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Pennys Support Endowments to Celebrate Contributions of Dean Davison M. Douglas and Professor Lynda L. Butler

By Jaime Welch-Donahue

May 28, 2020

Additional commitment establishes endowment for Penny Professorship

James D. Penny J.D. '83 and Pamela Jordan Penny '77, HON J.D. '16 want to rally alumni and friends to contribute to new endowments honoring two of the school's exceptional professors and leaders as the *For the Bold* campaign approaches its close on June 30. The Pennys, along with other major donors, have led the way by making substantial commitments this spring to the Davison M. Douglas Professorship of Law Endowment and the Lynda L. Butler Law Scholarship Endowment. Other major donors include Stanley G. Barr, Jr., '62, J.D. '66, for the Douglas Endowment, and James A. Penney J.D. '83, for the Butler Endowment.

"We have two incredible faculty members and administrators in Lynda and Dave," Jim Penny said. "We really need a very strong level of support for these endowments to let Lynda and Dave know how much they are appreciated. They have been integral to the success of the Law School and are part of the legacy of our Law School."

The Pennys also recently established the Penny Professorship of Law Endowment to support and recognize outstanding faculty.

"A Tremendous Force for Good": Dean Douglas

During his nearly 11 years as dean, Douglas has led the school forward on numerous fronts. Fundraising met with unprecedented success under his leadership, with alumni and friends contributing more than \$85 million, to date, to the Law School's *For the Bold* campaign in cash, gifts, pledges and estate gifts. The school's endowments reached new heights, growing from \$31.9 million in 2009 to \$79.5 million in 2019.

Jim Penny became president of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law Foundation shortly after Douglas became dean. In that role and as chair of the Law School's Campaign Steering Committee, he has appreciated the impact of Douglas's leadership and vision.



“Dave has been a tremendous force for good at the Law School,” Jim Penny said. “He has served as an outstanding leader and mentor for students. He has recruited and retained marvelous faculty. He has developed and maintained relationships with alumni and other donors, which led to record-breaking fundraising and the remarkable increase in our endowments.”

William & Mary recently announced that A. Benjamin Spencer, a nationally renowned civil procedure and federal courts expert and current professor of law at the University of Virginia, will succeed Douglas as dean on July 1, following a national search.

“A Strong Role Model for Women”: Lynda L. Butler

Butler taught her last class at the Law School in April, concluding a distinguished 41-year career and earning the distinction of being the longest-serving female faculty member at William & Mary. Butler also has the distinction of being one of the first women hired to teach on the law faculty in a full-time, tenure-track position. In addition to teaching thousands of students over the years, she served in numerous leadership positions, among them: president of the Faculty Assembly, director of the William & Mary Property Rights Project, vice dean and interim dean of the Law School (the only woman to serve as a law school dean in Virginia). William & Mary honored her at the 2019 commencement with the Thomas Ashley Graves, Jr., Award for Sustained Excellence in Teaching.

Jim Penny is still surprised when he thinks about the sheer volume of knowledge Butler imparted to him and his classmates during their first year of law school in 1980. While it was only her second year in the classroom, she already was an outstanding teacher, he recalled, as evidenced by the “huge amount of property law” that he still retains despite the many years of his career spent as a tax attorney.

Pam Penny, an honorary alumna of the Law School, said it was clear from talking with members of the Law School community over the years that Butler became “a strong role model for women” at the Law School, having taken on leadership roles in the early 80s and 90s when it was far less common for women to do so.

A member of the William & Mary Foundation Board, Pam Penny also is a charter member of William & Mary’s Society of 1918. The Society’s name commemorates the year that women were first admitted as undergraduates at William & Mary. The group



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has helped expand the involvement of women in philanthropy at the university and seeks to encourage, inspire and celebrate women in the William & Mary community.

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“I think there is so much good in the future for William & Mary,” Jim Penny said, and expressed the hope that all alumni would consider what they can do to help the Law School in the final weeks of the campaign. Gifts and pledges can be designated to support the Douglas or Butler endowments, he said, or provide funds for other endeavors such as scholarships, summer fellowships for students, clinics or student loan repayment assistance.

One way to help, he said, is by making a five-year pledge by June 30, which will count in the campaign. “I ask all alumni to consider supporting the Law School now, whether you are making your first gift to the campaign or considering stepping up to make another commitment. Please take a look and see what you can do to help the Law School as we welcome our new Dean and honor Dean Douglas and Professor Butler.”