

# Sooner Lawyer Archive

---

Volume 2013 | Issue 1  
*Spring/Summer 2013*

---

2013

## Faculty News

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/soonerlawyer>



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(2013) "Faculty News," *Sooner Lawyer Archive*: Vol. 2013: Iss. 1, Article 9.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/soonerlawyer/vol2013/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sooner Lawyer Archive by an authorized editor of University of Oklahoma College of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu](mailto:Law-LibraryDigitalCommons@ou.edu).

## Faculty changes

### ► New faces and titles



**Rodney D. Ring** was named visiting assistant professor of clinical legal education in January. He will supervise OU Legal Clinic interns in criminal cases in Cleveland and McClain counties. He joined the faculty after retiring with almost 20 years of judicial service as a special judge and later, as a district judge, in Cleveland County.

### ► Faculty appreciation event honors retiring professors

Professors David Swank ('59) and Mark Gillett, who both retired at the end of the spring semester, were honored April 25 at a faculty appreciation event in Monnet Hall.

With 50 years of service to the University of Oklahoma, Swank has held numerous titles. He began in 1963 as OU legal counsel and assistant professor of law. Other positions include associate professor, professor, associate dean, dean of the College of Law, director of the Law Center and interim president of the university.

Prior to coming to OU, Swank was a partner in the law firm of Swank & Swank in Stillwater, Oklahoma. He later served as assistant county attorney and county attorney for Payne County.

Swank has been active in the Oklahoma Bar Association and the Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association. He is a fellow of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation and the American Bar Foundation. Swank was the OU faculty representative to the Big Eight Conference and the National Collegiate Athletic Association, in which he served in a variety of capacities. In 1994, he was named by *College Sports* magazine as one of the most influential people in college sports. Swank was inducted into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame in 2011.

Gillett was admitted to the Iowa State Bar Association in 1978 and practiced law in Muscatine, Iowa. He was a partner in Stanley, Lande and Hunter law firm there before he joined the OU Law faculty in 1987.

Gillett was the author of estate practice software, originally published by Shepard's/McGraw-Hill in 1985, and later by the West Group. More recently, he released the Gillett Estate Management Suite, which prepares federal estate and gift tax returns and fiduciary accountings.



After presenting a Tribute Owl to David Swank, Dean Joe Harroz passes the microphone to him.



Family members join David Swank in celebrating his retirement. Pictured with him are his granddaughter, Katie Swank, son, David Swank II, wife, Ann Swank, and daughter, Ami Swank.



Mark Gillett was joined at the reception by his mother, Phyllis Gillett, and wife, Libby Gillett.



Mark Gillett smiles after addressing the group of faculty, family and friends gathered for the event.

## Faculty honors

### ► Backus, McCall receive faculty recognition



Mary Sue Backus

Professors Mary Sue Backus and Brian McCall were honored at the University of Oklahoma campus-wide Tribute to Faculty on April 18 in the Sandy Bell Gallery of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. Backus was named the Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation Presidential Professor and McCall received the Merrick Foundation Teaching Award.

Presidential professorships are awarded to faculty members who excel in all their professional activities and who relate those activities to the students they teach and mentor, exemplifying the ideals of a scholar to students and colleagues.

Backus joined the OU Law faculty in 2004 and teaches Criminal Law, Education Law and Evidence. She taught as a Fulbright Scholar at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, China, during the 2012-13 academic year.

The Merrick Teaching Award is given to the faculty member who is considered most outstanding in bringing to students a better understanding and appreciation of the economic and political basis of American society.

McCall began teaching at the OU College of Law in 2006, following nine years in private practice with an international law firm. He teaches classes in Contracts, Payment Systems, Secured Transactions and Corporate Finance.



Brian McCall

### ► DaVinci Institute recognizes Wattley

Cheryl Wattley was one of five winners of a 2013 DaVinci Fellows Award presented at a March 29 banquet at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. Presented by the DaVinci Institute, an Oklahoma nonprofit organization, the award recognizes higher education faculty whose accomplishments reflect a creative approach and a high degree of innovation to complex issues and have made a significant contribution to their academic discipline.



Cheryl Wattley

## Beyond the classroom

### ► Election law is focus of symposium

Focusing on legislative issues in election law, the annual symposium of the *Oklahoma Law Review* was held February 15 in the Dick Bell Courtroom. The symposium was sponsored by McAfee & Taft and featured experts on election law from around the country.

Edward Foley, professor of law at Ohio State University and longtime leading figure in election law, started the presentations with "The Possibility of a Fair System of Election Laws."

Other speakers included Nicholas Stephanopoulos from the University of Chicago, Charles Stewart from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Joshua Douglas from the University of Kentucky, and Michael Pitts from Indiana University.



Speakers at the *OLR* symposium on election law were Charles Stewart, Michael Pitts, Nicholas Stephanopoulos, Joshua Douglas and Edward Foley.

### ► Assistant secretary of Indian Affairs participates in symposium addressing tribal issues

The Overcoming Barriers Symposium, which focused on legal issues facing Native American tribes, was presented March 7 at the OU College of Law. The event was sponsored by the *American Indian Law Review*, Student Bar Association, Native American Law Student Association and OU Native American Studies program.

Noted scholars and practitioners exchanged ideas on resolving intratribal conflict and defining jurisdictional boundaries. The

keynote addresses were given by Kevin Washburn, assistant secretary of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, and Barbara Smith, chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Chickasaw Nation.

Symposium participants also had the opportunity to tour Coats Hall to view Native American art displayed throughout the building and to enjoy musical entertainment by Native American musicians.



Kevin Washburn, the keynote speaker for the afternoon session, spoke in the Bell Courtroom on the role of the Department of the Interior and tribal jurisdiction.



Barbara Smith delivered the keynote address for the morning session, "Tribal Peace Initiative and Traditional Justice." Smith is the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Chickasaw Nation and an OU Law adjunct professor.



## ► Advisory Committee on Civil Rules meets at OU Law

Judges and lawyers from around the country gathered at the OU College of Law April 11 and 12 for the spring meeting of the U.S. Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on Civil Rules. This committee oversees the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and develops proposals for new and amended rules.

The spring meeting drew special attention from the bar this year as the advisory committee agenda included several hot-button topics ranging from discovery reform to spoliation sanctions for the loss of electronically stored information.

The two-day meeting was hosted by OU Law and organized by Professor Steve Gensler, who served as a member of the advisory committee from 2005 to 2011. "This was a tremendous opportunity to bring some of the most prominent judges and lawyers in the country to the College of Law," said Gensler. "In addition to helping them with their work, we were able to expose our students to a vital area of legal reform and show our visitors some of the great things we have going on here."

In recognition of the event, President David L. Boren hosted a special reception at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and a dinner at the newly renovated University Club in Oklahoma Memorial Union.



Professor Gensler, President Boren and Dean Harroz greet guests at the reception in the art museum.



The U.S. Judicial Conference Advisory Committee on Civil Rules meets in the Dick Bell Courtroom.



## REMEMBERING FRANK ELKOURI

**O**n January 18, the OU College of Law community lost a very special and dear friend. Professor Emeritus Frank Elkouri was an outstanding scholar and a nationally recognized authority in arbitration. His book *How Arbitration Works* is still widely referenced today in courtrooms and classrooms. Professor Elkouri was an equally talented educator, inspiring students and faculty alike, during his 58 years teaching at OU Law. As an undergraduate at OU, Professor Elkouri Frank excelled in playing clarinet as part of an OU big band, which he also managed.



After learning of Professor Elkouri's passing, OU President David Boren said, "In the entire history of the OU College of Law, no faculty member has been more dedicated to his students and more generous to the school than Professor Frank Elkouri. I will always feel fortunate to have been able to study under him when I was a law student and to benefit from his international expertise in his field."

Professor Elkouri graduated from OU Law in 1947, and he never forgot the financial support he received that enabled him to attend law school. He and his wife, Edna Asper Elkouri, gave generously to the College of Law, including a major gift in 2002 to endow the Frank and Edna Asper Elkouri Professorship of Law. In 2010, the emeritus wing of the law school was named the Frank and Edna Asper Elkouri Emeritus Wing to recognize their remarkable contributions.

In 2011, he and Edna gave the largest one-time gift ever given to the College of Law, with the entire gift going to endow student scholarships. This \$6 million gift touched us deeply, not only because of the opportunities it provided to current and future law students, but also because of the spirit in which it was given. It truly was a gift from the heart.

A *Sooner Lawyer* article and video were produced during that time, honoring the Elkouris, their remarkable careers, and their legacy. I have posted links to both items in remembrance of Professor Frank Elkouri. We miss him greatly.

— Dean Joe Harroz

---

*Sooner Lawyer* article: <http://bit.ly/nRulKo>

Tribute Video: [www.law.ou.edu/video?page=1](http://www.law.ou.edu/video?page=1)

OLR article: <http://bit.ly/12iMrQo>





*“In the entire history of the  
OU College of Law, no faculty member  
has been more dedicated to his students  
and more generous to the school than  
Professor Frank Elkouri.”*

— PRESIDENT DAVID L. BOREN

