



Ronald C Smith

December 9, 1933 - October 19, 2018

Ronald Charles Smith, Professor Emeritus at The John Marshall Law School, died at about 2:30 a.m. on October 19, 2018, at St. Benedict's Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Niles, IL, where he had lived for several months while undergoing treatment. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, Mary Ann Scherer Smith; his sons, Michael (Liv Rainey) Smith and Matthew (Carolyn Chandler) Smith; and his goddaughter, Margaret Thompson Blumberg, and his cousins Philip, Jonathan and Mark Thompson.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, December 16, 2018, between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. at Loyola University's Piper Hall, 970 West Sheridan Road, in Chicago. Free parking is available at the Loyola lot at Sheridan and Winthrop.

The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, memorial donations be made to The Ronald C. Smith Scholarship Fund at the Rickover Naval Academy High School, 5900 North Glenwood, Chicago, IL, 60660. Please make checks payable to Friends of Rickover/Smith Scholarship. Or donations can be made on-line at www.friendsofrickover.org. As Ron was a devoted U.S. Navy veteran and a strong supporter of the education, this would be a most fitting memorial.

Ron Smith was born in Chicago on December 9, 1933. He graduated from Fenwick High School in Oak Park in 1951 and received a B.S. in Humanities from Loyola University in 1955. After graduation, he taught at Loyola for a year and then joined the U.S. Navy serving as a naval helicopter pilot and personnel officer. He left active duty in 1962 to enter law school but remained a Naval reservist until retiring as a Lieutenant-Commander in 1977. While in the Navy, Ron, a "seadog" with bright red hair, acquired the nickname "Red Dog," a name that followed him for the rest of his life.

After graduating from Loyola's Law School in 1965, Ron clerked for Justice John V. McCormick of the Illinois Appellate Court in 1965-1966. During that year, Ron was hired as an adjunct professor an adjunct in the legal writing program at John Marshall Law School, beginning his career-long association with the school.

Ron served as a legal counsel for the Santa Fe Railroad from 1966 -68, specializing in governmental regulation and administrative procedure, before joining John Marshall full time in 1968. He eventually specialized in constitutional law and criminal law.

In 1969, Ron ran for a seat as a delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention against a candidate backed by the regular Cook County Democratic Party. He won that seat and was aligned with an “independent bloc” of about ten delegates. Ron was a member of the Committee on the Executive, where he sponsored the amendatory veto provision.

In 1972 Ron ran for the Democratic nomination for the Illinois State Senate. The party regulars conspired to deprive him of the seat by running a candidate who would win, but then resign the nomination in favor of a replacement chosen by the party. Ron’s lawsuit, *Smith v. Cherry*, 489 F.2d 1098 (1974), was a notable federal elections lawsuit until legislation changed the situation. Unwilling to leave government life, he served as a member of Governor Dan Walker’s Ethics Board, among other appointed positions, while continuing to teach at John Marshall until 2014.

While at John Marshall, Ron continued to work in criminal law. In the 1970’s he served as an assistant state’s attorney during the summer, prosecuting cases for the Cook County State’s Attorney. Later he defended indigent accused, often those who were not knowledgeable in English or the American legal system. His work with the criminal justice sections of multiple bar associations culminated in his election to the chairmanship of the American Bar Association’s Criminal Justice Section in the fateful year of 2001. During that year he was often the voice of the A.B.A. on anti-terrorism activities and international criminal justice.

In 1991 Ron founded the National Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition, co-sponsored by The John Marshall Law School and The American Bar Association and held at the law school. Teams from all over the world have participated in this award-winning and path-breaking exercise in training future prosecutors and defense attorneys .

After his retirement, Ron participated in several law-related activities. He will be remembered as someone devoted to making Illinois a better place to live, to securing justice for everyone and to preparing law students to enter the noble profession that he loved.

In pace requiescat, Red Dog. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC **16**. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (CT)

Loyola University's Piper Hall
970 W Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626

Tribute Wall



“ *Ronald C Smith*

October 08, 2023 at 11:31 AM