

Garth Thornton, "Reflections on a Career in Legislative Drafting" June 20, 2009: New Orleans, Louisiana

Week One of the 15th International Legislative Drafting Institute (June 15-26) concluded with a most remarkable presentation by this year's honoree, Garth Thornton. Garth's text on *Legislative Drafting* has been an essential resource for drafters in Commonwealth countries during four decades, since publication of the first edition in 1970.



Garth addressed this year's Institute participants at a reception in the Tulane Law School Faculty Lounge on Friday afternoon, June 19th, sharing his "Reflections" on drafting experiences drawn from a 50-year career that began in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1958. Garth noted two major differences in legislative drafting during that time—the increasing use of plain language to make legislation understandable by members of the public and the use of computers.

Garth singled out two books that contributed significantly to the plain language movement, first mentioning David Mellinkoff's *The Language of the Law* ("What a wonderful book!") and then commending Professor Richard Wydick's "wonderfully succinct" text on *Plain English for Lawyers*. Professor Wydick was the 2008 Institute honoree. Both the Wydick and Thornton dedication pages are posted under "Institute Honorees" on the Institute's website: http://www.law.tulane.edu/ildi/.



We've posted on our website a

complete copy of Garth's "Reflections," so that everyone can read more about his remarkable career in legislative drafting, including an account of "the week my hair began to turn grey" because of a demanding drafting project.



After his remarks, Garth and his wife Judith visited informally with the 2009 Institute participants as the Faculty Lounge reception continued. The Thorntons departed New Orleans on Saturday, June 20th to complete a round-the-world trip, bringing them to New York City, then Switzerland and the Netherlands for a family visit, and finally returning to their home in New Zealand.