

Distinguished Achievement Citation

Richard North Patterson

Class of 1968

With pride, we present Ohio Wesleyan's Distinguished Achievement Citation to Richard North Patterson in recognition of his exceptional career as a novelist, lawyer and advocate. Ric graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1968 and received his law degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1971.

Before beginning his writing career, Ric served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Ohio, as a liaison for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to the Watergate Special Prosecutor and as a partner in two of the nation's leading law firms.

It was only after college and law school that Ric discovered a talent and interest for writing. While working for a Birmingham, Alabama law firm, he took a fiction writing course from southern novelist Jessie Hill Ford. Soon after, *The Atlantic Monthly* published his first short story. His first novel, *The Lasko Tangent*, which he drafted as part of a creative writing course, was published in 1979. This initial novel won the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Allen Poe Award for best first novel in 1979 and launched his writing career. Since then, he has written a total of 15 novels, including 11 consecutive international bestselling novels. In 1993, Ric retired from the practice of law to devote himself to writing. In 1995, he won the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière, the most prestigious award for crime and detective fiction in France, for his novel *Degree of Guilt*. In 2001, he won the Maggie Award for Planned Parenthood in recognition of his treatment of reproductive rights in *Protect and Defend*, and in 2007 his novel *Exile*, which deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, was nominated for South Africa's highest literary award.

Ric Patterson goes beyond the realm of simple legal and political fiction by melding his knowledge of politics and law with in-depth research on the most timely and important social and political issues in society, like gun control, capital punishment, reproductive rights, family violence, campaign finance reform, presidential politics, and even geo-politics in the Middle East. "I feel that by tackling issues through my books I can make a difference," he said. His friendships and connections with people in Washington D.C., including past presidents, members of their cabinets and members of Congress, have aided him in his research and given him a clearer perspective on politics throughout the course of his career.

Not only has Ric written about the issues personal to him, but he has become involved in various social causes and organizations. He was past chairman of the National Governing Board for Common Cause, an organization that provides a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest. He has also served on the boards of the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the National Partnership for Women and Families, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, PEN Center West, Case Western Reserve Law School, and Ohio Wesleyan. A frequent speaker on political, legal and social issues, in 2004 Ric spoke at the Washington D.C. rallies in support of reproductive rights and against gun violence.

We join his reunioning classmates, and his fiancée Nancy Clair, in saluting Richard North Patterson and recognizing his outstanding accomplishments through the presentation of this Distinguished Achievement Award.

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