Three New Profs Join Law Faculty

Broadcasting regulation, environmental law, and the “compulsory process” clause under the Sixth Amendment are among the research interests of three new faculty members at the U-M Law School: Lee C. Bollinger, Jr., Philip Soper, and Peter K. Westen.

Bollinger graduated from the University of Oregon in 1968 and from Columbia Law School in 1971. He worked as a law clerk for Judge Wilfred Feinberg of the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and for Chief Justice Warren Burger of the U.S. Supreme Court. He has taught contracts and commercial transactions classes since joining the U-M faculty in the fall.

Prof. Soper, who specializes in environmental law, comes to the U-M from the Council on Environmental Quality in Washington, D.C., where he was a member of the general counsel’s staff from 1971-73. In this capacity he handled legal and procedural issues concerning the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

After receiving his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Washington University (St. Louis) in 1964 and 1965, Soper graduated from Harvard Law School in 1969. He served as a law clerk to Justice Byron R. White on the U.S. Supreme Court, and then completed his doctoral dissertation work at Oxford in 1970-71. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Washington University in 1972.

Bogota, Colombia. For the past two years Westen practiced law in Washington, D.C., with the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, which specializes in federal civil and criminal litigation.

Westen’s article, “The Proposed National Court of Appeals: A Threat to the Supreme Court?” appeared last year in the New York Review of Books. He has also written on conflicts of law. Westen’s current research involves study of the compulsory process clause under the Sixth Amendment.”—Marty Hair

Appearance of Litigants Weighed in U-M Study

“Jurymen seldom convict a person they like, or acquit one they dislike.”

This remark, made some 40 years ago by Clarence Darrow, the famous trial lawyer, may not be far from the truth, a University of Michigan study suggests.

Based on simulated automobile negligence trials, U-M researchers found that physical attractiveness of plaintiffs and defendants “appears to have a significant impact on juror decisions,” including the amount of damage compensation awarded in such cases.

And these findings, the researchers conclude, “suggest that our complacent belief in the equity of the judicial process deserves some careful review.”

The research was carried out by Richard A. Kulka, a doctoral candidate and assistant study director at the U-M’s Institute for Social Research, and Joan B. Kessler, formerly a U-M student and now an assistant professor of communications arts at Loyola University of Chicago.