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A HEMISPHERIC LAW SCHOOL
LAW & JUSTICE NEAR AND FAR

Judge A. Jay Cristol Donates \$2 Million to Endow Chair in Bankruptcy

By Catharine Skipp and Michelle Valencia

Judge A. Jay Cristol, J.D. '59, Chief Judge Emeritus of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Florida, recently made a \$2 million commitment to create the Judge A. Jay Cristol Endowed Chair in Bankruptcy at the School of Law. This is Judge Cristol's second generous gift to Miami Law—in 2012, he named the Bankruptcy Clinic in memory of his wife Eleanor.

"Judge Cristol's extraordinary generosity ensures that the law school will continue to excel in the field of bankruptcy law and public service and provide an outstanding education for future generations," said Patricia D. White, dean of the School of Law.

"Judge Cristol has devoted his professional and judicial career to the education and mentoring of students," said Patricia Redmond, director of the Cristol Bankruptcy Assistance Clinic. "This generous gift reflects his commitment to ensuring that the University of Miami School of Law maintains a leadership role in bankruptcy legal education and scholarship."

At 87, Judge Cristol continues to maintain a full calendar in his downtown Miami courtroom, and



Photo by Catharine Skipp

after 30 years on the bench still finds bankruptcy law fascinating. Between court hearings, he teaches as an adjunct faculty member at Miami Law, serves on the school's Steering Committee for its annual Bankruptcy Skills Workshop, and keeps an active schedule of charity events. Judge Cristol also takes to the air behind the controls of a private aircraft whenever he gets the chance to fly angel flights that provide free transportation to and from regional medical centers for indigent adults and children.

Judge Cristol came to Miami Beach in the 1930s, his family fleeing the disastrous impact of the Depression on rural Pennsylvania. The Korean War interrupted his education at the University of Miami. He joined the U.S. Navy and, after completing flight school, was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Princeton in the Sea of Japan.

After the war, he returned to UM. He completed his undergraduate degree in philosophy in 1958 and his J.D. in 1959, although his service in the Navy would continue until his retirement with the rank of captain in 1989.

Judge Cristol served as Special Assistant Attorney General of Florida, and after 25 years of civil law practice stepped down as senior partner in a firm he founded to accept an appointment to the federal bench. He earned a Ph.D. in 1997 from the University of Miami Graduate School of International Studies.

Judge Cristol was president of the Law Alumni Association in 1985 and received the Thomas Davidson III Memorial Service Award. He also received the Henry Latimer Professionalism Award in 2008 and the William M. Hoeveler Award for Ethics in Public Service in 2014. On May 10, 2016, Judge Cristol was awarded the Law Alumni Association's Alumnus of Distinction Award before a sold out audience of admirers, friends, and colleagues.

"I love the University of Miami," said Judge Cristol. "I am grateful for my law education that has enabled me to succeed in my profession and allows me to give back in a way that may help future law students to graduate, and do the right thing and help people." ■