

1979 Visitation Report

University of Wisconsin Law School

The Board of Visitors of the U.W. Law School was established in 1958 by the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association for the stated purpose:

"of assisting in the development of a close and helpful relationship between the Law School and the University of Wisconsin Law School alumni on all matters of mutual interest including Law School facilities, curriculum, placement, admission and public relations of the school and the Bar."

The Visitors met jointly with the directors of the Law Alumni Association on November 4, 1979, and conducted the Visitation on November 5 with the Association board members, other alumni, and members of the judiciary. We note with regret the passing of Richard Trembath, WLAA board member, and James R. Schipper, Visitor. After our visit was conducted, Milt Lorman, Visitor, passed away. The contribution of these respected alumni will be sorely missed.

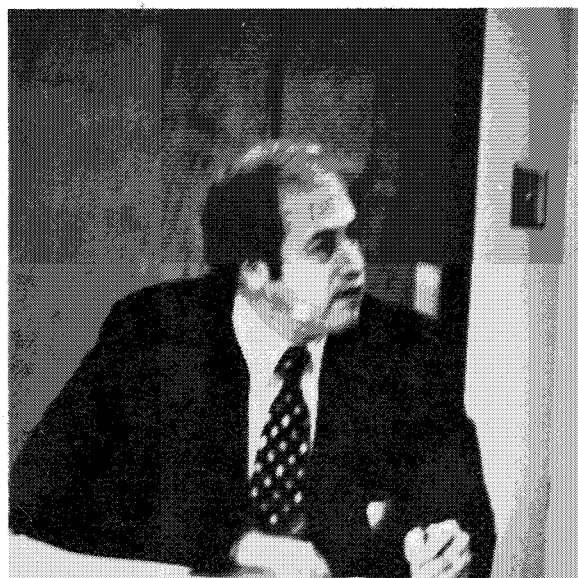
We were pleased to note that student interest in the Visitation has increased although the number of students that we had contact with remained quite small. In past years, the lunch session with students was held in the student lounge and was poorly attended, and the dialogue between students and the Visitors seemed restrained. This year the lunch session with students was moved to the Union, and representatives of specific student groups were invited to attend. It seemed to us that this improved the dialogue. The students were quite forthcoming with their comments about the school, and these comments in general were well thought out. Thus, we recommend that future visitations utilize the same approach for

the lunch session and, perhaps, expand it to two hours to permit more discussion. We were pleased to note that in addition to representatives of the Student Bar Association we also met with representatives from Black American Law Students (BALSA), PDP fraternity, and Steve Hernandez of LaRaza (Law School Hispanic student association). Our discussions with the students who did attend our lunch and open forum will be discussed later in the report.

On Monday morning the Visitors sat in on regular classes. During our observation of classes, we were sensitive to the criticisms of some students as to the teaching approach of one faculty member in particular. We were impressed with the quality of instruction from both new and experienced faculty members and noted various styles in the smaller classes that encouraged class discussion and participation by nearly all of the students in the class. We con-

tinue to encourage the faculty to employ small classes and class discussions as often as possible in both advanced and beginning courses. In addition, we recommend that experienced faculty members assist new instructors to enhance teaching skills and to employ techniques which place students in the role of demonstrating communicative skills and analytical talents. It is our feeling that all students and their future clients will benefit greatly from such an experience.

The subject of the afternoon forum was the impact upon the Law School of the legislatively mandated part time legal education opportunities. We remain concerned about the potential impact such a program will have upon the Law School's ability to attract and retain a high quality faculty. The admissions standards and other procedures applying to part time students are not different than those of full time, but we



Visitors Chairman Mark Barady



WLAA President-elect Dale Sorden

believe that we should continue to monitor the situation. We strongly encourage all students to attempt to complete their law school program on a full time basis wherever possible as it is our opinion that concentrated study is effective. For those interested, the Dean has prepared a statement about the part time legal education opportunities now available at the Law School. The statement is being distributed to all persons offered admission.

During the open discussion, a complaint was raised about the dislocation of Balsa from their office space. Representatives of Balsa indicated to us that their space was needed because of the counseling services they provide. We explored with the Dean alternatives for meeting Balsa's space needs, and on November 26th the Dean reported that space has been temporarily allocated to Balsa for the remainder of this academic year and probably for next summer. We strongly encourage the Law School to continue to attempt to make space available to the student groups wherever possible and to utilize arrangements such as that which Balsa has worked out with the placement office.

The lack of availability of certain courses on a regular basis prompted considerable discussion. In the past, we have heard complaints from students that they do not always have the opportunity to take wanted courses because of the liberal leave policy that is available to the faculty. We feel very strongly that the liberal leave policy should be continued as we understand that the availability of such a program has a high value to

the faculty and, therefore, significantly aids in the attraction and retention of highly qualified faculty members. However, we believe it would be helpful if students received early notice of faculty members taking leaves and that the leaves be planned so that no regular course would be taught by a part-time instructor.

On behalf of the Hispanic students, Mr. Steve Hernandez pointed out the need for a class on immigration law. He stated that there are few practitioners in this area in Wisconsin despite an apparent growing need. We recommend that the request for an immigration law course be considered and approved at the earliest opportunity by the curriculum committee. We note that such courses are being offered by some other major law schools. Subsequently, the Dean reported to us that an Immigration Law seminar is being offered in the Spring 1980 semester.

We want to take this opportunity in this report to commend the efforts of Ed Reisner as placement director. Over the past several years we have received many favorable comments about his efforts to assist students in the placement process. The record of the placement office speaks for itself — nearly full placement of every graduating class. These accomplishments are particularly noteworthy in recent years when many law graduates from other schools have experienced difficulty in finding suitable employment.

It is our hope that graduates recognize these efforts and support the Law School not only with financial

contributions but also by coordinating placements with the office.

The Visitors and the members of the Board of Directors are again concerned about the lack of alumni support for the law school. The Board of Visitors dinner on November 4th was well attended; perhaps the attendance may have been due, however, to the popularity of John Conway, recipient of the WLAA Distinguished Service Award. The attendance, nonetheless, was encouraging. Continuing efforts must be made to encourage alumni interest in the Law School and to provide greater financial support. We believe that the carefully integrated efforts of alumni and students need to be added to those of the law faculty, the Law School as a unit and the UW administration. When this can be done more effectively it will help assure the continuing excellence of the school's reputation and such increased interest should lead to broader support by alumni of some of the Law School's special needs.

We welcome the appointment of Robert O'Neil as president of the University of Wisconsin system and note his background as a lawyer and law teacher. He taught law classes while Vice President of Indiana University and we hope that he will teach a course or seminar each semester at U.W. Law School.

Sincerely,

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