



# John M. Brumbaugh

BETTY LYNNE LEARY

## A Celebration, A Tribute, A Farewell

With the confidence born from a commitment to hard work and excellence, the professor could strike fear in the hearts of unprepared students. Walking through the halls, dressed in a crisp, snow-white shirt and dapper suit, he moved with the pride of accomplishment and with a deep respect of place. And with his untimely death on Aug. 3, John M. Brumbaugh left a gaping hole in the heart of the School of Law and the scores of students and colleagues he left behind.

He was a gifted academic, a demanding professor, a trusted colleague, a loving husband, a witty friend.

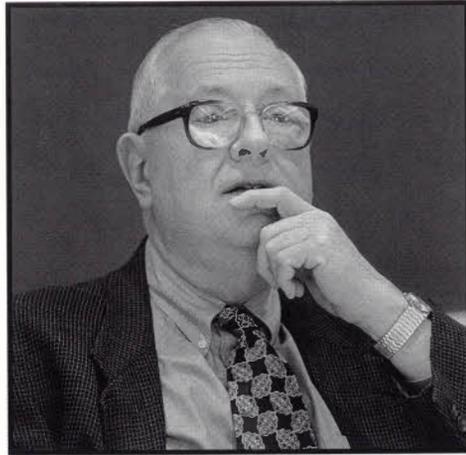
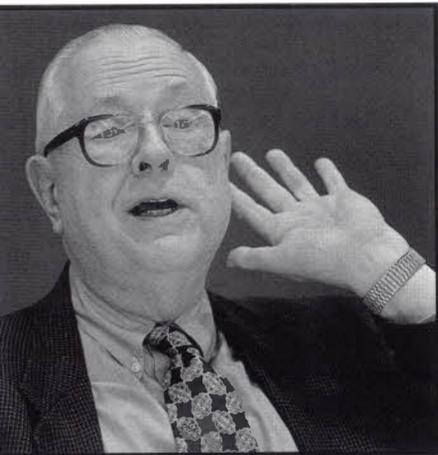
Brumbaugh touched countless lives with his charm and candor and with the breadth of knowledge he brought to his chosen field.

“John Brumbaugh was a real traditionalist for legal education,” says Alan D. Hornstein, associate dean. “He had a rigorous, analytic mind that would not settle for sloppy thinking or lack of preparedness.”

“He brought enormous knowledge to his classroom,” adds William L. Reynolds II, professor of law, who worked with Brumbaugh at the law school for almost 30 years. “He thought about the subject matter and how it should be taught, then demanded that his students be prepared and understand things.”

John showed deep love and loyalty to two things in life—his wife, Alice, and our law school. Countless numbers of lawyers across the state of Maryland and beyond made the remarkable journey through John’s classroom where they were enriched by his unique wit, his total charm and his fierce love of teaching the law. He truly is a legacy to the University of Maryland.

DEAN KAREN H. ROTHENBERG



**“I will always remember his candor. John spoke what he believed in plain words with the expectation that people would understand the good faith and good will behind those words and respond in kind. And because of his character, they did.”**

ALAN D. HORNSTEIN,  
ASSOCIATE DEAN, SCHOOL OF LAW

A native of Annapolis, Brumbaugh earned a bachelor’s degree in medieval history from Swarthmore College in 1948 but turned to the law as a profession after discovering he would need to master a foreign language to continue his studies. He earned his *juris doctor* in 1951 from Harvard Law School then clerked for four years in New York City before returning to Harvard as a teaching fellow for one year.

Brumbaugh returned to his roots in 1956 when he joined the faculty at the University of Maryland. By 1963, he had achieved the rank of professor and was well on his way to earning a national reputation as a dedicated scholar and expert in criminal law. Upon his retirement in 1996, he was named Wharton, Levin, Ehrmantraut, Klein & Nash Distinguished Service Scholar Emeritus and Emeritus Professor of Law and continued to teach. Brumbaugh authored books, book reviews, articles and other published works ranging from a proposed criminal code for the state of Maryland to a spoof on jurisdictional writings and light verse. But he was always first a teacher.

It was his understated, often dry sense of humor that many colleagues remember with great fondness.

“I will remember his droll sense of humor at faculty lunches,” Reynolds says. Garrett Power, a professor and colleague of Brumbaugh’s for 38 years, adds, “He was a

**“We will miss John’s professionalism, his integrity and his humor. He was a wonderful colleague who would do anything to help his fellow faculty members. He had enormous integrity, and you knew it was out of principle.”**

WILLIAM L. REYNOLDS II, PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LAW

man of great wit and pleasant humor. He could satirize the law school with corny, yet very gifted, verse.”

Formal but warm, Brumbaugh epitomized a true gentleman in every sense of the word. Although well-known among his peers for speaking his mind, Brumbaugh’s style, sincerity and love for the law school brought few critics.

“John and I disagreed on just about

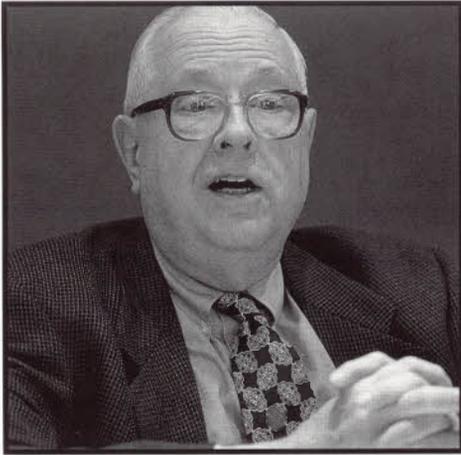
**“John Brumbaugh made you reach higher and do better. Everybody came away appreciating the fact that a professor as good as he was cared about teaching as much as he did.”**

FRANCIS B. BURCH JR. ’74, CO-CHAIRMAN,  
PIPER MARBURY RUDNICK & WOLFE

everything as far as legal education, but because of the affection we had for each other, our relationship never suffered,” Hornstein points out. “He was, for a lot of years, the face of the law school. It’s hard to think of the law school without him.”

Described as very giving and helpful to younger faculty members, Brumbaugh played an active role in integrating new faculty into the life of the law school. He promoted the idea of classroom visits by more experienced professors who would offer tips to newer faculty members.

“When I started on the faculty in 1984, he visited my class and gave me some very helpful hints,” explains U.S. District Judge Andre Davis ’78, currently an adjunct professor. “He took pride in excellent work and



**“He taught you in a way that made you feel a responsibility for the law. It was interesting and entertaining to take his courses, and you came out knowing there wasn’t a right or wrong answer for anything. You can’t say that about a lot of professors.”**

THE HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN '67, REPRESENTATIVE, 3RD DISTRICT

**“You never left John’s classroom without learning something. He had an amazing breadth of knowledge and was the master of every subject he taught. Others may equal his talent, but no one will replace him.”**

THE HON. FREDERIC N. SMALKIN '71, U.S. DISTRICT COURT; ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LAW

that is a good attribute for a lawyer.”

In the classroom, Brumbaugh practiced and perfected the Socratic method of teaching. Although popular culture often portrays an overbearing professor belittling a flustered student, Brumbaugh was never mean-spirited. His method was designed to force the student, under pressure, to think through the rules and principles through which legal doctrine is derived.

“John never called on people unawares,” Davis says, laughing. “You always knew your time was coming. You had no excuse for not being prepared.”

The Hon. Chief Judge Joseph F. Murphy Jr. '69, of the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, recalls his first encounter with Brumbaugh in the fall of 1965, during an orientation for the incoming class.

“I remember his presentation was spell-binding, and I said to myself, ‘Boy oh boy, this guy is really something,’” Murphy

relates. “He described the law as an interesting profession and discussed the importance of hard work and preparation. It was inspiring and foreboding at the same time.”

As a student in the early '70s, Francis B. Burch Jr. '74, co-chairman of Piper Marbury Rudnick & Wolfe, experienced two distinct sides to John Brumbaugh.

“One was the Kingsfield of the University of Maryland School of Law standing before a large class. He was very organized, very demanding, but scrupulously fair,” Burch describes. “He was the classic law school professor pushing you to think like a lawyer and to think on your own.”

The second image comes from Burch’s experience with Brumbaugh leading a small jurisprudence seminar.

“He’d bring a tin of English cookies and we’d sit and have tea and coffee during class,” Burch says. “He’d be in his suit and starched shirt, and we all had long hair and jeans. It was quite a contrast.” Although he was less formal in the seminar setting, Brumbaugh maintained the same discipline as he did in his larger classes.

“There was no fraternizing with him,” Burch notes. “The warmth came from appreciating how he made you better. He gave me a set of skills that is far more valuable than what I paid for them.”

Last spring, Carole Martens '01, an assistant administrator for facilities at Johns Hopkins Hospital, signed up for Brumbaugh’s trademarks class. After the

first class meeting, Brumbaugh asked her opinion as to why so few people had signed up for the course.

“He was obviously concerned,” Martens says. “He thought it was because trademarks was only a two-credit class and that students preferred three-credit classes.” Martens never gave the conversation another thought until the end of the semester

**“John Brumbaugh was our institutional memory. He was our Kingsfield, and he was the foundation for our modernization.”**

THE HON. ANDRE M. DAVIS '78, U.S. DISTRICT COURT, DISTRICT OF MARYLAND; ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF LAW

when Brumbaugh announced with a wide grin that he’d worked all semester and that starting next year, the class would be offered as a three-credit course.

“He talked excitedly about how he would completely revamp the course, expand some areas, and improve on it. He was doing something he wanted to do and was doing it well right up to the end,” Martens says. “He liked his students. He liked teaching. He looked forward to class. That’s a tribute to him and an inspiration to the rest of us.”