An evening of recognition and collegiality

It’s a very welcome occasion when faculty members can come together to celebrate each other in the kind of atmosphere of collegiality and easygoing dinnertime conversation that accompanied Michigan Law’s Faculty Recognition Dinner in October.

As Dean Evan H. Caminker noted in his welcoming remarks, the opportunity to enjoy such an evening comes too seldom amid the hectic daily schedules of teaching, research, counseling, mentoring, and other activities that fill faculty members’ daily lives.

The Recognition Dinner evening included a formal program that gave participants the opportunity to celebrate the career of a long-time faculty member, savor the creation of a professorship in honor of a recently retired professor, thank a departing professor, and welcome his replacement — and to enjoy the naming of two faculty members to endowed professorships.

Professor Emeritus Layman E. Allen

Professor Emeritus Layman E. Allen, who took emeritus status last spring, drew praise for his cutting edge work in using mathematical logic as an analytical tool in law, employing computers in legal research, and developing now widely popular games of logic and mathematics. His most recent work involves ferreting out unintended ambiguities in legal statutes and the game that grew out of his research, The Legal Argument Game of Legal Relations.

“It has been a great pleasure to come to know you as a friend and colleague,” Caminker told Allen.

The inventor of widely used games such as WFF ‘N PROOF and EQUATIONS, Allen joined the Michigan Law faculty in 1966. “I had the good fortune in my first year on the faculty to vote for the addition of Layman Allen to the faculty,” recalled former dean and Professor Emeritus Theodore St. Antoine, ’54. St. Antoine drew appreciative laughter when he explained that Allen was on Yale’s faculty at the time but found the New Haven law school a bit too practical for his tastes.

Allen has no pretensions, is “the genuine article” and is “the most 24-carat member of our profession I have ever encountered,” St. Antoine said.

Ralph W. Aigler Professor of Law Richard D. Friedman proudly related his daughter’s award-winning participation in high school state championships using Allen’s games—he held up one of his daughter’s trophies as evidence—and could have doubled as a standup comic as he described his own struggle to read the 60-page instruction manual for Allen’s game.

Professor Steven J. Croley

Professor Steven J. Croley, who this fall completed three years as associate dean for academic affairs, was praised for his dedication and efficiency and his launch of new initiatives like the highly successful Public Interest/Public Service Faculty Fellows (PIPS) program, which designates a number of adjunct professors with extensive public interest experience for special roles as teachers and mentors.

“1 was greatly appreciative when three years ago he expressed his interest in working with me as a team,” recalled Caminker, who then was the incoming dean.

Croley’s successor, Professor Kyle D. Logue, noted that he and Croley were a year apart at Yale Law School and have become close friends since both came to Michigan Law 13 years ago. Logue said Croley’s accomplishments are many and varied—from prodigious scholar to marathon runner—but he would focus on “two big things that he did that really made a mark on this institution”:

1. Coping with recent budget constraints by enlisting faculty members to teach more courses and/or courses they perhaps had not taught in some time; and

2. “Helping to put the U-M Law School on the map as a place that teaches and takes seriously its public service,” by establishing the “extraordinarily successful” PIPS program and “also finding a way to combine his own career with pro bono work.” Croley is using his current sabbatical to work as a volunteer U.S. attorney in Detroit.

Yale Kamisar Collegiate Professor of Law Douglas Laycock

Professor Douglas Laycock, a renowned scholar of the law of remedies and the law of religious liberty who joined Michigan Law’s faculty this fall, was named to the newly-created Yale Kamisar Collegiate Professorship of Law, named for the recently retired professor.

Professor Don Herzog explained that Laycock is a prolific writer who is widely recognized for his scholarship and intellectual energy. “You name it, and I think he’s done it,” Herzog said of Laycock’s work.

“Everyone has his own Yale Kamisar story,” Caminker noted. Indeed, Kamisar himself came to the podium to “set straight” the frequently told tale of how he threw a book at a student and broke the student’s glasses. Yes, he said, he did throw the book—underhand, he stressed, underhand—but it was part of demonstrating a legal point. And, yes, he
confessed, he did break the student’s glasses. But the student was not wearing them at the time; they were on the desk. And yes, he said, he did pay to replace them for the uninjured student.

Kirkland & Ellis Professor of Law Omri Ben-Shahar

Wade H. McCree Collegiate Professor of Law Kyle D. Logue

Two professors also were named to endowed professorships: Omri Ben-Shahar as Kirkland & Ellis Professor of Law and Logue as Wade H. McCree Collegiate Professor of Law. A specialist in law and economics, Ben-Shahar joined Michigan Law eight years ago and is director of the Law School’s John M. Olin Center for Law and Economics.

Caminker noted that the Kirkland & Ellis chair, established at Michigan Law in 1993 with gifts from the firm, William R. Jentes, ’56, and Karl E. Lutz, ’75, is one of four at U.S. law schools named for the Chicago-based firm, considered one of the best in the nation.

The McCree chair was created in 1988 to honor the one-time Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals judge, U.S. solicitor general, and Law School faculty member. McCree died in 1987. His widow Dorese, who retired from the Law School in 1996, daughter Kathleen McCree Lewis, ’73, and grandson Aaron McCree Lewis ’05, attended the dinner program.