

This book is dedicated to

Gary Slapper

1958-2016

the first Head of The Open University Law School

Suzanne Slapper

Dedication

In all his books, Gary would always write a dedication to myself, my daughters and his family in the acknowledgements. It is an honour to at last repay that kindness with a little dedication of my own.

Gary's first contact with the OU was in May 1987 when he applied to be an associate lecturer. As a young law graduate, he was keen to test out his skills and knowledge and, more importantly, pass them on. Unfortunately, that first contact resulted in a firm rejection! Gary hadn't realised that the OU didn't have a Law School and that there were no plans to create one.

Fast forward ten years and Gary found himself in London launching the new OU Law Programme with Cherie Blair. He was so excited to take up the challenge and hard work of creating a new Law School from scratch, and determined to make a success of it. He spelt out his motivation at a dinner to celebrate the first OU Law graduates in 2002. He said he understood the importance of law because it touched everyone's lives from birth to death and beyond; and for the lowliest individual to multi-national corporations and Governments. Despite this he said, 'only a minuscule portion of the overall population realistically had the chance to study law'. He felt that for Law to work properly it had to be not only for the people, but of the people and that the challenge for the 21st century was to make the legal profession more representative. As he put it, 'variety is the spice of Law as much as it is of life'. He wanted to move from a position where Law Lords took OU degrees, to where the OU educated the future Law Lords!

In his valedictory speech Gary spoke of his admiration for Jenny Lee and the social benefit of the OU. From its inception in 1997, to the time of his leaving, the Law School grew from 700 students and 25 associate lecturers, to 7000 students and 400 associate lecturers and was the largest Law School for undergraduates in the UK. This was thanks not only to Gary, but also to all the dedicated people who worked with him over the 15 years and 29 days he spent at the OU. At the end he felt he had made a contribution to the diversification of the legal profession as he had set out to do. He wrote of his days at the OU that, 'almost all of them had been an absolutely wonderful, unalloyed privilege'. I know that he would be glad that the OU Law School continues in its successes and, as ever, most of his praise would be for the hardworking students who ensure that his vision will become reality.

From his loving family, Suzanne, Hannah, Emily, Charlotte, Ivor, Doreen, Clifford and Maxine.