

2006

Law School Celebrates Naming of Wolf Law Library

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By Jaime Welch-Donahue

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Hundreds of well-wishers gathered on Nov. 10 to celebrate, in Dean Taylor Reveley's words, "an absolutely marvelous moment in the life of William & Mary's ancient law school" – the naming of the library under construction at the Law School in honor of alumnus Henry C. Wolf.

Wolf, the vice chairman and chief financial officer of Norfolk Southern Corporation, was appointed to the College's Board of Visitors in 2003 and currently serves as vice rector. He graduated from the Law School in 1966, two years after earning his B.A. from the College. Against a backdrop of fall foliage framed by the expansive windows on the top floor of the new law library, Reveley called on Wolf to unveil a drawing of the building that will bear his name. They were joined on the dais by College President Gene R. Nichol, Law Library Director Jim Heller, and Dixie Wolf.

"William & Mary is only months away from having a splendid new heart, a splendid new law library," Reveley said. "This new heart will transform us." He described Hank Wolf as "a stalwart friend and a wise counselor" to his alma mater, and "a person of extraordinary caliber, who stands squarely in the tradition of Marshall-Wythe's citizen lawyer." Hank and Dixie Wolf's support and generosity, he said, are "vital to the building of the new law library and will be a clarion call to major giving to the school in the years to come."

Regarded as one of the most able chief financial officers in the country, Wolf has served on the Council for the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, has been a member of the Board of Visitors of Eastern Virginia Medical School, and currently chairs the Board of Visitors' Committee on Financial Affairs for William & Mary. While in law school, he was a member of the Law Review and was active in Moot Court. His education continued with an M.B.A. from Louisiana State University, an LL.M. from Georgetown, and participation in Harvard's Advanced Management Program. In May 2006, the Law School recognized Wolf by selecting him for honorary membership in Order of the Coif, a national honor society that recognizes intellectual and professional accomplishment.

"I think it is very important for those of us who are associated with the Marshall-



Wythe School of Law to recognize the historical importance of the institution and to do everything we can to embrace it and to make it flourish,” said Wolf, adding “that is, in large part, the motivation behind the gift that Dixie and I have made on behalf of the Law Library.”

William & Mary established the first law school in the United States in 1779. George Wythe, a leading revolutionary-era statesman, was the College’s first professor of law. John Marshall, the great Chief Justice, was among the first students Wythe taught at William & Mary.

Nichol expressed his gratitude for Hank and Dixie Wolf’s “encompassing commitment to the breadth of the College.” “It is true of them,” he said, “as could be said of few others, that no call for help, or support, or advice goes unanswered.”

Nichol described their gift “as setting the pace, providing a conspicuous, generous, lead gift to a Law School that deserves it - that deserves a physical facility matching the attainments and aspirations of those who work here.”

Wolf credited two people whose example and guidance inspired him to make a multi-million dollar gift to the Law School, the largest in its history.

His late mother, though of modest means, he said, “made the effort to provide some measure of support for the Law School, in particular for the Law Library. She loved books, she loved libraries, and it was very important to her that she demonstrated her support for this institution and this library in particular.”

He also underscored the vital influence that his wife Dixie has had on him over a lifetime. She has taught him, he said, “how much one gets from the gifts, from the donations, from the service you can give to your community and to institutions like the Law School. It was a lesson that was very valuable to me, and without Dixie’s support and urging I probably never would have come to the conclusion that this was something we needed to do.”

He observed that a 17th century librarian once wrote that “a good library is a great kingdom.” “I hope this library serves as a ‘great kingdom’ for the Marshall-Wythe School of Law,” Wolf said, “and helps elevate it to a position of recognition and prominence that it so richly deserves.”



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The completed Wolf Law Library will open in spring 2007. Lead architects for the \$16.8 million project are Hayes, Seay, Mattern & Mattern, with construction by the W.M. Jordan Company. In the first phase of the project, which was completed in June, a three-story, 28,000-square-foot addition was built onto the Law School's south side. The addition, visible from South Henry Street, now serves as a temporary library while crews work on the complete renovation of the original library built in the late 1970s. In the final phase of the project, a new library will emerge when what is newly built and what is newly renovated are seamlessly joined to create a facility of 58,000 square feet.

Wolf Library Director Jim Heller thanked everyone involved in the project and also praised library staff who have carried out their duties "above, below, or next to jackhammers and drills." Marshall-Wythe students, he noted, have been "understanding, patient and sometimes even enthusiastic" during the construction which will create a new library about forty percent larger than the 1970s facility.

The Wolf Law Library will accommodate anticipated growth in book and journal collections and will place the latest electronic research tools at the fingertips of its patrons. Features include two reading rooms and a large study area that afford views of the outdoors, abundant seating with Internet access, and a rare book room which will display such items as Chief Justice John Marshall's family Bible and pleadings signed by George Wythe.