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# Strickland enters his last year as dean

■ Following the 2001-2002 year, law school Dean Strickland will take a sabbatical to write before he resumes teaching

By Kara Cogswell  
Oregon Daily Emerald

If Rennard Strickland wanted to boast about his achievements in his final year as dean of the Knight Law Center, few could blame him.

A renowned scholar and educator, he has taught at some of the nation's most respected law schools. He has served as a dean four times, has written several books and is regarded as an expert on American Indian law.

But Strickland said he takes the most pride in work done by his former students, some of whom created the Indian Child Welfare Act and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Another is now the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, he said.

"As a teacher, you teach so many people who do, in fact, make

a difference," he said.

Strickland, who announced last spring that he would step down as dean when his term expires at the end of the 2001-2002 academic year, will soon return to the role of the teacher as a professor on the law school faculty.

Before he does, however, Strickland plans to take a one-year sabbatical to continue his writing — the principal reason behind his decision not to accept University Provost John Moseley's offer to stay on as dean for another term.

Strickland was the editor of The Federal Handbook of Indian Law, which is considered to be the leading source on the subject. He is also the author of nearly 30 books related to American Indian issues. His current writing project is a 500-year history of American Indian nations and their struggle for survival. Strickland, who started the book 15 years ago, said he hopes to complete it within the next two or three years.

And with several more books

planned for the future, Strickland, 60, said he was afraid that if he continued on as dean, he wouldn't be able to write them all.

Merle Weiner, an associate professor of law, said she "is thrilled" Strickland will be staying on as a member of the law school faculty. "He's been a tremendous asset to the law school these last five years," she said.

Since he began as dean of the law school in 1997, Strickland has earned the law school national recognition through an alternative dispute resolution program he created.

The school has also received attention because of Strickland's position as the chairman of the national Law School Admissions Council, which prepares the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).

And he will always be remembered as the first dean to preside over the Knight Law School building. Strickland personally helped lead fundraising efforts for the building, which opened in the

summer of 1999.

While the building was still being designed, Strickland said he "caused controversy" by requesting the dean's office be moved from the second floor down to the first in order to be more accessible to students.

That accessibility is what Strickland, who also has an annual tradition of inviting first-year students to his home, said he will miss most about being the dean.

But, he added, he is looking forward to returning to what he calls the everyday "give and take" of the classroom.

While the search for a new dean is ongoing, President Dave Frohnmayer said he believes the impact Strickland has made will make the law school an even more appealing prospect for candidates.

"My hope is that because of the contributions Dean Strickland has made, this will be an even more desirable position," he said. "He's a superb scholar and dean."

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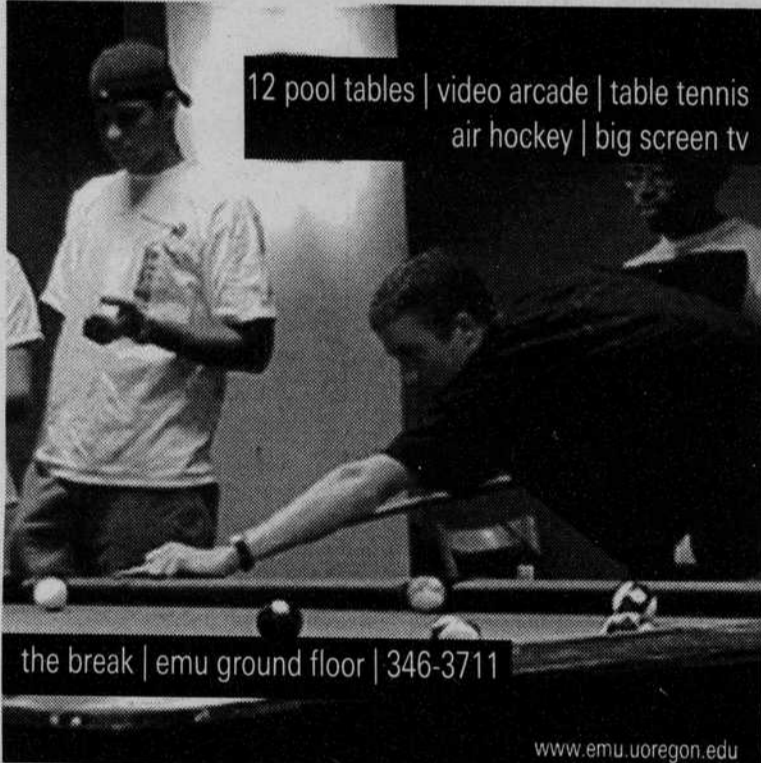


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