DENNY,
We will miss your wisdom,
your common sense,
your straightforward style
and your humor.
We wish you the very best.

J. DENNY HAYTHORN

Celebrating 39 Years of Service
I know of no one who has given more and given so unselfishly to this law school than Denny Haythorn. As the head librarian he has provided inspirational leadership, fiscal responsibility, and stellar service to faculty, staff and the public. As a teacher he has provided an excellent role model of professionalism, a thoughtfully designed educational experience, and a deep commitment to the success of our students and graduates. As a colleague, Denny has always put the law school’s well-being at the forefront of all his actions. When asked to serve in any capacity, Denny has never refused. As a sage, I and many others have turned to Denny whenever we needed excellent and practical advice — always offered with that implacable and ironic sense of humor that we will miss terribly. Throughout his thirty-nine years at Whittier Law School, Denny has represented balance, excellence, service, good humor and wit. He will be sorely missed, particularly by his final Dean.

And, of course, Denny has not just led an exemplary professional life. He has unselfishly dedicated himself to his family and his community. And, I know he treasures that new grandchild! I can only hope that as he leaves us to enter a different phase of his life, that he will remember and treasure the friends he has made at the law school, the impact he has made on the lives of so many, and the students whose lives he has bettered. A job very well done.

We wish Denny and his loved ones all the good that life can offer as they make this transition.

Penelope Bryan, Dean
J. Denny Haythorn is the longest current employee of Whittier Law School. In his 39 years here, he has seen six deans, two campuses, thousands of students, and a revolution that affected the nature of libraries.

The year was 1976, and Whittier College School of Law was moving into a new building in the Hancock Park area of Los Angeles and aiming for ABA accreditation. Denny Haythorn had just finished his Master of Law Librarianship at the University of Washington, and was hired to build a law library worthy of an ABA-accredited law school.

"In any startup organization, it is always very exciting. Everything you do is new and you are setting precedent," said Denny. He began to buy the core of the Whittier Law School collection, with books arriving by the semi-trailer truck. "There was a lot of enthusiasm among the students and in the community; there was a common purpose and that was to gain ABA accreditation." The school was provisionally approved very quickly, in 1978. It later gained ABA and AALS accreditation.

When Whittier Law School again moved to the Costa Mesa campus 21 years later, the 42,000-square-foot library was only slightly smaller than the entire Hancock Park campus. It represented another chance for Denny to develop an exemplary library. Yet an even larger change was already underway: the digital revolution.

"It was fun to watch the changes," he says. "I remember early on we had a discussion with the library staff if we should buy a fax machine," he says with a laugh. With most resources residing online today, Denny believes the role of the library is different. "The library has changed from a collection of materials to a gathering place, which is just as important in the life of the school. People are social animals, and they want to be with other people."

"The whole reason we are here is because of the students. We should be really enjoying our interactions with them because we are here to better serve them."

In addition to directing the library, and the Facilities department, Denny taught substantive courses in some topics near and dear to his heart (admiralty and aviation law) as well as business courses. He enjoyed the interaction with students. "It’s fun to go to alumni events and see how successful they have become. That gives me a lot of enjoyment."

For Denny, it’s always been about the students. "The whole reason we are here is because of the students. We should be really enjoying our interactions with them because we are here to better serve them."

Denny’s life has encompassed far more than his law school career. He was in the Air Force Reserves for 28 years, and has been very active in the California Yacht Club, even acting as Commodore in 2000. The highlight of his life has been his family. He married, raised two sons and has recently become a grandfather.

"The high point in my life has been to be a part of the law school and watch it grow to become what it is now. But the smartest thing I ever did was marry Lori. Watching my two sons grow, and spending time with Lori and my parents has been my greatest personal triumph."