

Hon. Thomas Rueter



A Scranton political science class introduced Hon. Thomas Rueter '77 to the legal profession, paving the way for a successful career in law. At left, Judge Rueter (far left) walks the University Commons with classmates in 1977. Below, the former Royal has taken an interest in helping the University's Pre-Law students reach their career aspirations.


RUETER FOUND LAW, REAFFIRMED FAITH AT SCRANTON

Despite his dual majors in English and history, Rueter notes it was Scranton's required courses in theology and philosophy that greatly shaped his life.

"I think the most important thing about The University of Scranton was that I was raised a Catholic yet it gave me the opportunity to reaffirm my faith and explore it in a greater depth because of the required theology and philosophy courses," he says. "They gave me a greater understanding of my Catholic faith and made it stronger so it could carry me through life."

"As far as my career, the heavy emphasis on philosophy and the logical thinking the University taught you were indispensable for being a lawyer because part of it is thinking through problems and reasoning through problems," he adds.

Rueter credits his time at Scranton with helping him realize his full personal capabilities.

"The University of Scranton was a wonderful experience; I was an average student in high school but I think it made me an excellent student," he says. "Whatever potential I had, it brought it out to the maximum and I became an excellent student at Scranton, which prepared me for my career." 



It was a chance encounter with John Marshall in the late Professor Timothy Scully's political science class that introduced Philadelphia native Hon. Thomas Rueter '77 to the world of law.

"When I went to Scranton, like most kids, I wasn't sure what I was going to do; initially I thought I was going to be an English teacher," recalls Rueter.

But after reading U.S. Supreme Court cases in Professor Scully's class, particularly early-era disputes like *Marbury v. Madison* and cases from Chief Justice John Marshall, Rueter was enamored.

From that moment forward, "I really became interested in the law," Rueter says.

After receiving a J.D. from Dickinson School of Law in 1980, Rueter began his career in a Philadelphia law firm, which led to an appointment as an Assistant United States Attorney, where he eventually served as Chief of the Narcotics Section.

In 1994, Rueter was appointed as a United States Magistrate Judge, and currently holds the position of Chief United States Magistrate Judge of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, where his responsibilities include presiding over both civil and criminal cases.

His career's journey can be traced back to the University.

"I had a phenomenal education at Scranton," Rueter says. "For a person like me who grew up in the city and who didn't come from a lot of wealthy means, it just really did wonders for me. I don't think I would have become a lawyer if it wasn't for that school."

Rueter readily admits that one of the most satisfying aspects of his job is being able to help people resolve their differences, which can often be contentious.

"I would say the most rewarding part of my job is my role as a mediator and a settlement judge," he says. "It's a pretty daunting challenge to get people in a room who have been fighting or have been antagonistic to each other. I think it is very rewarding that I can help people resolve their differences. For the most part, they leave satisfied. And I feel like I have helped people's lives for the good."

Much like his Scranton professors did for him, Rueter often tries to assist current Scranton students who are interested in the legal profession.

"Any time I get a resume for an internship or a law clerk position from anyone who attended The University of Scranton I always go out of my way to meet with them and try to help them," Rueter says.