

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



Attention: Education Reporter or Editor
CONTACT: Mandy Schrank, Executive Director
Education Law Association
Phone: (937) 229-3589
Fax: (937) 229-3845
E-mail: ela@educationlaw.org
Website: <http://www.educationlaw.org>

ELA Dissertation of the Year Award Renamed

DAYTON, Ohio—January 11, 2007—The Education Law Association (ELA) will present its first fully funded Dissertation of the Year Award at its Annual Conference in November of 2007, thanks to the generous contribution of Joseph C. Beckham.

Dr. Beckham endowed the dissertation fund, which will be used annually to cover all or a portion of the conference expenses for future recipients of the dissertation award. It is this magnanimous gift that has inspired ELA to rename the award the “Joseph C. Beckham Dissertation of the Year.”

Lois Berlin, Immediate Past President of ELA, comments, “I can’t think of a better way to recognize Joe for his dedication and ongoing contributions to ELA. Through the years, Joe has served in many capacities to promote our organization and to encourage and support students in their study of education law. Naming the dissertation award for Joe is very fitting.”

Beckham of Florida State University (FSU), is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, specializing in education law, policy, and finance. Dr. Beckham has faithfully contributed to ELA as a longstanding member, serving as president of the organization in 1991 and participating on its board of directors from 1982 to 1984. “Encouraging talented scholars to pursue topics in education law is central to our organization’s development. Establishing an endowment to support the dissertation award will perpetuate opportunities for future scholars and help ELA maintain its prominence as an organization dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge on law and education,” explains Beckham.

KB Melear, Dr. Beckham’s former student and 2001 Dissertation Award winner, offers an emphatic response: “As a privileged beneficiary of Joe’s guidance and mentorship, I have directly realized the professional perquisites of the ELA dissertation award, and can think of no honor more befitting. The express association of Joe Beckham with the dissertation award makes it all the more meaningful to me, and for future recipients, the award will attach an affiliation with one of the country’s foremost scholars in the field of education law.” Beckham notes, “Five of my former students have received ELA recognition for outstanding dissertations. I have seen the benefits that this recognition conveys, and my goal was to provide an endowment that would ensure ELA can continue this recognition for future scholars.”

In addition to his appointment to a number of state and national boards representing educators and attorneys, Beckham was awarded the McGhehey Award in 1996 for outstanding contributions to ELA and to the field of education law. Florida State University awarded him the Ross Oglesby Award for contributions to FSU in 1999, and he was also named Allan Tucker Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in 2001. His publication list is extensive, and he is a member of several editorial boards, including the editorial board of the *Journal of Law and Education* and the editorial advisory committee of *West’s Education Law Reporter*.

The ELA Dissertation of the Year Award, established in 1987, recognizes exemplary dissertations by doctoral students in the field of education law. To be considered, the dissertation must be conceptually clear and address an important problem or hypothesis; contain a comprehensive and relevant review of applicable literature; demonstrate a methodologically sound approach; present a cogent analysis of data; show significant results and discussion; and be written in a scholarly style with appropriate documentation.