Making the Case – Better: Gardner’s Revised Textbook Emphasizes Storytelling and Professionalism

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Making the case—better

Gardner’s revised textbook emphasizes storytelling and professionalism

“When a lawyer presents a case, he is trying to win an audience. The way people communicate is by telling stories. Even scientists tell stories when they are trying to communicate. It is all a matter of appealing effectively to the contextual expectations of your audience.”

— UB Law Professor and Vice Dean James A. Gardner, above left
The new edition of Legal Argument also includes an exhortation on professional behavior—necessary, Gardner says, in part because today’s students have been raised on the anything-goes communications atmosphere of the Internet. “There is a certain informality that pervades communicative relations now,” he says. “A lot of students come in not understanding that there are boundaries and that as a professional you need to develop a reputation for doing always excellent work. Part of the perception of excellence comes from being thorough, being timely, being concise. “A lot of people think that being a good lawyer is about being brilliant. But being careful and workmanlike every day is really what it means to be a professional.”