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Alumni Association

HONORS APLENTY

Professor Ken Joyce accepts the Jaeckle Award

A professor who is a perennial favorite of his students – and who came to his specialty, tax law, almost by accident – has received UB Law School's highest honor.

The Jaeckle Award, given by the Law School and the UB Law Alumni Association, was presented to Professor Kenneth F. Joyce at a laughter-filled luncheon Nov. 15, 2003. A standing ovation greeted the presentation, from an audience that included many past and current faculty colleagues and many of the (by one estimate) more than 12,000 students Joyce has taught during nearly 40 years at the Law School.

Mixed with jibes at the Boston-reared professor's beloved Red Sox were words of respect, affection and appreciation for his service in teaching and service.

"Ken is one of those rare people that you admire, respect, emulate and just plain love," said Denise E. O'Donnell '82, president of the Law Alumni Association. "From the moment he walks in a classroom, he lights up the room and fills every minute with great ideas, stimulates the minds of everyone present, and somehow manages to throw in a little humor in the meantime."

Law School Dean Nils Olsen spoke of the process that led to Joyce's being named a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor, saying this statement from a 1978 graduate was typical: "I now know that he is so effective because of the enormous amount of time and energy he puts into preparing his classes."

As well, Olsen said, "I would like to highlight his flexibility. Ken has developed completely new courses. For instance, he developed and perfected a clinical seminar on the law revision activities he was supervising in his public service role" as executive director, from 1984 to 2000, of the New York State Law Revision Commission.

"He has been an enthusiastic participant in trying to expand our curriculum to integrate our Letro Courtroom into the



substantive instruction in the Law School," Olsen said. For example, he said, Joyce co-taught a course on guardianship proceedings that involved hearings in the Law School's first-floor working courtroom. Students also had the chance in that course to discuss the guardianship law with Joyce, the author of significant changes in those state statutes.

"He has really shown just remarkable flexibility and innovation," Olsen said.

Professor William R. Greiner, who taught alongside Joyce in the Law School before his move into University administration, said, "Like so many others, I am a student of Ken Joyce's. I had great mentors when I came to the Law School: Nils Olsen, Jim Atleson, Lou Del Cotto, Jack Hyman, Wade Newhouse, Jim Magavern. But Ken Joyce was one of my best

teachers."

Greiner spoke of the "fascinating hall conversations" he and Joyce would have, talks that "ran on at great length."

"He really is a teacher's teacher," said Greiner, who has returned to the Law School after serving as the University's 13th president. "I think all of us at the Law School have learned from him. We benefit from each other; we are a community of scholars. And Ken is not just a great teacher of law students and lawyers, he is a great teacher of law faculty."

In accepting the Jaeckle Award from Greiner, Joyce recognized his fellow faculty in the audience and two students from the first UB Law class he taught, in 1964. He also acknowledged his children, Mary and Michael, 1990 and 1991 graduates of UB Law, respectively; and his wife, Rita Joyce, who taught autistic children for many years and continues to be extensively involved in autistic services.

His voice still reflecting the flat a's of his native Boston, he recalled with a laugh first being asked if he had thought about interviewing at Buffalo: "I said – and I am not kidding you – where is Buffalo?" He remembered his \$9,900 starting salary, and his "office" in "the so-called faculty lounge."

He said the four defining aspects of his tenure at UB Law School – its location in Buffalo, his work on law reforms, his teaching in wills and trusts, and his specialization in tax law – came to him entirely unplanned. He had planned to teach administrative law at UB – but pressing needs and serendipitous encounters with other faculty led him into the areas that have become his trademark.

Joyce cited two keys to his success as a teacher: "Attention to detail, and respect for students as human beings. My role model in that has been Rita, for 50 years." And he closed by citing the Gospel of Luke: "To whom much has been given, much will be required."



SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Kenneth F. Joyce and wife Rita with Professor William R. Greiner, who presented the award.



Law Alumni Association President Denise E. O'Donnell '82 presides at the Jaeckle Award luncheon.



Professor Joyce enjoys a laugh with Professor Greiner.