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Message From the President

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Message from the President

William F. Savino
*Alumni Association
President 1993-1994*



During the 1993-1994 term, our Association worked to involve itself more in the advancement of the Law School. The Association and the Law School demonstrated that working together they present a formidable team.

Since the first half of 1993, the Association has wholeheartedly supported the New Curriculum developed by Dean Barry B. Boyer, Acting Dean Thomas E. Headrick and others. The New Curriculum adjusts for the changes in our profession, eases the students' transition into it and maximizes the chance that they will be hired. For lower teacher-student ratios, computers and other support, the New Curriculum required enhanced funding from Albany.

Deans Boyer and Headrick and the Association approached Albany both together and separately but always with the shared goal of accelerating the implementation of the new curriculum. After a letter writing campaign and private meetings (orchestrated by my adroit successor, Peter J. Fiorella) and with the help of the University's Trustees (such as Buffalo attorney Arnold B. Gardner) and Western New York's legislative delegation (including Law School alumnus Senator Dale M. Volker and Senator John Daly), the first of the necessary funds were obtained. Critically for the Law School's continued development, its benchmark calculation for funding was increased.

The Association and the Law School coordinated less smoothly as to the latter's physical plant. As my predecessor, the Hon. Mark G. Farrell, stated in his letter to the Association, providing an adequate Law School building by the end of this decade is one of our most critical concerns. Although the Association has uniformly supported the Law School's efforts to obtain a new building, some of its directors and officers have encouraged placement of any such building in Buffalo's downtown, where the Law School was located until 1973.

A *Buffalo News* editorial supporting a move downtown was followed by an op-ed written by Dean Headrick thoroughly explaining why a departure from the University's campus would represent "a step backwards." Because our Association held no consensus regarding location or even its role, it held a special meeting and then appointed a study group headed by Judge Farrell.

The dream of some that a new Law School be combined with the new state court building was set back by the diverging timetables for the construction of each. Although discussions and planning continue, the Law School has targeted a greater presence downtown, while everyone remains dissatisfied with the current physical plant. The Alumni Association has had an impact, however, and it is now working with the Law School to improve the building.

Dennis C. Vacco chaired our standing committee responsible for Law School liaison and the new building. The Association is honored by his election as state attorney general.

The interaction with UB President William R. Greiner over the building expanded into a luncheon meeting (which has now been adopted as an annual event). The meeting, attended by President Greiner, Provost Aaron Bloch and the Dean, gave the Association an opportunity to engage in dialogue on such issues as disappointing rankings in the press and the perception of a surplus of law graduates.

Other programs were new for 1993-1994. A photo directory for freshman law students was instituted with Association funds. Chairperson Robert J. Feldman and Executive Director Ilene R. Fleischmann worked on our UB Law credit card program and are working to set up a NYNEX cellular phone program, both of which provide service to our members and income for the Association.

The 1993-1994 income of the Association was given careful attention by the Treasurer and Treasurer Elect, Juan Irene and Garry M. Graber. Working with Vice President and Fiscal Committee Chairperson Phillip Brothman, they developed a line-item budget for 1994-1995 as part of the Association's plan to ensure a surplus each year.

Our single largest fund-raising event in 1994 was, of course, the Association Distinguished Alumni Award Dinner. The May 13, 1994, event was expertly run by Chairperson Samuel L. Shapiro and Assistant Chairperson (a new position for freshman directors) Kenneth A. Manning. The dinner's awardees, Terrence M. Connors, Hon. Vincent E. Doyle, Professor Winnie F. Taylor, James L. Magavern and Owen F. Mangan, drew a large attendance and gave trenchant presentations.

To permanently space the Convocation six months (rather than six weeks) before our dinner, Vice President and Chairperson Richard G. Birmingham and Assistant Chairperson William A. Lundquist undertook to convene it on October 30, 1993. The move to autumn was effected adeptly, and the panel presentation on estate practice was informative. The Jaecle Award was given to Hon. Henry Nowak, who had just retired after serving the 33rd Congressional District of New York in the House of Representatives for 18 years.

As in prior years, the Association held a luncheon in New York City on Friday, Jan. 28, 1994, to coincide with the annual meeting of the New York State Bar Association and in conjunction with our New York City chapter. Considering the chilling, torrential rain which minimized the number of walk-ins, attendance was commendable. During 1993 and 1994, chapter development events were also held in Albany, Rochester and Syracuse.

The GOLD Group (Graduates of the Last Decade) continued its annual Saturday lecture series and added further social events. These nut- and-bolts presentations have been phenomenally well attended. During 1994, the chair of GOLD passed from Paula Eade Newcomb to Douglas W. Dimitroff.

In addition to participating at each of the above events, I was lucky enough to be given an opportunity to speak at orientation, the Moot Court Dinner and graduation, and to participate on the Dean's Advisory Counsel. My main goal was always to convey the Association's goals of improving the ability (and marketability) of our graduates and advanc-

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ing our alma mater.

In addition to the various officers and directors mentioned above, Vice Presidents William J. Regan and Catherine T. Wettlaufer lent their able assistance, and Sharyn G. Rogers maintained the high standard for the Association's secretary established by her predecessor, Bob Schaus. No thanks would be complete without recognition of the support and coordination of Ilene Fleischmann, our executive director; Alan S. Carrel, who has been promoted from Associate to Vice Dean; and Patricia Warrington, the Alumni Office's administrative assistant.

At an October 1994 meeting with the Association, President Greiner reiterated his vision for the Law School's role within the University. Taxpayers everywhere are looking for higher education to "put something back" as it competes for funding. The Law School's graduates do not typically remain in academia; they enter the community and have extensive and diverse interaction with its institutions and citizens. The Law School can become the prototype for the other professional schools in the University. It can and should produce law graduates who excel as they develop their practical skills while always remembering the need to "put something back." ■