



**GARGOYLE COVER**

Alumni will notice that our cover this year is a reproduction of John Stewart Curry's remarkable mural "The Freeing of the Slaves." Lloyd Garrison, Dean at the time when the mural was painted on the Law Library wall, explains in a story on page XI "How the Painting Came to Be." The Gargoyle is indebted to Gerhard Schulz of the University's Photo Lab and to Mrs. Doris Lange, a free-lance commercial artist, for creating the cover design.

**THE GARGOYLE**

Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin Law School, published quarterly.

**Vol. 8 No. 1 Autumn 1976**  
**Ruth B. Doyle, editor**

Photos by G. Schultz

Publication office, Law School, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis. Second class postage paid at Madison, Wis. and Waterloo, Wis.

**Postmaster's Note: Please send form 3579 to "Gargoyle", University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, Wisconsin.**

Subscription Price: 50¢ per year for members, \$1.00 per year for non-members.

By now, most of our alumni are aware that Acting Dean Orrin Helstad was appointed Dean by the Board of Regents on June 11, 1976. He has served as Acting Dean for the past year. In that capacity, he made several important contributions to the *Gargoyle*.

He is one of us. He was an honored member of the Class of 1950. He has been a member of the faculty since 1961 and served as Associate Dean from 1972 to 1975.

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## HOW THE PAINTING CAME TO BE IN THE LAW BUILDING

By Dean Lloyd K. Garrison

When John Curry first showed me the sketch which he had made for "The Freeing of the Slaves" I thought it was one of the most impressive pictures I had ever seen, and I used to say to him that if we should ever have the good fortune to put up a new law building he must do a mural for us based upon the sketch. Neither of us at the time ever supposed that this dream would come true.

When, with the help of many people, including first and foremost President Dykstra, it became possible to build a new law library, the architect's design for the reading room resulted in a great wall space over the Librarian's desk which was very close to the shape of Curry's sketch.

One day a friend of the University who desires to remain anonymous came to my office with Judge August Backus of Milwaukee, and I showed them the

wall space and also Curry's sketch. This sketch had an extraordinary vitality because one could look at it at a very great distance and still see clearly the outline of every figure, and yet, at the same time, feel the strength of the mass of figures. My visitors at once perceived what the mural would be like, and believed that it would be a great painting. The one who must remain anonymous was particularly interested in the subject matter because of family associations with the Civil War and a family tradition of friendship for the Negroes. He generously contributed the funds which made possible the painting of the mural, and asked that his gift be accepted in honor of Judge Backus.

I felt from the beginning that the mural would be appropriate for the law building although it is a far cry from the more usual paintings depicting a court-room scene or Justice with a sword. Here is one of the great events in our constitutional history, an event fashioned in the midst of a

national crisis by a great lawyer-president. The mural not only symbolizes that event but proclaims in a noble and patriotic setting the dignity and freedom of all persons, however humble, in a democracy whose ideals of liberty are summed up and protected by the Constitution.

Underneath the mural on a wooden plaque are carved these words:

"And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

This is the last sentence of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The sentence at once explains the mural, to which the beauty of the language is a fitting compliment.

The carving of the plaque was executed with great skill and artistry by Harry E. Lichter of the Wisconsin Historical Museum Staff.