

## **Travis H.D. Lewin** **Professor of Law, Emeritus**

A fellow specialist in the teaching of trial advocacy once said that “[i]n every law school’s history there is one person everyone looks to as the defining presence for the growth and development of the school’s trial advocacy program.” For our College of Law, that person is unquestionably Travis H.D. Lewin. For 45 years, Professor Lewin inspired generations of students to enter the courtroom as zealous and successful advocates, and led our law school to its place as a perennial powerhouse in regional and national moot court competitions.

Holder of undergraduate and law degrees from the University of South Dakota and a doctoral degree from the University of Michigan School of Law, Professor Lewin joined the faculty of the College of Law in 1967 after several years in private practice and, later, as an Assistant United States Attorney in South Dakota. He taught a range of courses, including evidence, criminal procedure, the law firm, street law, law and psychiatry, and, of course, trial advocacy.

Professor Lewin is a prolific author, publishing two books and numerous articles on mental health law, criminal law, and administering legal justice, and numerous entries on criminal law, criminal procedure, and evidence for Syracuse Law Review’s annual Survey of New York Law. Professor Lewin also has lectured regularly at county and statewide programs on criminal law and procedure, advocacy skills, and trial training. In the mid-1980s, he served as interim dean of the College of Law. Professor Lewin also was a consultant to the Michigan Department of Mental Hygiene and the Syracuse Police Department, reporter to the Speedy Trial Act Planning Group of the Northern District of New York, and a member of a legislative commission that considered a proposed New York Code of Ethics.

But, as his nominators wrote, his most profound impact has been in the field of trial advocacy, where, for decades, he advised, coached, and mentored our competition teams. One member of the 1978 Mock Trial Team reminisced about a competition where the Syracuse team steamrolled its first-round opponent. After one of the judges assumed that the winning team surely was from Harvard, our team had “fun” correcting him. Even back then, Professor Lewin’s teams were that good. And that success had a ripple effect, reaching even students who were not on his teams or in his classes. Fellow Law Honors medalist Judge James Graves told students in 2007 that, although he did not study with Professor Lewin, the man was “very inspiring to be around.”

Over the years, Professor Lewin has been widely recognized for his work as a teacher, coach, and trial advocacy professional. In 1984, he received the first Richard S. Jacobson Award for Distinguished Trial Advocacy Teaching from the Roscoe Pound American Trial Lawyers Association. He also received the Syracuse University Chancellor’s Citation for Academic Excellence. Just last year, he was honored by Stetson University College of Law with its Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Teaching Advocacy, which recognizes those who fundamentally changed the way in which the world approaches the teaching of trial advocacy.

After retiring from the classroom in 2012, Professor Lewin remains a relevant figure in the College of Law and he continues to judge advocacy program competitions. He established two scholarships to support students who excel in advocacy. The first, created last year, honors his friend and teaching colleague Emil Rossi L’72. The second, “Models of Excellence in Advocacy,” launched this year, honors a student who demonstrates excellence in advocacy and exemplifies leadership, sportsmanship, and professionalism, and will be made in recognition of a Syracuse law graduate who participated in its advocacy programs as a student. Those awards, however, pale beside the legendary Water Buffalo Award, which he distributed to the students who had the highest honors in his classes.

To this day, Professor Lewin’s continued presence warms the hallways and inspires faculty, staff, and students.

In recognition of his tireless service to the College of Law and its students  
and his spearheading its advocacy programs,  
Syracuse University College of Law is proud to honor  
**Travis H.D. Lewin**  
with the Syracuse Law Honors Medal.