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Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Feinstein Foundation Gives \$1 Million to Roger Williams University School of Law - Free Legal Services to be Offered in Rhode Island" (1996). *Life of the Law School (1993-)*. 7.

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Release Date:

Immediate

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Feinstein Foundation Gives \$1 Million to Roger Williams University School of Law - Free Legal Services To Be Offered in Rhode Island

BRISTOL, RI (September 9, 1996): The one-million dollar donation will establish The Feinstein Institute for Legal Service and the Feinstein "Enriching America" community service program to produce an enduring culture of public service among law students at Roger Williams University School of Law.

Through the Louis Feinstein Legal Clinic, to be situated at the School of Law's Providence center, law students will provide *pro bono publico* (for the public good) free legal service to individuals and organizations in the community which might not have access to legal representation.

The Louis Feinstein Legal Clinic is named in memory of Alan Shawn Feinstein's late father, a prominent Boston lawyer for 50 years. Upon his retirement the elder Feinstein worked with SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and as legal counsel for Alan Shawn Feinstein Associates.

"To know that thousands of poor people will now have free legal services because of our gift - I'm sure my father is smiling," said Alan Feinstein, founder of the Feinstein Foundation.

The \$1 million Feinstein gift makes Roger Williams the seventh institution of higher education in the state to receive a Feinstein seven-figure grant to help establish community service as a part of their curriculum.



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This will mean over 5000 college students will be doing projects in the Feinstein college programs to enrich communities throughout the state every year.

Roger Williams *pro bono* legal services, as part of a college community service program required for graduation, is believed to be among the first in the country.

“Providing *pro bono publico* service has long been a hallmark of the legal profession,” said University President Anthony J. Santoro, in making the announcement. When he founded the School of Law in 1992, Santoro promised that the school would have an important and positive impact on professional standards.

“Mr. Feinstein has now enabled us to fulfill that goal during the early years of the School of Law’s development. Since participation in a community service program will now be required of all students, this Institute will provide a lasting framework for community service as a significant component of our students’ academic experience. By introducing law students to community service at the beginning of their careers, we set the stage for a lifetime of commitment to public service,” continued Santoro.

Through The Feinstein Institute for Legal Service, the School of Law will create a multi-tiered, multi-year program. “*Pro bono* obligations will be enmeshed in the Juris Doctor curriculum,” said John E. Ryan, vice president and dean of the School of Law.

“Beginning with a professional obligations lecture during first-year orientation and subsequent presentations, students will come to appreciate that it is part of the lawyer’s professional responsibility to give back to the larger community,” he added. “Second-year students will complete a legal professional responsibility class and subsequently will apply classroom learning in their third year through a mandatory substantial and significant community service experience.”

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Law students may accomplish this Feinstein community service experience by working as student-attorneys in one of the law school client-service clinics, assisting the elderly with income taxes, helping nonprofit groups meet governmental requirements, counseling senior citizens on health care, teaching secondary school students about the law, or through other outreach efforts.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Ralph R. Papitto noted that The Feinstein Institute for Legal Service supports the rationale for establishing the School of Law.

“We knew that a law school would rapidly become a major factor contributor in promoting the administration of justice in Rhode Island. The desire to enhance the legal culture of the state is very strong within the profession. Law schools, especially those which are the only one in a state, tend to become important partners with the bench, bar and community,” stated Papitto.

Emphasizing the importance of this partnership, Chief Justice Joseph R. Weisberger of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island commented, “On behalf of the Rhode Island Judicial System, I express great appreciation to Alan Shawn Feinstein for his generous endowment of a *pro bono* institute at Roger Williams University School of Law.”

“Public service and aid to the poor are the highest attributes of the calling of the legal profession. The establishment of The Feinstein Institute for Legal Service will strengthen and enhance this great tradition by making it a part of a coordinated teaching and service program that will benefit both the student and the Rhode Island community,” he added.

While Rhode Island individuals and organizations are the initial beneficiaries of this new program, the effects will be far reaching. As graduates return to their native states or relocate to accept a position, they will continue their service to the new community.

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Opened in 1993, the Roger Williams University School of Law, is approved by the American Bar Association. Currently, there are more than 500 students enrolled, 60 percent of whom are attending the three-year, full-time day program and 40 percent in the four-year, part-time evening program.

Twenty-seven states and two foreign countries are represented in the student body. Nearly all part-time and 40 percent of the full-time students are Rhode Island residents. Students are taught by 25 full-time faculty members who have come to Roger Williams University from other established U.S. law schools.

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