

1996

Edward J. Murphy: A Professor for All Seasons

David T. Link

Notre Dame Law School, david.t.link.1@nd.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

David T. Link, *Edward J. Murphy: A Professor for All Seasons*, 71 Notre Dame L. Rev. 557 (1995-1996).
Available at: https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship/227

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at NDLScholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal Articles by an authorized administrator of NDLScholarship. For more information, please contact lawdr@nd.edu.

TRIBUTES

Edward J. Murphy: A Professor for All Seasons

*David T. Link**

Ed Murphy taught more Notre Dame law students than any other professor in the history of the University. To his students, he was more than a teacher; he was mentor and even legend. A mainstay at the Law School, Professor Murphy died in July of last year at the age of sixty-eight.

Ed joined the faculty in 1957. He served as Acting Dean during the 1970-71 academic year and directed the Notre Dame Summer Program in Japan in 1974. Appointed in 1979 as the John N. Matthews Professor of Law, Ed became the first chaired law professor at Notre Dame. He retired in 1994 after thirty-seven years of service as a professor of Contracts and Jurisprudence.

Ed was a professor for all seasons: teacher, scholar, mentor, role model and committed servant to the University and the Church. Professor Tom Shaffer and I had the privilege of being in one of his first law school classes. From the start of his teaching career, he was a superior teacher. Organized, methodical, demanding, and serious with the right sprinkling of humor, he conducted every lecture as an academic adventure which he shared with his students. Every discussion was perfectly timed and ended with Professor Murphy making the precise point he wanted to ingrain in every student's memory.

Congressman Peter King, '68 Notre Dame Law, recently visited his alma mater and sat in on a Contracts class. Peter King, in his law student days, had Ed Murphy for Contracts. He stated that much of what he had learned from Ed came back to him as he listened to the new contracts teacher. Congressman King referred to Ed as a "teacher's teacher" and remarked that Ed provided his students not only with the relevant material but the means to understand and remember. I don't know of a former student who doesn't feel the same way. Ed was a master not only of his material but of the Socratic method. Ed knew how to get the best from every student but he never badgered or belittled a student who did not know an answer. Ed Murphy was one of the best casebook teachers in the country.

Ed Murphy also was a scholar. He published widely in the area of commercial law, authoring a popular casebook, *Studies in Contract Law*,¹ which is now in its fourth edition. His Brendan Brown Lecture at Catholic

* The Joseph A. Matson Dean and Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame.

1 EDWARD J. MURPHY & RICHARD E. SPEIDEL, *STUDIES IN CONTRACT LAW* (4th ed. 1991).

University of America, *Conflicting Ultimates: Jurisprudence as Religious Controversy* was amplified and published in the *American Journal of Jurisprudence*.²

He was always ready to serve the University and the Church. He contributed invaluable to a number of important University committees and answered the call to serve as Acting Dean when his experience was needed in administration. For the Church, this accomplished teacher gave of his spare time to teach religion to young people, author a religious text for high school students entitled *Life to the Full*³ and, with the collaboration of his family, create a series of Saints Collector Cards.

Ed will always be remembered as a role model for both his students and his faculty colleagues. By his example, he taught us all how to learn and understand both man's law and God's law. He taught us how to live and how to make our lives worthwhile. He taught these lessons to the very end of his earthly life. Finally, in one of his most important lessons, he taught us all how to face death and prepare for eternal life.

I was privileged to be his student, his colleague and his friend. I miss him very much. We all do. But, of course, his example lives on. He continues to be a part of the great Notre Dame spirit. Our recently appointed contracts professor tells me that every time she enters the classroom, she feels his presence. Even though she never met him, he inspires her as he has so many of us. May it always be so at the law school of Our Lady whom Ed Murphy loved so much.

² Edward J. Murphy, *Conflicting Ultimates: Jurisprudence as Religious Controversy*, 35 AM. J. JURIS. 129 (1990).

³ EDWARD J. MURPHY, LIFE TO THE FULL (1978).