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THE UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT LAW SCHOOL

WILLIAM KELLY JOYCE, SR.*

THE FIRST CLASSES of the University of Detroit School of Law were held on October 1, 1912 and the first students graduated from the School of Law in June, 1914 (these first graduates had completed a year of law study at other schools and had transferred to the University of Detroit when it opened). The first graduating class of students who had completed their entire legal education at the School of Law graduated in June 1915.

The school is justly proud of many alumni who have obtained distinction in the profession both in private practice and in public life. The courts of Michigan include a number of these graduates, among them being one currently on the state Supreme Court, one former Governor, now deceased, and several in federal district courts.

Prior to 1922, a student could be admitted to the School of Law upon the completion of a high school education. In that year, the entrance requirements in the case of a student seeking the Bachelor of Laws degree were raised to include one year of pre-legal college education. In 1923 they were raised to two years of college work. It was still possible for a student who had only a high school education to study law if he did not seek a degree in law but only a certificate. In this connection, one should remember that it was not until 1930 that the Michigan legislature required two years of collegiate study before a person commenced his study of law as a regular law student and that it limited the number of "special" students, that is, those who had only a pre-law high school education and who did not seek a degree in law. Actually, in a typical year before Pearl Harbor, about one-third of the student body would have had a Bachelor of Arts degree, or its equivalent, and another third would have completed three years of pre-law college work. At the present time a large number of students have more than the minimum two years of pre-law college work.

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During the decade preceding World War II, enrollment at the School of Law reflected the falling enrollment in most other American law schools but for the most part hovered around the 150 mark. After the



Dean Louis H. Charbonneau, Sr.

end of the war, enrollment increased substantially because of the influx of veterans in the school but has since tapered off, the present enrollment being approximately 120.

During the 1920's, the University of Detroit embarked upon a program of expansion under the leadership of its dynamic president, the Very Reverend John P. McNichols, S.J., after whom is named McNichols Road in Detroit. At the present time, the School of Law, the evening division of the School of Commerce and Finance, and the School of Dentistry are still located on East Jefferson Avenue near St. Antoine Street, but the main campus of the University is on McNichols Road at Livernois. There are located the athletic stadium and the many fine buildings housing the Arts and Sciences Department, the College of Engineering, the day division of Commerce and Finance School, the grad-

uate school, dormitories, a library, an outstanding Memorial Building and the Student Union Building. Tremendous progress in the expansion of the University and its facilities has been made during the past eleven years under the presidency of the Very Reverend Celestin J. Steiner, S.J., Ph.D., who has only lately been succeeded as president by the Very Reverend Lawrence V. Britt, S.J., Father Steiner having been appointed Chancellor of the University.

When the School of Law opened its doors it had a library of about 8,000 volumes which has expanded to over 37,000 fully bound volumes, not including unbound pamphlets, journals and periodicals. Some five years ago, as a result of a generous bequest by the late Edward D. Stair, publisher of the Detroit Free Press, new facilities were afforded the library with the complete remodeling and refurbishing of a building which had been an addition to the original Dowling Hall, giving the School of Law excellent accommodations for its library. The Reverend Paul P. Harbrecht, S.J., is the Chairman of the Library Committee, and is responsible for its excellent administration.

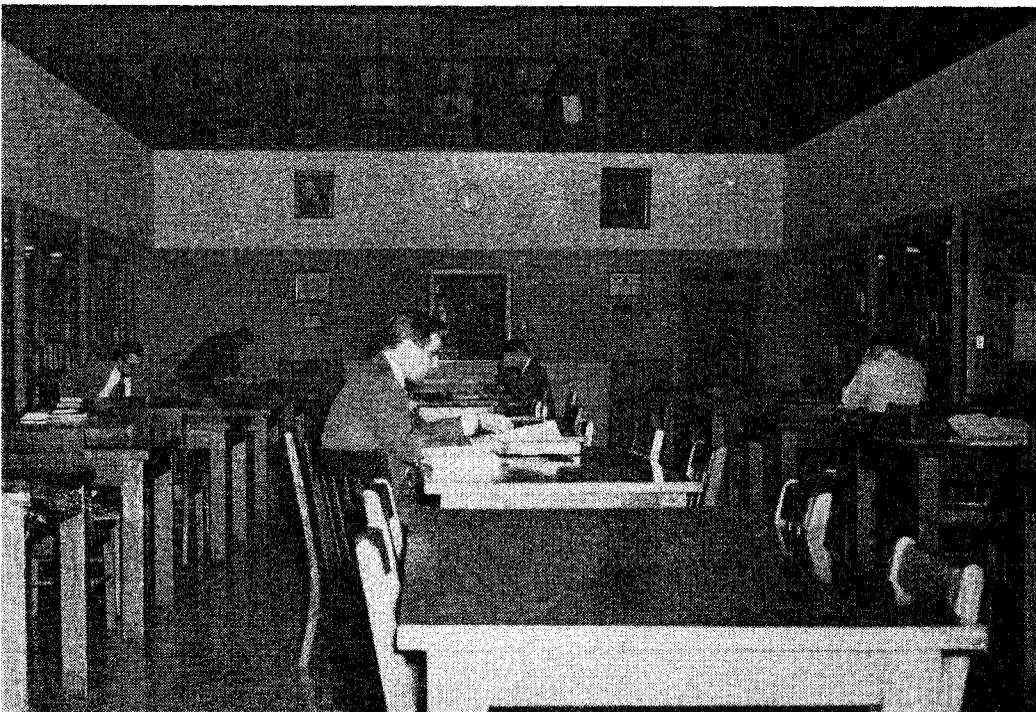
The School of Law was placed on the approved list of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association in 1933. It was elected to membership in the Association of American Law Schools in 1934.

In addition to the hard business of studying law, the students have always found time for various extra-curricular activities, some of which savor of the law itself, while others are of a lighter nature. Perhaps the most important of such activities from a professional viewpoint has been the publication of a periodical now called the University of Detroit Law Journal. In 1916, a

magazine called the Monthly Law Review began its existence. It was edited by students and it published various articles and editorial comment, but most of its pages consisted of the printed report of the written opinions of the Michigan Circuit Courts from which no appeal had been taken. Inasmuch as such opinions were not published elsewhere, the Monthly Law Review had a practical as well as an academic value. Later, the periodical was modified in some detail and became the University of Detroit Bi-Monthly Law Review. In 1931 it was reorganized into the University of Detroit Law Journal. This was obliged to suspend publication in 1933 at the time of the national financial crisis, but publication was resumed in 1939. During the administration of Father Bayne, new impetus was given to the activities of the Law Journal, and under his direction, with the assistance of

Dr. Manuel R. Garcia-Mora, the Law Journal acquired status as one of the finest periodicals of its type in the United States. The actual editorial work is done by a group of carefully selected students. The Law Journal follows in general the style of a conventional American law review, with leading articles by experts in their fields and with editorials, casenotes, book reviews, etc.

Other student activities which are very effective in enhancing the progress in law of the student body are the Student Bar Association and the Moot Court Association. The Moot Court has a typical court room in which trials of selected and hypothetical cases are held. The local bench and bar have contributed substantially to this activity. For example, at one of the last trials, the court sitting in the particular case included the Chief Justice of the Michigan



Portion of the Law Library—Dowling Hall

Supreme Court, a retired judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and a judge of the local United States District Court. The Reverend Jerome A. Petz, S.J., is faculty moderator of the Moot Court, while the writer of this article serves as moderator of the Student Bar Association.

Another student activity is a student-operated housing unit for male students, completely student-controlled and appropriately named the Inn of St. Ives. The Inn furnishes living and boarding accommodations for twenty-one students. In addition to the Inn, the dormitory facilities at the main campus are available to law students and, through an arrangement with the Detroit Housing Commission, facilities can be obtained through the Director of Student Housing for married couples.

In August of 1955, the law school was made the situs of a branch school for Judge Advocate General courses, primarily for army reserve officers commissioned in the Judge Advocate General's Corps and for other army reserve officers commissioned in other branches who are students attending accredited law schools with the intention of transferring when qualified.

The School of Law has revived one of the medieval traditions of the law, namely, the celebration of the so-called Red Mass.

In England prior to the Reformation, it was customary for the judges to attend a Mass at the beginning of the Autumn term of court, to invoke the assistance of God in the performance of their duties. Because the celebrant of the Mass wore red vestments, the Mass itself came to be known as the Red Mass. The practice was resumed in England during the reign of Queen Victoria by the Catholic members of the judiciary. The School of Law has adapted this traditional religious ceremony to the situation of a modern American law school.

The School of Law has two objectives — professional and apostolic. It blends two great traditions of which it is singularly the possessor — the legal and the Jesuit. Consonant with the great profession of the law, the School of Law is dedicated to professional excellence and skill, classroom and teaching precision, and scholarly research in moot court and law journal.

The foregoing sketch of the history and activities of the School of Law has necessarily been incomplete. In the long run, a school, professional or otherwise, must be judged by the character and ability of its graduates. The School of Law of the University of Detroit is justly proud of the record of its alumni in the profession of law and in the wider field of life itself.
