Looking at Love and the Law

by Sally Holterhoff

For many people, Valentine’s Day draws attention to special relationships in their lives and is celebrated by the giving or receiving of chocolates, candy conversation hearts, roses, or even jewelry. In honor of the year’s most romantic holiday, let’s take a look at another special relationship, the one between love and the law. While it’s true that taking the legal view may put a damper on romance, the two topics have been paired throughout history, since the days of Adam and Eve and their eviction from the Garden of Eden. From recent proposals of “e-marriage” to the age-old question of what happens to the engagement ring in a broken engagement, the legalities of love and romance are challenging. Here are some books, articles, and Web resources that shed some light on various aspects of this intriguing combination.

Books in the Law Library Collection


Paul W. Kahn, Law and Love: The Trials of King Lear. PR 2819 .K34 2000


**LAW JOURNAL ARTICLES**

(accessible via HeinOnline)


**ON THE WEB**

For a discussion of how the legal definition of marriage has changed over time:
www.law.cornell.edu/topics/marriage.html

For a family law professor’s blog covering love and marriage:
http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/family_law/

Finally, as Professor Probst pointed out to 1-L legal research students in class recently, there is a 2002 Pennsylvania Supreme Court case with a famous rhyming dissent. Here is an excerpt from **Porreco v. Porreco**, 811 A.2d 566 (Pa. 2002):

* A groom must expect matrimonial pandemonium when his spouse finds he’s given her a cubic zirconium instead of a diamond in her engagement band, the one he said was worth twenty-one grand. . . .