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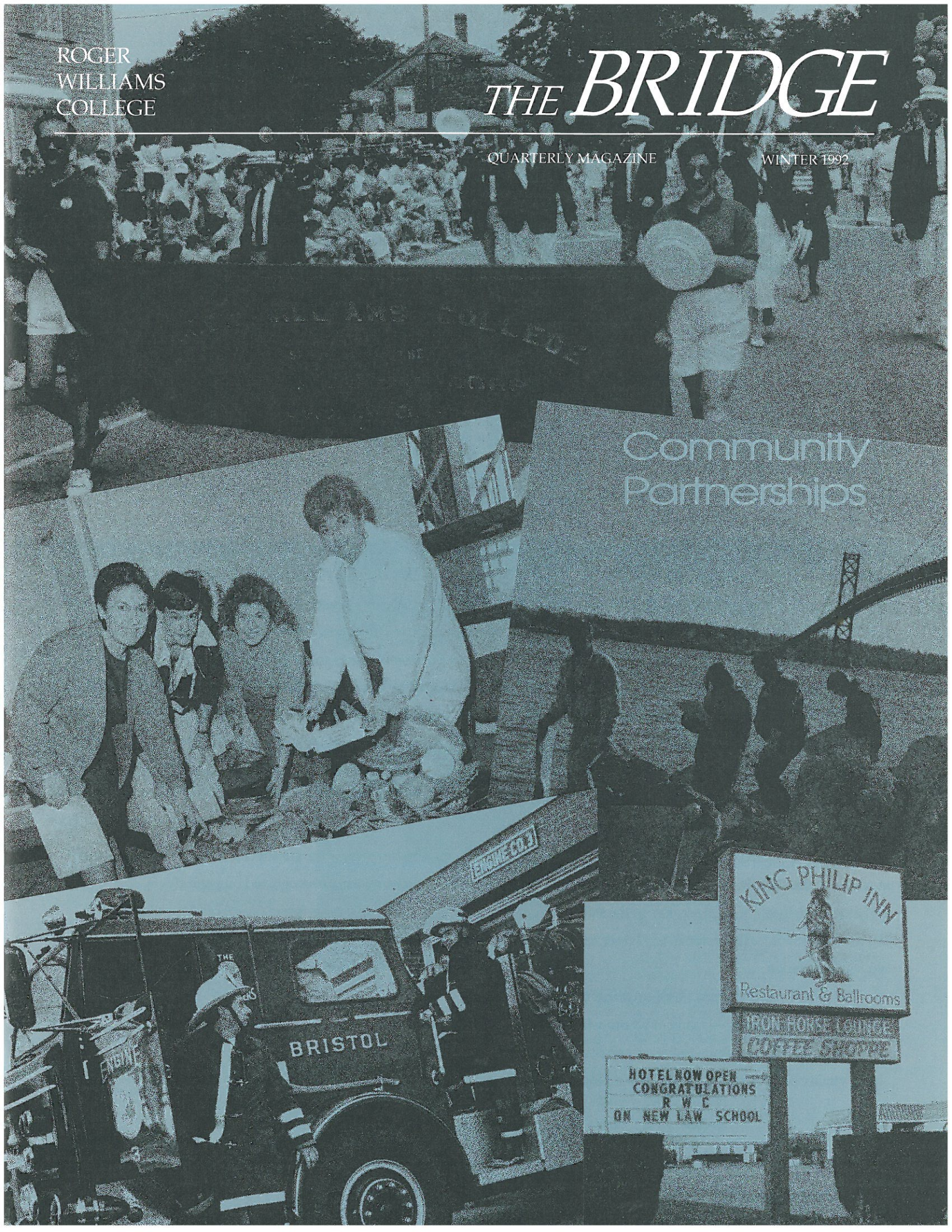
ROGER
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THE BRIDGE

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

WINTER 1992

Community Partnerships



KING PHILIP INN
Restaurant & Ballrooms
IRON HORSE INN
COFFEE SHOPPE

HOTEL NOW OPEN
CONGRATULATIONS
RWC
ON NEW LAW SCHOOL



THE BRIDGE

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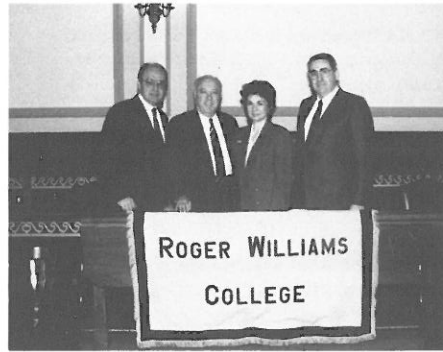
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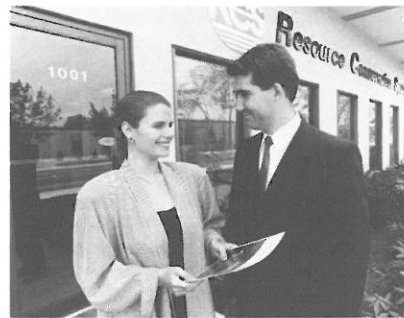
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LAW SCHOOL UPDATE

An Interview with Anthony J. Santoro, Dean and Professor of Law, Widener University School of Law



At its Dec. 3, 1991 meeting, the Roger Williams College Board of Trustees voted to establish Rhode Island's first law school and accepted the Law School Feasibility Study. The Board approved the recommendations of consultant Anthony J. Santoro, dean and professor of law at the Widener University School of Law.

The law school will be located on the Bristol Campus, with a law clinic in Providence, and will enroll students as early as Fall 1993.

When the law school is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA), the College will join a select group of approximately 160 colleges and universities in the United States with ABA-approved schools of law, of more than 3,000 institutions of higher learning nationwide. Rhode Island is one of only three states without a law school.

The decision caps nearly two years of comprehensive planning including feasibility studies conducted by the Law School Advisory Board and its forerunner, the Law School Study Committee. Both groups were chaired by Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Joseph R. Weisberger.

"The announcement that Roger Williams College was considering opening a law school has drawn unprecedented interest from throughout New England and beyond.

"Capitalizing on this momentum that has been generated, the Board of Trustees is enthusiastic about moving full speed ahead to take the steps necessary to admit the first students in Fall 1993," Ralph R. Papitto, chairman, Roger Williams College Board of Trustees, emphasized.

Appointed in June 1991 by President Natale A. Sicuro to conduct an in-depth study concerning the establishment of a law school at the College, Dean Santoro currently heads the Widener University School of Law with campuses in Wilmington, Del., and Harrisburg, Pa.

He was a member of the founding faculty at Western New England School of Law (Springfield, Mass.); the founding dean of the Bridgeport (Conn.) School of Law and the Widener University School of Law (Harrisburg Campus); and the American Bar Association Consultant for St. Thomas University School of Law, Miami, Fla.

Director of Public Relations and Publications Betty M. van Iersel interviewed Dean Santoro about the recommendations in his final report and the future of the Roger Williams College School of Law.

Q. Dean Santoro, your report demonstrates the need for a School of Law at Roger Williams College. Yet, according to the American Bar Association, Rhode Island ranks 17th among the states in attorneys per capita. Why the demand for another law school?

A. There is an almost universal belief that Rhode Island has been badly served by the lack of a law school. In addition to educating aspiring lawyers, the Roger Williams College

School of Law will enhance the delivery of legal services in the state by becoming the focal point for law reform, legal research and continuing legal education of the bar.

The Feasibility Study shows demand in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts due to three factors.

First, there is a substantial population of prospective part-time students, especially women who may have primary child-care responsibilities, minorities and others, who cannot commute to the Boston area. The market surveys showed a large pent-up demand for legal education in this area which existing schools of law have not satisfied.

Second, there is a need in Rhode Island for a vehicle to provide objective commentary on developments in the law — important cases and bills pending before the State Legislature — and to keep the profession vigorous. Because the law is becoming increasingly complex, there is an ongoing need for continuing professional education.

Finally, while many would agree that the upper and upper-middle classes are adequately served by the present delivery system in Rhode Island, there is a question as to whether middle- and lower-income clients are receiving adequate legal services. Other states — Massachusetts, for example — spend much more per capita on legal services for the poor than does Rhode Island. This is another need which creation of a School of Law at Roger Williams College can address.

Q. How will the creation of a School of Law impact the quality of undergraduate programs at the College?

A. Based upon my experience as a consultant to four other colleges and universities which have recently established schools of law, there is a significant "trickle-down" effect impacting upon the quality of undergraduate admissions. Law students tend to be drawn from a wider geographic region than are undergraduates, enhancing the colleges' visibility.

Undergraduates as well as law students benefit from the interdisci-

plinary cross-fertilization which can occur; for example, if an environmental law curriculum were established, that could be beneficial to undergraduate students in the School of Science and Mathematics and others.

At Roger Williams College, you have the example of the School of Architecture — a great success story and one of your flagship programs. Rather than competing with other Schools and programs for financial resources, it has enhanced the ability of the College as a whole to attract voluntary support. I am convinced that the School of Law will do the same.

Financially, the School of Law will be operated independently of the undergraduate programs; funds will not be co-mingled. Therefore, faculty in other areas should have no concern that the School of Law will drain resources from their areas.

Q. Is a Fall 1993 starting date realistic?

A. It would put the College on a fast-track, but the consensus of the Law School Advisory Board and Board of Trustees is that the College should capitalize on the momentum generated by the December 4 law school announcement and aim for a September 1993 starting date. The feasibility of that will depend upon attracting a dean or dean-designate within the next few months.

Q. What would be the next steps?

A. After the dean is hired, you then have to construct the facility including a separate law library; hire faculty and administrators; develop curriculum; establish an admissions procedure and standards; set tuition and fees; and recruit students.

Q. What program niches might be considered?

A. That would, of course, be up to the dean and law faculty. Some "hot" programs currently include medical, environmental, and international law, and these would undoubtedly be explored, along with others.

Q. What would be the relationship between the School of Law and the Law Center

which currently houses the political studies, paralegal studies, administration of justice and public administration programs in the School of Social Sciences?

A. Again, that decision would be up to the respective deans and faculty (of the two Schools), but I'm certain the Law Center would have some type of affiliation with the School of Law. The paralegal studies program, in particular, would benefit from such an association, and there is an increasing need for more professionals in fields such as judicial administration as the law becomes increasingly complex.

Q. How early can the new School of Law become accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA)?

A. No school of law may be accredited until it first earns provisional accreditation from the ABA. A school must be open for at least one full year before it may apply for provisional accreditation. In the case of the Roger Williams College School of Law, therefore — assuming the School admitted its first students in Fall 1993 — it would be October 1994 before the School could be provisionally accredited. Normally, it takes three years from provisional accreditation to earn full accreditation, although sometimes that period may be shortened somewhat. The College is taking all steps necessary to ensure accreditation at the earliest possible date so that the first graduates of the School could earn their degrees from an ABA-accredited institution.

Q. What has most impressed you about your experience at Roger Williams College?

A. Most colleges and universities considering schools of law fail to plan adequately. That has certainly not been the case at Roger Williams College. I have been extraordinarily impressed by the depth of the planning process, beginning with the announcement of the preliminary feasibility study and formation of the Law School Study Committee in December 1989, and carrying through to the preliminary committee report in May 1991 and to the final, in-depth Feasibility Study in Fall 1991.

The College has laid all the groundwork for success by assembling a first-rate, blue-ribbon Law School Advisory Board including leadership from the highest levels of the State of Rhode Island judiciary and legal systems.

Also, you have involved all key College constituencies including faculty, students, volunteer and community leadership at all stages of the planning process. The market surveys have been comprehensive in documenting a need and demand for a school of law in Rhode Island.

I commend Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, Chairman Ralph R. Papitto, President Natale A. Sicuro, Vice President Malcolm H. Forbes, who served as the College liaison to the Law School Advisory Board and all others who played a role. Their efforts will, I believe, result in a strong School of Law at Roger Williams College and will greatly enhance the College and State as a whole.

Roger Williams College announced plans to proceed with the creation of a School of Law at a special press conference held Dec. 4, 1991 at the Superior Court Building, Providence. From left: Anthony J. Santoro, dean and professor of law, Widener University School of Law; Ralph R. Papitto, chairman, Roger Williams College Board of Trustees; Dr. Victoria Lederberg, secretary to the Board of Trustees and chair, Board of Trustees Law School Committee; Dr. Natale A. Sicuro, College president.

