



Professor Richard C. Wydick

This year, we honor the work and the wisdom of Professor Richard C. Wydick, whose marvelous little book, *Plain English for Lawyers*, has been such an enduring resource to hundreds of Institute graduates. Professor Wydick has played a key role in the Institute with his annual lectures on the fundamentals of plain language drafting during the past twelve years.

When we first invited Dick Wydick to speak at the 1996 Institute, we knew he expressed himself extremely well in print, because we used his text in our classes with Tulane and Loyola law students. We did not know how he would present himself in person, however, when we introduced him for that first Institute presentation. Despite his many accomplishments, Professor Wydick is a modest man whose concern for others gives him an attentive rather than an assertive demeanor. Fifteen seconds into his presentation, any doubts were dispelled.

Watching Dick Wydick in the classroom is like watching Muhammad Ali in the ring—without the violence. He energetically engages students in a “Socratic” dialogue, using question-and-answer to elicit their opinions and refine their responses. The experience can be challenging for students who are accustomed to being the passive recipients of information imparted by lecture. For many participants, the encounter with Dick Wydick on Wednesday morning of Week One may have been their first experience with “active learning,” and their memories no doubt remain vivid.

Professor Wydick retired in 2007 from a successful teaching career as a faculty member of the Law School at the University of California at Davis. He served as Acting Dean of the Law School in 1978-80 and received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1983. He's authored books on ethics, evidence, and good writing. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Scribes—the American Society of Legal Writers, and in 2005 he received the Golden Pen Award from the Legal Writing Institute.

Hundreds of Institute graduates experienced Dick Wydick in the classroom. Several thousand law school students benefitted from his career in teaching. Tens of thousands of writers have improved their abilities because of important lessons learned from *Plain English for Lawyers*. We are honored to dedicate the 2008 International Legislative Drafting Institute to a celebration of the works and the wisdom of Professor Richard C. Wydick.