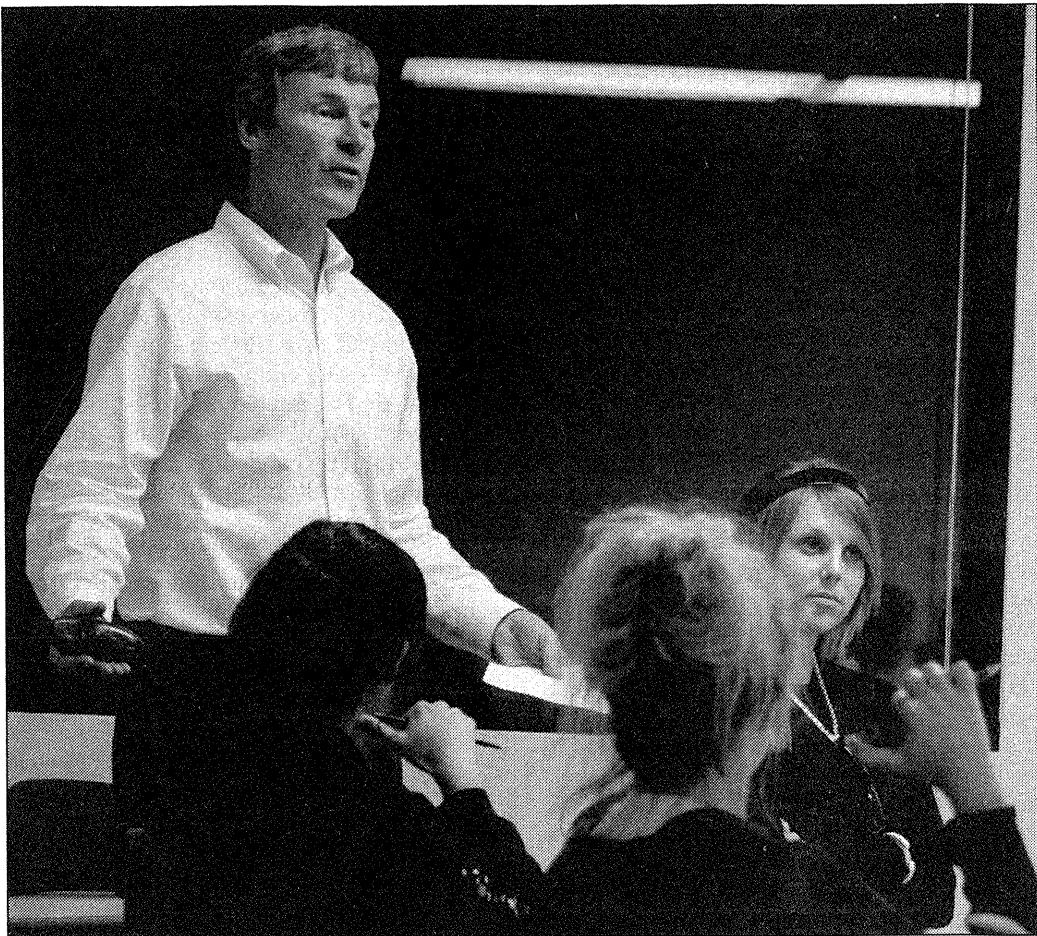
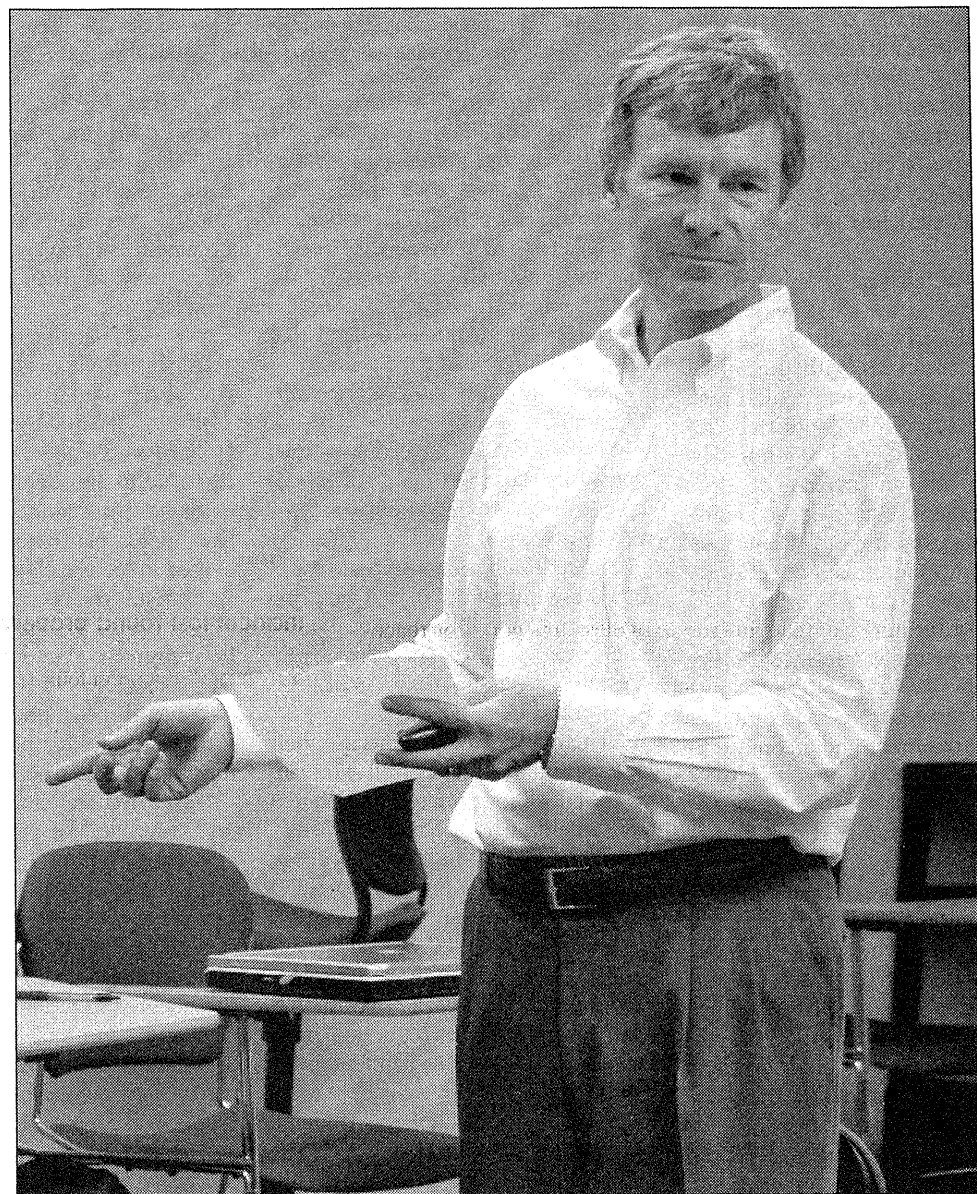


TEACHING FROM EXPERIENCE PART THREE IN A SERIES



JOHN TOCCI/ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Adjunct Professor Jon Pfeiffer discusses the top 10 celebrity court cases in his mass communication law class. Students applied what they learned in a group activity where they predicted the outcomes of the cases. Pfeiffer uses media clips, powerPoint and music to hold students' attention during his four-hour class Monday nights.



JOHN TOCCI/ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Pfeiffer practices entertainment law and is a partner at his firm in Santa Monica and has served on the Board of Trustees for the L.A. County Bar Association. He was also the President of the Santa Monica Bar Association and has practiced law for 23 years.

Laying Down the Law

By **JESSICA MERTURI**
STAFF WRITER

While teaching his first media law class, adjunct professor Jon Pfeiffer made a reference to "Miami Vice" that left his students with blank stares. No one knew what he was talking about. However, the experience turned out to be a "wonderful gift" that would change the way he taught his classes.

"[Student's] awareness span of current events probably started 10 years ago," said Pfeiffer, an entertainment lawyer with 23 years of experience. To make much older court cases relevant, Pfeiffer said he knew he would have to "set the scene." To do this, Pfeiffer brings in clips of "news stories and things that are going on" around the time of the case.

For example, to give the students a better understanding of *Dietemann v. Time*, he ordered the article that sparked the "invasion of privacy" controversy more than four decades ago, for his students to read for themselves.

And to help his students understand the difference between private versus public figures, Pfeiffer played a clip of Regis Philbin complaining about a Verizon repair man who never showed up to fix the popular day-time host's cable.

"He had a pedestal to do that. A private citizen doesn't," Pfeiffer said. "The clip was a visual

way students could understand the difference between the two and why different laws are made for each."

By combining audio and visual clips, with stories from his years of experience as a lawyer, Pfeiffer said he strives to be like some of his favorite professors who kept students' attention as well as keeping them informed.

His students say Pfeiffer has been successful. "It's good even if you're not a com. major. It's practical," said senior Christina Hursey.

She said she is also amazed the effort he puts into the class and the presentations.

"He's blown away most of the com. teachers in the department," she said.

Pfeiffer has practiced law since earning his law degree from the University of Denver in 1983. Initially he practiced general business litigation but later made his way into entertainment law. Throughout his career, Pfeiffer has successfully tried more than 65 cases. Pfeiffer is a partner in his entertainment law firm Pfeiffer, Thigpen, and FitzGibbon LLP, in Santa Monica. He served on the Board of Trustees for the Los Angeles County Bar Association and was president of the Santa Monica Bar Association among many other honorable positions.

With his track record, it was no surprise that Susan Salas, associate professor of telecommunications and director of broadcasting, recommended him to teach classes in mass communi-

cation law at Pepperdine. Salas, a long-time friend of Pfeiffer's, knew he would be a perfect fit.

"Not only is he an accomplished attorney and comes from his office/court to teach the class, he is a wonderful man and strong role model for students," Salas wrote in an e-mail. "He is so committed to his students and the subject, and I am thrilled to have him as a colleague."

With the exception of teaching seminars to lawyers and presentations to high school students, Pfeiffer had never taught at the college level.

"I knew it would be a huge undertaking," Pfeiffer said.

Pfeiffer began teaching a media law class at Pepperdine in the spring of 2006. At first, there was no balance between his law career and teaching. He said he spent every weekend—all day—prepping. Putting material together in an informative and interesting way became one of Pfeiffer's biggest challenges, he said.

"Why are teachers so proud of the syllabus?" Pfeiffer asked and quickly answered: "It takes so long to prepare."

Pfeiffer took the fall semester off from teaching and said he has spent the past six months collecting clips from TiVo and movies, which has sped up the time it takes to put lectures together. "I'm enjoying this semester so much

more," Pfeiffer said.

Pfeiffer said he is spending this semester "smoothing out the rough edges."

Pfeiffer said teaching has helped him in his practice. "When I am trying a case, I'm much more cognizant of setting the scene and putting it into a context," Pfeiffer said.

He also said he is starting to see parallels between teaching a class and presenting a case to a jury. "You are trying to educate," Pfeiffer said. "The methods are the same."

Teaching has been a good experience on many levels and he would like to continue teach at least one class, Pfeiffer said. "The interaction [with students] is fun and stimulating," he said. His students feel the same way.

Junior Lorian Mark, said she loves the class and that it is a lot of fun.

"It's taught me a lot and it's only been a couple of weeks," Mark said.

Pfeiffer also keeps his students entertained with tunes. "He plays music at all the breaks," Mark said as "Dani California" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers could be heard from outside of his classroom just before the start of class.

Students said the class, which lasts for almost four hours, moves along quickly.

"It's engaging," Mark said. "Everyone has to get up and talk about a case." This setting makes for plenty of interaction and not just boring lecture, Mark added.

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