

# CLASS NOTES

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER STURM COLLEGE OF LAW



1975 | TED BANKS



Ted Banks, JD'75, at the DU Law Masters dinner

**Ted Banks** emerged from DU Law armed with a veritable tool belt of legal knowledge, confidence and a job offer from corporate giant Kraft Foods. Yet, as he began to implement complex legal tactics in sensitive international licensing and policy at Kraft, Banks quickly realized that effective, targeted communication was the real gateway to achieving professional success. And as the simplest lessons in life are the ones that take the most diligence to effectively master, Banks spent the remainder of his time at Kraft honing his own communication skills.

In a large corporation such as Kraft, there is a constant need to educate employees about current good practice policies of the company, ranging from food safety to employee rights and benefits. Early in his career, Banks made the mistake of delivering law school-esque lectures while trying to explain policies to Kraft employees without a legal background. He was met with empty stares and alienation. One client

even threw a memo back at him, insisting, “I want an answer, not a legal treatise!”

Gradually, Banks learned to communicate more effectively with both client and employee. By opening his ears and considering such factors as age, culture, education and the specific concerns of a particular individual or group, Banks was able to formulate effective, calculated responses. This focused awareness is a skill that he acknowledges is essential, but difficult to teach.

“In order to be effective, you need to put yourself in the shoes of your audience and talk and write in a way that resonates with them, not that resonates with you,” says Banks. “The whole essence of being a lawyer is centered around communication.”

*Editor's Note: In April 2009, Theodore (Ted) Banks, JD'75, returned to the University of Denver Sturm College of Law to participate in the revived DU Masters Program. During the Masters Program, a select group of alumni, recognized for their mastery or accomplishment in a particular field of study, return to the university to teach courses to current students and participate in various Masters events. Banks was recognized as the College of Law's 2009 Master for his work as corporate counsel with Kraft Foods for 32 years. In addition to his lecture in a class taught by Professor Jay Brown, Banks also led a discussion about corporate compliance at a lunchtime event for current students and participated in an alumni Continuing Legal Education panel in downtown Denver.*