

September 1, 2009

**Davis Attorney to Give Kangas Lecture:  
The Death Penalty and Why it Must Go**

Davis, Calif.—Notable high-stakes criminal lawyer, Quin Denvir, will deliver the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute’s annual Kangas Lecture on October 10<sup>th</sup>. This free event will address an important national issue: Capital punishment and what he describes as its flawed application in the United States.

Denvir is known in California for defending Ted Kaczynski, the infamous Unibomber during well-publicized pre-trial court appearances in Sacramento. He has represented others who were also in the shadow of the death penalty, notably Cary Staynor, the Yosemite killer. In 2006 he defended a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, regarding California’s “Three Strikes, You’re Out” sentencing rules. Denvir’s defense team lost the decision, 5-4. Interviewed at the time, Denvir said he felt “despondent,” showing evidence of his personal commitment to fairness in the criminal justice system.

“The death penalty is known to be meted out haphazardly, skewed on the basis of race and gender, and in a disparate fashion geographically,” Denvir maintains. “Its application depends a great deal on which country you are charged in.”

“These geographical inconsistencies,” added Denvir, “coupled with the high costs of prosecuting and implementing capital sentences, are providing incentives to abolish the practice, or at least reduce its use.” He noted as well that “The costs imposed on the whole judicial system at various levels—lawyers, courts and appeals—are much higher than the costs of keeping convicted murderers in prison for life.”

Denvir grew up on Chicago’s South Side. His father and brothers were lawyers. He says he was drawn to the law because of the mobility it affords and the variety of opportunities it offers. He attended Notre Dame University before going into the Navy, then earned a law degree at the University of Chicago. Denvir’s early career included a stint with a Washington, D.C., law firm. After moving west he worked for California Legal Services, providing help to poor clients, and serving as chief counsel for the California State Department of Health. He was also head of the state’s Office of Public Defender, and later appointed to head the federal Public Defender’s Office for the eastern district of California.

Denvir now does criminal appeals work. He and wife, Ann, have been married for 43 years and have six grandchildren. Both greatly enjoy taking OLLI classes, and Quin served as a panelist on last year's popular course, "Let's Kill All the Lawyers," about movies and the law.

The public is invited to the 2009 Kangas Lecture, sponsored by OLLI and the Davis Senior Center, 646 A Street, Davis. This free event takes place on Saturday, October 10 at 1 p.m.

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