

# Newton recently honored as 'Legal Legend'

by Amy Curry  
Staff Writer

Frank Newton, Dean of the Texas Tech Law School, was recently deemed a "Legal Legend" by Texas Lawyer newspaper. The list recognized 102 of the most influential attorneys of the 20th century

After researching through State Bar archives and taking nominations, the editorial staff of Texas Lawyer compiled a list of 102 Texas lawyers who had made the greatest impact on a state and national level in the past 100 years. Recipients were comprised of both living and non-living attorneys.

Newton was named among the elite.

"The editorial staff made its decision based upon which Texas lawyers had the most impact during their careers," said Garth Budlong, a Texas Lawyer staff member. "The list was originally designed to honor 100 attorneys, but it was very difficult to narrow it down any further, so we ended up with 102 recipients."

A native Texan, Newton earned his

undergraduate degree at Baylor University. He then headed northeast where he attended Columbia University and New York University and received his law degree in 1967.

After college, Newton spent some time in Washington, D.C. where he practiced civil defense and public international law for a few years.

In 1972, he finally settled down as a law professor at Baylor, but by 1985, Newton was prepared for the next step in his career.

Shortly after leaving Baylor, Tech offered Newton a position as Dean of the Law School.

"This job offer came at a time when I was trying to decide whether to stay in legal education or re-enter law practice," Newton said. "But I decided to go ahead and come to Tech, and I've been enjoying it ever since."

During his career at Tech, Newton has made many contacts on both state and national levels. He formerly served as president for the State Bar



Newton

of Texas. He has also worked with representatives in Washington, D.C., as well as the American Law Institute.

Judith Guzman, a May 2000 Tech Law School graduate, said some of the contacts Newton has established has helped given the law school a name among Texas universities, and without these influences, Tech might be overlooked.

"This is a great honor for Dean Newton, especially considering Tech is located in Lubbock," Guzman said. "I think it says he has real influences down in Austin, among other places in the country, and they have definitely been to the school's benefit."

Newton attributes his overall success to the support of the university, especially the regents and Chancellor John Montford.

"This university has been very supportive in many aspects that have helped me as a professional to reach out and have some impact on the state, and in turn, be recognized on a national level."

In February, law school students gave Newton yet another accomplishment to add to his already im-

pressive resume when they achieved a 100 percent passage rate among those who took the state bar exam. Thirty-three students took the exam.

Any student who desires to enter the law profession is required to pass the bar exam – a test designed to show mastery of material – in order to be licensed and certified by the state. This is the first time since 1983 that any law school in Texas has had a perfect passage rate.

Tech students outscored other universities by more than 10 percent. The second highest pass rate on that exam was only 89.58 percent, achieved by Baylor Law School.

"This is very rare in a state as big as Texas for 100 percent to pass on the first try," Newton said. "It says a lot about the caliber of Tech law students and faculty."

Guzman, who now works at the Court of Appeals in Amarillo, said the 100 percent first time passing rate on the bar exam exemplified the quality of Tech Law School.

"It's definitely a benefit to have such a high bar passage rate, she said. "It shows that the school knows what

it's doing and that we're coming out prepared."

Graduating from Tech Law School has proven to be rewarding as the many students land jobs with firms within the first year of graduation. Graduates are aided by the Career Service Center. Newton said one of the top graduates to come through Tech Law School earned \$135,000 in his first year out.

Unlike undergraduate students, Newton said law school students are less likely to specialize in one particular aspect of law.

Many students take more generalized courses and decide on a more specific area after they graduate or while in practice.

Each year, the law school admits approximately 600 students to the three-year graduate program. The average cumulative GPA of students enrolled is 3.4 and must have high scores on the LSAT.

"Enrollment is limited," Newton said. "Only around 200 new students are admitted, and requirements are high. Competition for admission is known to be fierce."