

*Personal Biography*  
*Dr. Vernon Valentine Palmer*

Vernon Valentine Palmer is the Thomas Pickles Professor of Law at Tulane University and is the former director of the European Legal Studies program at the Tulane Law School. He currently serves as Co-Director of the Eason Weinmann Center for Comparative Law.

Professor Palmer received his first law degree from Tulane with Law Review Honors and thereafter pursued post-graduate studies at Yale University where, as a Sterling Fellow, he received a Master of Laws degree. He received his doctorate in Philosophy (D.Phil) from Oxford University (Pembroke College) in recognition of his dissertation on English legal history.

Dr. Palmer's initial teaching appointment was to Indiana University Law School (Indianapolis) where he taught for several years. He took a two-year leave to teach and research law in Southern Africa. On his return he joined the Tulane Law Faculty and has remained since.

Dr. Palmer's teaching and research have focused upon the interaction between the civil law and common law traditions, particularly the influence of these traditions in Europe, in Louisiana and in the mixed legal systems around the world. His expertise in French law figures prominently in his writings, and in certain works such as his 2005 book *The Louisiana Civilian Experience*, he has tried to assess and clarify the contribution that France and the Code Napoléon have made to the Louisiana Civil Code and to legal life in Louisiana. His ground-breaking study --*Mixed Jurisdictions Worldwide: The Third Legal Family* published by Cambridge University Press—is the leading work in the field and the first comprehensive assessment of the characteristics, commonalities and diversities of the mixed jurisdictions.

Professor Palmer's scholarly output now runs to more than 12 books and 50 articles, much of it emphasizing the value of comparative law as a means to understand the interaction between common law and civil law in world legal systems. His intellectual interests extend into many parts of the law school curriculum, having taught as many as eleven different subject areas.

Professor Palmer's international travels and foreign service have been substantial. As constitutional consultant, he advised the Kingdom of Lesotho (Southern Africa) in its attempt to return to democratic rule after having fallen into dictatorship. He served as one of the two principal drafters of Lesotho's present constitution. He also served as constitutional consultant to the Republic of Madagascar and advised the nation's constituent assembly on the drafting of a new constitution. He is currently serving as the external examiner for the Hong Kong City University School of Law.

He has taught widely in overseas, notably in Paris, Strasbourg, Lausanne, Martinique, Barcelona, Trento, Geneva, Fribourg, Hamburg and forthcoming in Tokyo. For two years he held the title of *Professor Associé* at the Sorbonne in Paris. For 18 years he served as director of the Paris Institute of European Legal Studies, Tulane's summer program in Paris, where various

courses on European law are offered, including his own offering *An Introduction to French Law and Legal Culture*.

In 1994 Professor Palmer was named by the French prime minister a *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* for his contributions to French culture, particularly for his role in creating the program of European Legal Studies at Tulane. In 2006 he received France's highest civilian honor from President Chirac, the Legion of Honor, for his contributions to the field of comparative law. A decade ago Dr. Palmer founded the first international society devoted to the study of mixed legal systems--The World Society of Mixed Jurisdiction Jurists—and still serves as its president. In 2002 he became a titular member of the International Academy of Comparative Law.

He is married to Martha Lemoine Palmer, a remarkable wife, mother and teacher who for more than twenty years taught American government and history at The Academy of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans. Their son Val (Valentin) is an eighth grader at Country Day School in New Orleans.