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# Dean Thomas J. Romig



Washburn University School of Law welcomed its new dean, Thomas J. Romig, Major General, U.S. Army, retired, on July 2, 2007. Dean Romig comes to the School of Law from a distinguished career. A native of Manhattan, Kan., Romig graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in social sciences from Kansas State University and a commission as a Second Lieutenant in Military Intelligence through the Army ROTC program.

Although interested in law school, Romig chose to enter the Army after graduating from Kansas State and following basic training was assigned as a paratrooper at Fort Bragg, N.C. During his fourth year of service as a military intelligence

officer he was participating in military exercise when his parachute canopy collapsed and he fell 75 feet and broke his back. It was then that he decided to revisit his earlier interest in law school. He applied and was selected for the Army Funded Legal Education Program, attending law school at Santa Clara University School of Law in California. After serving as an editor on the *Santa Clara Law Review* and a member of the Honors Moot Court Board, Romig graduated with honors in 1980. Upon graduation, he became an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

His many military legal assignments included prosecuting felony and misdemeanor criminal cases in Texas; Chief of Planning for the JAG Corps; Chief of Assignments for the JAG Corps; Chief Legal Officer for Army Air Defense forces in Europe; and Chief Legal Officer for U.S. Army V Corps in Germany and U.S. Army forces in the Balkans. Additionally, for three years he taught International Law at the ABA-accredited Judge Advocate General's School, in Charlottesville, Va. While at the JAG School, in addition to teaching, he served as



a thesis advisor and reviewed research papers for both new- attorney and graduate-level courses.

As a senior leader in the JAG Corps, Romig's other military positions included Chief of Army Civil Law and Litigation and Chief of Military Law and Operations, both in Washington, D.C. In 1996, he received a Master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College, National Defense University, Washington, D.C.

From October 2001 to October 2005, Romig served as the 36th Judge Advocate General of the Army, the top military lawyer for the U.S. Army, during one of our nation's most challenging periods in recent history. He led and supervised an organization of more than 9,000 personnel comprised of roughly 5,000 active and reserve military and civilian attorneys and more than 4,000 paralegal and support personnel spread throughout 328 separate offices in 22 countries. He oversaw a world-wide legal practice including civil litigation, criminal prosecution and defense trial practice, criminal appellate practice, an independent military judiciary, international law, administrative law, legal assistance, labor and employment law, environmental law, fiscal and procurement law, claims, and ethics compliance.

Romig was the principal military legal adviser to the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and key members of the Army senior leadership team. He planned for and sustained the largest combat mobilization and deployment

of military legal personnel since World War II.

Romig also institutionalized the first strategic planning process for the Army JAG Corps to lead the way for dramatic change in how legal services are provided to the Army.

“Throughout my legal career, I have had an abiding interest in legal education and working with young people.”

As the Judge Advocate General, Romig conceived the strategic plan to vastly expand the JAG School's scope and effectiveness by creating the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. As part of that expansion, Romig realigned and physically moved all Army paralegal training and education from a traditional Army training facility located at a fort in South Carolina to Charlottesville, Va., creating a paralegal academy within the Legal Center structure that dramatically enhanced the education of the Army's several hundred paraprofessionals. He also established the first ABA-accredited paralegal degree program for all Army paralegals.

After retiring from the Army in 2005, Romig became Deputy Chief Counsel for Operations with the Federal Aviation Administration. In this key executive position within the FAA legal department, he oversaw the Airport and Environmental Law Division, the Personnel and Labor Law Division, and the Enforcement Division. In addition, he supervised nine multi-disciplinary Regional Counsel Offices and the Aeronautical Center Counsel Office. For a period of five months, he was the Acting Chief Counsel of the FAA, until a political



appointment was made by the President to fill the position.

During his career as a JAG, Romig thought numerous times about returning to academics as a law school dean. After his retirement from the Army, the law

schools which had openings for a dean did not interest him.

Romig's interest in a deanship was piqued again when he learned of the opening at Washburn University School of Law. He was attracted to the excellent reputation of the law school as well as the opportunity to return to Kansas, where he still had family. The opportunity also allowed him to do what he had long desired to do — return to working in legal education and helping people prepare for legal careers. After applying, interviewing, and visiting the law school, Romig knew Washburn Law was the fit he was looking for.

“Throughout my legal career, I have had an abiding interest in legal education and working with young people. I believe my greatest strengths and enjoyment lie in developing new lawyers, motivating and caring for those in my trust, and developing and implementing a vision that transforms legal institutions to enhance their effectiveness and expand their potential. I believe I have a leadership style that capitalizes on collegiality and the abilities and strengths of the members of the organizations I have been privileged to lead,” stated Romig.

He continued, “I believe new lawyers need to be imbued with the values and ethical tenets of our profession and the worth of public service.”

Romig is admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, and the Supreme Court of the State of California. During his career, Romig has received numerous awards and recognition including the following: Santa Clara University School of Law Alumni Association Special Achievement Award; United States Senate Tribute for Military Service, Congressional Record June 14, 2005; Kansas Senate Resolution #1833, March 2006, for Distinguished Military Service; Kansas House Resolution #6021, March 2006, for Distinguished Military Service; Kansas State University Distinguished Alumni of the ROTC Program; Hungarian Ministry of Defense Distinguished Military Service Award; United States Army Distinguished Service Medal; United States Army Legion of Merit; and United States Army Meritorious Service Medal (five awards).

Those on campus and at the law school who have had the opportunity to work closely with Romig have expressed their enthusiasm:

“Washburn University School of Law has a long proud history of excellence. Because of our reputation we are able to attract high-quality faculty and students. The position of Dean is also a coveted one across the nation. Dean Romig emerged as the top candidate from our search process. He comes with an extensive background, not only in the practice



President Jerry Farley

demonstrated ability to succeed and to motivate others to excel,” said Dr. Jerry Farley, president, Washburn University.



Prof. Nancy Maxwell

interviewed people who had worked with him and they described him as a compassionate leader, who was able to recognize individuals’ talents and place them in positions that allowed them to succeed. Because of this ability, Tom had consistently selected people from diverse backgrounds to work with him, which is very much in keeping with the tradition of our law school. When Tom interviewed on campus, he thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the students and his enthusiasm was absolutely infectious. I believe all of these leadership qualities will be invaluable as we compete to recruit top

of law but in the oversight and administration of a prestigious complex legal organization. Tom will continue our tradition of providing quality legal education and caring for our students. He has a

students, continue to expand job placement opportunities for our graduates, and hire talented faculty and staff members.”

Bernie Bianchino ’74, who served as the other co-chair of the dean’s search committee, added, “It

is easy to simply look to Tom Romig’s many accomplishments and honors and reach the conclusion that he will be a great dean. But, I believe that it will be his ability to relate to people and his capacity to make everyone feel that he cares about them personally that will make him stand out as a dean and as the leader Washburn Law needs.”

When discussing faculty, staff, and students at the law school, Dean Romig said, “Through all of my experiences and interactions, the one common thread has been my emphasis on the value and importance of each individual not only for what each contributes today but also for what each can become in the future.” He continued, “My experience taught me that success comes to institutions and organizations when they place this value ahead of all else.”

Faculty, staff, and students of the School of Law are elated to have Dean Romig join the school and are looking forward to him leading the law school to its next level of excellence in legal education. Romig said, “I can think of no greater pursuit which will enable me to contribute in as broad and enduring fashion to our profession than being a law school dean. I want to shine the light on Washburn Law, not only regionally but nationally as well.”



Bernie Bianchino

