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This is the ninth of a series of articles on Catholic law schools in America.

THE LAW SCHOOL OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

VERNON X. MILLER*

LIKE MANY OTHER Catholic law schools, the one at The Catholic University has lived several lives. From 1899, when the first degrees were granted, until 1954, the law school was situated on the campus of The Catholic University. A member of the Association of American Law Schools and on the approved list of the American Bar Association for more than thirty-five years, its founders contemplated a small school. Over the years the number of graduates was not large, but their success in practice and politics lent support to the small school thesis. Among the eight hundred graduates were governors, judges, legislators and successful practitioners in every part of the country. They were men and women who carried the Catholic way of life into their professional careers.

In 1954 the school was merged with the School of Law of Columbus University and is presently known as The Columbus School of Law of The Catholic University of America. The School of Law of Columbus University was founded in 1922 as a part-time school for government workers. By 1954 it had been on the approved list of the American Bar Association for a dozen years, and numbered among its alumni many persons presently in government service in Washington.

Following the merger, the school moved to downtown Washington, occupying the old Columbus properties. These reflect a dignified nineteenth-century charm. The Foster house, located on the site, has served as a law school since the early 1920's and has recently been extensively remodeled and modernized. It was built in the early 1890's and was

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the home of John W. Foster, Secretary of State in President Harrison's cabinet and grandfather of the present Secretary of State.

Since the merger with Columbus the school has maintained two divisions, a



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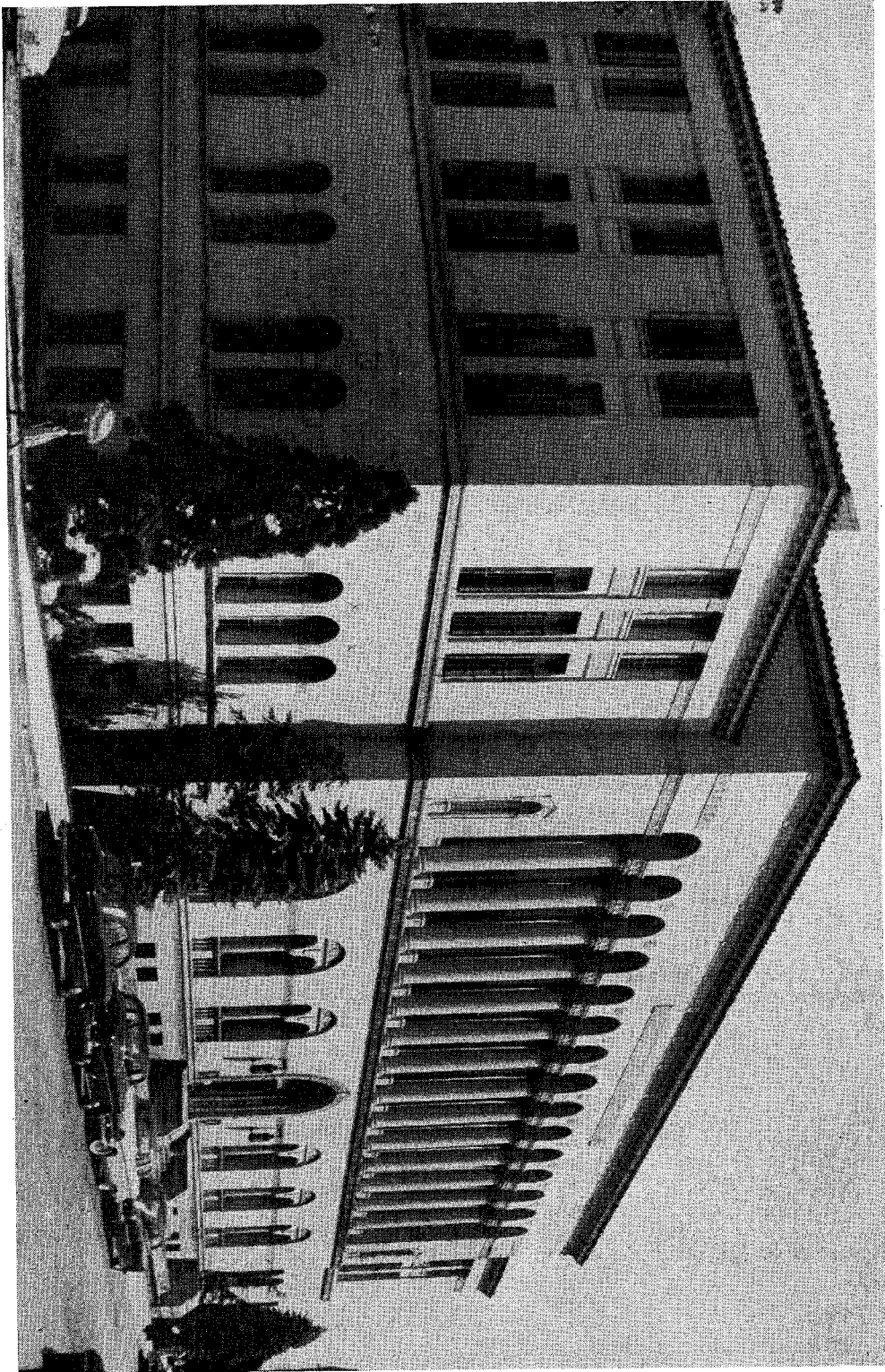
three-year day division for full-time students and a four-year evening division for part-time students who are employed in outside work. The course of studies, the standards and the teaching personnel are the same in both divisions.

Although there are practical reasons why the three- and four-year programs will not be lengthened, new developments in the law are so extensive that educators cannot stand pat on old curricula. Therefore, if the overall course is not to be extended, the curriculum must be revised. During the last three years we have reshaped most of our courses. There are now four basic six-hour courses for the first-year program: Constitutional Law, Contracts, Property and Torts. Other courses are offered to first-year students, but the work in these four subjects is intensive. It is in these courses that we introduce begin-

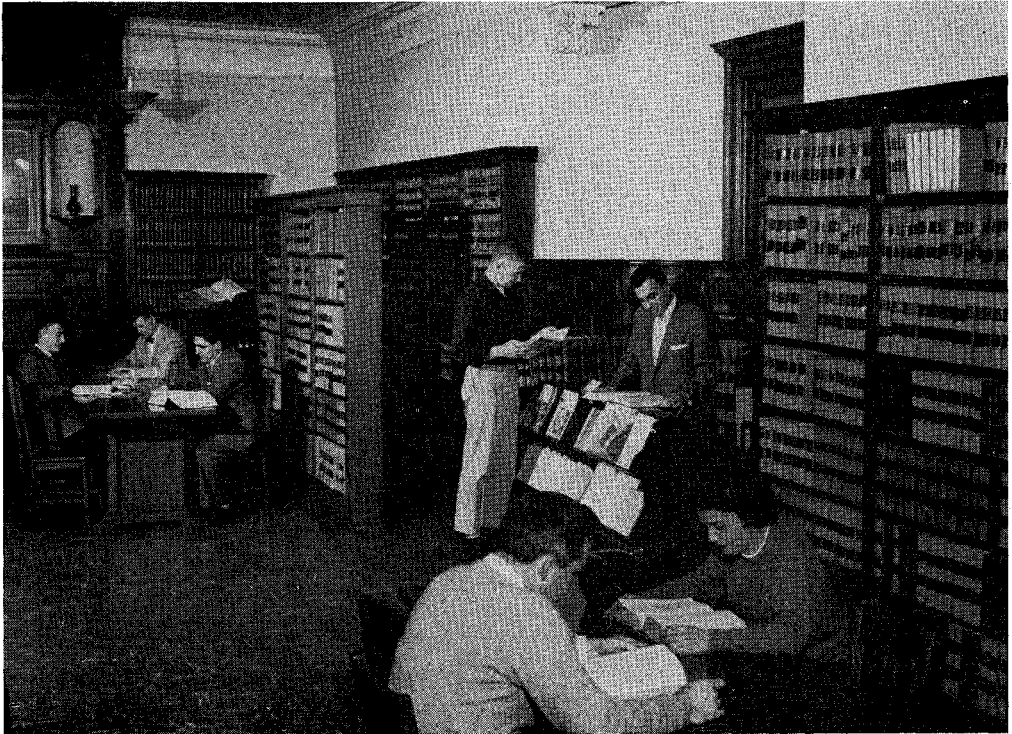
ning students to case method and analysis, and where we try to develop in them a facility for what lawyers call "legal reasoning."

Old courses have been broken up and the materials for our second- and third-year programs have been reorganized. We have devised what we call survey courses. Our new courses are listed as Business Association, Land Transactions, Estates and Commercial Transactions. These have replaced the traditional courses like Bills and Notes, Agency, Wills, Trusts and Sales. Much is demanded from our instructors, who must break down old divisions and build new combinations. Most often they have to prepare their own materials. Whether he uses a standard casebook or a syllabus of assigned materials, each instructor prepares a special prospectus for his course, and all instructors compare notes to eliminate overlapping and to fill gaps. In the third year a survey course is offered which we think is unique. In it we introduce our students to the ramifications of administrative law with all the emphasis on procedural due process which is usual in this kind of course. They also begin a study of the special problems of antitrust, labor law, and the independent agencies. We call this new combination Public Law Survey. While we hesitate to measure our achievement in curriculum-building, we are conscious of a job we think needs doing and we are proceeding accordingly.

We are proud of our library. The reading rooms retain the graciousness of the Foster home. They and the stack rooms are open seven days a week to serve our students, our alumni and the members of the bar. A full-time, law-trained librarian supervises the library with the help of stu-



The John K. Mullen Memorial Library



One of the Library Reading Rooms

dent monitors. Materials have been collected and organized to serve students from the forty-nine states.

The opportunities for extracurricular activities are many. All students are members of the Student Bar Association, which is affiliated with the American Law Students Association. Every student is solicited to write for *The Catholic University of America Law Review*, published under faculty supervision. High-ranking students in the upper classes serve as officers of the Law Review staff. Because of the time demanded for it, the Moot Court program is of interest primarily to full-time students, but part-time students have represented the school in national competitions and in the traditional George E. Sutherland competition which is sponsored by our school of law. Other competing schools are Ford-

ham, Virginia and Yale. The trophy was donated by the late George S. Elmore, an alumnus of the School, in honor of his uncle, Mr. Justice Sutherland.

The school is strong in its professional area because of the competence and experience of its faculty and because of its traditions. Its strength is derived also from the many resources of the University's ten schools and twenty-seven departments, which make the opportunities for graduate work in Law many and special. Plans are underway in the School of Law to develop an extensive graduate program in which we can use all the resources of the University.

It is not for us at The Catholic University of America to appraise our law school or to evaluate our achievements. It is enough here to say that we are working to relate Catholic social and moral philoso-

phy to the problems of politics as they are reflected in court decisions, legislation and the tradition of the common law. Our students will learn how to relate their general information to professional problems. We try to condition them to open-mindedness. We hope they will discover that men mold solutions for social problems and that variety in policy choices can be consistent with the rule of law. In every political system men are free within the confines of objective truth to set goals and to devise means for reaching the common good. Law-making and judging are integral parts of that planning and choosing.

Our school at The Catholic University is small, and our faculty is small. We think that a close relationship between faculty members and students helps to develop a feeling of solidarity and an appreciation of professional responsibilities. Our full-time law teachers have been practitioners and are now dedicated to the teaching of law. They know their students individually. They do not all think alike on political questions or legal issues, but they do have in common an appreciation of the profound implications and soundness of Catholic philosophy, particularly as it relates to social questions.



Some Members of the Faculty and Staff