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"College Forms Law School Committee"

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THE ABRIDGED

COLLEGE BULLETIN WINTER 1990



At the media conference announcing plans to explore the feasibility of a law school at the College, from left are Rhode Island State Senator and College Trustee Victoria Lederberg, College President Natale A. Sicuro, Rhode Island Supreme Court Justice Joseph R. Weisberger, and College Board Chairman Ralph R. Papitto.

College Forms Law School Committee

"In Strong Position" to Consider Law School, President Sicuro Says

President Natale A. Sicuro recently announced the formation of a 15-member blue-ribbon Law School Committee including three College trustees, three College faculty, five justices from the State of Rhode Island judicial system and managing partners of three leading law firms in the state to explore the establishment of a law school at Roger Williams College. If created, the Law School would be the first in the state.

Roger Williams College is in a strong position to consider the creation of a law school in conjunction with the College Plan for the '90s now being developed by the College Planning Council, according to President Sicuro. The Council is chaired by Vice President for Academic Affairs Malcolm H. Forbes, who will serve on the Law School Committee.

The Committee will be chaired by The Honorable Joseph R. Weisberger, Rhode Island Supreme Court justice, who chaired the 1974 committee to study the feasibility of establishing a law school at Providence College.

"Roger Williams College is indeed fortunate that Supreme Court Justice Weisberger has enthusiastically agreed to chair this landmark study for the College. Judge Weisberger's stature and dedication provide a beacon to all of us toward the goal of a top quality product," President Sicuro stated.

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Committee Moving Ahead on Library Building Fund

"With a new president, new chairman and relatively new board of trustees, Roger Williams College is at a higher level — one with active fund raising for a growing college," said Trustee Joseph M. Cerilli '70, president of Providence Land Company and chairman of the Library Building Fund Steering Committee.

"We're all very active on the Steering Committee," Mr. Cerilli said. The main function of the Committee is to determine the most appropriate means of soliciting gifts and actually raising money for the new Library. As of December 1989, the campaign was approaching the \$1.5 million mark.

The Steering Committee is currently in the process of "laying the groundwork" for future fund-raising activities to reach the \$4 million goal, according to Mr. Cerilli.

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Alumni Survey Results Pouring In

Response to the alumni survey, mailed in November to all Roger Williams College graduates, has been "unprecedented," Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving Lianne C. Oberg has reported. At the time of printing, more than 1,300 responses had been received.

Free Alumni Association window decals were given to alumni who took the time to respond. Results are currently being compiled, and will be published in a forthcoming issue of *The Bridge*.

If you have not yet responded to the questionnaire, please take a few minutes to do so. Your input will be valuable in planning future Alumni Association activities, such as regional events and reunions.

"I look forward to participating again in a committee to look into the possibility of creating a law school in Rhode Island, the only state besides Nevada and Alaska which does not have such an institution," Judge Weisberger said.

Other Rhode Island judges to serve on the Committee include The Honorable Thomas F. Kelleher and The Honorable Donald F. Shea, justices of the Rhode Island Supreme Court; The Honorable Anthony A. Giannini, presiding justice, Rhode Island Superior Court; and The Honorable Albert E. DeRobbio, chief judge, Rhode Island District Court.

"This step . . . is a logical extension of the College's strong undergraduate liberal arts curriculum coupled with selective professional programs."— Natale A. Sicuro, president of Roger Williams College

Trustee Lederberg to Vice-Chair

Trustee Victoria Lederberg, a Rhode Island state senator, will serve as vice chair of the Committee. Also on the Committee are Trustees Joseph R. DiStefano, president, Capital Properties, Inc., an attorney; and Michael Silverstein, managing partner, Hinkley Allen Snyder & Comen.

"I believe this is a very important undertaking, because if we establish a law school it will greatly enhance the practice of law in the State of Rhode Island, much as a medical school enhances the practice of medicine in the state," Dr. Lederberg said.

"In addition to providing for legal education studies in Rhode Island, a law school in the state can improve the practicum experiences that could be possible for the training of our young lawyers.

"Overall, I see a law school not necessarily increasing the numbers of lawyers but possibly contributing to an overall improvement in the caliber of law as it is practiced," she added.

"The purpose of the Law School at Roger Williams College would be to enhance the practice of law in Rhode Island; this exploratory study comes because of the great interest expressed by a wide variety of individuals on the need for a law school in the state," Chairman Ralph Papitto of the College Board of Trustees said.

Mr. Wright to Serve as Executive Secretary

President Sicuro emphasized that he anticipates strong contributions from the College faculty members whom he has appointed to the Committee. Faculty members serving on the Committee include Dr. John Pozzi, director of the College Law Center; Thomas E. Wright, attorney and instructor at the Law Center, who will serve as executive secretary to the Law School Committee; and Raj Saksena AIA, director of the Architecture Program, who will consult on physical needs, such as a law library. Mrs. Marie D'Amico of Warwick has been named as student representative to the Committee.

"... This exploratory study comes because of great interest expressed by a wide variety of individuals on the need for a law school in the state" — Ralph R. Papitto, chairman of the College Board of Trustees

Three Rhode Island Law Firm Partners on Committee

Managing partners of three major Rhode Island law firms have been appointed to the Committee by President Sicuro. They include Gary R. St. Peter, Adler Pollock & Sheehan, Providence; Deming E. Sherman, Edwards & Angell, Providence; and College Trustee Silverstein.

"This step to undertake a feasibility study is a logical extension of the College's strong undergraduate liberal arts curriculum coupled with selective professional programs. The Law School would build on our strong 3,700

enrollment on campuses in Bristol and Providence, and upon our excellent Law Center and Paralegal Studies major," President Sicuro added.

The feasibility study will consist of research into the purpose of a law school, the potential market for such a school in the State of Rhode Island, resources needed including teaching facilities and a law library, and the availability of full- and part-time faculty needed to meet accreditation. Professional and accrediting organizations, such as the American Bar Association and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, which accredits Roger Williams College, will also be asked for input. Vice President Forbes will have primary responsibility for evaluating resources needed to obtain accreditation, according to President Sicuro. Deans of other law schools will serve as consultants to the Law School Committee, which will report its findings to Dr. Sicuro before the end of 1990.

The announcement of the Law School Committee and feasibility study was made December 18 at the Rhode Island Superior Court Building in Providence.

"... If we establish a law school it will greatly enhance the practice of law in the State..." — State Senator Victoria Lederberg, Roger Williams College trustee
