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THE ADVOCATE

Vol. XXVIII, No. 2

The Official Student Newspaper of Fordham University School of Law since 1967

October 9, 1996

CAPRA AWARDED REED PROFESSORSHIP

On September 17, 1996, Daniel Capra was named as the first Reed Professor as the Reed Professorship in Civil Justice and Dispute Resolution was inaugurated. The reception gained the attendance of nearly all the faculty as well as members of the board of the Phillip Reed foundation, and Phillip Reed, Jr.

Professor Daniel J. Capra has distinguished himself as one of the truly great classroom lecturers in the nation. Students consistently praise his ability to convey complex course subjects in a manner that is simultaneously clear and engaging. His writings on subjects relating to civil justice are extensively cited.

Professor Capra is a graduate of Rockhurst College (1974) and received his law degree from the University of California at Berkeley (1977). He was an associate with the law firm of Lord, Day & Lord (1977-79) and was an Assistant Professor at Tulane -Law School (1979-81). He has been at Fordham Law

since 1981.

Professor Capra is a columnist for the *New York Bar Journal* and a coauthor of the casebook, *American Criminal Procedure*, 4th Edition. He has published articles on ethics in the *Brooklyn Law Review*, the *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics* and the *Trial Lawyers Guide*. He was the faculty moderator of the *Fordham Urban Law Journal* for 9 years. He is former chairman of the Committee on Professional Responsibility of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, current chairman of the Association's Committee on Legislation, and chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Rules of Evidence, ABA Section of Litigation, Trial Evidence Committee.

Philip Dunham Reed, to whose memory this professorship is dedicated, was a leading industrialist, patent attorney, and international corporate executive during the great epochal periods of



Dean Feerick giving Phillip Reed Jr. a golden ram in honor of his father and the Philip Reed Professorship.

this century: the boom of the twenties, the Great Depression, World War II, and the postwar reconstruction.

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on November 16, 1899, he was graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1921 with a degree in electrical engineering. In 1922, while still a student at Fordham Law School, he became vice president and patent counsel for Van Heusen Prod-

PLEASE SEE CAPRA CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

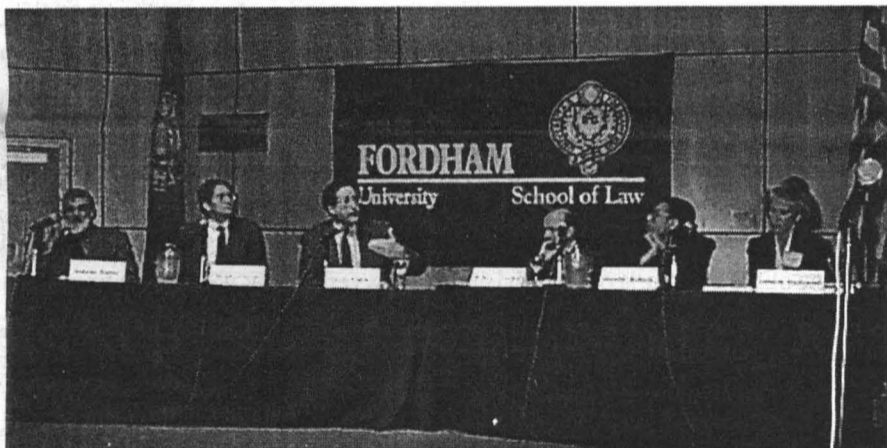
1996 VOLUNTEER FAIR LINKS STUDENTS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

On Thursday, August 15, 1996, the Community Service Project (CSP) held its annual Volunteer Fair in Platt Atrium. Stressing the importance of community service, Thomas Schoenherr, the Director of the Public Interest Resource Center, and Helen Lee, a Fordham alumna now working with the Legal Aid Society offered encouraging speeches to the first year class. After the discussions, first years had the opportunity to meet with representatives from over twenty-five volunteer organizations.

The atrium was filled to capacity with students who encountered a diverse range of organizations. The East Harlem Tutorial Program, American Red Cross in Greater New York, the Fortune Society, and DOROT, Inc. are just a few examples of the organizations in attendance. Students were able to speak with the representatives, pick up literature, and sign up for organizations with which they might volunteer. Andrew Campbell

('98), Joanne Quinones ('97), and Naeem Vargo ('97) coordinated the successful event.

The Volunteer Fair was a kick-off for CSP activities this year. CSP is a volunteer clearinghouse which coordinates matching interested Fordham Law students with public service organizations. The volunteer opportunities available to Fordham students include working on a crisis hotline; delivering food; donating to campus blood, food, and clothing drives through the Community Outreach Program; and tutoring children through the Tutoring Program. CSP extends a "thank you" to all of the organizations and representatives, as well as to all of the first years who attended the event. The members of the CSP urge students to stop by the Public Interest Resource Center in Room 08 of the Law school to learn more about what opportunities exist for volunteering time and skills. Or, you may contact the CSP by dialing ext. 6970.



The panelists comprised some of the best known theorists in academia

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS

In mid-September Fordham had the honor of playing host to a symposium on "Fidelity in Constitutional Theory". For the first time in almost ten years the most revered theorists/philosophers on the meaning of the Constitution of the United States were to convene to share their ideologies, or, as one of the panelists remarked, their heresies. This analogy seemed a true one, especially in light of the opening lecture for the symposium. The Robert L. Levine Distinguished Lecture was delivered by Professor Ronald Dworkin, of New York University School of Law and Oxford University on "The Moral Reading of the Constitution". The McNally Amphitheater was packed to standing room only capacity as all were charmed by Professor Dworkin's eloquence, but perhaps not all were persuaded by his argument. The success of the opening lecture paved the way for a successful symposium, as between 250-300 professors and students attended altogether, some from as far away as the University of Oregon and the University of Texas. The panelists comprised some of the best known theorists in academia from, amongst others, the University of

Chicago, Yale, Harvard, Georgetown, New York University and, of course, Fordham.

While most of the symposium dealt with different connotations of fidelity, whether it be as integrity, translation, etc., the symposium's last panel discussed whether the Constitution deserved any fidelity. Professor J.M. Balkin of Yale Law School started the discussion with an amusing discourse on the remedies to "Constitutional Evil" which led to some interesting responses and, in particular, heated responses from Professor Dorothy Roberts from Rutgers University. She questioned whether African-Americans should just chuck the whole thing and ignore the Constitution altogether, instead of trying to work within the confines of its rules, as did Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Black Panthers. The consensus of the panel seemed to be that it does deserve our fidelity, but with some reservations, or as Professor Flaherty stated, "Yes, it deserves our fidelity, but not our blind faith." The symposium will be published by The Fordham Law Review.

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STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION

THE SBA COLUMN NUMBER 2: OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

By: Allan Urgent, SBA President

What is the Office of Student Affairs responsible for other than locker assignments and obtaining student identifications? I spoke with Dean Nitza Milagros Escalera on Thursday, September 19, 1996, to find out.

As usual when I enter her office, a bright smile greeted me as I sat down to chat with Dean Escalera. She informed me of the many events and programs falling under the purview of the Office of Student Affairs, but said that the main purpose of the office is "to make the experiences of students more enjoyable." In order to accomplish this goal, she attempts to isolate the causes of stress for students, and then find ways to reduce that stress as much as possible. The Dean works as part of a team attending several administrative and faculty committee meetings, as well as meetings of bar associations to address student needs.

From a student's perspective, the calendar of the Office of Student Affairs begins with the orientation for first year students, and ends with the graduation of third year day and fourth year evening students. In between, Dean Escalera works with the Fordham Counseling Center to schedule stress management workshops for students, and she worked with Dean Feerick to schedule the *Town Meetings* which were held during the week of September 23. Her office also coordinated *Family Day* on September 29, 1996, giving the families of first year students an opportunity to meet the faculty and administrators of the law school.

Dean Escalera is in constant contact with the Student Bar Association. She coordinated an orientation program for student group leaders, and she coordinates meetings between student leaders and Dean Feerick at least once each semester.

You can expect to see even more from the Office of Student Affairs in the coming months. Dean Escalera will work with the faculty to coordinate a workshop for first years on "How to Take Law School Exams," and a workshop on "Choosing Electives," in the spring. Her office also oversees the functioning of the *Academic Enrichment Program*, which holds student-led workshops on writing legal memoranda and briefs, and preparing for the legal writing and moot court competitions. This year, the Office of Student Affairs also plans to recognize students' accomplishments at an awards program prior to the traditional ceremony at graduation.

Interaction With Students

In addition to the programs and events coordinated by her office, much of what Dean Escalera does for students on a daily basis is inter-personal. She and the people in her office attempt to serve as resource people for students. Having both a J.D. and a Masters Degree in Counseling, Dean Escalera addresses a wide range of academic and personal issues for students.

Dean Escalera believes that at the least students should feel that their needs are being heard. She spends a large amount of her time trying to be a good listener for students. If she is unable to answer a student's question, she will refer that student to a more appropriate office.

While Dean Escalera keeps her door open to students most of the day, the best way to utilize her office is to schedule an appointment. By doing so, students ensure that they will have her undivided attention. She also noted that she is always open to suggestions, and constructive criticism on how her office can better serve students' needs. Dean Escalera can be reached at extension 6818.

Meeting the Needs of Evening Students



"Don't hesitate to use me," states new Assistant Director for the Office of Student Affairs

PLEASE SEE SBA COLUMN
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Family Day Topic: Student Life at Fordham Law School

**Remarks Made by Allan Urgent on Sunday, September 29, 1996*

Good afternoon, and again, welcome to Fordham Law School. We are delighted to have you with us today.

I was elected to the position of Student Bar Association President last April by the students of Fordham Law School. I had to aggressively campaign to win the election. So now I feel a bit like a politician trying to make sure that I fulfill the promises in my platform and keep people happy.

After this, I'm quite certain that would never want to run for anything higher than a local office. How many people have ever gone to visit their state legislature? I'm from Massachusetts. I went to visit my state legislature when I was in high school. It was chaos. I was like, "what the hell's going on in here?" There was no semblance of order or anything.

But here at Fordham Law School, on our small scale, I feel that what I do has a real impact on students' lives. And I feel that way because we have a small, close community of students, faculty, and administrators. I have no doubts that people here are doing the best they can, to help us, as students, maximize the brief (though costly) experience that is law school.

We in the SBA do a lot of things, but I think that the greatest thing that we do is serve as community builders. And with the raw materials that we have -- outstanding faculty, dedicated administrators, and intelligent, diverse, collegial students, it would be really hard for us not to be successful.

One of the best parts of my job is that I get many opportunities to speak with people about the school. And I get excited when I talk about Fordham. I get

excited because all of the right elements are here. Most of us know that things could be better, and a lot of people are thinking about ways to make it happen. I see glimpses of what we can become when I talk to people, which I get really excited about.

So I try to play my small part to be a catalyst in the effort. Sometimes I'm not as humble about it as I should be, but people humor me.

But I really should turn to the specific thing that I was asked to address today, aside of my normal rambling, which I'm sure Dean Escalera has come to expect from me by now, and that is student life at Fordham Law School.

Okay, so how many people are familiar with the television series *Star Trek*? Now, I know what you're thinking, "he's one of those Generation X people, can't stay focused on anything -- too much MTV," but I asked you that question for a good reason. I want to make an analogy, which is a fundamental part of what we do here. And I like to think that I'm putting my education to good use. So, by way of analogy, I would say that life as a law student at Fordham moves along at the speed of Warp nine.

You ever watch *Star Trek*? Everything is flying past the screen really quickly. The people are moving back in their seats. It's like, Whoosh!!! And it doesn't slow down for three years.

The challenge of being a law student is trying to digest a lot of complicated material, with unfamiliar words and phrases, in a very short period of time. And then there is learning to write like a lawyer, so that we can continue to bill at

PLEASE SEE FAMILY DAY
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION

By: Allan Urgent, SBA President

After going from office to office asking Fordham Law's Administrators to tell me what they've done for us lately, two first year students made me aware that many people are unclear of the purpose of the Student Bar Association ("SBA"). I would like to take a few minutes of your time to clarify this now.

The SBA has three principle functions. First, the SBA serves as the official body for relaying the needs, concerns, and suggestions of students to the faculty and administration of the law school. To fulfill this role, I have planned visits to the heads of all of the law school's administrative offices. I will then write reports to you, the student body, here in the *Advocate*. If you have something that you want the faculty or administrators to know, please leave a note in my campus mailbox, or call the SBA at extension 6951.

Second, we allocate the funds for, and help to coordinate the activities of the law school's 29 SBA-funded student organizations. The officers of the SBA recently spent numerous hours reading and discussing this year's funding requests. The SBA Treasurer will publish a report on the budget in this issue. An orientation program for student group

leaders was held on Wednesday, October 2, 1996.

Third, the SBA hosts social events that are intended to appeal to a large cross section of the student body. We see the purpose of these socials as helping students to build relationships that will last long beyond Fordham Law School. The remaining SBA-sponsored events for this semester will be listed in the forthcoming SBA Update.

I feel that it is incumbent upon me to address an important issue related to SBA social events. It has been brought to my attention that some people think that the SBA is promoting alcoholism through our drinking events. I apologize to anyone who may have developed this perception of us. The reason that we provide a few hours of free beer each month is that we've found it an effective way to bring people together to socialize. However, we are actively trying to do this in other ways. By no means do we encourage drinking alcohol to excess. We want you neither to hurt yourselves, nor to perform at any level other than excellent in your classes. Collectively, we all have an interest in ensuring that Fordham Law School produce the best lawyers it can, so please remember to drink responsibly.

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE BUDGET PROCESS

During the first week of the semester, each student group was asked to submit an official request for SBA funds. Each proposal outlined the specific group's planned or potential activities for the upcoming academic year and listed the estimated cost of each activity. Many of these proposals were thorough and reflected careful planning and great enthusiasm on the part of the student groups.

Throughout the early weeks of September, the SBA committed much of its time to reviewing these budget proposals. After careful analysis and discussion, the SBA attempted to allocate the available funds in the most efficient and fair manner.

In order to allow each student group a

Following is a list of the funds allocated to each student group for the 1996-1997 academic year:

ACCESS	\$250.00
THE ADVOCATE	\$2,000.00
APALSA	\$3,800.00
Battered Women's Advocacy Project	\$2,000.00
BLSA	\$4,400.00
CATHOLIC LAW STUDENTS	\$1,100.00
CIGAR LOUNGE	\$750.00
CLAN naGAEL	\$1,200.00
Community Service Project	\$1,200.00
Death Penalty Defense Project	\$1,750.00
Family Court Mediation	\$400.00
FEDERALISTS	\$900.00
Finance, Securities and Tax Forum	\$3,000.00
FOLLIES	\$2,500.00
GALLA	\$1,500.00
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY	\$2,500.00
HOUSING ADVOCACY PROJECT	\$1,400.00
Italian-American Law Students	\$1,800.00
Jewish Law Students	\$2,600.00
LALSA	\$4,400.00
LAW WOMEN	\$4,500.00
NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD	\$1,000.00
PHI ALPHA DELTA	\$3,000.00
REPUBLICANS	\$600.00
SPORTS LAW SOCIETY	\$800.00
SPORTS LAW SYMPOSIUM	\$2,500.00
Student Loan Repayment Group	\$1,300.00
Unemployment Action Committee	\$1,900.00
YEARBOOK	\$500.00

The SBA would like to thank all student groups for their obvious commitment to their various organizations and their cooperation throughout this entire process. We wish you all great success in the coming year!

SBA COLUMN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

"Don't hesitate to use me," Diana Sanabria implored the Evening Division Students at the September 25 Town Meeting with Dean Feerick. "I'm here for you. I'm here to serve your needs."

Ms. Sanabria is the Assistant Director for the Office of Student Affairs, and has been in her position at Fordham for about a month. She is the person specifically assigned to address the challenges faced by our Evening Division Students. As a newcomer, she is still trying to gain visibility, but those of us who have met her realize that she will be a valuable ally.

Ms. Sanabria told me that she tries to do anything that an Evening Student is physically unable to do because of incompatible scheduling. If a student has difficulty accessing an office, for example, she will pick things up for them, or speak to the faculty or administrators on the student's behalf. She makes sure that there are accommodations for our students who fall under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. If a student would

voice in the allocation process, the SBA invited representatives of all SBA funded groups to state their case for additional funds. A meeting was held to accommodate those who wished to address an open forum. Additionally, the SBA accepted written requests for additional funds.

The SBA reconvened to review the original allocations. While no group's allocation was reduced, a number of groups received additional funding for various reasons. The purpose of the final meeting, held on September 17th, was twofold; first, the budget policies and procedures were fully explained by SBA President Allan Urgent and, secondly, the budget was put to a vote. The final budget passed by a resounding majority!

FAMILY DAY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

those outrageous rates. That is very different from the style of writing that we've done in the past.

In addition, you've got everyone and their brother trying to tell you the "right" way to do something. So it's difficult. Then you throw in the inherent competitiveness of law school, the anxiety over grades, and the fear that a lot of students have of not finding a place in the job market. Combined, this can lead to a lot of low points during the year. I'm speaking specifically about first year now, which is what most people refer to when they talk about their law school experience. Each year has its own challenges, but for some reason that I haven't been able to figure out yet, the first year is viewed twice as importantly as the other two years.

The good side of being here is that I have made some of the closest friendships that I've ever had, and I've learned from some of the smartest people I've ever been around. And those are just the students. The faculty's not so bad either.

I think that it says somewhere in the *Bible*, "happy is the man that finds wisdom." My sense of what wisdom means is being able to have good judgment and make good decisions when common sense fails you. Being in this environment where things are happening so fast we are constantly forced to prioritize and reevaluate what the most important things are at any particular moment. I think that law school is good preparation for the type of decision making that we'll have to do when we are practicing law. So that's another good thing about being here. It's all a matter of perspective.

If you work hard, and you have a good study plan you can do well here. I'm my

biggest critic, so I think that I certainly could have done better, but I don't think that it's too much of a stretch to say that I've done well. And of the many, many, talented students, about 15 percent will either grade-on or write-on to the *Fordham Law Review*, which is a great honor. Employers in all areas of the law look very favorably on the members of Fordham's law review. And then, the rest of us, get a slight . . . attitude adjustment. Just a small one. I think that this is one of the factors in the well known tendency of law students to complain a lot. However, with some scrambling, and a little luck, the rest of us can find a job in today's job market. It may not be the one that we wanted initially, but I think that in time you can find a way to get to where you want to be.

Even though you're only getting one student's perspective, I think that many students would agree with me when I reflect on my time here and think, "that wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be." I wouldn't want to do it again. But having done it, I am glad that I did it here at Fordham. So that's my perspective on student life at Fordham Law School. Thank you for listening.

Shivering in the back seat in Room 311? We feel your pain. In the next issue, the SBA reports on conversations we had with the Office of Finance and Administration and the Registrar's Office.

THE ADVOCATE

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The Advocate is the official student newspaper of Fordham Law School. The goal of The Advocate is to report news concerning the Fordham Law School community and development in the legal profession. The Advocate also serves as a forum for opinions and ideas of members of the law school community. The Advocate does not necessarily concur with opinions expressed herein, and is not responsible for opinions of individual authors or for factual errors in contributions received. Submissions should be made on disk in MS Word (any version) or Word Perfect 5.1. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar. Advertising rates available upon request. Contributions are tax deductible.

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ADVOCATE STUDY REVEALS OUTLINE OF FORDHAM GRADE CURVE: MEDIAN GPA DROPS; 14% A's, 74% B's, 9% C's FOR ENTERING 1Ls

by Herb Detrick ('97)

Median GPA Lower

The median grade point average (GPA) for the 334 day students who entered Fordham Law School in August 1995 was slightly lower than the median first year GPA for day students who entered in August 1994, said Law School registrar Ken Pokrowski in a September 11 interview with *The Advocate*. The median GPA for the 118 evening students who began law school at Fordham last year was also slightly lower than that of their counterparts who first opened their law books two years ago.

The median first year GPA for day students in the Class of 1998 was 3.056, Pokrowski said. In comparison, the median first year GPA for day students in the Class of 1997 who entered Fordham Law in August 1994 was 3.091. The

corresponding first year median GPA for the recently graduated Class of 1996 day division had been 3.00.

The median first year GPA for the evening division of the Class of 1999 was 2.995. This compares with a median first year GPA of 3.004 for evening students in the Class of 1998. The median first year GPA for evening students starting in August 1993 was previously reported by Pokrowski as 2.99.

GPA is an evaluative statistic determined by calculating the weighted average of all course grades earned by a student. The numerical equivalent of a student's grade for a course is multiplied by the number of credits for the course. These weighted course grades are then added together and the result divided by the total number of credit hours represented to yield the GPA.

By definition, the "median" first year

GPA represents the exact middle of the GPA ranking for Fordham 1Ls. Armed with this information, this year's day and evening division 2Ls who wish to give an interviewer some idea of how their first year grades compared to those of other students can refer to the "median" GPA for their respective cohort.

For example, a day division student from the Class of 1998 who earned a 3.06 GPA during her first year at Fordham could legitimately tell a potential employer that her grades placed her "in the top half of the class." On the other hand, an evening division student from the Class of 1999 with a GPA of 2.99 would have ranked in "the bottom half of the class."

Until now, however, most Fordham Law School students have been forced to resort to broad generalities when describing their overall academic perfor-

mance to job interviewers. Phrases like "approximately the top third" and "approximately the top 40 percent" are used, often without reliable empirical support.

Silence Equals Dissent

Students who seek to discover more specific details of their class ranking invariably meet with silence from Fordham Law School officials. Transcripts issued to students by the registrar's office clearly state: "The Fordham University School of Law does not calculate class standings."

Yet official silence over the shape of the overall grade curve neither eliminates competition among students nor curtails students' interest in class rankings. As one recent graduate and Law Review editorial board member observed, "Fordham is monumentally competitive. People fight for a third of a

Below is a continuance of last issue's "Comprehensive Guide to Student Organizations." Due to deadlines, we were unable to print these summaries in the September 13 issue.

THE FORDHAM FOLLIES

The Fordham Follies is the marvelous musical that the students of Fordham Law School write, produce, and perform in the Spring. We welcome anyone who is interested in writing, performing, working behind the scenes, or a little bit of everything (including spoofing those professors you've held grudges against all summer!!) We have begun writing and are always looking for new ideas and funny stories about life at Fordham. Tryouts will be in November. Please watch for signs!!! If you have any questions please call Donna Mulvihill at (212) 3990228.

FORDHAM LAW WOMEN

The Mission of Fordham Law Women is: to inspire and support the professional aspirations of the women students of Fordham through a diverse group of annual activities; to support the professional aspirations of our mentors and colleagues, the women faculty and staff of Fordham; to contribute to our school by reaching out to alumnae and to other women's groups to share Fordham's strengths and to gather additional resources for the women of Fordham; to raise the consciousness of the Fordham community by communicating and celebrating the professional successes of women students, faculty, alumnae, and others; and to contribute to our community by participating in at least one service project each year.

Latino Awareness Month

POETRY SLAM

Thursday, October 10, 1996 @ 9 PM. Location to be announced.
Bring your favorite poems to share with everyone! Refreshments will be served.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 12, 1996. More details to come. Sign up at the LALSA board. (\$\$\$)
Join LALSA on this march on Washington for Latino Rights.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Sunday, October 13, 1996. More details to come. Sign up at the LALSA board.
Join LALSA in our effort to register voters in Lower Manhattan.

HISPANIC NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION OPEN FORUM

Tuesday, October 15, 1996 in the McNally Amphitheater @ 6 PM.
Important issues raised at the 1996 HNBA Florida Conference will be discussed.

LALSA GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 16, 1996. Room TBA

CUENTOS NEGROS - REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL.

Sunday, October 20, 1996 @ 3PM. Sign up at the LALSA board. (\$\$)

MOVIE NIGHT - EL NORTE

Thursday, October 24, 1996 in Room 109 (First Floor, Residence Hall) @ 8 PM. Refreshments will be served.

BRUNCH AT ABBY'S & TOUR OF EL MUSEO DE EL BARRIO

Saturday, October 26, 1996. Sign up at the LALSA board.
Join LALSA for a fun brunch at Abby Seda's and then a quick tour of El Museo de el Barrio. FREE!

SOCIAL/DANCE WORKSHOP

Friday, November 1, 1996 in the Law School Cafeteria @ 5 PM to 7 PM. (\$\$) Sign up at the LALSA board.
Help LALSA wrap up Latino Awareness Month with a bang. Learn to dance Salsa and Merengue (and maybe bachata and bolero, too!) and then show off your new skill at the Copa Cabana afterwards.

All events are free except where otherwise indicated (\$\$)

For more information and/or to sign up for individual events, call the LALSA office at 636-6950.

grade."

One reason for grade competition during the first year of law school is economic. With large firms paying \$85,000 and higher to first year associates, students have a tremendous incentive to hold themselves out to recruiters as "tops in their class."

Indeed, despite the efforts of many law school career counseling centers to place students into on-campus interview slots with high-salary firms, some recruiters still look first and foremost for high GPAs. During one on-campus interview conducted last year by an attorney for a big Wall Street firm, the first question asked was, "So what about the grades?" In that case, the interviewer was also a Fordham alumnus.

In addition, students who are seeking employment as law clerks will find the task of landing an interview with a judge easier if their resume shows that they were "selected for LawReview." At Fordham, this means that a student either "graded on" by completing the first year of law school with a GPA in the top 10

percent, or broke into the top 25 percent and submitted a writing sample of sufficient quality to "write on."

Officially, the minimum GPA for making Law Review is a guarded secret. According to Ken Pokrowski, after grades are posted for the spring term, a list of first year GPAs is sent to Professor Joseph Perillo, the faculty advisor for Law Review. Perillo then determines what the Law Review GPA "cut offs" will be.

"They don't tell us what the cut off is," says a Law Review staffer who preferred not to be identified by name. "I know of one person with a GPA higher than mine who didn't make Law Review. But they tell us that we aren't supposed to know. They won't even confirm for an employer if we graded on or wrote on."

The Law Review member in this instance had a GPA of about 3.5.

The official policy of not publicizing any part of the class standing list for first year students was restated by Pokrowski during his interview with The Advocate.

The Fordham Law School registrar "does not release the Law Review cut off," Pokrowski said.

Additional confirmation of this policy of silence comes in the form of a letter sent last year to Professor Perillo requesting more specific information about class ranking. Although reasonable in both scope and content, the letter remained unanswered.

Grading Policy Guideline

Notwithstanding the official policy of silence about the statistical distribution of student GPAs, Fordham Law School does issue an official grading policy guideline to all professors. The formal guideline sets forth specific targets for the percentages of A's, B's, and C's which a professor may assign in any one class.

The current grading policy guideline provides that 5-15% of final grades for each first year class be in the "A" range, and another 5-15% in the "C" range. Consequently, the expected course grade for about 80% of Fordham 1Ls is in the "B" range.

All Fordham professors are required to follow the grading policy guideline when assigning grades to 1Ls. Grades of straight A, B, and C are worth 4, 3, and 2 points each. Grades of A+, B+, and C+ are worth a three-tenths of a point more. Grades of A-, B-, and C- are worth three-tenths of a point less. The only grade in the D range is a straight D, which is worth 1 point. Students receiving an F earn 0 points for the course and must repeat in order to graduate. Except for Legal Writing, all first year coursework must be graded within the parameters of a clearly defined curve.

The key elements of the current grading policy were adopted by a vote of the faculty on March 22, 1995. The current policy replaces a grading system which was remarkably similar, except that 25-35% of grades for required courses had to be in the "C" range. The new policy is also distinguishable from the old because it provides that grades of B and B- are to be distributed in roughly equal numbers for the 45-65% of students whose grades fall in that range. The old policy set a "blanket" grading standard for the 65-75% of grades which were above the "C" range.

According to one professor who was involved in the discussions leading up to the adoption of the new grading policy, reducing the percentage of mandatory "C" grades was justified because students being admitted to Fordham Law School were bringing demonstrably higher academic credentials than those admitted just a few years ago. Similar attempts to "renorm" grading curves are standard practice in the educational testing field.

Purpose and Effect

Enforced compliance with both the old and the new grade curves has helped Fordham Law School avoid the kind of rampant grade inflation that is now the norm at many undergraduate institutions -- and even some law schools.

More importantly, says Pokrowski, "The curve brings different sections into parity." Because requests to deviate from the guideline must be expressly approved by Associate Dean Michael Martin, no one section is likely to gain or suffer unfairly from the overly lenient or unduly harsh grading policies of any one professor.

One other recent modification to the Fordham Law School grading policy is that first year day and evening students must be graded on separate curves. For example, a professor may teach one course at two different times to both day and evening students. In the past, when one final exam was given, generally stronger day section grades tended to "override" the grades earned by evening section students. Pokrowski says that grading day and evening sections separately "gives a fair reflection of the curve."

As a result of the transfer of 35 students to the day division, evening division enrollment for what is now the combined 2L cohort at Fordham has declined by nearly 30%. In addition, since the start of last year, the size of the combined

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

CASE ON POINT

Peralta v. La Placita Dominca Market Corporation

by Leslie duBois

Saturday, New York City. I began the evening with a pint of beer, friends all around. The bar, of course, was crowded. I took an elbow in the small of my back, a Velcro strap against a chunk of my hair, then some guy's hairy hand across my jaw. Nonetheless, I tried to stay in high spirits; this was nothing compared to the push and shove of a library assignment. Eventually, however, Mr. Hairy Hand's gesticulations demanded more space than my body could allow, and I took a solid blow to the right side of my head. I screamed law-suit.

Could I have collected money damages?

Not according to Justice Goldstein of Queens County Supreme Court. He says *fuhsidaboudit*. On August 27, 1992, he heard a case dealing with similar facts. Plaintiff, Mr. Peralta, stopped

for a beer at Defendant's bar, where the Defendant needed some carpentry work done on the bar floor. While Mr Peralta knelt down to check, Defendant stepped across his fingers. With his hand damaged, Mr. Peralta sued. *Peralta v. La Placita Dominca Market Corp.*, 260 N.Y. App. Div. 603 (1993), was decided against him, claim dismissed. Justice Goldstein held that it was not an event which ordinarily did not occur in the absence of negligence. More importantly, he said that "there are certain occurrences which one might consider sufficiently recurring as to be incidental to the usual routine of life in our society, and, while one might strive to avoid them, their occurrence is not necessarily actionable" In other words, Mr. Peralta, stuff happens.

EYE ON THE DEAN

The Town Meeting

by Robert Bruce Cowhey ('99)

The administration held meetings for the day and evening students recently in order to apprise students of some long term goals of the school and to acquaint themselves with students.

Two dozen students and nine mem-

Dean Feerick shed light on some of the school's accomplishments in national events and recognition for public service law programs as well as some proposed programs.

bers of the administration showed up for the first town meeting of the fall semester on September 26, 1996. Dean Feerick spoke about some of the long term plans in the works for the school. It is expected that in around seven or eight years there will be another building at the Lincoln Center campus for law school expansion, housing clinical education offices and meeting rooms and possibly a tech

center. While the proposed education building and possible additional dormitory space will not be the exclusive domain of the law school, they will allow considerable growth.

During the 1996-97 academic year clinical programs will be able to move into temporary accommodations in the Post Office Building, leaving some underground space for student groups to squabble over.

Dean Feerick also announced that during the summer he and a few others traveled across the country meeting with alumni, strengthening connections for Fordham graduate employment and bringing back great plunder for the school (millions of dollars in fact). A great deal of alumni contributions every year go toward financial aid, with some also going to fund the library, the Career Placement Office and the Environmental Law Journal.

Later, a student asked what Fordham was doing to enhance its national reputation. Dean Feerick shed light on some of the school's accomplishments in national events and recognition for public service law programs as well as some proposed programs. The Moot Court Program has been very successful at the national level, as have teams in the tax competition and

The Board of Directors of Fordham Law Women

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Women Students, Faculty, Staff, and Alumnae

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in conjunction with New York Cares Day

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R.S.V.P. 636-6956

- Wear old cloths, bring a lunch
- 8:00 a.m. Opening Ceremonies: continental breakfast, register, turn in voluntary donatioin of any amount to New York Cares.
- 9:00 a.m. Teams depart for assigned public schools by subway or chartered bus
At our school our team will work together painting murals and line games, repairing fences and play equipment, reorganizing libraries or planting bulbs.
- 4:00 p.m. Buses return for closing ceremonies with refreshments and dancing.

We Look Forward to Seeing You on the 19th!

Fordham has also hosted important academic conferences, and faculty members' writing in scholarly publications is far more impressive to the wider legal community than to students who don't have time to read them.

the Jessup Competition. In the eight years since it began, the LL.M. program has earned a solid reputation in European Community Studies. Out-of-state student enrollment has increased greatly over the past five years, from c. 5% to c. 30%, with California being the most represented state after New York and New Jersey.

Fordham has also hosted important academic conferences, and faculty members' writing in scholarly publications is far more impressive to the wider legal community than to students who don't have time to read them. A national merit-based scholarship to pick up shining stars before other schools can get their mitts on them is under development. Several alumni have already pledged significant amounts in support of this plan.

The Town Meetings will become a better forum for discussion between students and faculty as more students start to come to them. Expect town meetings to take place in the future on a bi-weekly basis. You can, in fact, ask questions on the mundane or monumental. If administration members present don't have an answer, you will at least have brought the matter to their attention. And if you don't ask, who will?

FORDHAM LAW CIGAR LOUNGE

presents

Sponsored by A.J. Gordon's

BLOWIN' SMOKE



Message from Cigar Lounge President, Keith Markel

It's been a few weeks since our last meeting so I wanted to update everyone on what has occurred since:

1. The T-shirts are in the making. The T-shirts will be sold for \$15 each to all the students and at all the events to help defray all of our expenses. All the members are required to purchase at least one T-shirt in lieu of a membership fee. I will let you know when they are ready.

2. The SBA has set our budget at \$750. Additional funds will be provided for printed invitations to our big event. While this might seem small we have been receiving donations from various organizations and cigar establishments. In addition to the money we plan to make from the T-shirt sales we feel we should have enough.

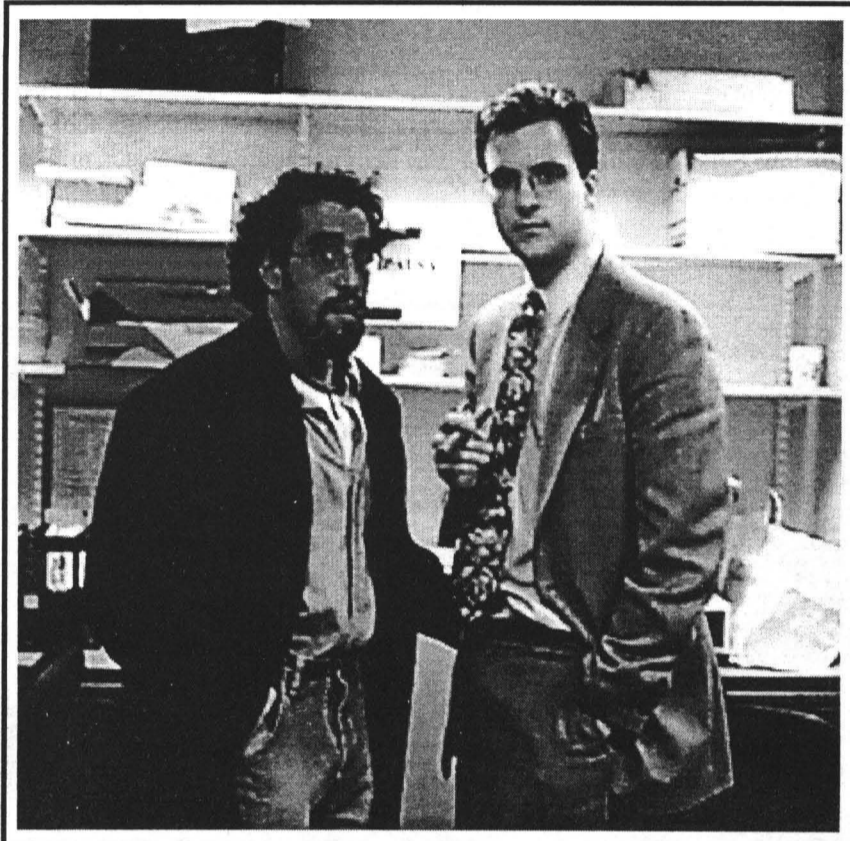
3. We have arranged a cigar tasting night at A.J. Gordon's every month (see invitation on lower right corner of this page). All members are strongly encouraged to attend. Although these events are not intended to be networking opportunities, we will invite some faculty and alumni. A.J. Gordon's is a great bar located on the Upper West Side. On our selected nights there will be an open bar, hors d'ourves, and a wide selection of cigars offered at cost. The famous Alvis Sanchez will be there rolling cigars and offering the finest handmade Cuban seed cigars available. Everyone will receive a tasting form in which they can compare and comment on the cigars they

smoked. Every month a page in the Advocate will be donated to reporting on the "Out Of The Humidor Nights." We are encouraging any member interested in writing cigar articles about these nights or about any cigar related story to do so and submit it to either myself or Kenneth Persing in the Advocate office. Bring you friends, invite attorneys, faculty—this is a great way to meet each other.

4. As for the big event, it is tentatively scheduled for the beginning of November. The exact date depends on the location, we are deciding between a few establishments. We are really excited for it—we plan on inviting over 500 attorneys as well as the entire Fordham faculty. An advertisement for this event was printed in the last edition of the alumni news letter and once we pinpoint the date and location we will be sending out formal invitations. If anyone has suggestions about where the event should take place, please feel free to call me. We will need everyone's help with the enormous task of mailing out the invitations so stay tuned for this upcoming mailing blitz.

5. As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to call me at 212-582-3606 or Tara at 212-262-4460. Also, I know of many cigar nights and places to buy your cigars if anyone is interested in other non-Fordham Law Cigar Lounge events or is having trouble finding their favorite cigar.

The Fordham Law Cigar Lounge's membership is currently at over 120 members, however, if anyone is still interested in joining, please contact Keith Markel, (212) 582-3606 or Tara Goldsmith, (212) 262-4460.



Cigar Lounge President Keith Markel and Advocate Editor-in-Chief Kenneth Persing enjoy a cigar while preparing the first edition of "Blowin' Smoke"

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LEGAL VOICES

from the Editors

Ask not what your school can do for you, but ask what you can do for your school

At the most recent Town Meeting, a student questioned Dean Feerick on Fordham's reputation, specifically, what he and the administration were doing to enhance the school's national stature. An excellent question, but one that could have been thrown right back at the student: "What are *you* doing to enhance the school's national stature?"

We, the students, overlook the fact that we're an integral part of what makes Fordham Law School. What we do, say,

win, lose, write, read, work, and volunteer represents Fordham more importantly than any other facet of the school. We should not be relying on the publishing prolixity of our professors to enhance Fordham's reputation. Nor should we be relying on our alumni's benevolence and nor that of our hard working Dean.

Yale Law School has a reputation for graduating students who use the world as their philanthropy. This is primarily

the result of a three year education that puts less emphasis on getting the firm job and more emphasis on thinking with foresight. Yale students may have that luxury because of their historical reputation, but historical reputation is a self fulfilling prophecy; history often happens in the present tense.

Fordham law students need to get their noses out of their books and get started on being more active in the community, the nation, and the school itself. We need to do some of our own world-stomping.

The bell curve that cracked

Herb Detrick's article on the Fordham grade curve was thoroughly researched and documented. It sheds bright light on

an administration policy that in the past was rather clouded in impenetrable darkness. Ironically, some might say it may have been better left that way.

His article does raise one interesting point, however. Does the grade curve apply to upper level students? And if it does, isn't it unfair? Upper level courses are much smaller, with some classes edging only a handful of students. Isn't it possible for 12 students to know everything there is to know about landlord-tenant law, and consequently, for all of them to get A-'s and better? Surely it must be so. If the grade curve were to be strictly enforced on these twelve students, a grave injustice would occur.

The welcome mat

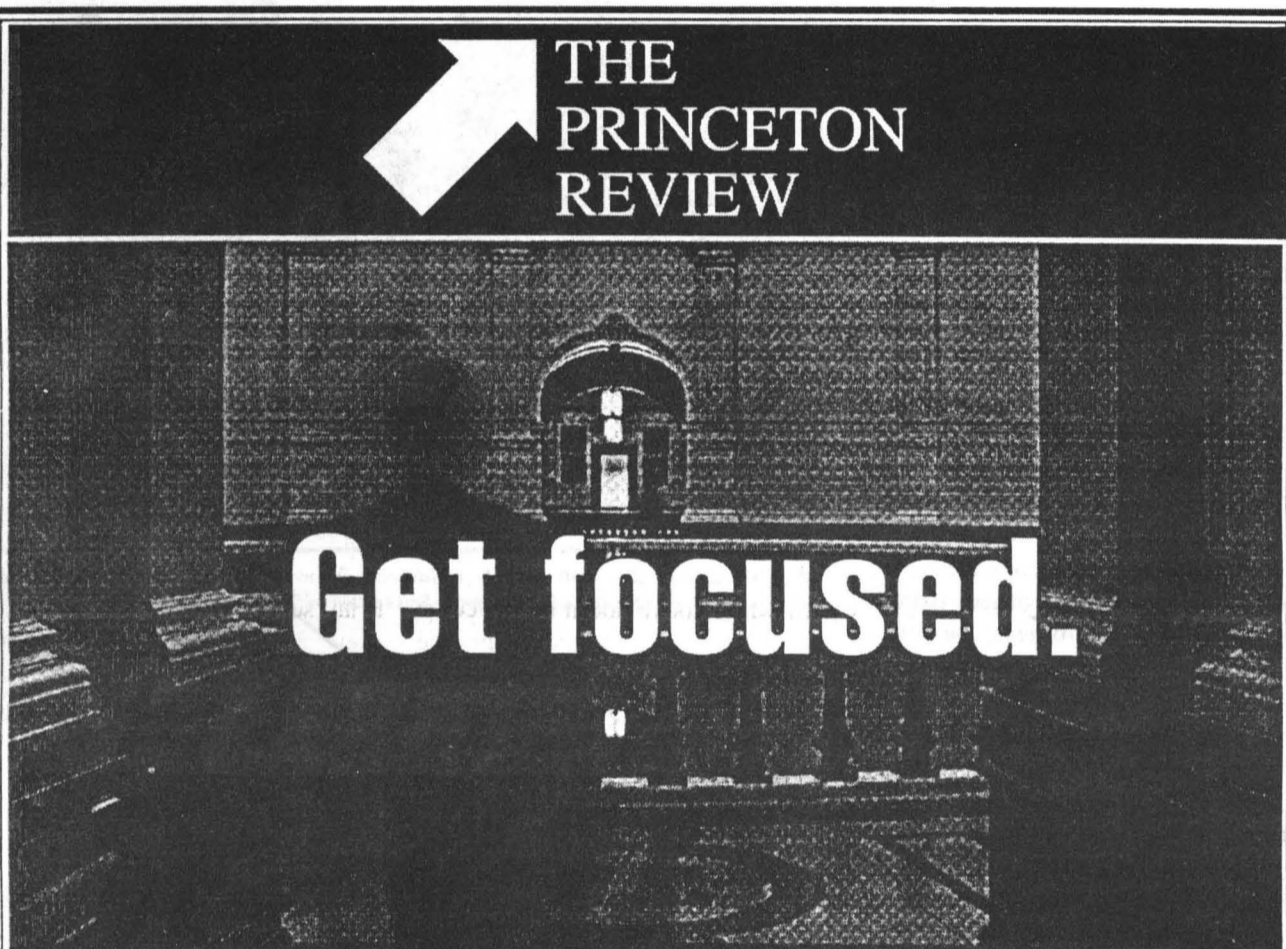
Several new writers have joined the *Advocate*. Susan Altamore is the columnist for *Reality Bites*, a ruse on real life tragically intertwined with the existential experience of law school. Robert Cowhey plans to keep a close eye on our Dean in *Eye on Dean*. Coupled with Amy Fahey's articles on *Fordham Alumni*, students should have a good list of contacts to call before loan payments become due. And lastly, Leslie DuBois will keep everyone on top of the latest cases that for certain reasons are not in our casebooks. Read her column and you'll see why they're not.

The voices that need to be heard

If you would like to respond to anything written in the *Advocate* or would like to submit your own article, please type it, double spaced, and leave it either in the *Advocate* office located in Room 26, or drop it off in Mat Paulose's law school mailbox --Eds.

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Four incumbants - two Senators and two Assemblymen - failed to win their parties' nomination in Democratic and Republican primary elections held in mid-september. The four will still appear on the November ballot on other party lines. Senator Robert j. DiCarlo (R - Kings/Richmond) lost to Jogn M. Gangemi while Senator Howard E. Babbush (D - Kings/Richmond) lost to John Sampson. Assemblyman Francisco Diaz Jr. (D - Manhattan) lost to Nelson Antonio Denis and Assemblyman John Brian Murtaugh (D - Manhattan lost to Adriano Espailat.



MULTISTATE BAR EXAM

A Multistate course should focus your attention. Unfortunately, other courses just aren't achieving this with their large classes, unrealistic practice questions, and lack of experience in standardized testing. The Princeton Review method is different. We cover the material actually on the Multistate, and give you proven techniques for mastering that material.

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Do you have too much time on your hands?
Do you have no consideration for contracts?
Do you feel like abandoning Civil Procedure for failure to state a claim for which relief can be granted?
Do you simply own no property and therefore see no reason for studying it?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, *The Advocate* can use you. If you are interested in writing for the Official Student Newspaper of Fordham Law School, please contact us at 636-6964.

ALUMNI FOCUS: WILLIAM FRANK

by Amy Fahey

As the semester quickly progresses, and the work load continues to pile up, it is important to step back and look at the larger picture. What do I hope to get out of all of this studying? Where would I like to be five, ten or thirty years from now? To consider the many possibilities ahead, we need only to look at our predecessors, those who have survived Fordham Law School and are now in interesting, successful, and fulfilling careers.

One particularly interesting alumnus is William Frank, a 1966 graduate of Fordham Law School. Throughout his career at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, Frank has done extensive trial work and litigation, representing major corporations, investment banking firms and individuals. A partner at Skadden since 1975, Frank headed the New York Office for some time, and today he is the Legal Practice Partner for the litigation side of the firm, which includes securities litigation, anti-trust, labor issues and white collar crime. In addition to practicing law, Frank helps manage the firm, is a trustee of the Federal Bar Council, chairman of the board of regents, and a member of the board of directors of Georgetown University, where he did his undergraduate studies. At Fordham, he serves on the boards of advisors of the Graduate School of Business Administration and of the Law School, and is President of the Alumni Association at Fordham Law.

Impressive credentials indeed. Frank has had an exciting career with incredible growth. After graduating from Fordham, he served two years in the Army, spent one year in Vietnam, then traveled the world. Upon returning, he received several job offers, at both big and small firms.

He ultimately took a job at a small firm, as he was extremely impressed with the people he met there, particularly the man who interviewed him, our very own Dean John Feerick. As the twenty-third lawyer to join Skadden, Arps, Slate Meagher & Flom in the late 1960's, Frank saw his "small boutique firm" grow into one of the largest law firms in the world. Throughout the seventies and

eighties, the firm branched out into additional areas of practice, and expanded into new geographic regions, both nationally and internationally. Presently, the firm is at the forefront of legal practice, with approximately 1,100 lawyers spread throughout the world. "And it all started with an interview with John Feerick!"

Working for such a big law firm can be very exciting business. "With a big firm, you have what a lot of people refer to as the 'cutting edge issues,' the big issues. The issues that are on the front page of The Wall Street Journal. From the perspective of Corporate America, the issues that we deal with are probably the most interesting." With offices all over the world, Skadden has recently litigated in Columbia, South America, Geneva, London, and throughout the United States. "We have a very exciting practice. Everything is new, everything is different."

With roughly 75 Fordham graduates practicing law there, Skadden is certainly a popular place among our alumni. And in fact, many of our graduates practicing at Skadden have come back to Fordham to teach.

Being a Fordham graduate means a great deal today. "At one time it was difficult in the forties and fifties to get jobs at the so-called 'white-shoe' firms coming from Fordham. Now, Fordham Law students are sought by every large firm all over the country, and we can't get enough of them at Skadden Arps. They are among our best lawyers."

"You are at a great school and have great teachers. My advice is to study hard, but also get to know your fellow students, and enjoy it as much as you can. Among law schools, the 'Fordham Family' is very unique. Once you identify yourself as a Fordham Law person, it opens doors, it's a family of opening doors."

"When you go out there to look for a job, the firms, big or small, aren't just looking for legal people. They want whole people, real people. And from what I have seen and experienced, these are the kind of people that come from Fordham."

CAPRA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ucts, Inc. In 1926, Philip Reed joined General Electric, the company he was destined to remain with for his entire life. Named to the board of directors in 1938, he was elected chairman of the board in 1939. Under his dynamic leadership, GE's sales grew from \$396 million in 1939 to over \$4 billion in 1957.

He served as chairman of the U.S. Council of the International Chamber of Commerce; member of the Committee for Economic Development, the Council

for Foreign Relations, the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships, and the International Executive Service Corps. As much as any private U.S. citizen during the twentieth century, Philip Reed helped secure peace and cooperation among nations and foster open channels of international communication.

Philip Reed's genius as a giant in U.S. industry and finance was always tempered by his concern for the welfare of his fellow human beings, both in the United States and abroad. The corporate "matching gift" program in part of the legacy of his noble life.

Reality Bites

By Susan Altamore ('99)

Most first year students in law school spend their weekends exploring New York, studying, writing the first draft of their short memo or just hanging out with their friends. A 35 year-old first year spends it a little differently: "S-u-u-u-e, he's bothering me." "S-u-u-u-e, she's annoying me." "S-u-u-u-e, can I have a friend over?" "S-u-u-u-e (with a note of hysteria), she's wrecking my Legos!" Ah yes, the sweet dulcet tones of children — surely about as far away as you can get from the law school mindset.

I know, you think I'm exaggerating. "Come on. Kids aren't really like that. Today's kids are cool, 'with it', into exploring the Internet and playing Sega, too busy with their own lives to interfere that much with their parents." Well, I'm not exaggerating; far from it. In fact, what I wrote above doesn't even come close to the reality. I've had over five years of experience being a weekend stepmom to four kids now aged 7 through 12, and let me tell you it's the most challenging and exhausting job anyone could ever have. The stress of school pales in comparison; there it's only you, the only worry being studying and trying to grasp the elements of a negligence action and the difference between specific and personal jurisdiction. At home, it's physical needs — food, clothing, making beds (getting them to do it sometime before noon), safety (as in protection from a sibling fighting mad that you took the red big ball to sit on which is exactly the same as the big blue ball) — and emotional needs — why does this friend never call me back? Why can't I have a sleepover this weekend? I never get to have a sleepover! Why do I always have to sit in the back? — all against a background of trying to find time for yourself, your partner and the grocer, drycleaner and laundry room.

Remember how you were as a kid: dreaming, fighting, running, playing, heedless to the world around you? Well, that's exactly how kids are today — despite all the rumors and New York magazine articles to the contrary, children in the suburbs today are almost exactly the same as we all were 10, 15, 20 years ago. Sure, parents are a little more concerned with safety — the kids now have to wear helmets when they bike ride, and maybe they can't bike that far from home till they're 11 as opposed to 8 or 9 — and much more into "being involved" (wait until you experience PTA mothers!), but it's really not that different. The kids play with computers but they also play with footballs and basketballs. They may

have Sega now but they still have Barbie, GI Joe and Legos too. Pre-teen girls still have slumber parties and keep diaries. Nine yearold boys still secretly like Bambi and the Aristocats. And they all still love stuffed animals, looking "cool" and fighting with their annoying brothers and sisters as much as we did!

Kids today are more sophisticated, that's true, but only in certain ways. For as much as they understand that parents or grandparents divorce, they still want them to be married. Even though they understand the details of sex at an earlier age, the boys still stand on the other side of the room while the girls "Macarena" together during the junior high dances. And they've all heard about drugs, but Oreo cookies and Carvel ice cream are still the snacks of choice.

All in all, it's a very pleasant contrast to law school. It really is true that it keeps everything in perspective. But even more than that, it reminds me what we all

have to keep in mind: there is more to life than work. I know, everyone says that, and we've all heard that "you can't have it all," but it's true: if you expect to have more than one child, you and your spouse will not be able to devote the attention to your profession that you think it requires. Having children is an enormous commitment. Infancy is actually the easy part, believe it or not. Then it's more a question of physical needs. After that it's both physical and emotional. Children need and demand our attention: you had better get used to the idea now that that attention is going to be required, more likely than not, right at the time you're trying to juggle five different tasks for the home and office. There just aren't going to be enough hours in the week, let alone the day, sometimes to get it all done — and you thought 15 credits a semester was tough to manage!

I'm glad I have my "other life." From a practical viewpoint, the demands of partner, children and home (including a seemingly endless renovation project which you don't want me to start on about!) force me to be more efficient with my time and prioritize my obligations at school. But even more importantly, my kids, the children of my heart, force me to keep in touch with reality: while we all want to become lawyers to help people, or to have a challenging career, or to be successful, the real way in which we will all eventually be measured is through our children — their happiness, their emotional well-being, their success. To achieve in that respect is the real challenge we face.

UPCOMING APALSA EVENTS

NAPALSA Conference in Washington D.C., October 10 to October 13, 1996. If Interested, please contact Emma Lee at 636-6947

Cuentos Negros - Repertorio Espanol, in Honor of Latino Awareness Month. Co-Sponsored by APALSA and BLSA. Sunday, October 20, 1996 @ 3:00 p.m.

APALSA PARTY, Saturday, 10/26 @ "PULSE" - 54th between 2nd & 3rd, free admission with graduate school I.D. Open Bar from 10:00 to 11:00.

Bottle and Glass

by James C. Maroulis

After decades of mediocrity and abuse, California wines have finally come into their own. California now produces good wines in all price ranges. Over the last two years, I have been drinking more wines from California than from any other place. Today's column examines the basic California wine options available in New York wine shops.

California names its wines after the type of grape used. Wines with over 75% of one grape variety are permitted to put the grape name on the bottle; these wines are called "varietals." Almost all of California's best wines are varietals.

California wines are relatively easy to buy because they are labeled in a simple, logical fashion. When you look at a bottle of California wine, it is pretty easy to determine what it will taste like because the label will tell you what type of grapes were used to make the wine. After you have tried enough of these wines to learn which varietals you like, you will have a pretty good idea of what to buy.

Differences from French Wine

Now that California wines are moving up in the world, it is only natural to compare them with French wines. From a consumer's perspective, California wines compete very favorably against French wines in several markets. Certainly, California makes better cheap wine than France. Not only is California

king of the jug wine market, but most California wines under \$8 are better than comparably priced French wines. Cheap French wine is generally a losing proposition. Although the French make some great wines, at the low end of the market, they export some really nasty plunk. In the middle end of the market (\$8-20), California produces many fine bottles that compete with their French counterparts. Further, in New York, there is probably a better selection of wines from California at this price range. At the high end of market (\$20 and up), the French continue to rule. Although many California makers are now producing special "reserve" wines that cost \$50-100 a bottle, these wines generally do not reach the heights attained by the top French vineyards. Even in this area, however, California is closing the gap, and its only a matter of time before we're going toe-to-toe with the Frenchies.

Although California and French wines may be compared, there are some fundamental differences between them. First, in many cases, California vintners make a different style of wine from their French counterparts. The California style is generally more fruity, more sweet, and less tannic. Although these stylistic differences may have something to do with the different climates in these two areas, it is also the product of a conscious choice by the wine-makers. Second, California wines mature much more rapidly than most French wines. I know you've heard aphorisms that include allusions to wine improving with age, but California wines

are usually pretty short-lived. Most California reds drink very nicely when they are four years old. By age ten, many of these wines are in their golden years. By age 20, most of them are long dead. Although some of the "reserve" bottlings may last 20 years or more, California wines generally don't age like the French Bordeaux of yore, which sometimes needed a quarter century before they even began to taste good. Further, California whites usually don't last more than five years. Third, because California's climate is relatively stable, there are few "bad" years in California, and you generally don't have to concern yourself about learning which vintages are good. Some years are better than others, but I have never noticed the vast range in quality that appears in different French vintages.

Sparkling Wines

California is now making some very nice sparkling wines. To make these wines, California vintners usually employ the same methods that are used in the Champagne region of France. Further, these wines are made from the same grapes that are used in Champagne, the Chardonnay and the Pinot Noir.

Although California Sparkling Wines are still a cut below the best French Champagnes, many of them are real bargains. All of the major French Champagne houses are now producing inexpensive California alternatives. In the \$10 range it is really tough to beat a good California sparkling wine. I have had great experiences with Domaine

Chandon, Piper Sonoma, and Mumm's Cuvee Napa (all around \$10). Although California makes some nice sparkling wines in the \$20 range, I think that comparably priced French Champagnes are better.

Red Varietals

California primarily produces four major red wine varietals and also produces small quantities of three other varietals. Most of these varietals are traditional French grapes. The lone exception is the our native Zinfandel, which was the subject of last week's column. Here is a brief description of California varietals.

Cabernet Sauvignon. The Cabernet is not only the principal red wine grape in the Bordeaux region of France, but it also is the most common red varietal made in California. Cabernets are usually the strongest, richest California wines. Commonly they have intense black currant flavors and are the most tannic wines from California.

California Cabernet spans the qualitative spectrum. Cabernet is used to make both jug wine and the most expensive California reds. Overall, the quality level is quite high. Some of the cheap Cabernets are a good bargain. See, e.g., Glen Ellen, Fetzer, Sutter Home. Further, some of the reds in the \$8-20 range can be very tasty and a good bargain. See, e.g., Kendall-Jackson, Simi, Burgess, Caymus, Mondavi. I have been somewhat disappointed with the few expensive California Cabernets that I have tried.

Merlot: Merlot is the second most common red wine grape in Bordeaux. Like the Cabernet, it has a strong flavor. Yet, it is softer and rounder than the Cabernet. It also matures more quickly and the wine is drinkable at a younger age. A good Merlot can be a very tasty, seductive wine.

I have been disappointed with the Merlot options from California. At the low end of the market, I have never found a great bargain. Most of the inexpensive Merlots are light, acidic, fruity wines that miss the classic Merlot richness. Further, I have been amazed at how few Merlots sell in the \$8-20 range. The variety in New York is terrible, and I have never found a great Merlot buy. Finally, I haven't drunk any of the premium Merlots, but I hear that they are fabulous.

Pinot Noir: Don't do it - just don't do it. The Pinot Noir is the heartbreaker of grapes for several reasons. First, it is very difficult to grow. Not only doesn't it grow well in France, but even in the prime growing real estate of Northern California, the Pinot Noir often withers. Second, because it is hard to grow, the price for French Burgundies, which are made from the Pinot Noir, is astronomical, and the price for California Pinots is pretty high. Third, and worst of all, a handful of these wines are absolutely mind-blowing. There is nothing like a good glass of Pinot Noir. It combines wonderful, fruity, cherry flavors with deep reach earthy tastes. The problems is that you can never find more of it. I have seen many people waste countless dollars chasing that ever elusive bottle of Pinot Noir at the end of the rainbow. I used to laugh at them, until I found myself doing it. As someone who's been there, take it from me, don't do it.

Zinfandel My last column discussed

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Zinfandels. Suffice it to say, they are the best California wine bargain going.

Petite Sirah Over the last year, I have begun to see more California *Petite Sirahs* coming on to the market. This is the principal red wine grape of the Rhone Valley in southern France. It generally produces strong, heavy reds that taste of red currants and spice. In France, this grape is typically grown in very warm climates and reaches a high degree of ripeness. Thus, it would probably do very well in California. I have not had enough California *Petite Sirahs* to form an educated opinion. I can say, however, that they generally appear to be a pretty good bargain and are probably worth a look.

Gamay: The Gamay is the main grape used to make red Beaujolais. I generally find that red Beaujolais is an insipid, light, fruity wine. Incidentally, always beware when someone describes a wine as "fruity." "Fruity" wines in New York commonly turn out to be weak, insubstantial, and tasteless. Most of the Cali-

fornia Gamays I have tried have been very "fruity."

Cabernet Franc: The Cabernet Franc is the third most commonly grown red wine grape in Bordeaux. Very few French wines use large quantities of this grape. Yet, occasionally you may run across a bottle of California Cabernet Franc. This grape has a flavor that is very similar to the Cabernet Sauvignon. It is slightly less heavy and less tannic. I have tried a couple of California Cabernet Francs and they were both very good. This is another varietal to look

White Varietals

There is little variety in the realm of California white wines. Chardonnay dominates the market and a few other varietals make token appearances now and then.

Chardonnay: Chardonnay is the principal grape of white Burgundy, the

King of California white wines, and the world's favorite white wine. Chardonnay has a variety of flavors; it

can be smooth and buttery or strong and austere. It can taste like lemons, pears, apples, or pineapples.

There is a flood of Chardonnay on the market, but I am always impressed by how good the general quality level is. At all price ranges, there is plenty of good Chardonnay available.

Sauvignon Blanc: The Sauvignon Blanc is the major white grape from Bordeaux. In California, it plays second fiddle to the Chardonnay. Although lacking some of the Chardonnay's fruity character, the Sauvignon Blanc can produce a flexible range of flavors and can be smooth, mellow, acidic and slightly grassy. In California, this varietal is sometimes called the Fume' Blanc. This dual naming system has caused needless confusion.

Sauvignon Blanc, or Fume' Blanc, is a great value. There are few expensive Sauvignon Blancs, and the inexpensive ones are very nice. I strongly recommend that you try a bottle of the Mondavi Fume' Blanc (\$8), the Simi Sauvignon

Blanc (\$8), or the Caymus Sauvignon Blanc (\$11).

Reisling: Last year I said that I would try some California Reislings and **get back to you**. Well, I **haven't**. I tried several French Reislings and they were very nice. I understand that California is producing both dry and sweet wines from this grape, and that many of them are very good. Unfortunately, I have continued to avoid this varietal because I always expect sweet plunk.

White Zinfandel I don't like White Zinfandel.

Paraphernalia Corner

Several months ago, I purchased a fine new piece of wine paraphernalia the Vacu-Vin. This device allows you to store partially full bottles of wine in a vacuum, and thus keep the wine from going bad. If wine is exposed to air for several hours, its flavor deteriorates. The Vacu-vin prevents this by sucking all of the air out of a bottle and plugging the bottle with a reusable rubber cork. I have been very happy with this \$8 piece of equipment. Further, it makes a great gift.

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G.P.A.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

2L cohort at Fordham has increased from 452 to 457 students. This net increase of five students, Pokrowski says, is due to an excess of students transferring into Fordham Law School over students who either transferred away or dropped out.

One side effect of the new mix of 374 day students and 83 evening students is that it creates uncertainty among 2Ls about the current median GPA for the 2L day and evening divisions. Although the first year median GPAs for day and evening 2Ls have been released by Pokrowski's office, the changing composition of the 2L cohort has resulted in some shifts in the mid-point of the two curves.

Further evidence of recent changes in the shape of last year's 1L grade curve comes from the same Law Review staff member quoted above. According to the staff member, some students who did not make Law Review during the summer were offered positions on Law Review in September. Although "affirmative action" factors apparently play a part in the Law Review selection process, even slight variations in Law Review GPA cut offs mean that a few students who were not accepted in July received a pleasant surprise upon returning to school for the Fall term.

For students hoping to learn more about how their GPAs compare to those of their classmates, the Fordham Law School grading policy guideline offers little satisfaction in terms estimating class rank. If the grading policy guidelines are taken at face value, students with B- to B+ GPAs can only quote a line from the reverse side of their transcripts and say, in effect, that they have met "the standard expected of a significant majority of Fordham students."



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