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## Dedication to Professor Luvern V. Rieke

John R. Price  
*University of Washington School of Law*

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## DEDICATION TO PROFESSOR LUVERN V. RIEKE

Dean John R. Price\*

While it is a great pleasure to contribute to the dedication of an issue of the Washington Law Review to Professor Emeritus Vern Rieke, I regret doing so at this time because it is occasioned by Vern's unwelcome early retirement. I write largely to celebrate Vern's long, dedicated, and effective service to our Law School, to our University, to the broader legal community, and to the public. Our good fortune in having this kind and wise man with us for so long is reason for celebration and thanksgiving.

Generations of law students and faculty members benefited from Vern's remarkable career at the University of Washington. Over almost forty years, from 1949 to 1987, he helped guide students through difficult academic waters—ranging from the exquisite mysteries of the law of contracts to the intensely personal and practical concerns of domestic relations. All of the available evidence—observations of colleagues, testimonials of students, and former-student evaluations—indicates that Vern was an extraordinary teacher and effective role model from the very outset of his career. His selection by the Student Bar Association in 1985 as Professor of the Year attests to the continued excellence and effectiveness of his teaching.

Vern's consummate skill as a teacher was also responsible for one of the great joys that deans experience: receiving laudatory letters about faculty members. Throughout his career, Vern's skill has stimulated a flow of letters that has brought joy to a succession of deans. The encomiums of students and former students often mention the effectiveness of Vern's teaching style, comingling humor and drama to help them learn complex and difficult subjects. They also frequently recount, appreciatively, how their attention was captured by his "fine and whimsical sense of human drama and humor." Others have noted his use of the classroom as a teaching theatre: "One of my classmates refers to him as the 'Shakespeare of Contracts' due to his animated discourses on aspects of the bargaining process." Still other letters note "his love of teaching and his sincere interest in students [which] shine through in everything he does."

Vern's extraordinary skill as a teacher has extended beyond the classroom to the Washington Judicial Council (of which he was executive director for many years), legislative hearings and committee meetings, courtrooms, and charitable organizations. His activity in the extended

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\* Dean and Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law.

classroom was expressed in a tribute by our colleague, Professor Charles Corker:

Vern Rieke is clearly a great teacher, scholar of stature, a role model for students of the law (students and faculty, matriculated and nonmatriculated). Among his students are members of the Washington Legislature, members of the executive branch of state government, and many of the state's judges.

Professor Rieke's leadership in the extended classroom has led to the adoption of an impressive array of reforms in family law. Most recently his service as chairman of a committee studying the problems of domestic violence led to the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (1984).<sup>1</sup> His work with that committee continued and he later chaired a Joint Legislative Committee composed of five senators and five representatives, which studied revision of child support legislation.

Throughout his career Vern has made many other important contributions to the Law School, including service as Acting Dean during a critical interval, 1968-70. His integrity, thoughtfulness, and calm leadership as dean helped the faculty overcome the difficulties engendered by some troubling and divisive issues. With characteristic cooperativeness, consideration, and skill, he later shouldered the responsibility of organizing and supervising a tutorial program to assist law students who were experiencing academic difficulties. For several years he also served as faculty advisor to the Legal Aid Society, which continually faced challenging fiscal and organizational problems. His service as a faculty member has been distinguished by a special concern for students, charm and good humor, and a willingness to assume unusually difficult assignments.

As dean I have particularly appreciated Vern's reliable, quiet, steady, and cheerful contributions to the overall life of the Law School. Perhaps equally important, his compassion and innate kindness have been an important model for faculty and students alike. His classroom skills have inspired us all to dedicate more effort to teaching. At least in part because of Vern's example, our law school classrooms are generally more humane—less threatening, more congenial, and much more fun for faculty and students alike. That Vern's heart is in the classroom is also evidenced by his wish that an oil portrait of him, commissioned and contributed to the Law School by Professor Cornelius Peck, would hang in Vern's favorite classroom, Room 135.

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1. WASH. REV. CODE §§ 26.50.010 et seq. (1986).

## Dedication to Professor Luvern V. Rieke

A recognition of Vern's many contributions to the Law School would be incomplete without noting the strong support provided by his wife, Jane. They are a great team, who we hope will enjoy health and happiness together for many years to come.