A lasting tribute

Audio tape heralds McCree Professorship

An innovative taped program featuring the interviews of numerous distinguished guests heralds a lasting tribute to Wade H. McCree, Jr., the late Lewis M. Simes Professor of Law. The audio-cassette, in a radio program format, presents an inspiring look at the life and distinguished career of McCree, a highly respected federal judge who was probably best known as Solicitor General of the United States under the Carter administration. The tape signals the beginning of the Law School Fund's effort to raise the funds necessary to establish a collegiate professorship in McCree's name. The chair will be the first named after a minority faculty member at the Law School and the University.

Mary Talen, coordinator of this project at the Law School Fund, said the radio program format was chosen because of the power of the spoken word in capturing the essence of McCree's profound impact upon his colleagues and students.

Talen found participants in the project eager to share their memories of McCree and enthusiastic about contributing to the taped interviews. Given the speakers' evocative memories, the documentary format, according to Talen, was perceived as an especially fitting manner in which to honor McCree.

One of the contributors, Dean Lee C. Bollinger, stated, "The process of writing letters has become so stylized, so formal, it is very difficult to convey the real sense of emotion and personality that often lies behind efforts like this. My hope is the tape will provide a rich sense of how important this endowed professorship is to the School, something that an official letter could not do."

The program features interviews with many individuals whose personal and professional lives were touched by McCree. Several faculty members describe McCree's contribution to the Law School. Dean Bollinger, Professor and former Dean Terrance Sandalow, and Professor David Chambers recount their memories of McCree's academic career. Members of the judiciary contributing to the program include the Hon. Pierce Lively and the Hon. John Peck, both of whom sat with McCree on the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and the Hon. Horace Gilmore of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. Other distinguished contributors include former United States Attorney General Griffin Bell, the late Governor of Michigan G. Mennen ("Soapy") Williams, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Dennis Archer, Lansing attorney and former research assistant Jonathan Zorach, former student James Portnoy now practicing law in Washington, D. C., Detroit lawyer Otis Smith, Lawrence Wallace, and Wayne State University Vice President Arthur Johnson.

More intimate insights are provided by Professor McCree's spouse, Dores McCree, and son, Wade H. McCree, a Detroit lawyer. Through previously taped interviews, McCree's own thoughts and words grace the program.

As for highlights of the interviews, Talen says, "Stay tuned." Many interesting and inspiring anecdotes have been collected during the course of the project. "It has been a tremendously enjoyable experience" for all, she concludes.

Since the number of tapes produced is necessarily limited, individuals seeking more information or interested in making a donation should contact: Mary Talen, University of Michigan Law School Fund, 721 S. State Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-3071. Telephone (313) 763-7970.