

The Catholic Lawyer

Volume 2
Number 3 *Volume 2, July 1956, Number 3*

Article 3

The Fiftieth Anniversary of Fordham University School of Law

William Hughes Mulligan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/tcl>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Catholic Lawyer by an authorized editor of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact selbyc@stjohns.edu.

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

WILLIAM HUGHES MULLIGAN*

IT WAS WELL OVER one hundred years ago that a small band of Jesuit Fathers at the invitation of Archbishop John Hughes traveled from St. Mary's in Kentucky to the Manor of Rose Hill in the Bronx, New York City, to begin the great Fordham University that flourishes there today.

The present Fordham Campus of seventy-two acres was once a part of the Manor of Fordham, founded by John Archer, and consisted of well over three thousand acres, which extended from the Polo Grounds to West Farms on the Bronx River, north to Williamsbridge and across to Kingsbridge on the Harlem River.

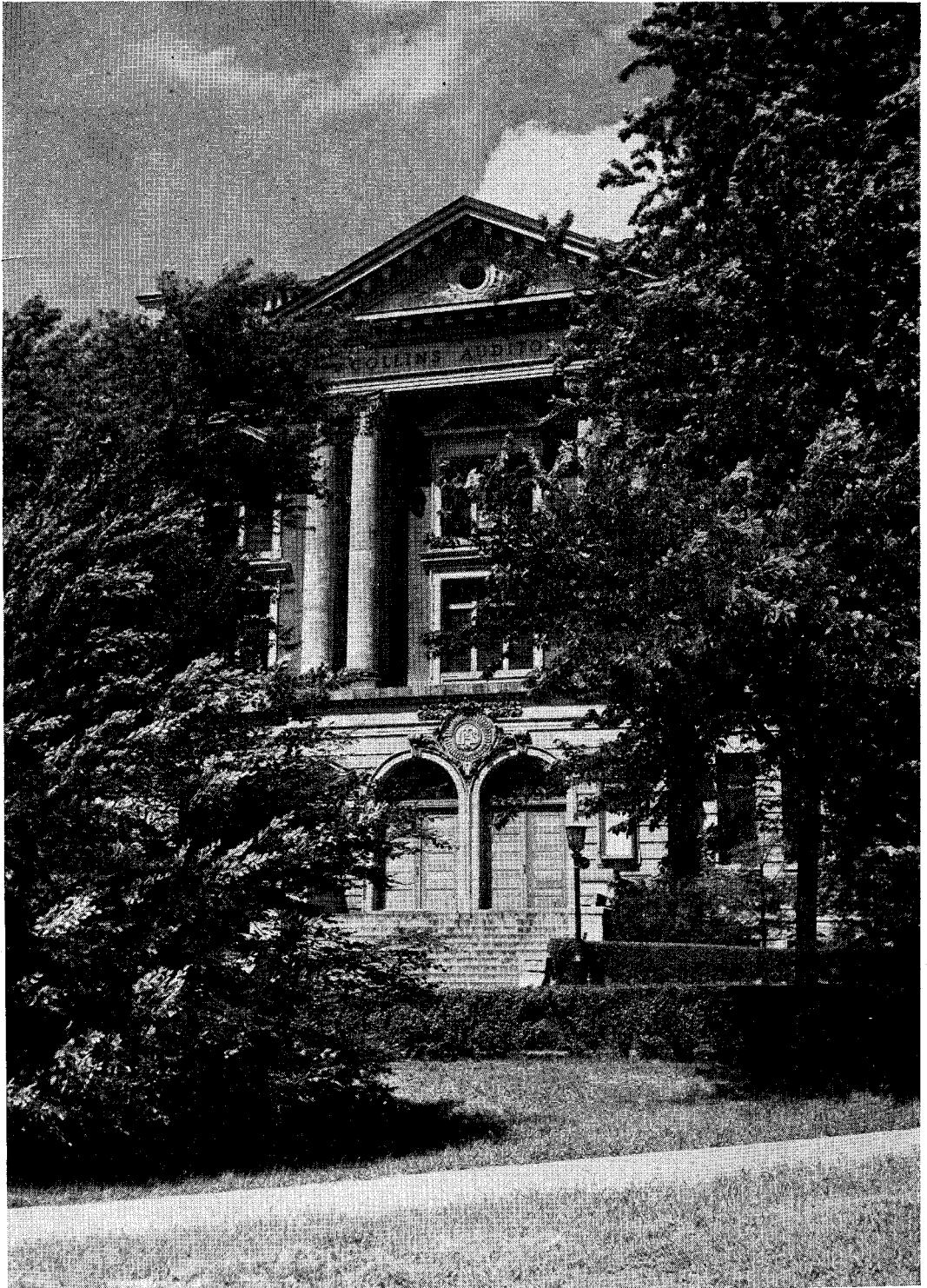
It has been suggested by Father Edwin A. Quain, S.J., Vice President of Fordham, that we think of the early founders of Fordham University as John Salisbury humbly thought of the great scholars who had preceded his generation:

We are like dwarfs, seated upon the shoulders of giants so that we can see farther and more clearly than they could, not because we have greater stature or sharper vision, but because we are lifted up to our present eminence owing to their magnificent accomplishments.

One of the visions of these intellectual giants was that of a School of Law. They visualized the law as the art and science of the relevant, and conceived its study as demanding accuracy, balanced judgment, a keen feeling for the precise meaning of words, a respect for the brilliant light of the facts of a case, and a passion for the pursuit of truth unencumbered by emotional bias or prejudice.

In October 1905, the vision of a Fordham Law School became per-

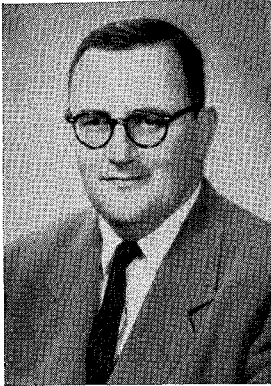
*Assistant Dean and Professor of Law, Fordham Law School.



Collins Auditorium—1905-1906

sonified in nine young men who assembled in Collins Hall with their teachers on the Fordham Campus as the first class of Fordham University School of Law.

Henry Ford had not yet turned out the first Model-T; the Wright Brothers had taken their first flight at Kittyhawk only two years before, and the tallest building in the world reached up 29 floors on Park Row.



WILLIAM H. MULLIGAN

Eight of the nine young men were college graduates and the other was a special student not eligible for a degree. Their faculty consisted of six men assembled by the first Dean, Paul Fuller. Fifty years later, Fordham Law School has become well and favorably known throughout the United States; its graduates have become eminent practitioners and it has produced more than its share of jurists. Its alumni include board chairmen, directors, general counsel and officers of some of the largest corporations in America; its sons have served the city, state and nation in high office. Its faculty has included some of the greatest names in legal education—Chapin, Gifford, Keener, Carmody, Father Shealy, Loughran, Wilkinson, Kennedy, Kane, O'Connell, Wormser and Butler, to name but a few who have passed on.

Space does not permit a detailed account of the story of Fordham's fifty years of growth and accomplishment. There is a parallel in the personal career of the Law

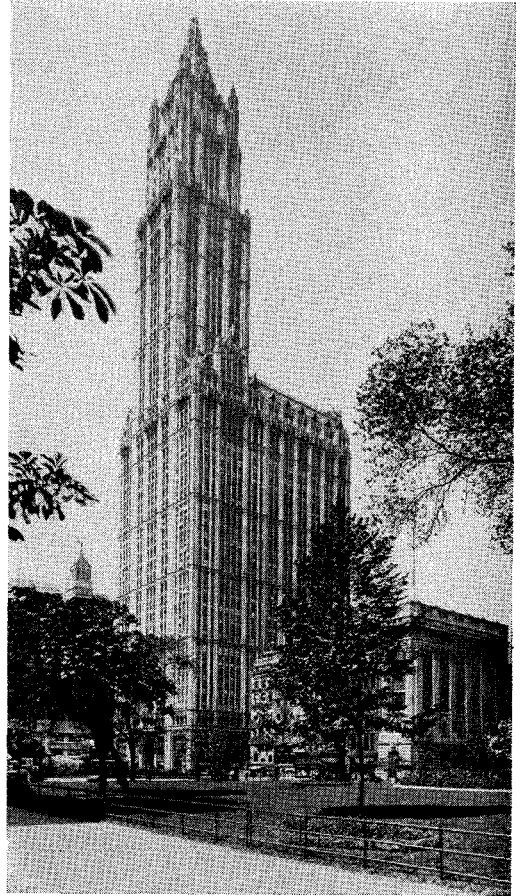
School's first Dean, Paul Fuller, who for the first three years was at the helm of the new Law School. Fuller was born on a clipper ship bound for San Francisco in the Gold Rush of '49. His parents died when he was an infant, but he somehow found his way across the United States to the City of New York, where he arrived at the age of ten without funds or friends but a mastery of Spanish which he spoke without a trace of accent. He was befriended in New York by a former officer of Napoleon, Charles Coudert, who brought him into his home and into the office of his sons, Coudert Brothers, to act as an office boy when Fuller was only twelve years of age. With amazing energy and ability, Paul Fuller ultimately became a partner in the firm and one of the most famous international lawyers of his day. In 1916, President Wilson sent Fuller to Mexico as his personal envoy. Although this man had never spent a day in a classroom, Fordham was indeed fortunate in obtaining his services as the first Dean of its Law School.

Fuller organized a faculty, a law library, and helped to formulate the curriculum. In the spring of 1906, the Law School was moved from the Campus to lower New York City where it has been ever since. In 1906, Fuller was able to obtain the services of Professor Ralph Gifford who joined the faculty as Pro-Dean. Gifford had been a student of Ames at Harvard and he introduced the case system at the Law School, replacing the "lecture and quiz" method which had originally been employed.

In 1908, the first class composed of six men was graduated from the Law School,

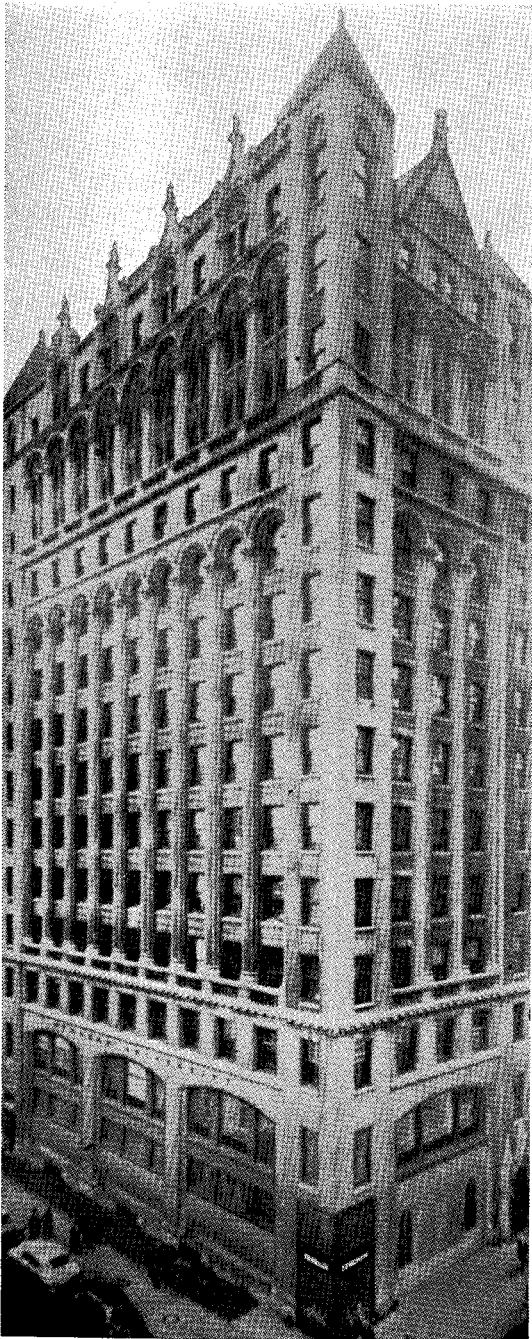
and the principal speaker at the Commencement exercises was the then Governor of the State of New York, Charles Evans Hughes. Governor Hughes made a magnificent address in which he stressed the professional idealism of the bar. Fuller had recognized the particular mission of the Catholic law school, and the famous Father Shealy, S.J., had already commenced a course in Jurisprudence which was probably the first ever given as a part of the regular curriculum in any law school in the United States. Upon Fuller's resignation in 1908, he was succeeded as Dean by John Whalen who had been Corporation Counsel of the City of New York and by Michael Dee who acted as Pro-Dean until 1923. In 1911, the faculty was augmented by three men who were destined to play a large part in its future development and success. Professor William Keener, who had been Story Professor at Harvard Law School and Kent Professor at Columbia Law School, joined the faculty to teach Contracts. When Keener died in 1913, he was succeeded by a young professor from the University of Illinois, I. Maurice Wormser, a truly great teacher of the law who conducted classes in Contracts and Corporations until his death last fall. Two young men were also invited to join the faculty in 1911, John T. Loughran and Ignatius M. Wilkinson, who were graduated that year from the new Law School at the head of their class. Professor Loughran continued to lecture for eighteen years, a beloved teacher and the author of an excellent casebook on Evidence. Professor Loughran ultimately became Chief Judge of the New York Court of Appeals, a position of the highest prestige in the judiciary of this State, now held by his

fellow classmate, Albert Conway. In six years, the Law School was producing leaders in the legal profession.



The Woolworth Building
1917-1943

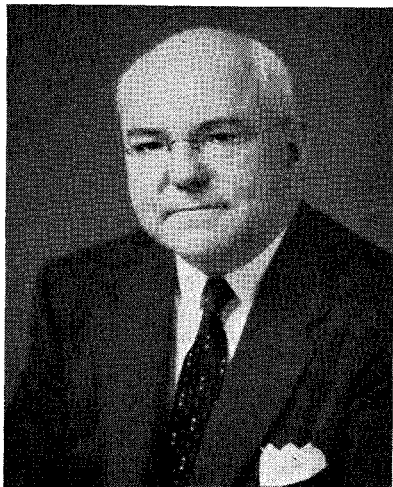
In 1919, John Whalen was succeeded by Francis Garvan who was then serving as Enemy Alien Property Custodian. Dean Garvan resigned in 1923 and was succeeded by Professor Ignatius M. Wilkinson. Dean Wilkinson remained at the helm of the Law School until his death in 1953 with a short leave of absence from 1943 to 1945 when he was Corporation Counsel of the City of New York.



302 Broadway
1943-

During this period the Law School was growing to vast proportions in comparison to its modest origin. The enrollment of 13 in 1906 grew to 218 in 1910, and from 436 in 1915 to 687 in 1920. In 1924, after twenty years the Law School had a registration of 1484 students. Dean Wilkinson's principal contribution was to strengthen and improve academic standards. Under his aegis the Law School achieved an excellent scholastic reputation. In 1935, he reorganized the Fordham Law Review under the inspirational guidance of Professor Walter B. Kennedy, who acted as Moderator of the Law Review until his untimely death in 1945. Professor Kennedy served as Acting Dean while Dean Wilkinson served as Corporation Counsel. During this time, the Law School moved from 233 Broadway, the Woolworth Building, to its present quarters at 302 Broadway. In 1936, the Law School had strengthened its standards to become eligible for membership in the American Law School Association which membership it still retains. In 1946, Dean Wilkinson adopted the policy of accepting for admission only those who had obtained an undergraduate degree. During the post-war rush of students after World War II, the Law School has maintained its policy of accepting only the best qualified applicants, keeping its student population on an even keel. In the spring and summer of 1955, over 800 graduates of colleges throughout the country applied for admission and only 270 were finally accepted for admission. Commencing in September 1955, all applicants were required to take the Law School Admission Test administered from Princeton, New Jersey.

Upon Dean Wilkinson's death in 1953, Professor George W. Bacon became Acting Dean, to be succeeded in 1954 by Professor John F. X. Finn as Dean.



JOHN F. X. FINN

In celebration of its Fiftieth Anniversary, Fordham Law School sponsored upon the campus three Jubilee Lectures on the general theme of "Freedom, Responsibility and Law in a Troubled World." These lectures were given by Henry Cabot Lodge, the representative of the United States to the United Nations, by Rev. John Courtney Murray, S.J., Professor of Theology at Woodstock College, and by David Sarnoff, Chairman of the Board of Radio Corporation of America.

It also sponsored an Institute on the Law of Government Construction Contracts, attended by a capacity audience in Keating Hall over a two-day period, and a Trial Tactics Panel at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

A Fiftieth Jubilee Dinner was held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, with principal speeches by Rev. William A. Donaghy, S.J., President of Holy Cross College, and by Thomas E. Murray, Esq., a member of the Atomic Energy Commission of the United States.

A Fiftieth Jubilee Luncheon of the Fordham Law Alumni Association was later held, again at the Waldorf, with the principal speech delivered by Herbert A. Brownell, Jr., Attorney General of the United States.

The Fordham Law Review published a "Fiftieth Anniversary Volume" which featured, among other articles, an article by C. Dickerman Williams, Esq., on "Problems of the Fifth Amendment," a Symposium on the Law of Government Construction Contracts and two notable addresses by Mr. Justice Edward S. Dore, one entitled "Expressing the Idea: Essentials of Oral and Written Argument" and the other entitled "To-day's Climate of Opinions."

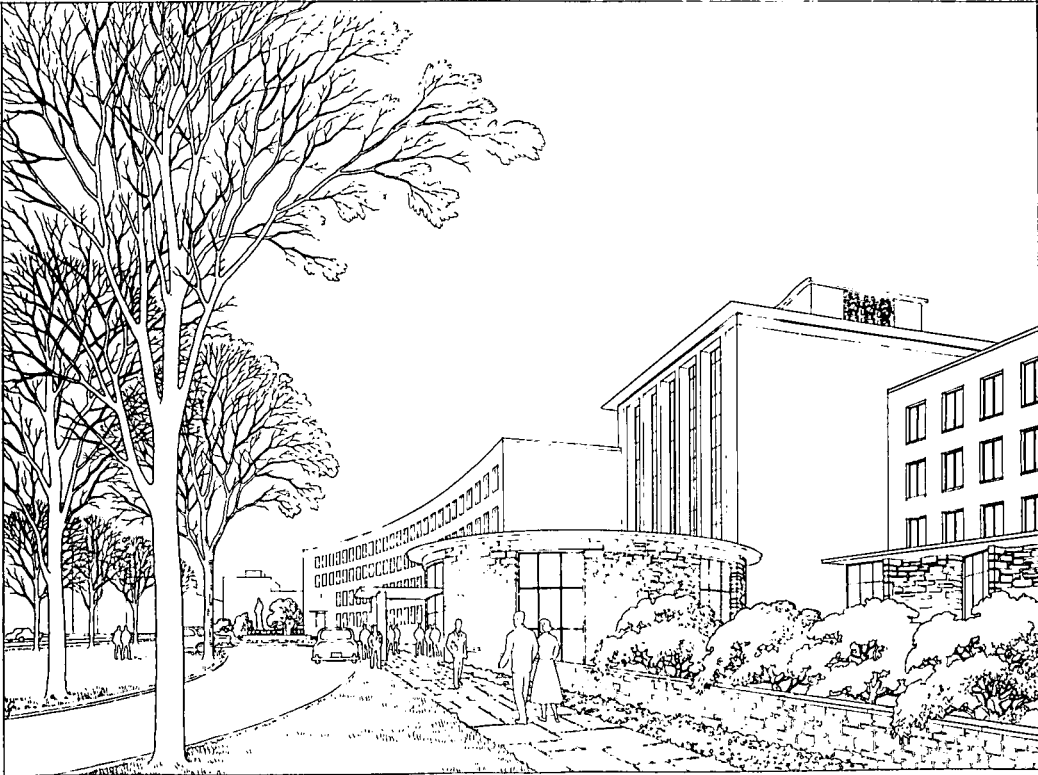
The conclusion of the latter address was as follows:

At all events we should not leave the gross materialistic superstition unanswered that "science" and materialistic "evolution" explain all without God; that religion demands we accept the unseen, whereas science gives us demonstration. The invisible is in every order a reality; and without faith it is impossible to live. Facing this ultimate choice in the presence of God, the source of all Goodness, Truth and Beauty, each of us with our whole minds and all our hearts and wills should re-echo the prayer that came from the great mind and heart of Augustine (after he had tried, and

found useless for enduring human happiness all the world could offer):

“Oh! Everlasting Beauty, ever ancient,
ever new,
All too late have I known Thee;
All too late have I loved Thee.”

After fifty years of growth and progress, Fordham University School of Law looks forward to the next fifty years with the same vision and emotion which inspired its creation by the Jesuit Order.



Proposed Fordham Midtown Center

THE CATHOLIC LAWYER has planned a series of articles on the Catholic law schools in the United States. In conjunction with the recent celebration of its Golden Jubilee, Fordham University School of Law has been made the subject of the initial article.