Richard J. Bonnie – Professor, University of Virginia School of Law

Professor Richard Bonnie is an expert in the fields of criminal law and procedure, mental health and drug law, public health law, and bioethics. He is distinguished faculty member of the University of Virginia where he holds appointments as: Harrison Foundation Professor of Medicine and Law, Hunton & Williams Research Professor, and Professor of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University.

Professor Bonnie earned a B.A. degree from Johns Hopkins University and an LL.B. degree from the University of Virginia School of Law. While in law school, Bonnie was notes and decisions editor for the Virginia Law Review, and a member of the Order of the Coif and the Raven Society. Immediately following his graduation in 1969, he became assistant professor at Virginia for one year before a period of military service and service as associate director of the National Commission on Marihuana and Drug Abuse. He returned to the Law School in the fall of 1973 He became Director of the Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy in 1979.

Bonnie has been actively involved in public service throughout his academic career. He served as a member of the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse (1975-80) and from 1979-1985, he was Chairman of Virginia's State Human Rights Committee, which is responsible for protecting the rights of residents and clients of Virginia's public mental health and mental retardation services system. Bonnie served from 1981-88 on the Advisory Board for the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Mental Health Standards Project, from 2004-2007 on the ABA Task Force on Mental Illness and the Death Penalty, and from 1988-1996 on the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Mental Health and the Law.

He is currently chairing the Commonwealth of Virginia Commission of Mental Health Law Reform established by the Supreme Court of Virginia in 2006. He is also currently participating in the MacArthur Foundation's Research Network on Mandated Community Treatment as well as the Foundation's new Initiative on Law and Neuroscience. He has served as an adviser to the American Psychiatric Association's Council on Psychiatry and Law since 1979, and also serves as an adviser to the Committee on Ethics, Law and Humanities of the American Academy of Neurology.

Bonnie was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences in 1991. He recently chaired an IOM/NRC committee on reducing tobacco use (2004-07), and is serving on the NRC Committee on Law and Justice, as well as the governing board for the Division on the Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Bonnie has previously chaired IOM Committees on Underage Drinking (2002-03), Injury Prevention and Control (1997-98), and Opportunities in Drug Abuse Research (1995-96), as well as an NRC panel on Elder Abuse and Neglect (2001-02).

Bonnie was vice-chair of the IOM Committee on Preventing Nicotine Dependence in Children and Youths (1993-94) and was a member of the IOM Committee on Increasing Rates of Organ Donation (2005-06), the IOM Committee to Assess the System for

Protection of Human Research Subjects (2000-02), the IOM Committee to Assess the Science Base for Tobacco Harm Reduction (1999-2001), and the National Research Council Committee on Data and Research for Policy on Illegal Drugs (1998-2001). In 2002 he was awarded the Yarmolinsky Medal for his extraordinary service to the IOM and the National Academies.

He has been deeply interested in issues involving psychiatry and human rights. In 1989 he was a member of the U.S. Department of State delegation that assessed changes in the Soviet Union relating to political abuse of psychiatry and performed a similar mission for the World Psychiatric Association in 1991. In 1993 he became a member of the Advisory Board of the Network of Reformers in Psychiatry in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and was a member of the board of directors of the Global Initiative on Psychiatry from 1997-2006.

Bonnie is a fellow of the Virginia Law Foundation. He is a charter fellow of the College on the Problems of Drug Dependence and has served twice on the Board of Directors of the College. He is co-chair of Physicians and Lawyers for National Drug Policy (PLNDP), an organization established in 2004 as a "public health partnership" to promote evidence-based policies relating to alcohol and other addictive drugs.

He has received numerous awards, including the American Psychiatric Association's Isaac Ray Award in 1998 for his "contributions to forensic psychiatry and the psychiatric aspects of jurisprudence" and a Special Presidential Commendation from the APA in 2003. He is also a distinguished honorary fellow of the American Psychology-Law Society. He received the Thomas Jefferson Award, the University of Virginia’s highest honor, in 2007