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John E. North

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CREIGHTON LAW SCHOOL — A PRIVATE INSTITUTION IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

JOHN E. NORTH*

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY is the fruition of a pioneer's dream. It began as an idea in the mind of Edward Creighton, industrious telegraph builder, whose "singing wire" linked the east and west coasts. When Edward Creighton and his brother John entered Omaha in 1856, they found it a rugged, unpromising village of 1800 inhabitants. In the following decade, the brothers were influential in the construction of telegraph lines, the establishment of an express business, the development of stock investments and the founding of substantial banking establishments.

Edward Creighton's cherished plan to build an institution of higher learning in the city of Omaha was cut short by his death in 1874. However, his widow, Mary Lucretia Creighton, bequeathed the initial endowment that was to make Creighton University a reality. Classes were begun in the original Creighton College on September 2, 1878.

Bishop O'Connor, who had been named trustee of the institution in Mrs. Creighton's will, invited the Jesuits, world famous order of teachers for four hundred years, to conduct classes. In 1879 Bishop O'Connor surrendered his trust to "The Creighton University," a Nebraska corporation, and the gift of the pioneers became irrevocably joined with the traditions of the Jesuits to provide Omaha with one of the finest Catholic universities in the Midwest.

As the years rolled on and Omaha grew and flourished, John A. Creighton, Edward's younger brother, contributed a large portion of his fortune to the building of the University. In 1904, the School of Law was opened in temporary quarters provided by the School of Medicine, and was moved the following year to the Edward Creighton Institute. In September 1921, the School of Law moved to its present home, a modern three-story building on the main University campus.

* LL.B. (1948), Creighton University; LL.M. (1949), Duke University. Professor of Law, Creighton University School of Law.

The Creighton University School of Law has made every effort to keep faith with its founders. Sound education for the legal profession should provide the student with thorough knowledge of fundamental legal



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principles, and an understanding of the role of law in modern society. At Creighton the program and method of instruction are designed to prepare the student to practice law wherever the Anglo-American system of law prevails. The case method of instruction is followed and emphasized, particularly in the first year, but each teacher is free to adapt it in such manner as will, in his judgment, prove most effective. The fundamental principles of law are illuminated by study of their origin, development and function. As the student progresses from his first to his third year, the impact of legislation, administrative rules and orders, and, to a limited extent, the effects of closely related social sciences are integrated with his growing knowledge of case law so that he may understand the broad meaning and direction of the law as a whole. Solution of hypothetical problems, drafting of legal documents, preparation of written briefs and oral arguments supplement classroom work in order to familiarize the student with the skills through which a lawyer makes effective use of his legal knowledge.

This balanced program embodies both required and elective courses. Students do not ordinarily undertake subjects with

the idea of specialization in a particular field. However, many specialized courses, such as Administrative Law, Estate Planning, Natural Resources, International Law, Municipal Corporations, and Legal Accounting, are available as electives. These courses are interwoven with basic courses in Torts, Contracts, Crimes, Procedure, Business Associations, and approximately twenty-five other related courses which form the traditional law school curriculum. In compiling the eighty-two hours required for a degree, all students are required to take a two-hour course in Jurisprudence. From time to time the curriculum is reviewed, and, when necessary, revised, to assure that the prescribed courses are kept abreast of current developments in the legal field and that the students are offered a legal education which is not only basically sound, but also practical.

Ninety per cent of the instruction is carried on by full-time educators. A small number of carefully selected practicing lawyers and judges augment the staff and present courses in specialized fields. The combined qualifications of the faculty reflect degrees from Harvard, Michigan, Duke, Stanford, Catholic University, and ten other leading colleges and universities located in various sections of the United States. In addition to their academic accomplishments many of the faculty members bring to their teaching duties a wealth of practical experience obtained in private practice, government service and diverse business associations. Under the capable guidance of James A. Doyle, who has been Dean of the School of Law for the past ten years, the academic and experiential skill of each faculty member has been carefully channeled to produce the most effective results. With a faculty-stu-

dent ratio of one to sixteen, there is exceptional opportunity at Creighton for individual instruction and counseling.

Faculty efforts do not inure exclusively to the benefit of the school. Creighton professors currently contribute to legal publications throughout the nation, actively participate in local, state and national bar



DEAN JAMES A. DOYLE

association activities and projects, supervise legal aid for indigent citizens, cooperate in continuing legal education for practicing attorneys, and serve on legislative committees designed to improve the administration of justice. Each faculty member wholeheartedly devotes his efforts to help discharge the obligations which Creighton has assumed as a private institution in the public service.

The library, laboratory of the law school, consists of over 42,000 volumes. The students have access not only to the minimum essential publications found in an accredited law school, but also to a wealth of other material desirable for a well-rounded and complete legal education. In a modern reading room which adequately accommo-

dates seventy persons, the students have at their finger tips the statutes of key jurisdictions, digests and reports of every published decision in the United States, over eighty legal periodicals, up-to-date services in specialized fields such as Taxation, Labor Law, Trade Regulations and Federal Procedure, recognized authoritative treatises in every significant area of law, and one of the finest collections of English cases and materials west of the Mississippi. The adequacy of the library not only aids, but encourages, active faculty and student research programs. The practical utility of this facility is evidenced by the number of practicing attorneys from Nebraska and neighboring states who constantly use it.

The Student Bar Association was organized during the spring of 1950 to make law students conscious of the obligations and opportunities existing for lawyers through bar association activities, to promote a consciousness of professional responsibility, and to provide a medium for the promotion of student activities generally.

To carry out its objectives since organization, the Association has been active, through its committees, in developing a varied program of activities of interest and value to students. The Association publishes its own newsletter bi-weekly, sponsors the annual Law Day in the spring, holds a reception each fall for the incoming freshmen, maintains its own student lounge in the School of Law building, conducts a speech club, and throughout the year brings prominent speakers before the student body.

The Student Bar Association ever strives to impress upon the students their obligation to assume professional responsibility. Each year the Association awards a plaque to the graduate recognized by the faculty



Creighton University Law School Faculty. From left to right: Margaret Hall, Librarian, Lyle Strom, Robert Fisk, John E. North, Joseph D. Brock, Lee Bloomingdale, William Sternberg, Winsor C. Moore, Richard Kelley, and Dean James A. Doyle. Not pictured are Robert R. Troyer and Barton Kuhns.

for outstanding service to the School of Law during his course of study. All members of the Student Bar Association also enjoy the benefits of student membership in the Nebraska State Bar Association.

In 1953, the Student Bar Association at Creighton was awarded a Certificate of Recognition as the most outstanding member of the American Law Student Association. Certificates for outstanding achievements were also awarded for the years 1952 and 1954.

Two national legal fraternities have active chapters at Creighton. Phi Alpha Delta is represented by the St. Thomas More

Chapter and Delta Theta Phi by the Bryan Senate. Friendly rivalry between the two fraternities results in many well-planned professional and social activities during the year. The fraternities play an important role in producing well-rounded lawyers for the future.

Appellate moot court arguments are conducted in connection with the formal course in Appellate Procedure, which is required for all second-year students. Appellate briefs are prepared on carefully selected problems and oral arguments are presented before practicing attorneys and judges. The three students who make the most effective

presentation are selected to represent the School of Law the following year in the National Moot Court Competition.

The national competition, in which Creighton has participated since 1953, is sponsored by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Last year Creighton's team reached the national semi-finals before being eliminated.

The School of Law, in cooperation with the Omaha Bar Association and the Barristers Club, conducts a legal aid clinic to

furnish advice and assistance to persons in the community who are financially unable to afford legal aid. The office of the clinic is located in the School of Law and is generally supervised by members of the faculty. Senior students interview the clients, investigate the facts, procure evidence, and prepare all preliminary drafts of pleadings and other necessary legal instruments. The local bar associations provide attorneys who direct and supervise all cases in litigation. In this manner students acquire



Arguing before the Moot Court.



The Law School Library reading room.

valuable training in judicial administration under the watchful eye of a practicing attorney. But more important than this practical training in dealing with clients and with courts is the development of an awareness that the profession is dedicated to public service and that legal aid is the heritage and right of every citizen, rich or poor.

In Creighton's view, the perfection of legal training does not consist alone in a ready command of man-made rules and procedures. It demands also a mastery of the principles of the divine, natural, and positive law, and their application to human law and its administration. Consequently,

only those lawyers who are morally alert and who fully appreciate the impact of morals upon the vitality and endurance of the nation, are able to serve the truly best interests of their clients and community. For this reason, the program of instruction at Creighton Law School places strong emphasis upon the moral value of the legal principles, rules, and policies found in the various courses. Thus the student forms the habit of testing past and prospective patterns of legal activity by the law of God, thereby preparing himself to excel in his office of lawyer and citizen. This distinctive aspect is the crown of legal education at Creighton.