

Intellectual Pursuits

BAYLOR LAW SCHOOL
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR
DAVID HENRY TAKES HIS
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
EXPERTISE FAR AND WIDE



It is an understatement to say that David Henry (JD '85) is a busy man.

He is a member and chair of the intellectual property and export control compliance section at Looper Reed & McGraw, P.C. in Dallas. He has served as adjunct professor at Baylor Law School for more than 20 years.

He teaches in the Hankamer School of Business' renowned entrepreneurship program. He helps lead the i5 (Immersion Into International Interdisciplinary Innovation) program at Baylor, and soon he will begin work with the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative (BRIC). Oh, and he also advises a number of Baylor student groups.

Henry says he does all this because Baylor saved his life by giving him a chance when his high school academics were less than stellar.

"During my late teens and early 20s, I drifted from one low-wage, dead-end job to another. I had become my own worst nightmare — a person who had nothing of significance to offer others. I decided then and there to turn things around. I believed that, if I could somehow get into Baylor, I could probably turn things around. For whatever reason, it simply had to be Baylor," he says.

Baylor Law School Adjunct Professor David Henry, pictured here at the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative (BRIC), teaches intellectual property law.

Baylor listened to his plea, allowed him to enroll, and even came up with a viable financial path for the young man and his wife, Priscilla. Henry proved the university made a good decision. He made the dean's list as a pre-med major during his first semester and soon was tutoring other pre-med students. However, toward the end of his undergraduate years, Henry realized that his other, long-time interest — law — was a more financially viable option at the time than medical school. So he applied to Baylor Law School.

"As it turns out, the fortuitous combination of a science undergraduate degree and law degree qualified me to take the patent bar and become a patent attorney," he says.

Henry, a lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force's Auxiliary, pilots his own planes. Flying allows him to go to his clients, so he and Priscilla can live in Waco and get involved with Baylor activities.

Since 1994, he has passed on his knowledge of IP law to students covering patent, copyright, trade secrets, and trademark law in his classes.

"There are countless damaging myths about IP law," Henry says. "In a world where 81 percent of the value of all S&P companies rests in their intellectual property, and much litigation arises from businesses that don't know the issues, we need to educate lawyers and business people alike on these issues."

Henry has found there isn't much difference between teaching law students or business students; the message in the unfamiliar field of IP is much the same for both.

"We start from ground zero when it comes to IP law," he says.

Henry adds that some of the latest IP issues include the America Invents Act, which switches the U.S. patent system from a "first to invent" to a "first inventor to file" system; and the difference between U.S. and overseas rules, which are surprisingly uniform but varied in enforcement.

His i5 students practice what they have learned under Henry's tutelage. The i5 allows a group of Baylor students, including IP track law students, to join forces with Chinese students and advise actual companies about doing business in China. The students serve as consultants and help to identify and create recommendations for commercializing products and services and, among many other topics, protect a company's intellectual property. Henry thinks the i5 is the only entrepreneurship program that combines business, engineering, and IP.

"I spend about six weeks in China with my students. These students are dealing with real issues that affect companies, including IP issues. I assess what the students are doing and critique their presentations. In addition to the i5 work, I have been advocating with Chinese officials about the evolution of China's IP laws and enforcement," he says.

Henry latest venture is with BRIC and the Innovative Business Accelerator (IBA). The IBA will provide businesses with infrastructure, training and connections, and allow them to effectively market themselves. According to Gregory Leman, director of the IBA, the accelerator will provide various kinds of help, from instructions on filing patents to business plans, and raising money. Henry will office in the BRIC.

"I will be the IP consultant for the companies that work with BRIC and IBA," he says. "Numerous companies fail because they didn't attend to their IP at the start."

So why does he invest so much time with his alma mater?

"I have a moral duty to give back, and it is the most rewarding thing I have ever done," he says. "Baylor and the Baylor Family provided or made possible the most meaningful memories my family and I have. Baylor affords the contexts for the best aspects of my present life and some of my most meaningful relationships, and continually gives me hope and excitement for the future."