

Coming Into Focus

Sometime during 1999, I am convinced that all of us will be hit by the “millennial bug.” It will be a time to look back at the progress of the 20th century and to look forward to what the next millennium may bring.

Over the last several years, through columns, letters and speeches, I have shared with you my sense that legal education in the 1990s is profoundly different—particularly in terms of curriculum and demograph-



ics— than it was a generation ago. The stature of the University of Maryland School of Law within the world of legal education also has improved dramatically. The turn of the century is certainly an appropriate time to mark the major changes that have taken place over decades.

At the same time, the onset of a new century or a new millennium frequently seems to coincide with accelerated change. It is difficult to

speculate whether there is a causal link between the turning of the calendar and the quickened pace of change, or whether it is a coincidence.

There can be no question, however, that today the University of Maryland School of Law stands at a time of dramatic transformation and opportunity. Within a few months, we will leave the building where for the past generation, Maryland’s best legal education has been housed, and head to the “Law School at Campus Center,” where we will teach, learn and study during the next two and a half years. In early 2002, we will move back to our current site, but to a new building strikingly different than the current one. One of the reasons that many alumni, faculty and staff are working so hard on our new building is that we recognize this facility will create a paradigm for how the University of Maryland School of Law is perceived, not only by our students and faculty, but also by our fellow citizens within the state of Maryland and by legal educators, lawyers, judges and business leaders throughout the country.

Our law school, however, is more about people and programs than it is about physical facilities. It is with regret that this issue of the *JD* will tell you of the pending resignation of one of the finest law teachers in America.

Professor John Ester will retire after 39 years of teaching.

Finally, this issue will tell you about some leadership changes at the School of Law. Dave Bogen has served as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and as the conscience of our community and the voice of our faculty for four of the seven years I have been Dean. He has been a critical partner and has become a close friend. Dave was always a reluctant administrator and, at this time, has asked to be relieved of his decanal obligations. I thank you, Dave.

I am pleased that two outstanding faculty members have agreed to assume positions as Faculty Associate Deans. Professor Jana Singer, a universally respected colleague and admired classroom teacher, will be Associate Dean for Academic Programs. Professor Diane Hoffmann, a key partner in the success of our nationally acclaimed Law and Health Care Program, will be Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. Professors Singer and Hoffmann are the first two women on the faculty ever to serve as Associate Deans. I feel extremely blessed to have Jana and Diane take on these new leadership responsibilities.

There have been other leadership changes at the law school. José Bahamonde-González, whom I originally recruited two years ago to be Assistant Dean for Career Development, will be the all-important Assistant Dean for Administration. Dana Morris, formerly Director of Career Development, has now been promoted to lead that office as Assistant Dean. Shelley Gitomer, who has spearheaded our successful efforts to raise the \$8 million for the Building Campaign, will continue to serve as Assistant Dean for Development.

The importance of these individuals to the School of Law cannot be overestimated. Our recent successes have much to do with our outstanding faculty, our talented student body and our uniquely committed and generous alumni. These accomplishments would not have happened, however, without my colleagues within this “Dean’s Leadership Team.”

Talent. Dedication and perseverance. Ingenuity and vision. Collaboration. The keys to success for all of us as we approach the new millennium.

Donald G. Gifford, Dean