

UH Law Center Receives \$600,000 Gift from alumnus Ron Robins to Fund Endowed Professorship and Student Scholarship

Nov. 25, 2024 - Ron Robins, a member of the University of Houston Law Center's Class of 1969, has donated \$600,000 to his alma mater, establishing a merit scholarship for students and the W. Ronald Robins Endowed Professor of Law.

Now retired, Robins spent 55 years as a practicing attorney who specialized in intellectual property law. Robins was admitted to practice in the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the Texas Southern District's Bankruptcy Court and the Texas Western District Court.

"At UH Law, we are incredibly proud of Ron's professional accomplishments and his devotion to his alma mater," said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Ron is paving the way for those who follow him. Ron graduated from [UH](#) Law when the law school was located in just two rooms in the basement of MD Anderson Library. At that time, the major Houston law firms weren't hiring our alumni or students. Ron was one of the few of our alumni to work, and ultimately become partner, at [Vinson & Elkins](#)."

"Specializing in intellectual property law, Ron's successful career paved the way for recent graduates and students to be hired by the major Houston law firms. In fact, UH Law now ranks #23 in [Law.com](#)'s annual list of law schools that place graduates as associates at the largest 100 law firms in the nation," Baynes added.

The goal of Robins' endowed professorship is to attract and retain distinguished faculty, promote research and scholarship and increase the excellence and reputation of the Law Center.

"A law school, like any university program, succeeds by the quality of its faculty," Robins said. "They provide the essential connection between the subject matter and the students seeking to master it. In addition to the usual research, writing and lecturing skills expected of all academic faculty, the Socratic teaching method used in law school produces special challenges. It entails direct and frequent oral interactions – presentations, challenges and defenses – between students and faculty. When done well, it both teaches the subject matter and develops the critical thinking and oral argument skills needed to succeed in the legal world.

"The faculty who are best at combining all these skills become legends to their students and cornerstones of a law school's reputation and success," he added.

Robins received his undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from Lamar University. After graduating, this was his intended career path, but he had long considered the possibility of practicing law. He gained admission to the Law Center, and hoped to find an area of practice that he preferred.

He quickly fell in love with the law, and his Law Center education exposed him to a different academic setting, in which there were fewer certainties and boundaries than in the math and science disciplines of engineering.

“In law, there were no decimal places in the answers,” Robins said. “Instead, the softer skills of research, writing, problem solving and, very importantly, advocacy, were key to successful outcomes. The Law Center did a great job of taking someone with no relevant academic background in the legal skills areas and instilling the knowledge, experience and confidence needed to practice law.

“In the end, I wound up practicing for my entire career in the field of intellectual property law, which requires proficiency in both technical and legal subject areas. This career path never would have been possible without the opportunities afforded me at the University of Houston Law Center,” he said.

Robins’ generosity to the Law Center was inspired in part by the drastic financial changes for students who pursue an undergraduate degree or a legal education. Robins was the valedictorian of his class. The endowed merit scholarship bearing his name will be awarded to the No. 1 student in their class.

“When I was in school in the 1960’s, tuition at all Texas state colleges and universities was almost free at a flat rate of \$50 per semester, regardless of the hours taken,” Robins said. “I enjoyed the privilege of seven years of undergraduate and postgraduate higher education at very little cost and with no need for student loans.

“I have always been conscious of the debt I owe for this privilege. I believe that the endowed professorship is an appropriate way to repay some of this debt while supporting the Law Center’s efforts in attracting and retaining outstanding faculty,” he said.

University of Houston Law Center media contact: Carrie Anna Criado, UH Law Center Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-2184, cacriado@central.uh.edu.

About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) (UHLC) is a dynamic, top-tier law school located in the nation’s 4th largest city. UHLC’s Health Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Part-time programs rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 12 centers and institutes that fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

About the University of Houston

The **University of Houston** is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian-American-Serving institution with an enrollment of more than 47,000 students.