Marshall-Wythe News (Spring 2004)

W. Taylor Reveley III

William & Mary Law School
New Faculty: We have had a splendid appointments season.

William W. Van Alstyne, our new Lee Professor of Law, joins us from Duke Law School where he taught for many years. Professor Van Alstyne, a master teacher and prolific constitutional scholar, is among the most distinguished law professors in the U.S. His undergraduate degree is from the University of Southern California and his law degree from Stanford.

Eric D. Chasen will join us as an Assistant Professor of Law. He went to college at Duke, graduating Phi Beta Kappa in economics and mathematics, and law school at the University of Virginia, where he was a notes editor of the law review, an Olin Fellow in Law and Economics, and winner of the Edwin S. Cohen Prize as the most outstanding student in taxation. Professor Chasen has been a partner in one of DC’s leading tax firms, Ivins, Phillips & Barker.

Nancy Combs, who will join us as Assistant Professor of Law, received a B.A. summa cum laude in philosophy from the University of Portland and a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, where she was first in her class and an articles editor of the law review. After clerking for Judge Diarmuid F. O’Scannlaine of the 9th Circuit, she clerked for Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy. Professor Combs also has a certificate in public international law from the Hague Academy of International Law and will complete her Ph.D. this year at Leiden University School of Law. Since 1996, she has been the legal adviser to Judge George H. Aldrich of the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal in The Hague.

Erin Ryan joins us as well as an Assistant Professor of Law. She has a B.A. in East Asian languages and civilizations from Harvard-Radcliffe. Her J.D. comes from Harvard, where she was a notes editor of the law review and a Hewlett Fellow in the Program on Negotiations. Erin clerked for Judge James R. Browning of the 9th Circuit and has been an associate at a public interest law firm in San Francisco that specializes in environmental, land use and local government law. She has taught at the University of California at Hastings as an adjunct assistant professor of law.

Faculty Honors: Chancellor Professor Richard A. Williamson received William & Mary’s Thomas Jefferson Award during Charter Day ceremonies on February 7. This is the highest honor the College bestows on a faculty member. Haynes Professor Paul Marcus was honored with the Arizona Alumni Association’s Distinguished Citizen Award on April 17 at the University of Arizona College of Law. Law Professor and International Affairs Dean Mitchell B. Reiss was nominated on March 16 by President Bush as special envoy for Northern Ireland with the rank of ambassador; Professor Reiss has been on leave to serve as the State Department’s Director of Policy Planning.

Distinguished Visitors: Five distinguished public figures recently spent time with us. Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist was the keynote speaker at the Institute of Bill of Rights Law conference on “Dual Enforcement of Constitutional Norms” on November 14. William T. Coleman, Jr., received the Marshall-Wythe Medal, the highest honor given by the Law School faculty, on March 17. A distinguished corporate and civil rights attorney and public servant, Coleman helped write the briefs presented in Brown v. Board of Education successfully challenging the constitutionality of school segregation. Former U.S. Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker received the Benjamin Rush Medal for her significant contributions to the advancement of American health on March 25. Howard H. Baker, Jr., Ambassador to Japan and former Senate Majority Leader, was on hand for the ceremony honoring his wife. Former U.S. Senator and Virginia Governor Charles S. Robb shared his insights with students and faculty on April 5-6 as the 2004 Carter O. Lowance Fellow in Law and Public Policy. The fellowship honors the extraordinary contributions of the late Carter O. Lowance, an aide to six Virginia governors and an executive vice president of William & Mary.

First in the Nation: The Law School hosted a ceremony on February 16 to accept a plaque from the Virginia State Bar and the Virginia Law Foundation commemorating the founding of the first law school in America at William & Mary in 1779. Jeannie P. Dahnik ’85, President, Virginia State Bar, and Jimmy F. Robinson, Jr. ’89, a member of the Virginia Law Foundation, were on hand for the presentation, as was Jeannie’s husband William E. Glover ’86.

Admission Stats, Class of ’07: The Admission Office reports a record 4,239 applications, a 26% jump
compared to last year. That translates to over 21 applicants per seat in the class. Our applicants represent all 50 states, DC, 41 other countries and 657 undergraduate institutions. They possess the strongest credentials in Marshall-Wythe’s history as measured by median undergraduate grade point averages and LSAT scores. They also present equally strong credentials in community and extracurricular activities, and many have impressive records of military service and career accomplishments. An additional 49 candidates from 13 countries have applied to the LL.M. program. Nationwide, the number of J.D. applicants has increased 2.2% and applications submitted to law schools have increased by 6% compared to last year. Some 366 alumni in 42 states are telephoning admitted students to welcome them and offer their insights about the Law School as volunteers for the new Alumni Ambassador Program.

Devins to Become IBRL Director: Goodrich Professor of Law and Professor of Government Neal E. Devins will become director of the Institute of Bill of Rights Law on July 1. Hanson Professor Davison M. Douglas is stepping down as director after seven years. Under Douglas’s leadership the Institute has flourished. It is widely acknowledged today as one of the leading programs of its kind in the country.

Law Library Renovation & Addition Project: Our architects have reviewed schematic plans with local and state regulators. The Law Library project calls for a “south” addition (toward the graduate housing complex) to open in summer ’06, followed by the total renovation of the existing library facility. The entire project is slated to be finished by summer ’07. When completed, we will have a technologically advanced library facility nearly two-thirds larger than now exists. Interior design planning is underway as well, with planners looking at everything from carrels, chairs, and display cases to placement of electrical outlets and data jacks.

Courtroom 21 Project Earns Congressional Support: Congress has appropriated approximately $500,000 for the support of the Courtroom 21 Project. The funds are being administered by the National Institute of Justice. Under Professor Fredric I. Lederer’s leadership, our McGlothlin Courtroom has become the preeminent place in the world devoted to studying the feasibility, application, and impact of 21st century technologies on courtroom litigation. The Project is a hub of activity. During 2003-04, for example, it hosted technology demonstrations for delegations from Australia, Korea, and Russia as well as for U.S. appellate lawyers and state attorneys general; and it co-sponsored conferences on issues such as the legal and policy implications of courtroom technology and on privacy and public access to court records. The spring laboratory trial involved alternative dispute resolution for participants from the U.S., the U.K., Norway, and Australia. This summer Courtroom 21 will offer a new series of one-day courses. Taught by the Project’s experts, the courses offer an in-depth look at high-tech tools being used in litigation and explore issues raised by the use of technology in the courtroom and in pretrial preparation. Information about these and other upcoming courses is posted at www.courtroom21.net.

Office of Career Services: Since September, OCS has presented 37 workshops and career planning programs, coordinated student participation in 25 off-campus interview programs, listed over 2,000 position openings, and offered 1,402 one-on-one advising sessions with students and alums. Ramona Sein ’97, formerly with McGuireWoods, joined the staff in April as Assistant Director, and will divide her energies between the offices of admission and career services.

Rankings: The Law School came in at 29th this year (down from 28th last year) in the April U.S. News & World Report rankings. We are tied at 29th with Boston College (which was 23rd last year). Right above us are the University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign and UNC/Chapel Hill. Right below us are the universities of Georgia and Wisconsin/Madison.

Public Service Fellowships: Supported by $216,295 in public service fellowships, 76 students will work for 67 organizations in 16 states, India, and the Dominican Republic this summer. The amount of funding, the number of students, and the number of organizations are records for Marshall-Wythe. Funding for the fellowship program comes from a Virginia Law Foundation grant, the Public Service Fund, our alumni, federal work/study funds, and the Law School.

225th Anniversary Celebration: Plans are underway for a gala occasion on November 12 to kick off a year-long celebration of the 225th anniversary of the Law School’s founding. Details to follow.

We look forward to the graduation of the Class of ’04 on Sunday, May 16. As always, you are welcome at the festivities. Please keep abreast of day-to-day happenings at Marshall-Wythe via our web site: www.wm.edu/law.

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