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KENTUCKY'S LAW SCHOLARSHIPS

By ELVIS J. STAHR, JR.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In this article Dean Stahr of the College of Law, University of Kentucky, discusses a topic that is of increasing interest to Kentucky's lawyers. Born in Hickman, Ky., he is a son of Circuit Judge E. J. Stahr. After receiving his A.B. from the University of Kentucky he was a Rhodes Scholar from 1936 to 1939 and holds law degrees from Oxford University in England. He entered general practice in New York and after serving for several years with a Wall Street law firm he became Dean of the College of Law in 1948, and assumed added duties with the University as Provost in 1954. In World War II he saw service with the Infantry and was discharged as a Lt. Colonel. His last special assignment was in 1951-52, when on leave from the University he was an Assistant to the Secretary of the Army.*

One of the most important steps taken by the legal profession in Kentucky in recent years is the plan to establish scholarship assistance for deserving and needy law students of high moral character at the University of Kentucky College of Law.

As announced last November in a letter addressed to all members of the Kentucky State Bar Association, these scholarships are to be known as KENTUCKY LAW SCHOLARSHIPS and the money necessary to maintain them is being contributed by all members of the legal profession throughout the state. The scholarships are "living" scholarships rather than "endowment" scholarships and all of the funds contributed each year will be used to furnish direct aid to carefully selected young men and women who are having a desperate time financially in completing their legal education.

A committee of attorneys appointed by the president of the Kentucky State Bar Association will select the recipients on the basis of character, academic record, and proved financial need.

The basic, long-range purpose of KENTUCKY LAW SCHOLARSHIPS is to improve the quality of the future bar of Kentucky. They are not designed to increase the number



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of students who study law at the University of Kentucky or to increase the size of the bar. The objective is to improve the quality of legal education for all students by providing a nucleus of high-quality students whose work will help to keep up proper standards for the whole student body and the law school itself.

For instance, too many of the most promising students are forced to spend twenty to forty hours a week in outside employment while attending law school, with the result that the very student who has to make the greatest sacrifice does not get as good a legal education as other students.

One of the finest results of the scholarships will be that in a few short years there will begin to be infused into the Kentucky Bar each year a small group of outstanding young lawyers who feel a special obligation to the profession that has helped them when they needed it most—an obligation to maintain high standards of integrity, competence and unselfish service.

Although the need for financial assistance to those preparing to enter the legal profession has been met in various ways in other states, the KENTUCKY LAW SCHOLARSHIPS probably are unique because they offer *every* Kentucky lawyer an opportunity to help some struggling law student in a modest way each year at a time when this help is most needed and will be of the most benefit. The success of such a plan depends on a great many attorneys being willing to make annual contributions in an amount somewhat less than they might give at one time to an endowment fund. This feature makes it possible, however, for even the youngest member of the bar to participate and thus have a hand in furthering the cause of the profession.

A statewide committee of lawyers, with representation in all Judicial Districts and in most counties, has been formed to seek the necessary funds to begin awarding KENTUCKY LAW SCHOLARSHIPS in September, 1955. These representatives of the scholarships in each local

bar have been explaining the plan to the lawyers in their communities and seeking contributions since last November, and every report received has been most encouraging. Every effort is being made to complete this year's fund campaign not later than March 31, 1955, and a full progress report will be made at the spring meeting of the Kentucky State Bar Association. None of the money contributed will be used for administrative purposes, since the scholarships will be administered financially through the Kentucky Research Foundation, a nonprofit charitable corporation. Contributions are fully deductible for state and Federal tax purposes when made payable to that Foundation and should be sent to Kentucky Law Scholarships, College of Law, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

The idea for these scholarships originated with a group of young lawyers. The College of Law joined with them from the beginning in an effort to develop the kind of plan which would attract the enthusiastic support and wholehearted participation of the entire bar. Many members of the bar, including Chief Justice Brady Stewart and other members of the Court of Appeals, and Oldham Clarke, president of the Kentucky State Bar Association, have contributed valuable time and advice during the two years of planning which have gone into this project. Four lawyers who prefer to remain anonymous contributed all of the funds necessary to get the plan organized and publicized.

Extending help to those who are about to enter the profession is one of the oldest, and best, and most fruitful traditions of The Law—a tradition which all members of the bar can participate in and thereby improve their profession immeasurably.