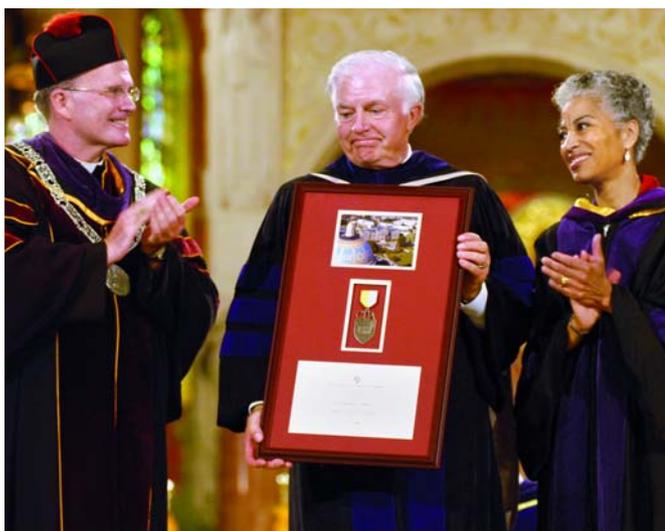


Most Honorable Discharge: A Beloved Professor Bids Farewell

Most sports stars vow to quit “while I’m still at the top of my game,” although the promise is rarely kept. One CUA law teaching star, however, is leaving while still at the peak of his classroom prowess. Not because his skills or motivation have eroded, but simply because the time is right.

On Sept. 30, 2006, the Hon. H.F. “Sparky” Gierke, chief judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, will complete his term, bringing to a close a 23-year career on the bench. For the past decade or so, he has shared his vast knowledge of trial practice and comparative military law with fortunate law students at both Catholic University and George Washington University. With the impending end of his judicial service, however, Judge Gierke has decided to relocate permanently to Florida, where his wife Jeanine is the human resources director at the Arnold Palmer Bay Hill Club and Lodge in Orlando. (He has already accepted the position of Distinguished Jurist-in-Residence and coordinator of lawyering skills and values at Andreas School of Law in Orlando, where he will begin in October 2006.) Continuing his service in the academic community, Judge Gierke will continue to support Columbus School of Law’s program, people and alumni.



Judge “Sparky” Gierke was presented with the President’s Medal, which quoted a former student and read in part: “He has given of himself much more to this law school community than we could ever repay him in words or gestures.”

Anywhere he lectures, students hold him in the highest esteem. In 2002 and 2004, the Student Bar Association at CUA honored him with the Outstanding Adjunct Professor Award. Their peers at G.W.’s law school did the same, conferring the Distinguished Adjunct Service Award on Judge Gierke in 2002. “I don’t claim I’m a better instructor than anyone else,” he says. “But, I do connect well with students. I’m accessible, and I make a substantial effort to accommodate their needs.”

“He has given of himself much more to this law school community than we could ever repay him in words or gestures,” says Christopher D’Antonio, 1999. “For those of us lucky enough to have been in his classroom or in his chambers, we will not forget the contributions that Judge Gierke has made—and continues to make—to our academic careers and our professional lives. He will be missed at Catholic.”

The admiration is mutual. “The students, faculty and alumni here have been just wonderful,” says the former justice of the North Dakota Supreme Court, noting that the several faculty members who have served as associate dean for Academic Affairs during his time have all offered their unwavering support. The judge’s regard for his CUA students extends to his court, where he typically employs two externs each semester. In recent years, most

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of them have come from the Columbus School of Law. “A colleague and good friend of mine has an expression: ‘If you want to be a better lawyer, start with

being a better person.’ The students here have got a head start on being better people,” says the judge. “They’re a pleasure to teach. One hallmark of the Columbus School of Law community is that the students become lawyers that you’d like to practice law with.”

Judge Gierke taught his normal courses during the spring semester of 2006. As the end of the semester loomed, his thoughts increasingly turned to his rich and rewarding years at CUA law. “It’ll be a tough walk down the hall and out of the building that last week,” he reflected. For its part, the university tried to acknowledge Judge Gierke’s vast contributions to the law school with the most significant gesture in its arsenal. On May 27, at the law school’s commencement ceremony, Judge Gierke was presented with the President’s Medal—the highest honor bestowed by The Catholic University of America.