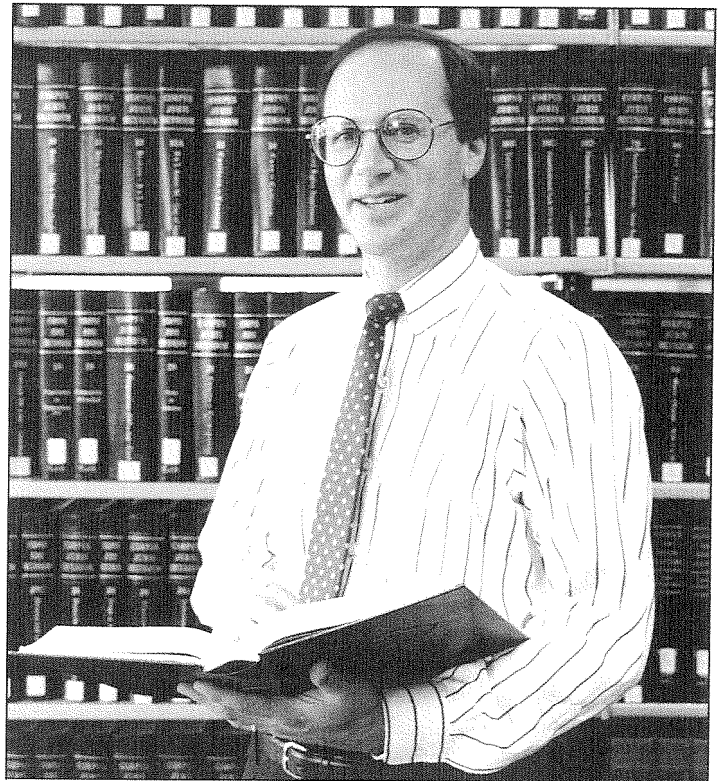

SPOTLIGHTING KSC'S 1990 DISTINGUISHED TEACHER DR. S. ALAN SCHLACT

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Last winter, *Reaching Through Teaching* featured an article entitled "KSC's Distinguished Teaching Award: A Retrospective," which highlighted the recipients of this prestigious award during the past decade. In the spring of last year, another Kennesaw State College professor joined this distinguished group. Dr. S. Alan Schlact, Associate Professor of Business Law, after being nominated by his students and supported by his colleagues, was selected by the Honors and Awards Committee as the recipient of the 1990 Distinguished Teaching Award.

Described in his nomination as a person "with great enthusiasm who challenges his students and demands that they become involved," Dr. Schlact seems to require of himself that same intense involvement. A member of the Georgia and West Virginia Bar Associations, he maintains an occasional law practice in the state of Georgia. He serves as teacher/lecturer/consultant for numerous and diverse organizations: the paralegal program and SBDS at KSC, the National Center for Paralegal Training, the Person/Wolinsky CPA Review Program, the Frazier and Deeter CPA Exam Review Program, a Newsradio 640 WGST on-air law show, and various other groups such as the U.S. Department of Labor, the Black Youth Program, and You and



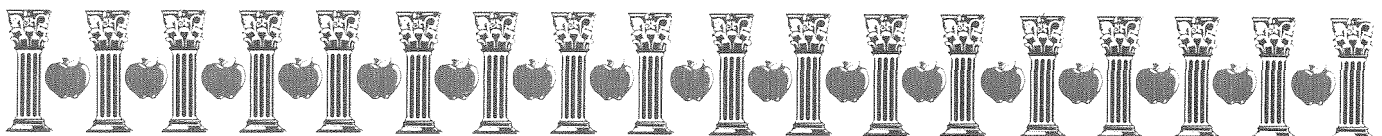
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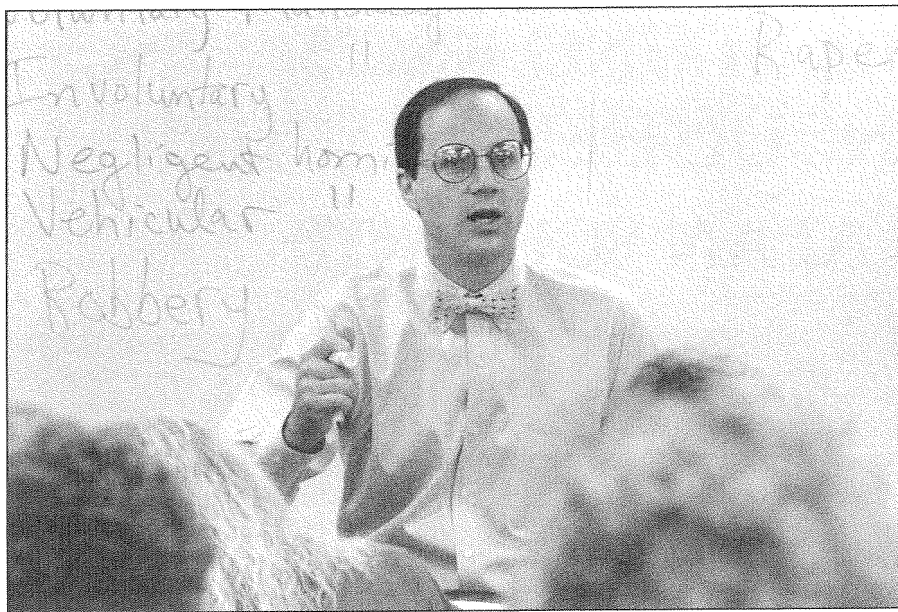
American Economy. He also reserves time to do "pro bono" legal work for students and for personal causes like the rights of women, minorities, and children, and to do research involving some of his own cases.

In the midst of this demanding schedule, Dr. Schlact makes time for his teaching and his students and, in fact, apparently makes them his first priority. His commitment is reflected in his students' assessment — "the best teacher that I have had at KSC," "the

kind of professor that has made a real difference in my life." It is also reflected in his own words:


"I am constantly being asked by students and faculty why I am teaching instead of practicing law. The impetus for such a question, I assume, is their belief that the practice of law would be more rewarding financially. That belief is absolutely correct! However, I have learned that a larger salary does not guarantee job satisfaction. I enjoy teaching. I like walking into a class-





room knowing that I have the opportunity to give my students information that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. As an attorney, I am paid to give advice. As a teacher, my clients are my students.

"I am fortunate that my subject is of interest to my students if presented properly. Virtually all of them will become interested if I ask them questions regarding their automobiles, job

 ***"I incorporate a positive approach to learning."***

security, or constitutional rights. The key is to avoid lecturing them on the law! I doubt that they would long remember the vast number of statutes and cases we discuss if I did not show them the relevance of the material. A Socratic teaching method also allows them to reach the appropriate result, thus enhancing their ability to recognize legal problems and solve them without me. Finally, I give each student a case problem to solve using Georgia statutes and cases.

"As a teaching method, I incorporate a positive approach to learning. Gone

are red ink, minus signs, and negative comments. I am appalled at faculty members who refer to students as 'no-brainers' or 'lazy and not willing to learn.' Perhaps the students sense a poor attitude on behalf of the instructor. As professors, we set the tone in the classroom. An exciting class discussion will eliminate laziness. Fair exams that test learning, not memorization, also enhance the experience. I allow students to bring a study sheet to each exam in the hope that learning will occur as the sheets are developed. I also give bonus points on the exams for truly insightful answers. My goal is to encourage broad thinking, not restrict it to the text and class notes.

"The practice of law, especially trial work, can be a demoralizing way to earn a living. Lawyers argue with each other, judges, and clients. Cases are lost, fees are not paid. The pressure to 'win' something overshadows the equities in the matter. As a teacher, I avoid that trap. I feel that every time I walk out of a class, I have won. I have accomplished my goal by enlightening students regarding a topic that will guide their actions for the rest of their lives (and beyond if they need my advice concerning estate planning). Hopefully, my students feel like winners, too."

Review (continued from page 3)

tremes. It demands attention, however, for the questions it raises, not for the answers it offers. Even if we embrace the premise that undergraduate education should not be job training, we need direction on how the eradication of all career-related courses might be accomplished. Surely it is unrealistic to believe every college and university in the country will agree to dissolve all professional programs. Those institutions that keep their business, education, and other professional arms—and these would probably be the schools less sensitive to the pure education Schaefer endorses and most sensitive to the dollar—would overnight have large enrollments, and the schools that did the right thing for education in principle would have few to educate.

Not the least of the questions the book raises, but most likely unintentionally, is the inevitability of compromise. Making concession, the essence of compromise, determines outcomes in all areas—love and war, faith and practice, style and substance. A total freedom from compromise seems possible only in some ideal world beyond the reach of compromised and compromising humanity. When all students genuinely desire learning, when professorial advancement and institutional reputation come from richness and reach in the classroom more than length of bibliographies, when commerce is not king, and when the public (not the happy few) demands the virtual canonization of the liberal arts, then education without compromise moves into the realm of the feasible. Until then, Schaefer's proposal might be viewed as an academic pastoral, an evocation of a Green World and Golden Age of teaching and learning. Scholars and colleges considering the standard the book advocates will probably be more inclined to say "I wish I could" than "I think I can." 🍏

