

UC DAVIS LAW REVIEW ONLINE

VOL. 52



SEPTEMBER 2018

Perschbacher Tribute

Jon Sands

Before he was the Dean, before he gained renown as a scholar, before the accolades, awards, and acclaim, Rex Perschbacher was foremost a teacher. From the first time he entered the classroom at King Hall — in the Fall of 1981— it was clear he loved the law, and more than that, teaching it. Slight and unassuming, Rex engaged students in how legal systems and structures sought, and ought, to work. Oh, that sounds boring and dull, but to be with a teacher who cared and wanted to impart his knowledge, and make you as interested as he was, was something exciting.

Was he always engaging? No. Look, some information, and some cases, bedevil the best. Never the less, he was always sincere, and he was always interested in the student's answer, even if the answer was as befuddling to him as it may have been to the student. He listened, tried to figure out where the student was coming from, and where he, as the teacher, may have been less than clear. That pained him, for he always thought it was his failure. Students never felt talked down to, nor used as props for the professor's own needs.

Possessing a dry humor, Rex could quip his way through a class, but never obscuring the real drama or stakes of the subject. In this manner, Rex elicited affection from his students, and they repaid it. Once his student greeted him as he entered the classroom all dressed in his professional attire: Khakis, blazer, with fake mustache. Professionally, students modeled themselves on his approach to law as a subject, as a practice, and as a profession. Rex treated students with dignity and a generosity of spirit. For me personally, Rex was a mentor

and a model. I was not alone. I believe that he inspired a whole generation with his teaching and his presence. We will miss him.