

Law school raises \$1 million for William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law

The School of Law has raised more than \$1 million to honor the man many dubbed the "real governor of Texas" because of his control over the state prison system and his sweeping rulings on desegregation and bilingual education.

The William Wayne Justice Fund for Public Service honors the senior United States district judge for the Eastern District of Texas, who is a 1942 graduate of UT law. The Justice Fund endows the work of the law school's Center for Public Interest Law, now called the William Wayne Justice Center for Public Interest Law.

The mission of the Justice Center is to educate law students about the need to increase access to justice and the rewards of fulfilling their ethical obligation to engage in pro bono, public service and public interest law as part of their professional lives. The endowment created by the Justice Fund will allow the Justice Center to expand programs and develop new initiatives such as clinical internships, lectures and conferences, pro bono projects, student awards and fellowships for students engaged in public service.

"Judge William Wayne Justice has been and is one of the great and courageous judges of our time," said William Powers, dean of the School of Law. "We are honored to have his name associated with our law school, especially in a way that will support public interest law."

Justice was appointed to the federal bench in 1968 by President Lyndon Johnson. His landmark rulings have safeguarded the rights of minorities, the poor and the politically powerless in many areas.

These decisions have addressed race discrimination in schools and housing, inhumane conditions in prisons and juvenile treatment facilities, the dilution of voting rights, inadequate education for immigrant and non-English-speaking children, and the unnecessary institutionalization of the mentally retarded.

UT law Professor Lynn E. Blais, who clerked for Justice in 1988-89, said "the endowment of the Justice Center makes concrete the law school's longstanding commitment to promoting public service lawyering among its students and graduates." Of Justice, Blais said, "He has a unique capacity to empathize with challenges he has not faced and struggles he has not endured. Our nation's legal traditions have been ennobled by his contributions, and naming our public interest law center after the judge is a fitting tribute to a great man."