



## News Release

May 12, 2011

Contact: Chris Saunders  
619-961-4311

### **President of Southern Virginia University to Lead Thomas Jefferson School of Law's New Academic Center for Sports Law and Policy**

*Rodney K. Smith is Co-author of Major Textbook on Sports Law*

SAN DIEGO – The co-author of one of the nation's leading casebooks on sports law will be the inaugural director of the Thomas Jefferson School of Law's new academic Center for Sports Law and Policy, scheduled to open here this fall at the school's new state-of-the-art campus near the San Diego Padres' Petco Park.

Rodney K. Smith will leave his current position as President of Southern Virginia University in August to assume his new role at Thomas Jefferson for the fall semester. In addition to his administrative experience and expertise in sports law, Smith is well versed in constitutional law and has published several scholarly works on the First Amendment and religion. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the National Sports Law Institute has served as a member of the NCAA's Infractions Appeals Committee.

"The addition of Rod Smith to the TJS� faculty provides an extraordinary opportunity to enhance the scholarly strength of the faculty, while at the same time providing for a concentration of courses in an area of particular interest to our students and of special interest to the San Diego area," said Rudy Hasl, the Dean of the Thomas Jefferson School of Law and the longest serving ABA law school dean in the nation.

Smith, a native Californian, also has an impressive background in legal education, having served as dean or a professor at several law schools, including the University of North Dakota, Widener University, Capital University, the University of Montana, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Memphis. He earned his law degree from Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School and his S.J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He practiced law in Bishop, CA, where he also served as City Attorney.

"Thomas Jefferson School of Law is an ideal place in Southern California for a Center for Sports Law and Policy," says Smith. "We'll bring in leading thinkers on legal and policy issues, form valuable affiliations, and create a series of relevant courses that add up to a certificate program for Thomas Jefferson's students."

The law school has offered a highly popular course in sports law for many years that is taught by San Diego attorney and 1994 Thomas Jefferson alumnus Randy Grossman, a player agent whose client list includes Major League Baseball Hall of Famer and Padres Vice President Dave Winfield.

-more-

## 2-2-2-2 President of SVU to Lead Thomas Jefferson's New Center for Sports Law and Policy

Some of the courses Smith is considering for the new center include: Professional Sports Law, Amateur Sports Law, Sports Antitrust Law, Labor Law in Sports, Sports Law and the Media, and a practicum that would require students to work on major projects such as Title IX audits, sports contracts and negotiations.

Also on his agenda is a national conference in early December related to the legal aspects of the controversy surrounding which college football teams should play for the national championship and which ones should play in major bowl games. "We're timing the conference so it will coincide with the decision as to which teams are going to play these games," he said.

In addition to working on the third edition of his widely adopted casebook, *Sports Law* (West Publishing Company), Smith is writing a new sports law book for the graduate level that he describes as "much shorter (than his 395-page casebook) and more focused on problems and policy issues."

It is the focus on policy issues in the world of professional and amateur sports that Smith feels will distinguish the new center at Thomas Jefferson School of Law from the relatively small number of sports law programs at other law schools.

"Policy leads to law," notes Smith. "Thomas Jefferson students will be working on cutting-edge policy issues and that will open doors for them. Their experience will be an interesting entrée in any employment interview."

Thomas Jefferson's Dean Hasl adds, "Our relocation to the Ballpark East area of downtown San Diego positions the law school for very creative work with the Padres organization and with the growing field of amateur athletics."

Students at Thomas Jefferson have already demonstrated a significant interest in sports law, which makes the announcement of Smith's hiring and the Center for Sports Law and Policy all the more timely. For the past decade, the student Sports Law Society has hosted an annual sports symposium featuring prominent members of the sports industry. Members of the law school's Student Bar Association (SBA), Alternative Dispute Resolution Society, and Sports Law Society, with the assistance of Grossman and others, have organized for this fall The First Annual National Sports Law Negotiation Competition & Sports Law Symposium for the weekend of Sept. 23 – 25. Law schools throughout the country are already registering for the conference, including UCLA School of Law, which is sending two teams, Marquette University School of Law and Pace University School of Law.

According to SBA President Jeremy Evans, there is no other competition like this in the nation with fact patterns that will focus on current, real-world sports issues such as contract negotiation; trading of players; salary demands and details; special requests and accommodations; intellectual property issues of individual athletes, leagues, teams, and licensing companies; television rights; and torts cases.

# # #

**EDITORS:** Rod Smith is in San Diego today and tomorrow and is available for interviews. To arrange an interview, please contact Chris Saunders at 619.618.6734 or [csaunders@tjssl.edu](mailto:csaunders@tjssl.edu).