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The Law Schools Look Ahead (Book Review)

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE LAW SCHOOLS LOOK AHEAD. Conference held at the University of Michigan Law School, June 15-18, 1959. Edited by Charles W. Joiner. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Law School, 1959. Pp. 328.

The University of Michigan Law School has recently published the papers, discussion, and consensus of the 1959 Conference on Legal Education along with the advance memoranda prepared by the participants. The Conference was called for the purpose of taking stock and planning for the future in concert with members of the law teaching profession, undergraduate educators, practicing lawyers and persons representing commerce and industry, and directing the attention of those interested in the process of legal education to the ultimate goals of excellence and superiority which are essential for tomorrow's lawyer. The Conference was composed of one hundred persons broadly representing the indicated groups.

The reviewer had the good fortune to attend this Conference and was very favorably impressed by the format and the agenda. Great credit is due Professor Charles W. Joiner, the Conference Chairman, for having organized and conducted a most stimulating and thought provoking three-day meeting which produced much that should be of benefit to the future of legal education in America.

Of all of the many significant agreements coming from the Conference which the report lists, two deserve special mention:

1. The law schools and the colleges should work more closely together. Diverse reasons are given for this statement:

(a) The recognition that both institutions have separate responsibilities for the education of the lawyer and each must contribute to the end that law graduates be even better tomorrow than today.

(b) The need to have the colleges provide more knowledge about lawyers and legal institutions for their undergraduates.

(c) The need for better education in the communicative skills.

(d) The need of the legal profession for a greater share of the superior students.

(e) The recognition that law schools cannot do everything and that they must rely on and influence the colleges in undergraduate education.

2. Law schools and law students must, through study and research, increase their awareness of the laws and legal institutions of

other countries and the laws and institutions governing the conduct of nations. To this end proficiency in a language other than English was urged. This thought was based on the idea that the world is becoming smaller, involving lawyers in the problems of clients abroad; technological advances make it important to develop new international institutions; lawyers must interpret the world scene to the rest of society in light of the rules of law.

With respect to the law schools as a vehicle of public service, the report states in part:

Consistent with the obligation of universities to advance knowledge, we recognize the imperative need for expanding law-related research as essential to the greater understanding and the improved functioning of our governmental, economic, and social system. We also recognize the significant potential of American law schools as centers for this type of research because of the capacity of law school faculties to relate legal problems to the information and techniques of other disciplines such as economics, sociology, psychology, and medicine. We therefore conclude: (1) that it is the responsibility of law schools to meet this need by providing leadership, in sustaining programs of faculty research; (2) that it is the obligation of law schools to provide sufficient exposure of their students to such research to give them an appreciation of its importance, its techniques, and its uses.

In line with these conclusions, it may be suggested that law schools establish research institutions which are similar in operation to the St. Thomas More Institute for Legal Research at St. John's University School of Law. In this manner research efforts in law schools, which were previously confined to law review materials, could be deepened and broadened, undergraduate and graduate training could be enriched and the opportunity for professional training could be extended on a broader basis.

It is the opinion of the reviewer that if such research institutes are established at accredited law schools throughout the United States, they could operate on specific problems and furnish solutions which would be of more immediate value to the community than that derived from many law reviews.

Due to the wide scope of the material presented in the report, which covers topics such as "The Law School's Role in Developing a Lawyer" and "The Law School as a Vehicle of Public Service," it is obvious that every student of the law will find at least some parts of it most informative and helpful. Certainly all law schools, colleges and related organizations should consider thoughtfully its message and act on its recommendations.

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