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Tribute to Professor William Dorsaneo, III

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TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR WILLIAM DORSANEO, III

*Jennifer M. Collins**

HOW to summarize the career of a Texas legal legend? This tribute issue to the remarkable Bill Dorsaneo and his forty-six-year career at SMU will try its very best. Professor Dorsaneo received his J.D. degree from the University of Texas in 1970, graduating with high honors. He was admitted to Order of the Coif and the Order of Chancellors as Grand Chancellor. Prior to joining the law school faculty in 1975, Professor Dorsaneo worked in litigation at a Dallas law firm. He was appointed to the Chief Justice John and Lena Hickman Distinguished Faculty Fellowship in 1997 in recognition of his extraordinary service to the university.

Professor Dorsaneo has focused his career on Texas pretrial, trial, and appellate practice procedure. He is the author of the preeminent treatises in the field, including the twenty-six-volume *Texas Litigation Guide* and the five-volume *Texas Civil Trial Guide*. He has written three casebooks, entitled *Cases and Materials on Civil Procedure*, *Texas Civil Procedure: Pretrial Litigation*, and *Texas Civil Procedure: Trial and Appellate Practice*, and numerous law review articles and essays. He is board certified in civil appellate law and is an active member of the Advisory Committee to the Texas Supreme Court, a member of the American Law Institute, and Chairman of the Texas Supreme Court's Task Force for Revision of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure. In 2015, the *Texas Lawbook* honored Professor Dorsaneo as one of the "Lions of the Texas Bar," noting that "Dorsaneo has had more impact on the Texas Civil Justice System than any other lawyer who has not served on the Texas Supreme Court."

Professor Dorsaneo truly loved to teach and has quite literally educated generations of Texas litigators. Student comments on his courses included such praise as "master of the material," "really makes the class engaging," "genuinely nice man," "Prof. Dorsaneo is a brilliant litigator," and "Professor Dorsaneo's lectures were vibrant and enlightening."

Both inside and outside of the classroom, Professor Dorsaneo was known for his dry and witty sense of humor. Professor Tom Mayo shared some wonderful memories in this regard: "Bill was a serious thinker and writer when it came to civil procedure (especially Texas procedure), but around the office he managed to keep things light. For years he had a red

* Judge James Noel Dean and Professor of Law, SMU Dedman School of Law.

model airplane hanging from the ceiling in his office, and he could turn it on with the press of a radio-control button. After the plane's novelty wore off, I started hearing 'laser space noises' emanating from his office. There was no alien abduction underway but instead just a kid's 'space gun' that he kept near his desk and would fire when he needed to take a break."

Professor Dorsaneo truly loved both the law and SMU, and his brilliance and friendship enriched Dedman Law in immeasurable ways. Not only the entire law school community, but the entire Texas trial bar, will miss Professor Dorsaneo terribly. Few scholars have left such a profound impression on litigation and procedure, and we are profoundly grateful for all he has done for SMU and the Texas legal community.