

Year of the Alumni



by Michael R. Schoenenberger
Associate Dean

A dramatic new era in the rich history of the law school will open with the dedication of the new building on September 13, 1980. This is an especially exciting time for me to join the staff at Marshall-Wythe.

As an alumnus of the College, I remember the struggle of its distinguished faculty to bring an appreciation of this learned profession to its students in the basements of Bryan dormitory. It allows me to appreciate the dedication of the faculty in preserving the traditions of this ancient institution. And although the physical facilities are only one factor in the development of an educational program, it does constitute an important step in the evolution of its place in the history of legal education.

It will be my job to help the Dean marshal the resources of its alumni, faculty and students into a common effort of institutional advancement into the new era. The resolution of appointment by the Board of Visitors defines my position as Associate Dean with responsibilities in the areas of placement, development, and alumni affairs.

Dean Spong has identified the placement function as the area of highest priority for the first phase of my time on the job. Although the Marshall-Wythe placement program ranks as one of the best in the South, thanks to the fine work of Mrs. Louise

Murtagh, the aspirations of the Dean go still higher. It is his hope to provide even greater opportunities for the excellent caliber of students the school has attracted. His goal is to organize all of our friends and alumni into a spirited campaign of advancement on all fronts.

Marshall-Wythe is an exciting place. There is an atmosphere of enthusiasm that can exist at an academic institution only when a capable faculty and an able and motivated student body combine interests in achieving a challenging objective. With the long-awaited facilities now a reality, the implementation of the goals envisioned by the Dean are merely a matter of time and effort.

The year 1979 marked a year of celebration of the founding here of the first university related chair of law in the United States. It was also a year of reflection on the mighty struggle this institution has endured in its 200 years of existence.

As the school begins its third century, there are many things to be proud of. Marshall-Wythe does not just endure today, in the first year of its third century of service, but prevails as a place of universal study dedicated to the excellence to which such men as Jefferson, Marshall, and Wythe were committed.

It is clear that its national reputation is due to the special relation that exists between the school, its

alumni and friends. In the future, Marshall-Wythe will depend more than ever on their continuing interest and active financial support.

With the bricks and mortar aspect of its development completed, the development program can now turn its attention to the people and programs that constitute its most important resource.

In this era of rapid growth, the law school must look to its alumni and friends for the private support that provides that margin of excellence so vital to its future development.

The Law Alumni Association launched its 1980 fund drive with this goal in mind. Under the leadership of President Frank Morton '68 and 1980 Campaign Chairmen Tim Coyle '74, the Association has sponsored a series of alumni dinners in Richmond, Northern Virginia, Williamsburg, and Norfolk in the last two months. To date, more than 250 alumni have turned out for these affairs in a demonstration of their support for the program. Leadership of the 1980 development effort will be shared by the Vice-Chairperson, Barbara Jones '72 and the regional Chairpersons, Joseph and Diane Abdelnour '72 in the Williamsburg area, Jeffery M. Zwerdling '70 in the Richmond area, K. Maxwell Dale '75 in the Norfolk area, and Lewis Puller '74 in the Northern Virginia area.

Private investments make possible the maintenance of excellence and the extension of educational opportunity in higher education. Alumni contributions have an impact on almost every area of our educational program. Without this private support, it would be very difficult for the law school to maintain the quality and standards that have given it a modern reputation and strength. Private support means

- Expanded educational opportunities to all talented students without regard to their social or economic backgrounds
- The opportunity to attract and retain the finest law scholars and teachers available
- The opportunity to create a resource that will endure.

It has been said that the university is one institution of mankind that has demonstrated the most remarkable capacity for survival and permanent usefulness to the community. An investment in education is an investment in the future. In the coming months, I look forward to the opportunity of meeting with our alumni to discuss the possibilities of private support in our future.

Note: On January 1, 1980, the Board of Visitors approved the appointment of Michael R. Schoenenberger as Associate Dean at the Law School. Mr. Schoenenberger is an undergraduate alumnus of William and Mary and received his J.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1971. From 1971-77, he served as staff counsel on a Congressional committee and since 1977, has been on the staff of the College.