Comings & goings

Proffitt's retirement: Michigan's loss

With deep feelings of nostalgia, Roy Proffitt wrote his final “Reading Between the Sheets” piece for the LQN summer issue, and turned the helm of the school’s development and alumni activities over to Jonathan Lowe. After 30 years of dedicated service to the Law School, Proffitt has joined the ranks of other distinguished professors emeriti.

Hailing from Hastings, Nebraska, Proffitt earned a B.S. in business administration from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1940. Soon after graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve and over the years rose in rank from apprentice seaman to commander. After World War II, he enrolled in the Law School and received his J.D. in 1948.

Following a brief period in practice, Proffitt returned to academic life, first for a short time as a research assistant in international law at the University of Nebraska, and then as a member of the law faculty at the University of Missouri. In 1956, after a year as a Cook Fellow at Michigan, he joined the faculty as associate professor of law and the school’s first assistant dean, later becoming professor and associate dean. With no “job description” for assistant dean, Proffitt participated in nearly all of the school’s activities. He has described his responsibilities in those early years as similar to those of the executive officer of a navy vessel: “I kept things running, and if the dean suggested something be done, I was expected to see that it was.”

This arrangement worked, and in his 14 years as assistant and associate dean he gained the respect and affection of thousands of students. Alumni across the United States and throughout the world still recall his sound advice, his genuine interest, and his willingness to assist them.

Professor Proffitt’s academic interests and writings were originally in criminal law and criminal procedure. During the last 15 years he has taught the admiralty law subjects.

Roman law specialist joins faculty

Bruce W. Frier, currently a professor in the Department of Classical Studies at the U-M, has received a concurrent appointment as professor of law. Frier has for a number of years offered a seminar in Roman law at the Law School.

Frier is the author of Landlords and Tenants in Imperial Rome (1980), which won the American Philological Association’s 1983 Good-