



## C. William 'Bill' Ossmann '77

### *Alumni*

Bill Ossmann

received the Adjunct Professor of the Year Award from the law school graduating Class of 2007. An award greatly deserved for an individual who puts his heart and soul into not only Washburn University School of Law, but the Topeka community as well.

Ossmann graduated with a BS in mathematics from Kansas State University in 1973, a JD from Washburn Law in 1977, and an MPA from the University of Kansas in 1992. In addition, Ossmann completed courses in fire science from Kansas City and Hutchinson Community Colleges.

After graduation from law school, Ossmann started a private practice with a fellow graduate for one year before he went to work as a criminal prosecutor in the district attorney's office. In 1993, Ossmann became an assistant district attorney and later first assistant district attorney for Shawnee County, Kan. From 1993 to 1997, he worked as a special assistant attorney general for the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and since 1997 he has worked for the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation services, currently serving as chief litigation attorney.

Ossmann began teaching at Washburn Law back in the 90's. "I taught trial advocacy a long time ago when only a few faculty members taught class. We re-worked the program in the 90's, and I have fallen into adjuncting ever since." Ossmann also is extensively involved in the Washburn Law Intensive Trial Advocacy Program (ITAP). In addition to teaching students, Ossmann participates in the NITA (National Institute for Trial Advocacy) outreach program sponsored by Washburn Law. Ossmann believes the NITA Outreach provides a great service, "I think the county attorneys are grateful that Washburn Law offers the outreach program. It gives them additional experience and learning opportunities convenient to their location." Ossmann puts in countless hours preparing for and instructing the ITAP and NITA courses. He also serves as a faculty member of the Rocky Mountain Regional Trial Skills programs and the National Public Service

Lawyers Program at NITA's National Education Center in Louisville, Colo., and the Midwestern Regional Trial Skills Program and Midwestern Deposition Program in Chicago, Ill.

Ossmann gives an inordinate amount of time back to the School of Law, but he doesn't feel like it is work. "I feel like I have fun rather than feel like I'm working at giving something back. It's a chance to re-charge, have fun, and a chance to re-examine what you do when you are teaching others." He enjoys the chance to work with law school students. When he worked in the DA's office he would supervise the offices interns and enjoyed that as well.

Ossmann believes the most important aspect of being a trial attorney is to "be prepared." He said, "I may not have been the most brilliant attorney, but I was certainly the most prepared. The outcome is always better that way. Teaching students and other practitioners the best way to be prepared to succeed is very rewarding, and I always come away learning something new."

In his spare time Ossmann serves as volunteer fire chief and an EMT with the Shawnee County Fire District #4, which covers portions of western Shawnee County and eastern Wabaunsee County. He also trains fire service and EMS personnel on liability and legal issues.

Ossmann reflects on his profession stating, "The law is fun and very rewarding. It's a profession that has more impact on others lives than many professions, and it is something to be taken seriously. However, everyone should remember not to take themselves quite so seriously."

Through Ossmann's dedication and service to the Law School, he has helped build a strong Trial Advocacy program, has been instrumental in the ITAP and NITA programs, and has been a strong advocate for the Law School. It is with this level of support that Washburn Law's programs continue to improve and receive outstanding national and regional recognition.