

# Law school institutes \$517,000 professorship

By Kelly Gooch/  
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The Texas Tech School of Law recently instituted a \$517,000 endowed professorship.

Walter Huffman, dean and law, said the purpose of the endowed professorship is to take interest from the \$517,000 as a salary supplement for a new law professor coming to Tech.

A letter announcing the endowed professorship has been sent to each full professor at every law school in the United States, Huffman said.

He said he hopes the endowed professorship will attract a talented professor from another law school to come teach at Tech.

Professors at other law schools, Huffman said, have already shown interest.

"(The endowed professorship) will enhance our national reputation," he said.

Part of the law school's evaluation, Huffman said, includes the size and number of endowed professorships it has.

The Alumni Board of Directors decided to name the endowed professorship after former Governor Preston Smith because he signed legislation to bring the Tech law school into existence, Huffman said.

The Board of Regents and Chancellor Dr. Andrew Smith, Huffman said, agreed to give \$250,000 if the law school alumni and

friends could match it, and they exceeded that amount.

"I'm very appreciative to our alumni and friends," he said.

Julie Shoop, a 1999 Tech law school graduate and director of career services, said the endowed professorship provides a chance to bring name recognition to the law school.

"I think it furthers Governor (Preston) Smith's vision for education in West Texas," she said.

Nancy Soonpaa, associate dean for student affairs, said a benefit of the endowed professorship is bringing in a professor that might not come to Tech otherwise.

The endowed professorship would not go to a person who just finished law school, Soonpaa said.

"It's really a recognition of 15-20 years in the legal academy," she said.

With any professorship, she said, a person typically starts as an assistant or associate professor and then is reviewed for tenure, or long-term job security as a professor.

Soonpaa said the requirements for tenure include scholarship, service and teaching and when professors are reviewed for tenure depends on the school.

All applicants for the Preston Smith endowed professorship will be tenured and will have already proved themselves,

she said.

The endowed professorship, Soonpaa said, will help Tech be better known nationally instead of just regionally.

"That can only benefit the law school," she said.

Soonpaa said most people in the law school had heard about the endowed professorship before it was formally announced on Friday, and a committee of five people have been working on it since last fall.

Without the other law school's consent, Tech will not hire the new professor before March, she said, and it is considered bad form to wait to hire the professor until June.

Soonpaa said this endowed professorship is unique because most of the current professorships are already a part of the faculty.

Celeste Villarreal, a third-year law student and president of the Women's Caucus, said Governor Smith was well loved, had honorable value and benefited the common man.

"I'm glad the law school has instituted a legacy in his name," she said.

A lot of people around Texas, Villarreal said, know who Preston Smith was, so it will be an honor for the professor who might take the endowed professorship.