Waggoner: Dick Wellman, ’49, “changed the legal landscape”

Longtime Law School faculty member Richard (Dick) V. Wellman, ’49, who died last summer at age 82, “literally changed the legal landscape in the area of trusts and estates,” according to Lewis M. Simes Professor of Law Lawrence W. Waggoner, ’63, himself a nationally recognized expert in the field. Wellman was perhaps best known as the Chief Reporter for the 1969 Uniform Probate Code.

Waggoner traces his own involvement in Uniform Code work to the influence and mentorship of Wellman, who taught at the Law School from 1954-73. Wellman then taught at the University of Georgia School of Law, where he held the Robert Cotton Alston Chair in Corporate Law. He took emeritus status in 1990, but remained active in uniform law issues until his death last June.

Wellman’s “pathbreaking work as Chief Reporter for the Uniform Probate Code and work on many other uniform statutes has had profound influence on law of trusts and estates, as much or more so than the work of any other law professor, practicing lawyer, or legislator of his generation,” Waggoner wrote in a tribute to Wellman in Georgia Law Review.

“Dick could scarcely visit any state in the union that did not have as part of its law, law that he invented and wrote. One of his great achievements was to make the probate process cheaper and more efficient, anonymously easing the lives of thousands and thousands of grieving survivors.”

Waggoner studied Trusts and Estates under Wellman, and “I still pass on to my students many of the insights that I learned from Dick. After I entered teaching, Dick brought me in on Trusts and Succession, the casebook that I used as a student and that he coauthored with George Palmer. Although that casebook has gone through several revisions since then, and has been renamed Family Property Law, it still contains material that Dick prepared. My coauthors [Greg Alexander, Mary Lou Fellows, ’75, and Tom Gallanis—all Waggoner’s former students] and I will be dedicating the next edition of that book to Dick’s memory.”

The next edition of Family Property Law, the fourth, is to appear this spring.

Chinkin wins ASIL’s Goler R. Butcher Medal

The American Society of International Law (ASIL) has named internationally renowned human rights scholar Christine Chinkin, an Affiliated Overseas Faculty member at the University of Michigan Law School and a professor of international law at the London School of Economics and Political Science, a recipient of the 2006 Goler T. Butcher Medal.

Chinkin's co-winner of the prestigious award is Hilary Charlesworth, her co-author on The Boundaries of International Law: A Feminist Analysis (2000) and a professor of international law and human rights in the Research School of Social Sciences and in the Faculty of Law at the Australian National University.

"Professors Chinkin and Charlesworth were excellent choices for the Butcher Medal," said ASIL Executive Director Charlotte Ku. Their book "is an important contribution to the public policy debate on the status of women regarding human rights and international law. This award is an appropriate, well-deserved recognition of their work, and on behalf of the entire ASIL membership, I congratulate them both."

Chinkin and Charlesworth receive their award at ASIL's special centennial celebration/annual meeting in Washington, D.C., March 29–April 1. The award is named in honor of long-time Howard University professor and international human rights law advocate Goler T. Butcher. It has been presented annually since 1997.

The Boundaries of International Law: A Feminist Analysis, winner of ASIL's Certificate of Merit in 2001, critically examines how and why international law often has failed to address women's needs. It cites the lack of women in national/international positions of power as a cause of the inequality and urges that international law be redrawn to create a more equitable status and treatment of women.

In addition to teaching, Chinkin has been a consultant to organizations such as the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Amnesty International, the British Council, the International Center for the Legal Protection of Human Rights, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). She served in the working group that prepared the OHCHR Principles and Guidelines on the Human Rights of Trafficked Persons.

In addition to many articles and other writings, Chinkin's other books include Third Parties in International Law (1993); Halsbury's Laws of Australia, Foreign Relations Law (2nd edition, 2001), and Dispute Resolution in Australia (2nd edition, 2002, co-authored with Hilary Astor). Both Chinkin and Charlesworth serve on the Board of Editors of ASIL's American Journal of International Law.