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Dean Logan's Blog

The “Great Debate”: Should Harry Potter Be Taught in Law School?

Posted by David Logan on 03/14/2014 at 12:39 PM

All right, maybe it wasn't THE Great Debate (or even a serious proposition that was considered) but two popular members of the RWU Law faculty squared off in an evening of point and counterpoint, centered around two questions: first, should “The Law of Harry Potter” be a required law school course and second, if so, what course should it replace.

Taking the affirmative side was Professor Carl Bogus, who (to my surprise) displayed an actual book that he would assign (*The Law of Harry Potter*, by Jeffrey E. Thomas & Franklin G. Snyder) and argued that J.K. Rowlings' books present a coherent, indeed even compelling legal system worthy of study by law students. (He also pointed out that RWU Law was a “leader in Harry Potter studies,” as the RWU Law Review published Aaron Schwabach, *Harry Potter and the Unforgivable Curses: Norm-Formation, Inconsistency, and the Rule of Law*, 11 ROGER WILLIAMS L. REV. 309 (2006)). Professor Jared Goldstein would have none of this, arguing that the study of law has no place for magic and fantasy.

The disputants then addressed the second question, with Professor Goldstein arguing that Torts (the beloved topic of Professor Bogus) was a bogus area of law (I couldn't resist!), while Professor Bogus directed barbed comments at Professor Goldstein's area of expertise - Constitutional Law.

The be-robed debaters were kept (somewhat) in check by Presiding Justice Professor Niki Kuckes, and all was proceeding with appropriate decorum until Professor Bogus' phone went off, requiring him to suffer the same indignity he imposes upon his students for such transgressions: singing his college's alma mater. Let's just say, his Latin was better than his singing.

Here are some pictures from that fun evening for students, faculty, and staff.



