



Professor Morris Ratner (center)
with his students.

“

I am lucky to be at UC Hastings. As a relatively new professor, I can't imagine a richer soil in which to grow.”

Best in Class

PROFESSOR MORRIS RATNER RECEIVES 2015 RUTTER AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

In an emotional tribute last October honoring Professor Morris Ratner, 3L Christine Doelling told of meeting with her professors after earning all A-minuses in her first semester of her 1L year. Professor Ratner didn't congratulate her or tell her she should feel good about her grades, she said. Instead, he told her what she could do to earn the solid A's he thought she deserved. Doelling said she was moved by his faith in her. "Professor Ratner approaches every student with the belief that he or she is as capable as he is," Doelling said, tears welling in her eyes. "I would take any class by him, anytime—even if I wasn't interested in the subject."

Doelling was among the members of the UC Hastings community assembled in the law school's Alumni Reception Center to celebrate Ratner as the winner of the 2015 Rutter Award for Teaching Excellence, which includes a \$10,000 stipend.

The selection committee—Provost & Academic Dean Elizabeth Hillman, Professor George Bisharat (the previous year's recipient), and ASUCH President 3L Nicholas Lansdown—unanimously chose Ratner based on the extraordinary reviews he received in student evaluations. In her introductory remarks, Hillman offered a few examples: Professor Ratner is "a wonderful lecturer," "unfailingly polite," and "an excellent role model of what a good lawyer looks and sounds like," they wrote.

Ratner, who earned his BA at Stanford and JD at Harvard, joined the UC Hastings faculty in 2012. He previously was a partner at Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, where among other high-profile cases, he prosecuted and settled Holocaust-era claims against European companies for roughly \$7.5 billion.

His decision to join academia after such extraordinary success in the courtroom was based, he said, on the realization that "teaching is a calling for me." In addition to teaching civil procedure, legal ethics, and law practice management, Ratner oversees the law school's concurrent JD/MBA programs offered in collaboration with business schools at UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and Presidio Graduate School, as well as a new JD/Masters in Applied Economics and Finance program with UC Santa Cruz.

Ratner said he is inspired and motivated by the law school's stimulating intellectual environment and diverse student body. "I have all sorts of role models on this campus who illuminate different ways to be of maximum service in and outside of the classroom," he said. He cited empathy, patience, directness, and kindness as characteristics he strives to exemplify as a teacher.

"I am lucky to be at UC Hastings," he added. "As a relatively new professor here, I can't imagine a richer soil in which to grow."