Classroom Named in Honor of Greenfield

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW recently dedicated a classroom in Harry & Susan Seigle Hall in honor of Professor Michael Greenfield’s nearly four decades of teaching and scholarship and his more than two decades of service to building construction projects at the law school.

The new classroom is the first in the school named for a member of the law faculty. The Greenfield Classroom is a tribute to Greenfield’s tireless work with other faculty, students, administrators, alumni, architects, and contractors to ensure that the law school’s physical facilities are among the very best in the country.

“Mike Greenfield has given 40 years of priceless sweat equity to this law school as a teacher and scholar, as well as a member of at least three building committees,” says Kent Syverud, dean and the Ethan A.H. Shepley University Professor. “The classroom in Seigle Hall is a particularly fitting recognition of his selfless service to our school. He loyally, dependably, and at times brilliantly, did so much to make Seigle Hall a reality.”

The George Alexander Madill Professor of Contracts and Commercial Law, Greenfield joined the law faculty in 1969. In addition to his tenure as assistant dean and chair of several building and renovation committees, he has served on virtually every other law school committee. A prolific author, he is a renowned expert in commercial and consumer law, and an outstanding teacher. Greenfield was first appointed to a building committee under then Dean F. Hodge O’Neal. Next, during the deanship of Dorsey D. Ellis, Jr., Greenfield headed the faculty committee for the construction of Anheuser-Busch Hall. Eight years later, he was asked first by then Dean Joel Seligman and next by Dean Syverud to play a similar role for the construction of the law school’s portion of Seigle Hall and for the renovation of Anheuser-Busch Hall.

“The naming of this classroom in Seigle Hall is a most appropriate tribute to Mike’s enormous contributions to the law school’s physical facilities and to his unwavering commitment to demanding and effective teaching,” notes Ellis, dean emeritus and the William R. Orthwein Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus. Ellis and Syverud also acknowledged Greenfield’s wife and alumna, Claire Halpern, JD ’75, who has steadfastly supported his long hours of dedication to the school.

Greenfield says he was particularly humbled by having a classroom named in his honor: “I came to Washington University because many years ago my mentors praised the quality of the teaching that occurred here and the collegiality and supportiveness of the faculty who taught here. They were absolutely correct, and I found my passion here in teaching.

“In my opinion, the primary mission of a law school is teaching the students to engage in the rigorous analysis demanded by the law,” he continues. “In helping with the design of our physical facilities, in both Anheuser-Busch Hall and Seigle Hall, my greatest attention has been focused on the classrooms, hoping that they would function better than the classrooms at any other school in the country. Because of the importance I place on our function as teachers, I am especially pleased to have a classroom bear my name. You have honored me in the most meaningful way I can imagine.”