

# COENEN SELECTED AS UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

**“I view it as a great privilege to be a member of our university’s faculty and have always attempted to discharge the responsibility that comes with that privilege to the best of my ability. ... As I see things, positive change at our university is achieved, in the deepest and most meaningful respects, one student at a time ...”**

*- Hosch Professor Dan Coenen, who will soon hold the title of University Professor*



**L**ongtime Georgia Law Professor Dan T. Coenen has been awarded the title University Professor.

This honor is reserved for UGA faculty who have had a significant impact on the university in addition to fulfilling their normal academic responsibilities. This impact may be in the areas of policy development, teaching, curricular change, innovative programs or academic leadership. Additionally, it recognizes individuals whose actions as “change-agents” have improved the quality with which the university serves its missions.

“Dan Coenen is the consummate faculty member who richly deserves this recognition,” UGA Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Arnett C. Mace Jr. said. “He serves with distinction in all functions of the University of Georgia. An outstanding teacher, nationally-recognized scholar, superb leader and contributor to a myriad of committees, Dan contributes to the university with distinction and integrity.”

Dean Rebecca H. White said she could think of no person who better fits the University Professor description in every sense than Coenen. “Dan has served with distinction on numerous committees charged with reviewing and strengthening initiatives at both the law school and the university. His exemplary teaching skills have been recognized multiple times, again not only at the law school but campus wide,” she said.

“In my mind, what is most remarkable about Dan Coenen is that, despite serving in the demanding role of a full-time law professor, he has found the time to make a significant impact on the undergraduate student population at the university. Not once, but twice, he has been recognized by the Student Government Association for his dedication and commitment,” White added.

Coenen, who currently holds a J. Alton Hosch Professorship, joined the Georgia Law faculty in 1987 and teaches Constitutional Law, Contracts and Criminal Law. He said he was “moved and humbled” to receive the professorship, especially because UGA’s faculty “runs deep with teachers who work tirelessly every day” to help students and to better our society. “I am pleased to be a member of this faculty and especially honored to be designated a University Professor at a university as extraordinary as ours,” he said.

Coenen received the Josiah Meigs Award, the university’s highest honor for teaching excellence, in 1998. Law students have selected him on multiple occasions as the recipient of the Faculty Book Award for teaching excellence, the Professional Responsibility Award and the John C. O’Byrne Award for significant contributions furthering student/faculty relations. Additionally, Coenen has been chosen as an honorary graduation marshal seven times. In 2000, he was recognized by the undergraduate Student Government Association as an Outstanding Teacher for Having a Profound Effect on a Student Leader. And, last year, he received the SGA’s Outstanding Professor Recognition Award.

Often considered as a role model for other faculty, Coenen has

*“A great example of Professor Coenen’s true concern for his [Foundation Fellow] mentees took place during my freshman year. He had four mentees then, and all of us were brand-new freshmen living in the dorms. On the day of the 9/11 attacks, he came by our dorms and picked us all up and took us to his house so that we could be in a home and in a family environment on such a scary, tragic day.”*

**- Allison M. Scott, UGA undergraduate student and one of Coenen’s Foundation Fellow mentees.  
This comment supported Coenen’s nomination for the SGA Outstanding Professor Recognition Award.**

served as a faculty mentor in UGA’s Lilly Teaching Fellows Program and as a senior teaching fellow in 1999-2000. He was inducted into the university’s Teaching Academy in 2001 and was elected as a member of the organization’s executive committee the following year. Since 2001, he has served as a senior faculty fellow in the Foundation Fellows Program.

Over the years, he has been an active member of numerous law school committees including the Dean’s Advisory, Academic Affairs, Admissions and Faculty Recruitment committees as well as the UGA President’s Faculty Advisory Committee and the Faculty Awards Review Committee, a group empanelled by then-Provost Karen A. Holbrook to review the top faculty recognitions granted by UGA and on which he served as chair. He recently chaired the 2005 Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorship Selection Committee and served as co-chair of the Program Review Committee for the Political Science Department. Presently, Coenen is overseeing a thorough review of the law school’s upper-level curriculum.

A nationally-recognized constitutional law scholar, Coenen

served as a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun. His written scholarship on state-federal relations, Supreme Court decision making and the separation of powers has appeared in leading law reviews nationwide, including the prestigious *Yale Law Journal*, and is the subject of his first book, *Constitutional Law: The Commerce Clause*, published last year. Additionally, his work has been relied upon in numerous judicial decisions, including opinions by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Coenen earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin and his law degree from Cornell University, where he served as editor in chief of the *Cornell Law Review*. After law school, he clerked for Chief Judge Clement F. Haynsworth Jr. of the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals prior to joining the law firm Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson in Charlotte, N.C., where he later became a partner.

This fall, Coenen’s new title will go into effect. He will retain the University Professor title until resignation or retirement. Only one University Professor is appointed per year. ■

*“... [Coenen] is the finest professor I have ever had at any level in my educational process. I make this glowing recommendation despite the fact that some of my lowest grades in law school came from the pen of Dan Coenen yet I enrolled in every class he taught.”*

**- Christopher T. Adams, J.D.’92**

*“The first year law school curriculum is designed to break the student from his old ways of thinking and train him to ‘think like a lawyer.’ But Prof. Coenen told us that it was equally important to remember who we were before we came to law school, and where we came from. He urged us to remember and continually explore what it was that made us want to be in the law, and to use those memories to guide us and help us find meaning in our practice and in our lives.”*

**- Robert J. Cox, J.D.’97**

*“Above all, the most important thing Professor Coenen has done for me as a future attorney is inspire me with confidence. Every time I go up against another attorney from another law school, I will know one thing that will give me a great deal of comfort: I took Constitutional Law with Professor Coenen, and my opponent did not. And for my opponent, that is a disadvantage that will not be easy to overcome.”*

**- Stephen K. Marsh, J.D.’98**

*“The students knew that he truly cared about their academic performance as well as them as people. As a result, my law school class chose Professor Coenen as the individual it wanted to call out our names at graduation.”*

**- Jody Jenkins Corry, J.D.’91**

*“[I]t is important to note that Professor Coenen, in an exceptional manner, maintains an open door policy to all students, counseling them on the subject at hand, their job search, the stress of the law school curriculum or any other matter. Professor Coenen is, without a doubt, one of the most accessible professors at the University of Georgia.”*

**- W. Heath Garrett, J.D.’95**

**Student comments supporting Coenen’s 1998 Josiah Meigs Award Nomination**

*Photographs by Terry Allen.*