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Message from the Dean (Fall 2000)

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Dear Graduates and Friends,

The Annual Fund grew magnificently over the last fiscal year — up 35%. We're rolling toward our goal of one million dollars in annual contributions by June 30, 2003.

This infusion of resources helps in many ways. Two examples, both begun during the summer of 2000: (1) Research grants for faculty members doubled in amount, moving us from near the bottom among law schools to a respectable level. This has been a tonic for faculty morale, retention and recruiting. (2) The amount of each of our Summer Public Service grants for students (for a 10-week position) rose from \$2,500 to \$3,000. This marks a real step forward, since \$2,500 had been the figure for almost a decade.

The Class of 2000 made a galvanizing gift to the school: \$114,250, pledged by 74% of the class. These new graduates understand that a law degree is like a unit of currency. Its value fluctuates with people's perception of the distinction of the school that granted it. The Class of 2000 wants the value of William & Mary law degrees to keep appreciating.

The Law School is an extremely efficient, cost-effective operation. Even so, we simply lack the resources to do some very important things. For instance, we cannot offer enough financial aid to our students, and we are not able to help repay school debt burdening those of our graduates interested in practicing law in ways poorly compensated, but with high social value (for example, prosecutors and full-time *pro bono* lawyers).

It is good to be frugal, but it's not good to let frugality slip into financial anorexia. Distinction in almost every sector of American life costs money. There is certainly no "free lunch" for law schools. In an increasingly transparent national market, law schools are judged by faculty, students, employers and the media in light of many measures, most of them heavily influenced by the adequacy of operating budgets.

The University of Virginia Law School has more than twice as many students as Marshall-Wythe, while Washington & Lee Law School has almost one-third fewer students. Large UVa Law School (state-owned) and small W&L Law School (privately-owned) come together at one crucial point. Both believe it is important to spend a lot more per student each year than William & Mary Law School is now able to commit. If we had annual operating funds comparable to UVa's and W&L's, we would have about five million dollars more with which to work each year!

Thanks for your continued support of a school launched brilliantly in 1779 by Jefferson and Wythe, and now moving with great enthusiasm into the new century.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Taylor Reveley III". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

W. Taylor Reveley III