

Georgia Law says farewell to

Brussack reminisces on law school life



Professor Robert Brussack (J.D.'76)

After nearly 30 years of service, Professor Robert D. Brussack (J.D.'76) retired from Georgia Law, where he specialized in cyberlaw, civil procedure, administrative law and complex litigation.

A native New Yorker, Brussack moved with his family to Clarkesville, Ga., near Athens, as a 10-year-old in the spring of 1960.

Brussack entered UGA in 1967 as an undergraduate majoring in journalism. While still a senior, he joined the weekend news staff of WSB radio in Atlanta, becoming a full-time reporter and anchor after graduating in 1971. In 1972, while working in Atlanta, Brussack met and married Pat Lockwood, his wife of 35 years. He remained in Atlanta until the fall of 1973, when he returned to Athens to enter law school.

During law school, Brussack participated in the moot court program that he would later advise as a young faculty member. He also served as an articles editor of the *Georgia Law Review* and as a justice of the Honor Court. Brussack graduated first in his class in 1976 and was inducted into the Order of the Coif.

While in law school, Brussack served as a judicial clerk for Judge Lewis R. Morgan of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit. One of his fellow clerks was Julie E. Carnes (J.D.'75), who now serves as a U.S. District Court judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

"Julie and I, and our co-clerk Jim Alt, would meet every morning in a parking lot on Atlanta's south side and carpool down to the judge's chambers in Newnan," Brussack recalled. "Judge Morgan was a gentle, wise man. All of us felt privileged to work for him."

Brussack began his teaching career by spending one year on the faculty of the University of Houston College of Law before

returning to Athens to join the Georgia Law faculty in 1978.

It was in his early teaching years that Brussack served as moot court adviser, helping to lay the foundation for the program's remarkable success. His teams routinely won the regionals of the National Moot Court Competition and reached the national quarterfinals at least three times and the semifinals once during the early 1980s.

Brussack also helped to establish the moot court exchange between Georgia Law and England's Gray's Inn. "Diplomacy, of course, can call for sacrifice," Brussack said. "During our first trip to Cambridge, it was insisted that I try my hand at 'punting on the Cam' – you know, using that long, heavy pole to push that skinny, unstable boat down river. Well, 'into the drink' I went – suit, tie and all. I had to dry out and borrow a suit so that I could show up that evening for dinner at the High Table."

For four years, Brussack served as assistant dean for student affairs under then-Dean J. Ralph Beaird. "Ralph brought vision and energy to the front office," Brussack said. "He understood what our faculty, students and alumni were capable of accomplishing, and he insisted that we get on with it." Brussack's service to the law school also included chairing the school's two most recent self-studies.

Brussack's scholarship includes traditional pieces, including an article in the *Southern California Law Review* that helped to persuade the drafters of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to overrule a U.S. Supreme Court decision by amending one of the federal rules governing pleading in the district courts. Most recently, however, Brussack's focus has been on the use of the Internet as a medium for scholarship.

As a professor, Brussack received the SBA Faculty Book Award for Excellence in Teaching and the John C. O'Byrne Memorial Award for Furthering Faculty-Student Relations. He also served as a UGA Senior Teaching Fellow and was selected to be a member of the

university's prestigious Teaching Academy, which seeks to promote faculty leadership in teaching and learning, to advocate for effective educational environments and to foster a community of scholars.

In retirement, Brussack plans to spend more time with his wife, Pat, who holds a senior management position with UGA Food Services, and with their 11-year-old son, Ian, who will enter middle school next year.

He also plans to pursue a life-long interest in photography (stay tuned for more of his work in the *Advocate* and other Georgia Law publications), to do more work as unofficial family historian, to try his hand at some non-legal writing (perhaps dipping a toe back into journalism) and to lend a legal hand once in awhile to a worthy cause.

– Compiled by Nikki Girard

Five young professors joined the faculty of Georgia Law during the late 1970s. They were: (l. to r.) Robert Brussack (J.D.'76), Michael Wells, Milner Ball (J.D.'71), Jim Ponsoldt and Walter Hellerstein.



two alumni and professors

Ball leaves behind public interest law legacy



Milner Ball (J.D.'71),
the holder of the
Caldwell Chair in
Constitutional Law

and theology, Native American law and jurisprudence.

Ball first came to Athens as the Presbyterian campus minister in 1966. He had already earned his bachelor's and divinity degrees from Princeton University and Harvard University, respectively, before enrolling at Georgia Law in the fall of 1968.

He recalls his initial interest in the law: "From the outside, law may have looked like the last great missionary frontier. But I was drawn to it because

After almost 30 years of teaching at Georgia Law, Caldwell Chair Milner S. Ball (J.D.'71) taught his final class in December.

Ball is well known for his contributions to constitutional law, law and theology, Native American law and jurisprudence.

of its capacity – as I saw it then – to protect powerless minorities: the excluded, the poor, the disadvantaged, the kinds of people for whom the God of the biblical stories shows particular concern."

Fondly remembering his first course at Georgia Law, Legal Process taught by then-Dean M. Lindsey Cowen, Ball said he was introduced to subjects that were fascinating then and have grown even more so since: the language of the law, ways of thinking about law and the centrality of performances in law. "Even in contests about the smallest points," he said, "it seems that everything is always at stake."

While in law school, Ball served as the editor in chief of the *Georgia Law Review* and graduated first in his class in 1971.

He remained in Athens one additional year to work for Dean Rusk at the law school and to represent him at the 1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden.

Ball then joined the faculty at Rutgers Law School in Camden, N.J., in 1972.

"Another great memory and cause for thanksgiving was Ralph Beard's 1978 delivery of the invitation, doubtless skillfully and hard won from the faculty, to come home to teach," Ball said.

Early in his career at Georgia Law, he began teaching a course in jurisprudence. He encouraged his students to ask two questions: "Who am I as a lawyer?" and "What am I doing when I do law?"

Ball said he needed to explore how his life as a lawyer in a nexus of responsibilities and theirs as law students could be part of the material to which they would bring their imagination and critical scrutiny. Eventually his class evolved into the Public Interest Practicum and the Civil Clinic.

"It seemed natural that we should add to the discipline of reading texts together the discipline of responding together to the school's neighbors, those who inhabit the streets, shelters and jails," Ball added.

His class began spending time at places

like the soup kitchen, the YMCA shelter, the courthouse, lawyers' offices and the alternative school. "We – I as well as the students – learned about law from the bottom up," Ball said.

He is proud of the way the course drew from and depended on the students' initiative and inventiveness.

A former student in the course even stayed on after she graduated to help teach it. And, the time soon arrived for a full-fledged Civil Clinic, headed by Alexander W. Scherr as its first director, according to Ball.

His contributions to the law also include numerous articles and books, such as *Called by Stories: Biblical Sagas and Their Challenge for Law* (2000), *The Word and The Law* (1993) and *Lying Down Together* (1985). Ball's articles have appeared in a variety of journals including the *Stanford Law Review*, the *Harvard Law Review*, the *Michigan Law Review*, the *Texas Law Review*, the *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*, *Studies in Law and Literature* and the *Cardozo Law Review*.

The *Georgia Law Review* held a symposium earlier this spring to honor Ball's scholarship and its importance to the legal field.

Heading into his retirement, Ball said he plans to continue writing, taking part in community projects and serving as a minister.

Since moving to downtown Athens two years ago with his wife, June, he has been in convenient walking distance to the school and his office.

Ball said he will certainly miss his daily interactions with students. He added that any legacy he leaves at Georgia Law would have to be witnessed in the effects of his work on the lives and commitments of those who were students in his classes or readers of his writing.

– Nikki Girard

