

2017

Alumnus Rob Elliott Remembered With Interview Room

David F. Morrill



Alumnus Rob Elliott Remembered With Interview Room

By David F. Morrill

May 11, 2017

When he was chair of the Law School Annual Fund, the late Robert C. Elliott II, J.D. '69 often talked about the "thin green line," an invisible yet extremely strong tie that binds the Marshall-Wythe family together.

That tie was stronger than ever on April 28, when Jane Elliott and members of Rob and Jane's family returned to the Law School for a ceremony dedicating a special room in his memory. Located on the first floor of the James A. and Robin L. Hixon Center for Experiential Learning and Leadership, the Elliott Interview Room serves as a meeting space where clinical students and staff work with clients both in person and electronically.

"It is fitting to have Rob's name on this interview room here in the legal clinic suite, as it will most certainly be a space where tremendous advocacy work will occur, especially for our nation's veterans," said Davison M. Douglas, Dean and Arthur B. Hanson Professor of Law.

Second Lieutenant Austin Swink J.D. '17, USMCR, joined Douglas and shared some details about his 2L year working in the Puller Veterans Benefits Clinic. As a former clinic student, he was well aware of the ways in which the Elliott Interview Room would impact students going beyond the theory of the classroom into the reality of clinical work.

"When students walk in this interview room, they're going to see the Law for the first time," Swink said. "They're going to see a living, breathing human who is looking them in the eye and saying, 'I need your help.' That makes this room one of the most important rooms in the Law School."

The Elliott Interview Room is a perfect way for the Elliott family to support the Law School in William & Mary's **For the Bold** Campaign and to remember Rob Elliott's stalwart advocacy. Over the years, Rob served in several leadership roles at the Law School, including chairing the Law School Annual Fund and serving on the Law School Association Board and as President of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law Foundation Board.



After graduating from law school, Elliott was the founding partner of the law firm of Elliott, DeBoer, Rice, Barnum & Hauler, dedicating his practice exclusively to family law. In 1990, he became a Fellow in the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and in 1995 was voted into Best Attorneys in America, a distinction he held until his death in October 2013.

Elliott served on the Board of Governors for the Family Law Section of the Virginia State Bar from 1994 to 1995 and published several articles dealing with family law in the Family Law Newsletter. He mentored several young attorneys who were interested in family law and was always willing to assist those who asked for guidance managing domestic relations cases.

During the ceremony, Patricia Roberts, Director of Clinical Programs, and Director of the Lewis B. Puller, Jr. Veterans Benefits Clinic, presented challenge coins to members of the Elliott family. The Challenge Coin was created to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding devotion to veterans.

“The idea that [today’s students] will become citizen lawyers in the shadow of Rob, who was a citizen lawyer, really makes us very grateful,” Roberts said.

The ceremony concluded with Dean Douglas leading a toast in celebration of Elliott’s life and friendship.

“We celebrate Rob’s legacy that lives on each day in this important space and through the important work of our Veterans Benefits Clinic,” Douglas said.

For more information about the Hixon Center and important naming opportunities in the Center, please

visit: <http://law.wm.edu/giving/waystogive/buildinggiving/index.php>

About William & Mary Law School

Thomas Jefferson founded William & Mary Law School in 1779 to train leaders for the new nation. Now in its third century, America's oldest law school continues its historic mission of educating citizen lawyers who are prepared both to lead and to serve.