The John Burman Fund
For Clinical & Professional Education

“John is fond of saying ‘it is the choices we make that show who we truly are.’ John is a living legend due to his choice to selflessly dedicate himself to the Clinic, and compassionately provide assistance to countless disadvantaged clients across Wyoming. In John, I, along with hundreds of other law students, found a role model of integrity and humility, a patient mentor, and a genuine friend who taught us to practice law with dignity . . . and to eat at the Chuckwagon.”

Matt Landers, Student Director 2008-2009

Over the years, Professor Burman estimates that he has taught Professional Responsibility to around 1,500 students. While not all of these students have stayed and practiced law in Wyoming, the influence of Professor Burman’s teaching clearly has made an impact. Due in large part to the years of effort by Professor Burman, the University of Wyoming College of Law has a strong clinical program. To assure that the law school’s clinics continue to have strong financial support and, if possible, to grow the clinical programs by adding new clinics, the College of Law has created the John Burman Fund for Clinical & Professional Education.

For further information about the Burman Fund, please visit http://www.uwyo.edu/law.

To arrange an annual contribution to this fund, please contact Dean Steve Easton at seaston3@uwyo.edu.

Professor John M. Burman

Professional Responsibility, Ethics. Ask any lawyer in Wyoming who the voice of reason on these matters is, who the most reputed expert is, who the best is, the answer will be John M. Burman, Carl M. Williams Professor of Law & Ethics and Faculty Supervisor of the Legal Services Program.

All this from a man who was originally not interested in the field where he has contributed so much. In his own words, Professor Burman was an “accidental Professional Responsibility teacher.” In the spring of 1990, Professor Burman, as a non-tenured faculty member, was asked to step in and teach Professional Responsibility. While it was not his area of expertise, he soon “found the subject to be of great interest, both as a topic to teach and a topic on which to write.”

From the very beginning, Professor Burman noticed that there had not been significant commentary on professional responsibility and legal ethics in Wyoming.

Throughout the years, Professor Burman has done significant work to change this and provide a resource for those seeking answers to difficult questions. Starting in 1997, he began writing the column “Ethically Speaking” in the Wyoming State Bar Association’s publication, Wyoming Lawyer. These articles average about 5,000 words in an attempt to allow time-pressed lawyers the opportunity to, as Professor Burman puts it, “actually read them.” As a result, Professor Burman has been producing efficient articles resulting in a direct impact on the state of legal ethics in Wyoming.

After years of publishing these articles, it was suggested to Professor Burman to compile them together in a comprehensive book on Professional Responsibility. After several years of work, the end result was a 1,000 page treatise, PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN WYOMING (Wyoming State Bar 2008). Professor Burman’s main goal with the book is that it will be used as “a resource for lawyers and judges in Wyoming.”

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