Georgia Law bids farewell to two longtime professors

fter collectively dedicating more than 60 years of service to Georgia Law, professors Alan Watson and Donald E. "Eugene" Wilkes Jr. retired June 1.

Watson, the holder of the Rogers Chair of Law and a Distinguished Research Professorship, is regarded as one of the world's foremost authorities on Roman law, comparative law, legal history, and law and religion.

He holds 13 degrees (one is by decree and six are honorary) from the universities of Glasgow, Oxford, Edinburgh, Pretoria, Palermo, Belgrade and Stockholm.

A master of more than 12 languages, Watson has authored more than 150 articles and books, and several of his titles have been translated into various dialects.

Watson attended several sessions regarding the development of a common law for the European Union and, at the request of the U.S. Agency for International

Development, he served as a member of the two-person U.S. team which helped revise the draft civil code for the Republic of Armenia.

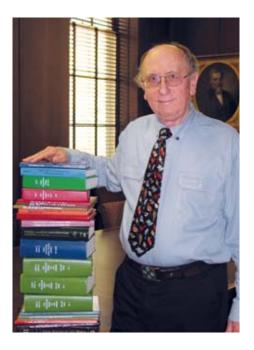
In 1997, he was elected Visiting Honorary Professor of Private Law at the University of Edinburgh, the highest honorary award bestowed by the Scottish faculty.

He regularly serves as a distinguished lecturer at leading universities in the United States and abroad, including institutions in France, Germany, Holland, Israel, Italy, Poland, South Africa and Yugoslavia. And, this fall, Watson will be presented with a lifetime achievement award by the American Society of Comparative Law.

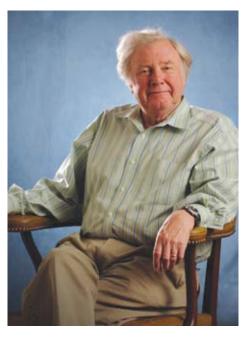
Of his 23-year tenure at Georgia Law, Watson said he enjoyed many memorable experiences and will miss teaching "some of the best and nicest students" he has ever encountered.

During retirement, he plans to continue his involvement with the Alan Watson Foundation, which was established by his colleagues at the University of Belgrade to promote a multidisciplinary understanding of law by encouraging scholarship broadly focusing on the correlation between law and society. Watson will also maintain an office at the law school, where he will continue his research activities.

Wilkes, who earned both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Florida, joined the law school's faculty in 1971. Specializing in the fields of criminal procedure, English legal history and postconviction remedies, he is a leading expert on the writ of habeas corpus.



Professor Eugene Wilkes, photographed with some of his scholarship produced during his 41-year tenure at Georgia Law, retired on June 1.



Alan Watson, the holder of the Rogers Chair of Law and a Distinguished Research Professorship, retired after 23 years of service to the law school.

His scholarship includes approximately 250 published works including five books, 14 law review pieces, two book chapters, five encyclopedia entries and more than 160 articles in magazines, newspapers and professional journals.

Prior to teaching at Georgia Law, Wilkes clerked for U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida Judge Ben Krentzman.

During his early years in Athens, he took a leave of absence to serve as a Fellow in Law and the Humanities at Harvard University from 1975 to 1976.

While one of Wilkes' highlights during his teaching career is having been interviewed by "60 Minutes" correspondent Harry Reasoner during May 1985 (a segment that subsequently aired), Georgia Law's 1990 graduation holds a special place in his heart – it is the year his daughter, Karen, received her law degree.

"Dean Ron Ellington allowed me to hand her her diploma," Wilkes said. "It was just a beautiful day. I remember the exact date – May 19, 1990."

The thing Wilkes said he will miss most in his retirement is helping to "broaden the horizons" of his students and "providing new perspectives."

Grading exams, however, is what he will miss the least.

"I think most professors will agree with me on this," he added.

Wilkes will maintain an office at the law school and actively engage in research and writing, primarily in the area of the history of the writ of habeas corpus. Additionally, he will continue his pursuit of supporting the aviary population and add further credence to his moniker a "friend of liberty and birds."

—Crissinda M. Ponder

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