practice of wisdom” is essential both to his own success and to our collective capacity to effectively address the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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With wit and self-deprecating humor, Halpern shares candid and revealing lessons from every stage of his life, from boyhood to his post-retirement activism, describing his journey and the teachers and colleagues he encountered on the way—a cast of characters that extends from Barney Frank and Ralph Nader to Ram Dass and the Dalai Lama. *Making Waves and Riding the Currents* vividly demonstrates the life-enhancing benefits of integrating a commitment to social justice with the cultivation of wisdom.

*“This is a rare and fascinating account of a life that deepens as it progresses. **Charles Halpern** made difficult choices again and again. With each purposeful transition, he became a better and more interesting man. He became wiser, wise enough to be able to point the rest of us in some of the right directions.”*

— **Bill McKibben**

*“**Charles Halpern** is uniquely qualified to give advice about how to work for a better world. His experience as a lawyer and social entrepreneur combined with the study and practice of mindfulness and Buddhist philosophy leads him to the conclusion that cultivation of wisdom and compassion makes for more effective activism. He challenges us to apply the lessons he has learned in our own lives and work. This book is highly readable, inspiring, and important.”*

— **Andrew Weil**

*“At a moment when many activists may feel overwhelmed and enervated, **Making Waves and Riding the Currents** provides strength, insight, a path. In describing the course of his own remarkable career, Charles Halpern provides a model for social transformation that rests on persistence, bravery, and the need for conscious reflection as an integral component of civic regeneration. This is a revivifying sourcebook of good causes, great ideas, and transcendent lessons about the personal and collective benefits of working in the public interest.”*

— **Patricia J. Williams, Professor, Columbia Law School and Columnist, The Nation**

CHARLES HALPERN'S career as an activist and innovator has taken him from the inner circles of the legal establishment to the outer fringes of gritty New York politics, from vision quests in the Adirondack wilderness to the current debates about stem cell research. He is currently the board chair of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, a leading force in bringing meditation and inner work into universities and other mainstream institutions. Halpern lives in Berkeley, California, with his wife, Susan Halpern, the author of *The Etiquette of Illness*. They meditate regularly and visit the remote waterways of California in their sixteen-foot canoe.

******Charles Halpern is available for interviews. Please contact Peter Cavagnaro for any questions about the author or *Making Waves and Riding the Currents*.******

Making Waves and Riding the Currents: Activism and the Practice of Wisdom

By **Charles Halpern**

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