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First Amendment endowed chair coming to UCI School of Law

Chemerinsky vows top scholar will be named to the post

By Don J. DeBenedictis

IRVINE - The UC Irvine School of Law soon will have a new faculty member specializing in First Amendment law, thanks to a \$1.5 million gift.

In a ceremony last week, Dean Erwin Chemerinsky formally accepted the donation from newspaper publisher Raymond Pryke to establish a rare endowed chair in the field.

No other University of California law school has a professorship dedicated to First Amendment law, according to UCI officials, and there are only about a half-dozen such endowed chairs in law schools across the nation.

The number of legal academics specializing in free speech and free press issues has declined over the last few decades. - Peter Scheer

The number of legal academics specializing in free speech and free press issues has declined over the last few decades, said Peter Scheer, the executive director of the First Amendment Coalition, who introduced Pryke at the ceremony.

"Twenty years ago, a number of fine law schools had full professors dedicated to... writing about the First Amendment as the centerpiece of the study of constitutional law," Scheer said.

He said the number of jobs for lawyers specializing in First Amendment law representing newspapers has declined.

Chemerinsky said UCI would use the endowment to attract a top scholar in the field. He said he and the university have yet to decide whether to look within UCI or outside.

"The chair holder will be a respected national authority in this field, and it is expected that he or she will teach, write and speak on First Amendment issues of the day, including the role of a free press in preserving democratic society," the school said in announcing Pryke's gift.

Eventually, Chemerinsky said, he hopes the professorship will become part of a larger center in First Amendment law that will attract speakers, hold conferences and conduct research in media and free-speech law.

Pryke owns Valleywide Newspapers in Hesperia, which publishes the Apple Valley News, the Antelope Valley Journal, the Victorville Post Express and several other papers. He has been a major contributor to the First Amendment Coalition, according to Scheer, who helped bring Pryke to UCI.

SPECIAL REPORT

20 Under 40

Plus: Five Associates to Watch in 2012



Friday, January 20, 2012

Government

Counties see more prisoner transfers than expected

County probation departments across the state are receiving a flood of former prison inmates to supervise as part of realignment - with some counties receiving nearly three times the projections.

Health Care & Hospital Law

Drugmakers look to FDA for guidance on off-label marketing

The FDA has only recently made an attempt to clarify its stance on what constitutes off-label marketing, the illegal promotion of drugs and medical devices for non-approved uses.

California Courts of Appeal

Same-sex custody ruling reversed on appeal

A 3rd District Court of Appeal decision Thursday gives family law judges a road map for recognizing parental relationships within nontraditional families.

Judges and Judiciary

'Occupy' movement turns its focus to courts

Activists have planned "occupy the courts" demonstrations at 130 federal courthouses nationwide today to mark the second anniversary of a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing more money into elections.

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Law Practice

First Amendment endowed chair coming to UCI School of Law

The UCI School of Law soon will have a new

A native of England, Pryke became an Royal Air Force fighter pilot at the age of 17 flying from aircraft carriers during World War II. He has "always loved a good fight," Chemerinsky said last week.

Now a U.S. citizen, Pryke began in real estate before becoming a publisher.

"As long as there is a UCI law school, there will always be a Raymond Pryke chair in First Amendment law," the dean told Pryke last week.

Capping last week's ceremony was a lecture by New York University constitutional law expert Barry Friedman called "Policing Without Permission" that examined the growth of police and regulatory intrusion into peoples' lives. "It's time we took responsibility for governing those who govern us," Friedman said.

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Liberal Scholar in a Conservative Realm August 24, 2009
Among the many people who know Erwin Chemerinsky - and there are very many - there is wide agreement about one thing: No one but Chemerinsky could have created a top law school from scratch. UC Irvine School of Law opens Monday to wide acclaim.

Panel Tosses \$3 Million Libel Judgment Against Newspaper Publisher May 7, 2007
SAN BERNARDINO - A state appeals court Friday tossed out a \$3 million libel judgment against a Hesperia-based newspaper publisher who was sued over a series of stories criticizing San Bernardino County's contract with a counseling service.

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faculty member specializing in First Amendment law, thanks to a \$1.5 million gift.

Litigation

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Corporate

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Insurance

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Unique issues to keep in mind when mediating disability claims. By **Nicholas DeWitt** of PMA Dispute Resolution

Health Care & Hospital Law

Universal health care bill passes state Senate committee
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Government

Senate Minority Leader cautions against online piracy bill
Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., weighed in Thursday on the side of technology companies fighting to stop legislation that would make it easier for content