

Washington & Lee University School of Law  
**Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly  
Commons**

---

Faculty Scholarship

---

1-1-2005

## A Tribute to Frederic L. Kirgis

Samuel W. Calhoun

*Washington and Lee University School of Law*, calhouns@wlu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlufac>



Part of the [Biography Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Samuel W. Calhoun, *A Tribute to Frederic L. Kirgis*, 62 Wash. & Lee L. Rev. 860 (2005).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact [osbornecl@wlu.edu](mailto:osbornecl@wlu.edu).

Samuel W. Calhoun\*

It was my good fortune to join the Law Faculty at Washington and Lee University in the same year as Rick Kirgis. During my entire tenure at Washington and Lee, therefore, I have benefited from Rick's incredible generosity. He has been especially helpful in three ways—as a colleague, an advisor and a friend.

Rick was already an experienced professor when we joined the faculty, but I was a relative newcomer. From the outset, I relied on Rick for help with one key element of a law professor's job—dealing with students. How should I handle the unprepared student? What was the fairest way to grade exams? These were only a few of the matters for which I sought Rick's counsel, and even though I have now taught for years myself, I still call on Rick for advice. Despite all the demands on his time, he is always willing to talk. Recently, a frequent topic has been the challenge of teaching the first year writing course and it has been helpful to commiserate with another member of the faculty. More importantly, Rick is a wonderful example of a rigorous and fair teacher who inspires others to strive for those same attributes. His thoughtful guidance on what rigor and fairness require in specific situations has been invaluable.

Rick's skills as a writer and editor are legendary at Washington and Lee. Although it embarrasses me to think how often I have asked him to read my drafts, Rick has cheerfully done it so many times that I am uncomfortable doing any writing without his input. That posed a serious problem with this particular writing project: Writing something without Rick's review made me nervous, but I could not very well ask Rick to proofread his own tribute!

I have been especially fortunate throughout my career to have had several colleagues with whom I could speak openly about personal aspects of my life. Rick has been one of these special persons. He is always available when I need to talk and we have often prayed together. I cherish the times I have been privileged to share my life with such a faithful and caring friend as Rick.

Given all of the ways Rick Kirgis has helped me, one would expect that I would view Rick's retirement as a great personal loss. Because of his generous spirit, however, I know that Rick has not actually retired as my colleague. It comforts me to know that I can still knock on his door to benefit from his wisdom, eloquence, and compassion.

---

\* Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University.