

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF LAW



Dear Alumni and Friends:

I write to share the very sad news that Professor Emeritus David Boerner, a celebrated faculty member who faithfully served the law school and the legal profession with distinction during his long career, passed away peacefully on March 9, 2025, on Mercer Island. A gifted lawyer and professor who was passionate about justice and education, he was 85 years old. His obituary is posted [here](#).

Professor Boerner leaves behind his three children, Judy, Dan, and Rich, and their spouses, along with six grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 70 years, Barbara, who passed in December of 2024, and his parents and sister.

After earning bachelor and law degrees at the University of Illinois, Professor Boerner and his young family moved to Seattle, where he began his legal career at the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO).

During his 18-year tenure, he rose to become the Chief Criminal Deputy. In his role, Professor Boerner helped to shape the Community Protection Act and the Sexually Violent Predators Statute and spearheaded the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

In 1981, Professor Boerner joined the faculty of the University of Puget Sound School of Law (which later became Seattle University School of Law), beginning a second career devoted to teaching, scholarship, and service that lasted for

nearly a quarter of a century. He was a renowned expert in Administrative Law, Criminal Law, and Professional Responsibility.

One of Professor Boerner's singular and lasting achievements was co-founding the law school's Access Admission Program, an innovative initiative that has provided a pathway to a law degree for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented communities over the past 30 years. Students admitted to the program demonstrate potential for success through their grit, intellectual curiosity, and the ability to overcome barriers, qualities which are not necessarily reflected by grades and test scores.

During his academic career, Professor Boerner published many notable books and law review articles on sentencing reform and legal ethics. This scholarship, combined with his work as a prosecutor, earned him state and national recognition as a leader in criminal justice reform.

Professor Boerner's extensive service to the legal profession included tenures as: chair of the Board for Court Education; chair of the Washington Supreme Court's Time for Trial Task Force; chair of the Rules of Professional Conduct Committee of the Washington State Bar Association; and member of the Washington Supreme Court's Jury Instruction Committee.

During his career, Professor Boerner also lectured frequently for groups such as the Washington Criminal Justice Institute, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, and the Federal Bar Association.

Upon Professor Boerner's retirement in 2005, Seattle University conferred emeritus status in recognition of his long service, dedication, and accomplishments.

Memorial Service

A shared Celebration of Life for Professor Boerner and his wife will be held on **Saturday, July 19, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at Sunset Hills Memorial Park & Funeral Home in Bellevue, Washington.** The entire Seattle University and Seattle University School of Law extended community (i.e., students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the law school) is invited.

In Memoriam Webpage

We established an “In Memoriam” page on the Seattle U Law website to pay tribute to Professor Boerner’s innumerable contributions to our community. We are now collecting individual remembrances from his former students, faculty and staff colleagues, and other friends and loved ones to post on this page for all to read.

To participate, please send your 1-3 paragraph remembrance to ProfBoernerMemories@seattleu.edu at your earliest convenience. Also include the following:

- **Your name**
- **Your relationship to Prof. Boerner**
- **Your title and affiliation**
- **Graduation year (for alumni)**

I know that Professor Boerner’s family and friends will appreciate reading your heartfelt messages.

Charitable Contributions in Honor of Prof. Boerner

For those who wish to make a donation in his memory in lieu of flowers, Professor Boerner’s family suggests the [Native American Rights Fund](#) or the [Seattle Clemency Project](#).

We extend our most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Professor Boerner’s family in their time of grief. While losing a colleague, a friend, and a loved one is heartbreaking, we can find comfort in celebrating his extraordinary legacy of significant contributions to the many students he taught and mentored over the years, our law school, legal education, and the practice of law during his career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Varona". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "T".

Tony Varona

Dean and Professor of Law