

# Mentoring Students

*After 30 years, Pierce reflects on career at Washburn Law.*

*By Angela Lutz*

When it comes to his 30-year career as a professor at Washburn University School of Law, **David Pierce**, '77, says he has his wife, **Martha Pierce, bsn '77**, to thank. The couple married while they were both undergraduates at Pittsburg State University in Southeast Kansas, and Martha attended nursing school at Washburn while David studied law.

“She’s the one who told me I needed to go to law school,” David said. “She’s the one who said, ‘You know, I think you’d enjoy being a lawyer.’ That was the main direction I got, and so we came to Washburn so I could attend law school.”

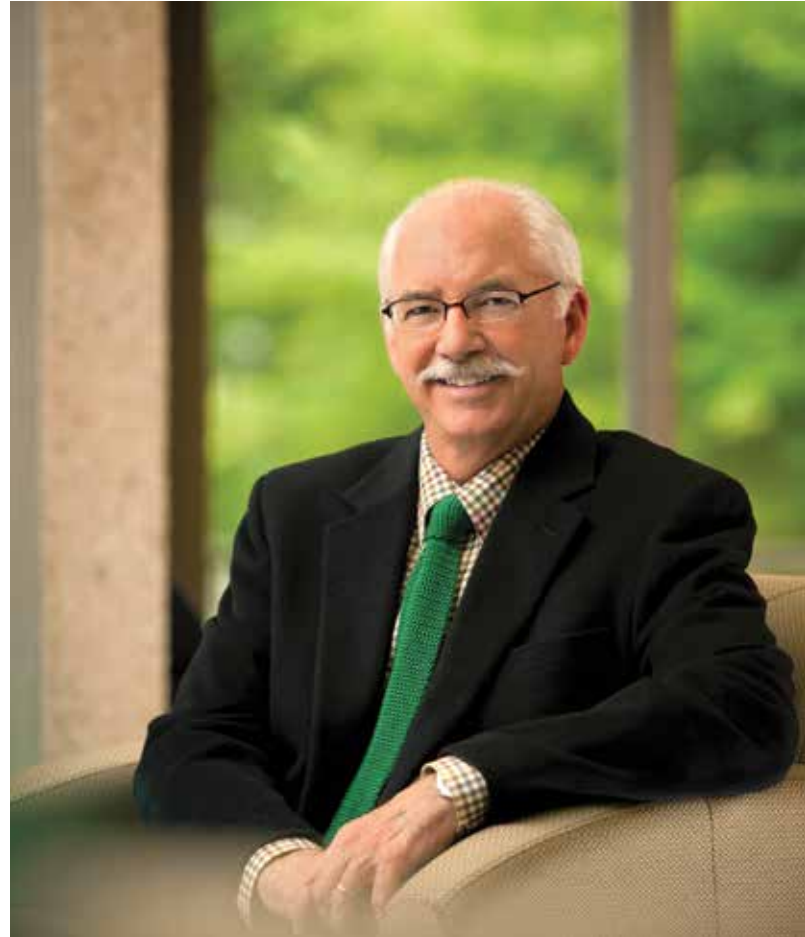
Martha may have steered David toward law school, but he always knew he loved to teach – and he always wanted to be a professor at Washburn. Even as a student, he often took the lead in study groups, and after he graduated he taught whenever he could while engaged in the practice of law. Before securing a tenure track position at Washburn in 1989, he taught at the law school twice as a visiting professor, once in 1981 and again in 1986.

When David retires next spring, he will leave behind a legacy as an authority in oil and gas, property, and contract law, as well as the gifts of guidance and mentorship to hundreds of students. David’s expertise is especially valuable because of how essential oil and gas law is in Kansas and the rest of the United States – and he has always enjoyed his time in the classroom.

“I’ve never had a class where I didn’t look forward to getting in the classroom and teaching,” he said. “I have always enjoyed it, and I hope the students did too. It has been fun.”

Although retiring, David will continue supporting the law school. “I particularly look forward to seeing the new building completed and seeing in action the new programs the law school has in the works,” he said. “Although I will not be a part of the day-to-day work of the law school, I still plan to assist when I can financially to help the law school achieve its goals. Having gone to law school at Washburn, and having worked here for over 30 years, I understand what makes Washburn special.”

In addition to the valuable role Washburn has played in his own life, David has enjoyed watching his students graduate and pursue “life after law school” in the many careers a law-trained professional can pursue.



David Pierce. Photo by jhP

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“I have always been mindful of the many ways I have been helped by the people associated with Washburn,” David said. **Joe Morris (BA '43, JD '47, H '81)**, gave me my start as an oil and gas lawyer when he hired me to work at Shell Oil Company. Jim Concannon hired me for my tenure-track position at Washburn. Carl Monk came through with two very strategic visiting professor positions at critical times in my career. And the greatest event of my teaching career was the opportunity to come back to Washburn and work with the faculty who had a direct role in teaching me the law.”