

# WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

Kristin Copenhaver  
Communications Director  
Office: (313) 577-4834  
Fax: (313) 577-9016  
[kcopenhaver@wayne.edu](mailto:kcopenhaver@wayne.edu)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Wayne Law Professor and Urban Planning Expert John Mogk Looks to Contribute to a Lasting Change in Detroit and Michigan**

DETROIT (Aug. 27, 2009) – It's no wonder that Wayne State University Law School is known for its publicly committed students. With professors like John Mogk to learn from and be inspired by, students quickly discover that there's no limit to what they can achieve through the law.

Professor Mogk, a nationally known urban planning law expert, has been committed to making a difference in his community and beyond for nearly a half of a century.

An undergraduate business administration student in the late 1950s, he sought a career path that would allow him to explore and understand how a society functions. His path quickly led to law school.

"There were no lawyers in our family when I grew up, but I had an early exposure to law through the eyes of my mother and my aunt, who were legal secretaries for two of Detroit's major law firms," Mogk said. "Their comments impressed on me that lawyers understood well the workings of society and more so than other professions possessed the skills necessary to address the challenges."

Mogk's interest in public service law escalated upon law school graduation. He began practice with New York's Shearman and Sterling in 1964 during tumultuous times as the country was trying to make sense of the assassination of President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., experiencing opposition to the Vietnam War, feeling birth pains of the Great Society, confronting racial injustice and understanding the seething conditions of urban ghettos.

That in our Nation's history, combined with Mogk's work on Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant, beginning in 1966, solidified his interest in public service and eventually led him to Detroit and Wayne Law.

The Bedford Stuyvesant project was an urban model to restore a vibrant community life and blocks of historic brownstones to one of the Nation's most distressed urban neighborhoods. Through this project Mogk had the opportunity to collaborate with many of prominent New York leaders of the day including Mayor John Lindsay, Senators Bobby Kennedy and Jacob Javitz and urban developer Ed Logue.

"The work was exciting and led to an offer by the new Dean of Wayne Law, Charles Joiner, to become one of four new urban law professors that he was adding to the faculty in 1968, one year after Detroit's calamitous riot," Mogk said. "As a member of the Wayne Law faculty I would have the opportunity and freedom to teach, write and engage in addressing the most critical urban issues of our time."

Mogk, who has been selected as the Wayne Law Outstanding Professor of the Year on a number of occasions, has served as a respected driver and voice of urban law and policy in Detroit and throughout

- more -

### ***Mogk release continued...***

the Nation ever since.

Shortly after joining the Wayne Law faculty, he was asked to participate in the work of New Detroit, Inc., the Nation's first "urban coalition" of corporate, civic, political, labor and grass roots leaders. This involvement drew the attention of William Milliken, who had been elevated to Governor of Michigan with the departure of George Romney to become HUD Secretary under Richard Nixon. Governor Milliken, who was from out-state, needed help on special projects of importance to Detroit. The Governor asked Mogk to head a number of them over the next several years.

"Assignments included establishing a demonstration manufactured housing program for Michigan, developing an affordable housing strategy for the state, decentralizing the Detroit Public Schools, serving as an interim member of the Detroit Board of Education, member of the SEMCOG Executive Committee and chairing the Governors Task Force addressing Detroit's regional problems," Mogk said.

"At the same time, I was the grass roots chairman of Detroit's largest neighborhood rehabilitation project in Jefferson-Chalmers on the city's southeast side," he continued. Mogk's successful effort to organize the community and gain a federal grant for its preservation and redevelopment gained him recognition in 1972 as one of the Ten Outstanding Young in the United States by the U.S. Jaycees and One of Four Outstanding Volunteers in America by the National Center for Voluntary Action.

From 1974-94, he led the state's university/industry/government partnership promoting energy efficiency and the introduction of renewable energy systems into the state's energy base – a subject that has returned to prominence today. In fact, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm recently announced the appointment of Mogk as chair of the Michigan Council on Labor and Economic Growth, a 70-member organization of leaders from business, academia, labor and government that advise the Governor and Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth on workforce training, education and economic development.

Mogk, who ran for Mayor of Detroit in 1973 and in 1977 with a campaign slogan of "save our neighborhoods," is now the media's go-to expert on conditions affecting the city of Detroit.

"My message when running for Mayor was that more attention and resources must be directed toward Detroit neighborhoods and creating a much closer relationship with the region in order to stem the decline of the city," Mogk said. "The neighborhoods needed to eliminate expanding blight, crime and poor schools and the region to create a strong economic partnership between the city and the suburbs to compete with other regions of the country. The message remains the same today as it was in the 1970s, but the challenges are a magnitude greater, because of the inaction by the city over the decades that have intervened."

He added, "While I lost in both primaries, I have no regrets about making the effort. I can be far more effective at this point in my career by offering to help those who have been elected."

Mogk has assisted, among many others, Mayor Dennis Archer in preparing Detroit's Empowerment Zone Plan and Governor Granholm in transitioning the state for the 21st Century economy in workforce training and economic diversification. He has also chaired Habitat for Humanity Detroit for a seven year period during which time it became one of the Nation's top Habitat affiliates, with expanded services and its staff growing from 3 to 43.

Though he certainly stays busy with his public service work, Mogk remains thoroughly committed to imparting knowledge to students in the fields of urban law and policy at Wayne Law.

"My teaching is most effective when I am able to integrate experiences outside of the Law School with

- more -

***Mogk release continued...***

classroom discussion, which occurs quite often.” Mogk said. “I enjoy my seminar in Urban Housing and Community Development most as it provides the greatest opportunity to merge my outside activities with the classroom experiences of the students. It also allows me to introduce them to leaders in Detroit and their strategies in addressing today's difficult problems.”

Mogk's dedication to “contribute to a lasting change in Michigan and Detroit that will see our current economic slide turn into a bright future” is contagious, and has led many Wayne Law graduates to seek positions of leadership in Detroit, Michigan and the country.

“It is a pleasure to teach students who are dedicated, intelligent and will offer much to the community in their professional lives,” he said.

**About Wayne Law**

Wayne State University Law School has educated and served the Detroit metropolitan area since its inception as Detroit City Law School in 1927. Located at 471 West Palmer Street in Detroit's re-energized historic cultural center, the Law School remains committed to student success and features modern lecture and court facilities, multi-media and distance learning classrooms, a 250-seat auditorium, and the Arthur Neef Law Library, which houses one of the nation's 40 largest legal collections. Taught by an internationally recognized and expert faculty, Wayne Law students experience a high-quality legal education via a growing array of hands-on curricular offerings, client clinics, and access to well over 100 internships with local and non-profit entities each year. Its 11,000 living alumni, who work in every state of the nation and more than a dozen foreign countries, are experts in their disciplines and include leading members of the local, national and international legal communities. For more information, visit [www.law.wayne.edu](http://www.law.wayne.edu).

- ### -