Welcome to our very first e-news magazine.

As the 40th Anniversary year begins, we hope to keep the Law School family up-to-date on exciting happenings, special events, and current issues as they unfold. At least two e-news magazines are planned for each semester, but there may be more as news warrants. Please join us as we keep you in touch with the Law School’s large, diverse, and ever growing ‘ohana.

The Job Market Debate: How to Prepare Yourself For Success

A New Year Begins: Wise Words in Orientation for the Class of 2016

Meet Our Students From Around the World: Masters Degree Candidates from a Dozen Countries

“Greening” the Law School With a Hawaii Icon: Judge James Burns Gardens – and Inspires

Tossing Out, Beefing Up, Giving Away: Transformation in the Law Library Serves Hawai‘i and the Pacific

Looking Forward, Looking Back, in Our 40th Anniversary Year: Graduates Reflect on their Richardson Experience
The Richardson formula for the Job Search—
‘Great Preparation and Extra Help’

BY JULIA WIETING

LANDING THAT FIRST JOB after law school is anything but easy. Fortunately, the William S. Richardson School of Law recognizes that knowing how to nail a job interview starts on the first day of law school — but is the culmination of years of academic and professional development. That understanding has paid off for the school’s graduates who are being employed at a much higher rate than the national average.

While the American Bar Association estimates a 75.2 percent employment rate nationwide for the 2012 graduating class, Richardson notes 87.5 percent of its 2012 graduates have found jobs.

There has been concern nationally in recent years over the difficulty in finding jobs in the legal profession and a newly-released study by the National Association for Law Placement shows that while the job market is still tight, there were more jobs available for law school graduates in 2012 than there were a year earlier. Yet even as the recession wanes, and the job market improves, Richardson continues to focus on preparing graduates for the real world — by giving them a tool kit of indispensable skills and experiences.

One key piece is the Law School’s career-oriented curriculum, supported by a robust Professional Development and Placement program, both of which encourage students to interact with practicing attorneys as much as possible.

“The school organized a lot of events that were very helpful in finding a job,” says alumna Lynda Arakawa ’11, “such as inviting lawyers from the community to conduct mock job interviews, and bringing attorneys from city, state, and federal agencies to talk about legal careers in government service.”

By caring about its students’ careers, the Law School maintains its directive to build a legal community for Hawai‘i. Law School Dean Avi Soifer notes: “In many ways, we proudly continue to build on C‘J’s vision - as well as his example - of leadership for the public good, defined in many different ways. And we do a great job in helping to prepare our students to be first-rate professionals without losing sight of how lucky they are to receive the kind of excellent training that allows them to help others effectively.”

A lot of our students work at the State Legislature, which gives them access to a whole range of legal issues.

Lyn Flanigan ’81 has been Senior Advisor for Career Development and Special Projects for the past year as part of Richardson’s Career Services program. (Over the summer, Minara Mordecai joined the Law School’s Professional Development team, and is also now Director of Special Projects. She comes to Hawai‘i from her previous position as Associate Director of Admissions at Berkeley Law. Additionally, Ronette M. Kawakami ’85, the new Associate Dean for Student Services, will play
a supervisory role with the team.)

Working with Piyada Nonzee, who recently became the Law School Registrar, Flanigan hosted a wide variety of career-related activities. These included programs that provide networking and skill-building opportunities, such as job skills workshops; open houses with local firms; sessions on judicial clerkships; and a public interest career fair. The Law School also provides job placement services, including posting job notices, offering career and interview counseling, and reviewing resumes and cover letters.

That help is making a difference in the careers of its graduates, according to the employment statistics that the Law School is required to collect and report. Richardson graduates have been highly successful at finding employment in the first year after graduating over the last three years, averaging 14 employed graduates for every one unemployed graduate still looking for work.

In addition, the Law School’s relatively low tuition and extensive financial aid means that graduates are far below the national average for law school debt. In fact, Brian Tamanaha, an outspoken critic of the status quo in legal education and the author of Failing Law Schools, listed Richardson Law School as an example of an “excellent” public law school that still charges resident tuition below $20,000 a year.

“As soon as 1Ls come here we introduce them to as many aspects of the legal profession as possible,” says Flanigan. Helping to familiarize students with different areas of legal work, such as the courts, the military, and public interest law is part of her job, but Flanigan also emphasizes the practical career mentoring that students receive from the Law School’s Career Services.

“We help students work on their job application skills, which culminates in twice-yearly on-campus interviews with local firms and clerkship opportunities. Alumni donate their time to help students prepare by conducting mock interviews, which also allows current students to begin networking with working attorneys.”

A student’s ability to network is considered central to the likelihood of getting a desirable job. The Law School encour-
ages students to see their 60 hours of required pro bono work as an opportunity to learn about the diverse employment opportunities available in public service, while also meeting potential employers. “A lot of our students work at the State Legislature, which gives them access to a whole range of legal issues centered around public policy,” Flanigan says. Other students work for community organizations that introduce them to nonprofit oriented work, especially centered around social and environmental services.

Although Career Services mentoring is optional, Flanigan estimates that more than 50 percent of all Richardson students take advantage of the extra help. “Some students are very motivated and already know what they need to do. But others need some direction and encouragement.”

Yet, acquiring the necessary legal and professional skills to actually get a job offer is something that Richardson students develop during all three years of their studies, guided by faculty and staff who understand that students can’t just study the law and expect to know what to do. In multiple ways, Richardson’s curriculum asks students to develop the lawyering skills necessary to apply their legal understanding to the real world. Three significant programs in particular help students to accomplish that goal: the pro bono graduation requirement, the clinical graduation requirement, and the externship program.

There are few other kinds of graduate programs that make volunteer work a core educational standard, but that is just what the pro bono program does. Although pro bono is commonly understood to mean free legal work, it actually comes from the Latin phrase pro bono publico, or “for the public good.” But instead of merely gaining practical experience, pro bono work allows students to explore their legal interests in a way that is fundamentally geared toward serving the public good.

“The rules of the pro bono program are expansive,” says long-time Director Professor James Pietsch. “The law student just needs to find a licensed attorney to supervise free legal work that can be as far-flung as saving Siberian Tigers, researching landlord tenant issues in Chinatown evictions, or preserving the iwi (bones) of native Hawaiian ancestors.”

Students are also required to take at least two credits of clinical classes, meaning classes in which they learn the particular skills needed for different areas of legal practice, generally through experiential learning involving real clients or in-depth simulated cases. Students consider and discuss the ethics of being a lawyer, reflecting upon and critiquing lawyering behavior while being supervised, taught, and mentored by skilled attorneys. With each new clinic offered, law students are better able to see how their future practice will draw on overlapping legal competencies.

Associate Professor Calvin Pang ’85, co-director of Richardson’s Clinical Law Program, is frank about how the clinical law faculty members influence their students. “The impact of a teacher's example can be great because students expect their teachers to set guideposts,” said Pang. “I tell students that their job is to observe all kinds of examples and at the end choose among the ones they deem the best. No one has cornered the market on good lawyering behavior.”

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**Students undertake the whole process of applying for a job** (in this case, one that’s unpaid), making contacts with firms, judges, legal service providers, nonprofits and, in growing numbers, non-traditional legal venues such as state and federal legislative offices, governmental departments, and government relations firms. But an externship differs from a job in that students are required to reflect on and write about their new experiences, drawing out insights regarding their personal and professional development.

Students write journals regularly about their experiences, and Dale Lee, Faculty Specialist in charge of the Externship program, replies to each student with a seasoned blend of advice, homily, and inspiration. “Seems to me that your first week offered a pretty good mirror of the real world and the life of the young lawyer/entrepreneur - there’s a trickle of work as one ‘waits’ for a ‘case’ to walk in through the door or to call,” Lee writes to one extern. He adds: “Then, there’s the other side of the coin - it’s Niagara Falls after a winter of record snowfall, and there’s not enough time in the day... to find a quiet moment to get a bite to eat on the run, as you work to get everything that the client needs and wants ‘a week ago’ even though they called just this morning. You get the picture. It’s an exciting scenario, full of potential.”

“If you’re not intimidated when you start out,” says Lee, “you’re not normal.” Lee likens the externship experience to a 14-week interview that shows employers how students are able to adapt to challenging work situations and to become problem solvers. Simultaneously, students come to understand how much being a lawyer may boil down to acting like a lawyer and carefully doing what lawyers do. —Julia Wieting
The externship program’s focus on active learning may seem very similar to both the pro bono and clinical programs, but it allows students to get class credit while expanding the range of their professional lawyering experience outside of the stricter public service requirements that govern pro bono work or the focused topical setting of the clinic classes. During an externship, students work off campus during a semester – as much as 14 weeks at a time.

Faculty Specialist Dale Lee’s eyes light up when he describes his experience managing the Law School’s Externship Program. “It’s my cup of tea,” he says, referring to the chance to guide students through the challenges of doing legal work in the real world. “It lets students connect theory with practice – what’s really going on here?” Lee explains, adding that the experiences help students gain confidence in the process.

Flanigan points to the fact that her advisory role is successful in part because the students’ professional development starts on day one of their studies – in the classroom and through these three programs, in particular. Professors impart not only knowledge to their students, but also a crucial, intangible sense of professionalism. And students learn fundamental skills, including legal writing and analysis, trial practice, and clinical techniques, in addition to the ethical underpinning of the legal profession.

Arakawa, who is clerking at the Hawai’i Supreme Court, agrees. “The professors and administrators at WSRSL are well-known and respected in the legal community, and they are a tremendous resource with regard to employment opportunities. I was very fortunate to have great professors who not only knew a lot about externing and post-grad opportunities, but were willing to generously share their time and advise me.”

As in many other professions, finding success as a lawyer depends on a variety of factors, including the definition of success that students themselves create. Understanding that educational experiences are also professional experiences is a crucial first step on the path to finding a job.

Pro Bono Program—

Connecting education with service

BY JULIA WETING

According to Prof. James Pietsch, Director of the Pro Bono Program, asking students to focus part of their energy solely on public interest work helps them understand how the law is grounded in community relationships.

“The preparation of lawyers who recognize the significance of their public service obligations is an important objective of the William S. Richardson School of Law. Lawyers have a duty to uphold the profession’s commitment to access to justice, and especially to underserved populations. Fostering a commitment to public service through pro bono work helps future lawyers discover that pro bono legal work can be rewarding not only for the client (or for the public) but
Inspiration and Excitement
During Law School Orientation Events that Launch 40th Anniversary Year

BY BEVERLY CREAMER

During a week of orientation activities that began with an introduction to the newly renovated Law Library and ended with a Saturday afternoon picnic on the Bachman Hall lawn, the William S. Richardson School of Law’s entering class of 2013 heard a series of unique perspectives designed to both inspire – and caution – as they began their law school careers at the University of Hawai‘i.

Dean Avi Soifer spoke about the Law School’s ideals of justice for, and service to “the underserved and vulnerable” – ideals espoused by the school’s namesake, the late Chief Justice William S. Richardson who passed away in 2010, but whose inspiration still guides the school.

Soifer also spoke of what it means to be a “Richardson Lawyer” – one who embodies integrity, professionalism, and civility, but also recognizes the importance of dissent and conscience.

“Law is also out there to be changed,” he told the class during a day-long program in downtown Honolulu with a lunch at the Plaza Club sponsored by the law firm of Starn O’Toole Marcus & Fisher.

Students are also required by the program to evaluate their own work in addition to being evaluated by a supervisor, thus helping them connect public service with developing the quality of their lawyering skills.

In fact, Richardson was one of the first law schools in the country to make pro bono work a graduation requirement. Remarkably, in the early 1990s, it was the law students themselves who asked for an additional graduation requirement of pro bono work and the faculty gladly agreed. While students must donate 60 hours of their time during their degree, the average law student donates 75 hours, and some students have recorded over 300 hours of pro bono work.

Students are also required by the program to evaluate their own work in addition to being evaluated by a supervisor, thus helping them connect public service with developing the quality of their lawyering skills.

“Fostering a commitment to public service through pro bono work helps future lawyers discover that pro bono legal work can be rewarding not only for the client but can be quite satisfying [for the lawyer].”
“I have that aspiration for you,” Soifer continued, “to change the law to make it more just.”

Some of the cautions came from Levi Ho’okano ’06, director of programs for the Hawai’i State Bar Association and a former Law School program director. Ho’okano raised particular warning flags about the image students project in this era of social media where a misstep could cost a job.

Employers use social media to research those they consider for hire, Ho’okano noted, making it imperative for future attorneys to know how they are presenting themselves to the world.

“Be wary of what you make public on your page,” he advised. “Google yourself once in awhile. Check it out to see what’s out there. Check Pinterest, twitter. Check your image and monitor your Facebook page all the time. Adjust your privacy settings so search engines do not go to your page.”

The downtown program took the students to the Hawai’i Supreme Court where they met with Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald who led them in the Student Pledge, as well as U.S. District Court where a panel of speakers shared their own reflections on the business of law.


Hawai’i State Bar Association President Craig Wagnild also spoke to the class during their Supreme Court visit.

During the full day downtown, the entering class heard from Hawai’i Supreme Court Associate Justice Sabrina McKenna ’82, and Mayor Kirk Caldwell ’84, both Richardson graduates.

“As a graduate of the Law School I felt I got the best education I could have;” said Caldwell, who grew up in Waipahu and Hilo. “My three years at William S. Richardson Law School were as good or better than any private school I went to. The caliber of the students is just as good and the caliber of the faculty is as good or better than any other;”

Caldwell encouraged the students to “engage” in their education – not cruise through it. “Education is the best gift you’ll ever get,” he said. “Take this gift and run with it. Engage and get involved in the community.” He urged the students to try out for moot court competitions, take on externships, and help in student organizations.

“This is the chance to test out your opinions before you have to go out and work for a living,” he said.

In her address to the students, McKenna spoke of the tremendous opportunity that lies ahead for the class, especially as the world increasingly looks toward Asia as a place of growing global importance.

“We provide a lot of resources not only to the Pacific, but also to Asia,” said McKenna.

“We’re in the Asian century - and you’re in the best place to be part of that.”
Meet the Largest LLM Class Yet—
in the Program’s 11th Year

BY BEVERLY CREAMER

THE WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON School of Law welcomes 19 LLM students from 12 countries this year, including Rinchen Dema from Bhutan – the first Master of Laws degree student at Richardson from that remote corner of the world.

“This is the largest LLM class in the program’s history,” said director Spencer Kimura, who runs the program that was founded by Prof. Alison W. Conner in 2003. “We’re very excited to have them in our Law School ‘ohana. They bring an amazing diversity of cultures and experience to the Law School, which enhances the learning environment for students and faculty alike.

“It’s not very often you get to sit at a table with folks from Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Korea and Saudi Arabia. You can tell you first-hand about how law is practiced in their countries.”

This year’s class – graduating in the Law School’s 40th Anniversary year – includes:

AKESH ABHILASH from Singapore. He graduated magna cum laude from the law faculty of Singapore Management University and successfully represented his school at the 8th ICC International Mediation Competition.

ANN-KRISTIN SCHNEIDER from Germany. She has been working as a research associate at Linklaters LLP, an international law firm, and has been involved in the corporate department. She is also working toward her doctorate at the University of Bielefeld.

BRADY LEE from Japan. He earned his bachelor’s degree in law from the University of Fukuoka. Born in the U.S., he is fluent in Chinese, Taiwanese and Japanese and has been studying English at the University of Oregon in preparation for his LLM study.

CAROLINA MONSERRAT BEZY from Chile. She earned a bachelor’s degree in law and a second bachelor’s degree in social sciences from Adolfo Ibáñez University in Vina del Mar, Chile. After graduation she worked in a maritime company, specializing in international relations. She has also spent time living on Maui.

DAAD BASFAR from Saudi Arabia. She earned her bachelor’s degree in law from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and was awarded a scholarship from the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission to study English and law in the U.S.

DELPHINE LE MAIRE from Belgium. She was a deaf advocate and legal adviser at the Federation of the Flemish Deaf Organization (Fevlado) in Belgium and has been involved in the development and implementation of lobbying strategies and legal instruments related to disability rights.

HEERANG YOON from Korea. He is a JD student at Inha Law School in Incheon, one of the few law schools authorized by the Korean government outside of Seoul. He earned his bachelor’s degree of laws from Korea University and is a leader of the Learned Society of Business Lawyers.
the biggest club at Inha Law School.  

JULIE SUEN from Canada. She worked as an insurance litigation attorney in Vancouver, B.C., gaining a wide range of experience in trial advocacy, negotiation, and legal writing and research. She earned her JD from the University of Saskatchewan College of Law and her BA in psychology from the University of British Columbia.  

KATHARINA HOHMANN from Germany. She passed her first bar exam from the University of Cologne and the higher regional court of Hamm. While preparing for her PhD thesis, she worked as a research assistant at one of the largest worldwide law firms, with 3,400 legal advisers.  

MARIA AMPARO VANACLOCHA BERTI from Spain. She earned a dual degree in Business Administration and Law at the University of Valencia, and plans to focus her career on business and commercial law.  

MARIA FLORENCIA CASAVILLA from Argentina. She earned her LLB from the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata in Buenos Aires. She has practiced law in one of the top law firms in her home town, specializing in administrative, banking, business, labor, maritime and commercial law.  

MD. NEYAMUL ISLAM of Bangladesh. He earned a bachelor of Business Administration and MBA from the University of Dhaka and also a Bachelor of Law with Honors from the University of London. He is a registered member of the Bangladeshi Bar Council and a member of Lincoln's Inn, UK.  

MOHAMMED ALMALIKI from Saudi Arabia. He earned his bachelor’s degree in law from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. He trained at Azzam Khouj Law Office, one of the top law offices for commercial cases in Jeddah.  

MISHAL ALSHENAIF from Saudi Arabia. He earned his bachelor’s degree in law from King Saud University. He received a scholarship from the Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission to study English and law in the U.S.  

NICOLE BRAUCHLI-JAGENEAU from Belgium. She worked as a junior associate in the litigation and arbitration department of VISCHER Ltd., one of the largest law firms in Switzerland. She earned a Master of Arts in Law and Economics as well as the CEMS Master in International Management from the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland.  

RINCHEN DEMA from Bhutan. (See accompanying story.)  

SERENA KO from Canada. She earned a bachelor’s degree in law from the University of British Columbia and has spent summers interning at a variety of law firms in China. She is fluent in French and Chinese.  

SEUNG-HEE JU of Korea. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Law at Duksung Women’s University in Seoul. She teaches Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Introduction to Law, Sexuality, and Law and Media Law to undergraduates. She is also a member of the International Crime Police Committee of the National Intelligence Service in Korea.  

It is seldom the case that a country’s foreign affairs rest on the shoulders of one attorney. But if they do, as in the case of Bhutan, that lawyer must be extraordinarily capable.  

Luckily, Rinchen DEMA fits the bill. In addition to having completed seven post-graduate certificates, diplomas, or training courses in various arenas of international law, she is starting the LLM program at the William S. Richardson School of Law this fall. She currently works as senior legal officer for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bhutan, specializing in disarmament, counter-terrorism, and legal issues related to human rights.  

The Law School’s LLM program is the logical next step for Rinchen’s legal career. “As the only legal officer in the entire Ministry, I look after cross cutting issues and am solely responsible for all legal related issues both national as well as international in the Ministry,” she says. “Although my graduate program and work experience for the last seven years has given me exposure to international law, my multi-faceted responsibilities require advanced knowledge and expertise in the field of international comparative law.”  

Her interest in coming to the Law School grows from the opportunities it provides to contrast Asian and American legal systems. According to Rinchen, Bhutan’s legal system combines aspects of both common and civil law traditions, so a broad understanding of international law is important for her work. “With the strategic location of the Law School, I believe it is the perfect place to get a holistic understanding of international law from different perspectives.”  

The chance to study in a new country is also a draw for Rinchen. As part of the East-West Center family, she and her fellow international students will be able to learn from each other, as well as from the local culture of Hawai’i. Those are the friendships that help balance the rigors of graduate work and create lasting connections.  

Or, as Rinchen puts it, “The study program at the William S. Richardson School of Law will be enriching not only academically, but culturally and professionally.”  

—Julia Wieting  

CARRYING A COUNTRY ON HER SHOULDERS—and Finding Help at UH Law School
ANKY, LEAN, AND STILL the spitting image of his father, the late Gov. John A. Burns who was a major architect of modern-day Hawai‘i, retired Judge James S. Burns is building an enduring legacy of his own at the William S. Richardson School of Law.

As the long-time Chief Judge of the Intermediate Court of Appeals, Burns played a key role in developing contemporary family law as well as other legal areas in Hawai‘i. “He became known as ‘The Father of Modern Hawai‘i Family Law,’ because of the many family law decisions he penned,” said Associate Professor Calvin Pang ’85, a friend and long-time colleague.

Now in retirement, the Judge has chosen to spend time not only mentoring law students but also creating a lush green oasis of rustling ti plants as a place for reflection and renewal in the midst of the University of Hawai‘i Law School. The Law School Alumni Association also pitched in, helping plant a ground cover of ferns among the ti. This group oversees the other two courtyard planters.

“I love to see plants grow,” said Judge Burns on a late afternoon, poking around the edges of his forest of colorful ti plants at the Diamond Head end of the courtyard to make sure no pests had taken up residence. “I have a hard time being where there aren’t plants … When I saw that the courtyard planter was barren, and the other part was infested with weeds.
and unsightly ground cover, I decided to change it.

For the students, this is part of the warmth of a school that nurtures as well as teaches. “Most of the students love Hawai‘i and this reminds us why we’re here – to protect Hawai‘i and keep it beautiful,” says second-year law student Loren Seehase ’15, who finds the garden a place of relaxation. “Our school would not be the same without this courtyard.”

The towering ti garden Burns has created in one of the courtyard planters is a tribute not just to his love of plants and making things grow, but to his patience and resilience. He has been through difficult recent years, first in fighting stage 4 throat cancer – he’s beaten it so far – and then in helping his wife, TV journalist and documentary filmmaker Emme Tomimbang, through recuperation and recovery after a ruptured brain aneurysm last year.

But even these challenges haven’t dampened his characteristic wry wit. “The Burns-Tomimbang Nursing Home is full,” he told a colleague. “Its maximum occupancy is two.”

It was Dean Avi Soifer who first invited Judge Burns to become a member of the Law School ‘ohana, both to anchor it firmly to Hawai‘i’s past and to honor Judge Burns, one of the state’s living legends, who embodies both those themes.

“It is wonderful to have Judge Burns with us on a regular basis,” said Dean Soifer. “He is remarkably unassuming, yet we all benefit from his deep knowledge of Hawai‘i and our law and from his common sense—and everybody appreciates his dry sense of humor.”

In the decade since Burns began planting his Law School garden - with an occasional blue ginger - he has collected a variety of multi-colored ti, haunting nurseries to find those with unusual leaves or shades of green and pink. Still, he prefers native plants, and has also added five varieties of indigenous hibiscus. Yet his prize plants are the ti that tower high above the planters.

These were the stalks of the large green leaf ti cuttings used during the memorial for the late Chief Judge William S. Richardson, namesake of the state’s only Law School. They sprouted and grew, and now some are more than 7 feet tall.

CJ Richardson was a close friend of Judge Burns and of his father. In 1962, the senior Burns was elected Governor and Richardson was elected Lieutenant Governor. In 1966, Burns appointed Richardson to be Hawai‘i’s Chief Justice. As close allies they helped advance workers and ethnic minorities in Hawai‘i. Richardson’s legal opinions deeply etched Native Hawaiian cultural mores into modern Hawai‘i law.

“It is particularly fitting,” said Dean Soifer, “that the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the William S. Richardson Law School honor the partnership of these two giants and that our two institutions really do work together unusually well.”

Like his father before him, Judge Burns has a habit of down-playing personal praise with a brisk wave. He similarly prefers to stay in the background, despite an illustrious career.

“Recently, the Hawai‘i Chapter of the American Inns of Court, a group that brings top-notch attorneys and judges into the company of law students, renamed itself the ‘James S. Burns Aloha Chapter, American Inns of Court IV’ because of Judge Burns’ many contributions,” notes Pang.

While the honors have been many, with typical humility Burns feels it’s his honor to work with the plants that help turn the Law School’s spacious open-air courtyard into a place that brings students together to study, talk story, or simply enjoy the surroundings of a truly special place.

“I love to see plants grow. I have a hard time being where there aren’t plants... When I saw that the courtyard was barren, I decided to change it.”
Law Library Upgrade

Serves the Community At Large

BY VICTORIA SZYMczAK

A PART OF A COMPLETE upgrade and modernization of the Law Library at the William S. Richardson School of Law, unneeded shelving, books and other library materials are being donated to Hawai‘i students and community groups as well as schools in far-flung Micronesian islands.

The effort involves a partnership with State Sen. Glenn Wakai who has been a key player in organizing materials to send to Micronesia, and then helping pack and load them for shipping. Wakai formed the nonprofit Reach Out Pacific specifically to enable shipment of medical and educational materials to islands in need. Recently he was named Palau’s Honorary Consul by Palau President Tommy Remengesau Jr.

“Sen. Wakai spearheads regular container runs to Pacific Island nations in need of supplies,” said Law Library Director Vicki Szymczak. “That includes desks, chairs, and, fortunately, shelving. So on a Saturday morning in late May, Senator and Mrs. Wakai arrived at the Law Library with a team of volunteers who loaded a moving van with our discarded shelves and brought them to a container ship for transport. The items are being sent to the College of Micronesia in Pohnpei and the Palau Department of Education.”

The Law Library’s upgrade has meant an entire year of reviewing dated materials, pulling them from shelves and completely reorganizing and updating the library materials – in order to provide a state-of-the-art digital collection for students, alumni, and for the larger Hawai‘i legal community. It has also meant total participation by the entire staff, with everyone playing an important role.

Manager Lynette Rudolfo and Evening Supervisor Kelsey Domingo organized and implemented this labor-intensive project with help from student workers. Faculty Support Specialist Garid Faria coordinated activities with the UH facilities department and worked on an acceptable discarding plan that included contacting Sen. Wakai. Law Librarian Catherine Bye, along with Cynthia Engle and Man Sze Shing, and their team of student assistants led the efforts to maintain the integrity of the library database. Law Librarians Roberta Woods and Swee Berkey (now retired) identified all of the collection’s Hawaiian materials that are so popular with in-house visitors, alumni and pro se litigants. All of the Hawaiian collection is now situated at the front of the Library to make it easier to find.

“Books that were irrelevant or dated were removed from the shelves,” explained Director Szymczak. “Printed counterparts to journals that we now access online were recycled. Archive materials were indexed and moved into storage. Government documents were repatriated to Hamilton Library. Collections were reorganized for easier access. And new materials in multiple formats were purchased to better support the exciting, multidisciplinary curriculum at the Law School and the needs of our alumni practicing law in Hawai‘i.

For a little more than two weeks, library visitors were treated to a book igloo by the architecture students.
Some might wonder what the Library is doing with all those books taken off the shelves,” adds Szymczak. “These items face various routes of distribution which include students, Hamilton Library, Friends of the Library, and, in many cases, the dumpster. But the most creative solution was to build an igloo out of the books.

“For a little more than two weeks, library visitors were treated to a book igloo designed and built by the architecture students working in the Law Library this summer. More likely, the books were sent for recycling. The students packed the books in boxes and then lowered them out a back window to be loaded into a dumpster unit. It was back-breaking work but was still completed ahead of schedule.”

The side effect? A host of empty shelves unnecessary for a growing digital collection. In August, the Library donated another set of shelving to the container run to Micronesia before the entering class of 2016 arrived.

Removing shelving primes the law library for future renovations. Plans for the near future include installing environmentally friendly floors, getting better furniture for our law students, and developing more collaborative work spaces while maintaining ample quiet spaces for individual studying.

While these initiatives are still a year or two away from execution, until then, Director Szymczak is working closely with the Law School’s administrators and Student Bar Association to provide extra and alternative seating for students. During the summer, additional sofas and high work tables were installed and study carrels were rearranged to provide more privacy and space.

The library’s future is bright. After several years of functioning below capacity, the library has been operating with a full staff beginning in August. Two new law librarians, Brian Huffman and Karen Schneiderman, have joined Catherine Bye, Keiko Okuhara, and Roberta Woods on the Law Library Faculty. For suggestions or questions about the project, contact the Director at vjs777@hawaii.edu.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RANKS

As the William S. Richardson School of Law heads into its 40th Anniversary year, three graduates reflect on what it means to be part of the extended Richardson ‘ohana. Two of the graduates were members of early classes; the third one graduated this year. Their memories and recollections resonate for all who have become part of a unique and warm-hearted community:

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Allen K. Hoe,
A graduating member of the inaugural class of 1976, speaking to the 40th class on their entry in 2013:

HE BIRTH OF THE INAUGURAL Law School class was as the ancient Kumulipo saga recites. It was a coming from darkness, of sorts, a very austere beginning, September 4, 1973. When we stepped forward on a bright sunny Tuesday morning, 50 plus of Hawai‘i’s most promising young men and women began a journey which was for many the opportunity of a lifetime, not only individually, but for our families as well.

Kānāwai Ka Hiapo, (the first born) the inaugural law school class, was often referred to in the early 1970s as the latest social experiment, a vision of a new Hawai‘i, spawned out of the dreams and desires of a new generation of Hawai‘i’s keiki o ka ‘aina, whose collective experience was of the blending of cultures from a waning oligarchy of privilege in a plantation society, a devastating World War and the young heroes who saved our democracy from the demons of fascism and hate. Their dream was that one day they too would be acknowledged and treated as equals within the evolving new society of democratic principles of equality which was to become America’s most turbulent years, the 1960s...

For the members of the first class, it was said that ‘we were the leftovers from the 1960s.’ We were picked from a backlog of applicants who had yearned to go to law school, but were unable to for a variety of reasons, be it money or family commitments.
The day before we arrived, there was no law school. Then on the 4th of September we were thrown into the turmoil of a school literally being constructed physically and institutionally around us.

As we started, many of us recognized familiar faces. ‘What are you doing here?’ ‘How did you get in?’ ‘Whose protégée are you?’ It was believed that nearly 20 plus of us were or had been at some time an aide to one politician or another. We took pride in that fact, that we had helped to shape the decision of Hawai‘i’s policy makers to give us this opportunity. In return, many of us continued our political work, part-time for our legislative mentors and supporters as well as ourselves, during law school. Several bore the survival mission to learn the rituals and protocol as well as nuances of the application of the law. One result was that all but two members who started went on to graduate. We rejected every attempt on the part of the faculty to institute distinctions between us, we advocated against grades, awards of outstanding students and a traditional law review program chosen on the basis of academic performance.

We shared everything, including the single unisex toilet located in the dance studio across the way. We were a very adaptive group who quickly became an integral part of the neighborhood, the Quarry that is. Late each evening a group of dedicated legal scholars would gather in the popular student lounge, oops, I mean we would occupy the back room of, the legendary university of Hawai‘i institution, known as “Kuhio Grill” where we would explore the finer points of Marbury v Madison, Miranda Rights and the importance of cultural traditions and established native Hawaiian practices in our contemporary society. Yes, on more than one occasion, the lively discussions at these impromptu, but serious, study group sessions would be led by one of our law professors. Can you imagine that?

In the end, we prevailed, each benefiting from the contributions made by all who gave of their time and devotion to the study of law; but more so to this incredible spirit of ‘ohana which the ancients of our Hawaiian experience have blessed us with.

I continue to be amazed by the men and women who shared that moment with me back on September 4, 1973. We have all benefited immensely from the opportunity which visionaries such as CJ Richardson, Governor John Burns and those men to fought and died on foreign lands so that we may enjoy the fruits of democracy, education and of hard work provided. We have become Governors, Senators, Mayors, Judges, Prosecutors, Public Defenders; we have occupied every seat in our societies milieu of existence, mothers, fathers, grandparents; our lives have been filled with the highest of highs and the lowest of lows, yet each of you as those who have gone before have, will always be grateful simply for the opportunity to pursue your dream.

"In the end, we prevailed, each benefiting from the contributions made by all who gave of their time and devotion to the study of law."
Jim Williston ’78
Attorney for the Honolulu City Council, and informal Law School ‘historian’

AFTER 4 1/2 YEARS OF COLLEGE and student teaching at the University of Puget Sound in the rainy Northwest, I was ready to come home. Upon my return to Hawai‘i, I found that most of my Kailua High friends had either left O‘ahu or started families. I was in need of new friends and then “UH Law School,” in its third year, had an ample supply. Although most of the women in the entering class of 1975 were a bit older, a solid core of the guys had just graduated or were just a year or two out of college. We bonded through our shared class experiences and study groups, but even more so through our intramural/Lawyers’ League sports (flag football, basketball, softball and volleyball), after-study card games in the Law Library (then open 24/7), and late night foraging at King’s Bakery, Kuhio Grill, Anna Bananas, or anywhere else open after 10 p.m.

I had graduated from UPS with honors in both Math and Political Science and both served me well at the Law School. In our first year, we had a number of classes that fed my interest in political/government processes, particularly Dick Miller’s “Legal Process” and Jerry Guben’s “Factual Inquiry.” These classes, and Jon Van Dyke’s Constitutional Law I and II classes gave me a solid foundation for my current job as an attorney for the Honolulu City Council. The math has helped me with legal reasoning, which (despite Justice Holmes’ famous comment about “The Law” being grounded in history, not logic) is pretty useful for any class or job.

En route to my current job, my classmates and professors helped me at every step. Classmate Patrick Taomae ’78, put in a good word with my first boss, Jerry Ruthruff. Then the Class of 1977’s Mike Liu asked me to join him for a session at the House Minority Attorney’s Office. Justice Edward Nakamura then selected me to serve as his first law clerk based on a recommendation from Professor Van Dyke. Finally, I served five sessions on the staff of my classmate Representative (now Senator) Brian Taniguchi ’78 while working between sessions as an associate to another classmate Colin Kurata ’78 in a general commercial practice with a bankruptcy focus.

Even after graduation many of my classmates and I continued to play Lawyers’ League softball together and, when one moved or retired, we added graduates from other Law School classes, principally the Classes of 1979 and 1987 (and a few good folks from other law schools as well). When I finally retired from coaching circa 2000, Colin Kurata and my best friend and classmate Paul Fong ’78 were still playing, 33 years after we had started out together.

In addition to providing most of my best friends and a great grounding in the law relevant to my practice, the Law School provided me a channel, through its Alumni Association, for my creative and philanthropic energies. For 30 years I had the opportunity to (with some great help) write and edit the Alumni Newsletter and, for 21 years, to help organize the Alumni Golf Tournament raising funds for law student scholarships. I had the honor of serving as the Alumni Association’s President for seven years and, through my service on the Alumni Board for over 30 years, to meet and work with fantastic students, faculty and alumni. It has been a great pleasure watching the Law School grow both in stature and in its service to the community over the past 40 years, and I expect even better years are ahead.

No one has cornered the market on good lawyering behavior.
AS A CURRENT STUDENT and soon to be graduate, the first thing I will say is that the three years in law school flies by in a blink of an eye! The second thing I have to say about my law school experience at the William S. Richardson School of Law is that it is all about the people. My classmates, the faculty members, and staff are amazing, hardworking, smart, good people, and I am so grateful to be a part of such an inspiring ‘ohana.

Before entering law school I was bombarded with all the myths and legends about law school: the cut-throat competitiveness; stress levels pushed to the max; long and complicated cases; and the nerves associated with the chance that you might get called on in class. Of course as the first day of orientation approached, I was nervous about all the uncertainty that I would encounter along the way. Initially it was challenging and confusing, but I soon realized that Richardson Law School was different from most law schools, and with the help of my classmates, and our late night study groups, we were able to decipher the law, and cases assigned to us. Soon the unfamiliar became the familiar, and bonds with classmates grew stronger as we all struggled together.

These three years have been a roller coaster full of experiences so rich and rewarding, and new friendship so deep, that I cannot imagine my life without them. I had the opportunity to work with amazing, passionate, and driven professionals who are paving new pathways to social justice, and fighting for the necessary changes in our society. However, out of all the people in law school, it was always incredibly inspiring for me to see my classmates in the Evening Program take on a full work schedule, law school, and still find the balance for family. These days law students are faced with more debt and uncertainty when it comes to jobs. The students in the Evening Program are the new trendsetters, raising the bar for what it means to balance a career with a desire to complete a law school education. These amazing individuals are a continuing source of inspiration for what it truly means to be a modern law student.

In the end, although law school is tough and stressful, the William S. Richardson School of Law provided me with such a different experience. It promoted support, comradery and a sense of community. I will never regret attending law school because what I learned in law school goes beyond what is in the law books, but rather I was able to learn the tools of how to be professional, civil, honest, and an organized individual who understands the importance of your reputation. These lessons are embedded in the framework of the Williams S. Richardson School of Law, and I am grateful to have had this opportunity to be provided with these tools as I enter the legal profession.