

LAW 125 DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SERIES

To Commemorate its 125th Anniversary the Law School of the University of Adelaide is pleased to announce a **PUBLIC LECTURE**

PROFESSOR JOHN V ORTH
William Rand Kenan, Jr. Professor of Law
University of North Carolina, USA

***“THE GOLDEN METWAND”*: THE MEASURE OF JUSTICE IN SHAKESPEARE’S MEASURE FOR MEASURE**

DATE 15 December 2008

TIME 1.00pm

VENUE Moot Court Room, Law School (Ligertwood Building)

TOPIC *Measure for Measure*, one of Shakespeare’s “problem plays,” is a dark comedy depicting Duke Vincentio’s effort to restore respect for the law after a period of lax enforcement. Peopled with a wide variety of law-enforcers and law-breakers, the play implicates numerous legal issues and has consequently attracted the attention of lawyers and judges. In the eighteenth century Sir William Blackstone contributed notes on the play, while in the twentieth century judges have quoted from it in their judicial opinions. Like all good legal dramas, *Measure for Measure* ends with a trial scene, but – as we would expect from Shakespeare – one with an unusual twist. When charges of corruption are brought against Angelo, the deputy appointed to enforce the law, the Duke orders an immediate trial: *Come, cousin Angelo / In this I’ll be impartial; be you judge / Of your own cause*. When the deputy’s guilt is disclosed, the Duke commands that he suffer the punishment he intended for others -- measure for measure, putting the Bible-conscious play-goer in mind of the passage: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. / For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you againe.” By ordering Angelo to be the judge of his own cause, the Duke is inviting the deputy to measure out his own punishment. And Shakespeare is forcing us all to confront the difficulty of doing earthly justice.

SPEAKER **John V. Orth** is William Rand Kenan, Jr. Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina, where he teaches basic and advanced property and legal history. He has a law degree and Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. He is the author of five books, most recently *How Many Judges Does It Take to Make a Supreme Court? And Other Essays on Law and the Constitution* (2006). He contributes the chapters on concurrent estates to *Thompson on Real Property*, as well as annual articles in the series Reappraisals in the Law of Property, published in *The Green Bag*. He is the author of numerous law review articles on constitutional law, property law, and legal history. He is a contributor to *The American National Biography*, *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States*, *The Oxford Companion to American Law*, and various other legal reference works. Professor Orth’s publications have been cited by federal and state courts, including the United States Supreme Court and the North Carolina Supreme Court. Professor Orth is the recipient of a University award for excellence in post-graduate education.

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For further information about Law 125 events, please contact Dr Paul Babie, paul.babie@adelaide.edu.au