

Distinguished Service Awards



Boardman, Murphy, Russell

The annual highlight of the Alumni luncheon each year is the presentation of the WLAA's Distinguished Service Awards. To be chosen by the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association, nominees must have made an "outstanding contribution to the profession, within or without the school or state, as a practitioner, teacher, judge or in government." To be considered, a person must be aged 65 or retired, but can be either living or dead.

The awards were established in 1967, and two people have been selected each year. Presentation can be made either at the Spring luncheon, which is the Association's annual meeting, or in the fall at the dinner which is part of the annual alumni visitation of the Law School.

This year, the Association chose to honor Robert B. L. Murphy, distinguished practicing lawyer, and Professor Emeritus John Conway. Professor Conway's award will be presented in the fall.

W. Wade Boardman, Madison (Class of 1930) Mr. Murphy's contemporary in the Bar, made the presentation, part of which

follows:

The Wisconsin Law Alumni Distinguished Alumni Award (now 'Distinguished Service Award') goes this year to one who has always been a man of distinction. There always has been a natural look and air of distinction about Bob, which is the same today as it was fifty years ago, except for the white hair and lesser amount of it. He was truly 'to the manor born'

...

Bob Murphy's father died when Bob was four years of age, leaving the widow and three young children, two girls and the boy ... To have raised that young family as she did with the son being honored as he is today has to be a tribute to that young mother. She must have been a remarkable person.

When Bob came out of law school he joined his companion Charlie Crownhart, now deceased, in the practice of law at Madison. Bob was to the legal profession "Mr. Medical Society."

... Came World War II. Bob

went with the Navy. He was stationed in Texas, where he met a member of what I have learned today to be the Women's Appointed Volunteer Emergency Service.

Her name was Arabel Zenobia Alcott. Bob did pretty well so to cover the whole alphabet and back again. They have made a very fine couple.

Both Bob and Arabel have done their civic duties. Bob has served on the Police and Fire Commission and Arabel at one time was president of the League of Women Voters.

Back in law school Bob wore, or at least could have worn, the keys of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Delta Phi. Bob has dutifully served the law school. For at least 10 years he has participated in its corporation seminars. He has been Alumni Editor of the Law Review. He is the immediate past Chairman of the Board of Visitors of the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association.

He has been particularly active in fund raising foundations for various worthy causes. He has had many honors and assignments in State Bar affairs, ... notably at this time the presidency of Wisconsin Lawyers Service, Inc., a foundation designed to conduct studies for group legal services.

Along the way to his law degree Bob picked up a master's degree in History. He always had a great interest in matters historical. For 30 years or more he has been a member of the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society. For 18 years he has been president of the Wisconsin History Foundation. He was also a member of the Board of Advisors of the National Trust Historic Preservation.

Cont'd. page 8

Parentetically, there should be mentioned at this point that Bob's interest in history is more in preserving the evidence of culture, of ethnic background, of the structural designs and environment, rather than the battle sites of

history. Witness, for example, the State Historical Society's purchase of the reconstructed homes and customs of the early mining days of Wisconsin in the form of Trelawney-Polpero-Pendarvis restorations at Mineral

point. I understand this is largely due to his leadership.

This is the background of the man to whom the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association presents its 1979 Distinguished Service Award, Mr. Robert B. L. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy replied:

Some time back I learned that the Board of WLAA had designated me as one of the recipients of the 1979 Distinguished Service Award. At that point, such elements of humility as I may still possess were at odds with the undisguised pleasure I have derived from this particular form of peer recognition. I consider the award a high professional honor which I shall always cherish.

In my view, this award has not been fully earned or merited. Others deserved it far more. Having accepted it, however, I can do no less than to try to close the gap in the time ahead.

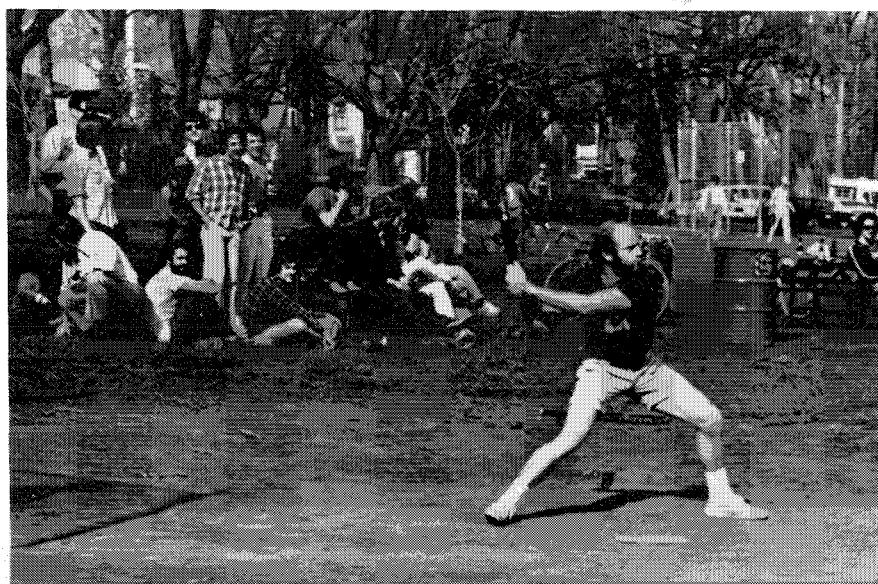
After 47 years at the Bar, I ask that you indulge me while I express a fervent hope. My hope is that a career at the Bar may continue to provide for those who follow it with dedication and sustained effort —

First, an unlimited opportunity for the lifelong development of the mind, and of professional and social judgment in a highly competitive arena;

Second, the challenge to perform professional services of a kind and quality which in their aggregate contribute something to the attainment of justice in our society;

Third, a chance to participate in the grand tradition of professional and public service which is rightly one of our proudest hallmarks;

Fourth, and last but not least, the richly rewarding fellowship of professional peers who have devoted their best talents to an honorable shared calling.



Rites of Spring: Faculty v. Law Review