Department of Chemical Engineering

University of Washington

**LEADERSHIP SEMINAR SERIES**

2:30-3:20 p.m., Wednesday, December 5, 2012

Physics Astronomy Building (PAA) Room A110

*Refreshments to follow in Benson Hall lobby.*

**"A CAREER FAR OUTSIDE THE BOX — A ChemE-Trained Lawyer”**

James W. McClain BS ‘61

Partner Emeritus, Brown Mart Haller & McClain LLP

**Abstract:**

    Engineering and law are normally considered to be distinctly different career fields.   Law students rarely take any university-level technical courses and engineering students concentrate on their technologies.  So why would a person who has trained and worked as a chemical engineer decide to become a lawyer?  Jim McClain will discuss how he merged his chemical engineering experience with law school to create an interesting and enjoyable career as a technology lawyer in chemical industries and chemical research.  His topics will cover:  What does a "hybrid" ChemE-technology lawyer actually do day-to-day and how does he/she learn the job?  How does he/she communicate and interface cooperatively with Chem Es and other researchers and operations engineers and with management on company projects?  Will their different roles result in conflicts?  Where can ethical issues arise?  And the most basic question - what personal factors should a ChemE consider when thinking about this kind of career?  Questions from the class will be welcome.

**Brief Bio:**

Jim McClain has a BS ChemE degree from UW as well as MS NucE and Law degrees.  After graduating from UW he worked as a refinery operations researcher for a major oil company and as a nuclear materials researcher for the US Atomic Energy Commission.  Deciding then to move out of the lab, he discovered that chemical-related industries were seeking lawyers who could handle industry legal problems in which key issues required a knowledge of chemistry and chemical engineering.  After getting his law degree, he worked as a staff attorney for oil, mining and metals companies.  He then switched to outside law practice and until his recent retirement was a partner in law firms providing legal advice to chemical, biotech, medical and advanced materials research companies, especially as to research, inventions, confidential information and technical employment.