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Wilford Kale

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Willey Urges Alternatives For Law Unit

By Wilford Kale

Times-Dispatch State Staff

WILLIAMSBURG—The College of William and Mary should make temporary plans about its law school space problems because it is doubtful that the next General Assembly session will appropriate the nearly \$5.6 million necessary to construct a building next year.

That was the suggestion State Sen. Edward E. Willey, D-Richmond, chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, said he would make to Dr. Thomas A. Graves Jr., William and Mary president.

Willey said that while he "is committed to support a new law school building at William and Mary . . . it is doubtful that there will be any funds available next year" in spite of a warning from the American Bar Association that the college could lose its law school accreditation because of its poor facilities.

In a letter to William and Mary, made public by college officials last month, the ABA said that the Marshall-Wythe School of Law building is "the most inadequate physical plant of any ABA-approved law school in the country."

WILLEY WAS ON vacation when the letter was released and returned to Richmond only late last week. He said he had not seen any of the letters or read Graves' statement about the ABA ultimatum.

However, Willey expressed concern that William and Mary, like other state agencies, is requesting and "making threats" for funds, yet does not offer any suggestions as to where additional money will come from.

"I know what Tom Graves wants," Willey said. "He wants a new law school building, but a lot of other people want something, too."

Willey said he does not consider the release of the ABA report to the press to be an attempt to blackmail the state of Virginia. "But you ask Tom Graves where we're going to get the money. The Medical College of Virginia has tried the same thing. They say their accreditation is threatened because of their hospital facilities.

"SURE I WANT the best medical school and the best law school we can have, but we've got money problems now. You tell Tom Graves that he should make some kind of recommendation of where we can get this money, but not to tell the General Assembly how to spend the money."

Willey said, "my suggestion to him is that he'd better start shuffling [rooms] down there." He indicated that reports to the State Council of Higher Education noted that there is "a lot of excess space down there, a lot of wasted space."

"It seems like to me that he'd better look around for a new and temporary plan for the near future. Willey said. Willey indicated that it could be several more years before money would be available to construct the law school building.

There is planning money out now for about \$200 million in capital outlay projects, Willey said, and "we're getting pressure from all over the state. The University of Virginia is

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just as intent as William and Mary about the construction of a new Alderman Library," Willey emphasized.

"IS WHAT THEY'RE asking for not just as important as what William and Mary wants?"

Willey said that neither he nor any other state government official "cango out and promise one project; you've got to look at the total picture, at the other needs around the state and then at the projected revenue. And finally, you have to look and see what comes first . . ."

Willey, who has actively supported the William and Mary law school on several occasions in appropriation bills as well as attacking it when it attempted to hire black lawyer Saad el-Amin (Jeroyd X Greene) to its faculty last year, said strongly, "There is a reality about all of this and I'm not going to let Tom Graves or anybody else threaten me."

One of the main items of concern to Willey, however, was not Graves' request to the governor "that every effort be made at the 1976 General Assembly to provide both capital outlay and maintenance and operating funds . . . to allow America's oldest law school to overcome this severe crisis," but that the ABA had pressed the issue with the college at this time of economic downspin.

"I DON'T KNOW of any

accrediting board in the country that is so tough as not to realize the facts of life," Willey said.

Apparently William and Mary is not the only school where the ABA is moving to challenge law school accreditations.

Several academicians and college officials in Virginia and several other states, including South Carolina, have said they have heard the same thing among legal circles.

Problems are not new to the law school, but in many respects the building question is largely out of the college's hands at this stage.

SEVERAL FACULTY members, however, have been critical recently of the college administration for not foreseeing the economic problems and for failing to have a strong alternative. They believe the administration has dragged its feet in an effort to construct the new facilities.

(The college proposed an alternative plan several years ago.) It would have converted old Rogers Hall into a second law building. But this work also would cost some money — estimated at more than \$500,000.

Some law school alumni have also noted that when the present facility was opened in 1967, it was just a "temporary facility." They are now asking why planning on the new building did not take public shape until 1972.

Gov. Linwood Holton urged the 1974 assembly to include

total financing for the law school building in his budget message just a few days before he left office. The request, however, was made at a time of diminishing funds and the legislature reduced the item to planning money.

College officials hoped then that the building could begin in 1976 with funding in the 1976-78 biennium budget.

THEN THE state and national economy took a tailspin and state revenue began to fall off by the millions of dollars and the state budget was cut several times by the governor. Hopes for the law building also began to fade.

The ABA letter to Graves "came as a real shock to me," he said last week. "We had received work earlier from the ABA of problem areas, but we believed we had given clear evidence of our proposed actions to solve problems that are very real at the law school.

"We provided data, information and progress reports on all aspects from William and Mary, the law school and the commonwealth of Virginia. The letter, which gave a Dec. 1

Center to Open

Junior Achievement of Richmond will open its new operations center at 6919 Lakeside Ave. at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The center includes administrative offices, a central workshop and six meeting rooms.

deadline for assurances that corrective steps will be taken, was a surprise," Graves said.

"There is just no way that we can get assurances from the state of funding by Dec. 1. I've asked for every consideration to be given our request . . . but as for assurances—how can we get them?" Graves said.

Acting law school dean Emeric Fischer told students last week that the future is not as bleak as it seems. He said he was confident that the assembly would not "permit anything to happen to this law school."

He also noted that the ABA's procedure in this type of case is one of "lengthy due process" and that it could be one or as many as two more years before the matter is finally resolved.