



# Professor Robert Rhee

## Faculty

Professor Robert Rhee believes the measurement

of success is, “Work hard, smarts only get you so far, there is always someone smarter or better than you. Goals must be set on your passions and they must be pursued passionately.” A previous colleague of Rhee’s stated, “If you want to succeed, pay attention to the details, do everything asked of you well, do it on time, and then do that extra work that has not been asked of you.” Rhee believes this is wonderful advice for everyone and it seems he has implemented that advice, which is reflected in a career full of successes and accomplishments.

Rhee received his B.A. from the University of Chicago in 1988 and his J.D. from George Washington University in 1991. After law school Rhee clerked for the Honorable Richard L. Nygaard of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He then worked for the Justice Department as a trial attorney in the Honors Program, Civil Division. It was then that Rhee thought about a teaching career, but decided he was too “young and inexperienced.” Rhee wanted a more diverse work experience and decided an “educational retooling” was needed. Always having an interest in finance and investment banking, he decided to attend The Wharton School and graduated with an MBA in 1997.

After Wharton, Rhee went to London with two suitcases to start his investment banking career at UBS Warburg as an Associate in the Corporate Finance Advisory Group where he worked on UK and Pan-European mergers and acquisitions. After UBS Warburg, he went to Swiss Re in New York where he served as Vice President, advising financial institutions in mergers and acquisitions and public/private capital raisings. After September 11, Rhee and his wife decided to leave New York and moved to Phoenix where he practiced law at Choi Rhee & Fabian. Rhee admits it was an eye opening experience. “I learned how difficult access to justice was for many ordinary people and how rough justice sometimes is. Legal analysis detached from a humanistic perspective is nothing but a game in logic.

I bring this perspective to both my classroom and my research and use it as a measure of whether it has any relevance,” said Rhee.

Rhee joined Washburn Law in August 2004 teaching Civil Procedure II, Comparative Legal Systems, Negotiations and Torts. Rhee’s passion is to “write and think” and believes coming up with original thought is “extremely exciting.” Rhee said, “I can’t believe the school is paying me to do this job.”

Rhee believes law students are his clients and he has a responsibility to ensure they can be competent members of the bar. As a student Rhee’s primary concern was “How can I get the best grade?”, as a professional, “How can I win?” and as a Professor, “Are my students learning?” Rhee thinks law school fosters an “all or nothing” environment, a thought he feels is depressing and a view he thinks is detached from how the real world works. He believes law school and students need to realize that some simply take “a little longer” to learn the language of the law.

“Never stop learning, pursue your passions and never give up,” are Rhee’s words of encouragement to students. He tells others to follow their heart in career choices, welcome changes and do not be afraid of uncertainty. “The legal profession should no longer be viewed as a career path of finite tracks. What was considered ‘alternative’ career paths are now established options available for lawyers. Lawyers should consider themselves entrepreneurs in the larger economy and the hallmarks of all great entrepreneurs are flexibility, courage, diligence and perseverance,” said Rhee.

Rhee is thrilled to be at Washburn Law. He feels the intellectual and social benefits of the schools openness to students is invaluable and makes the learning experience special. Rhee said, “I am most proud of the fact that I’ve accomplished every goal I set out to achieve. This doesn’t mean I didn’t have setbacks, but that the setbacks didn’t stop me from achieving my goals. It’s been a wonderfully rewarding intellectual and professional voyage. But now that has changed – being a professor at Washburn Law is a dream come true for me.”