



A Leader by Consensus

The School of Law's new dean, nationally prominent in legal education, is known for engaging the thoughts of others, then acting decisively to move things forward.

By Jamie Smith





FROM YOUR FIRST CONVERSATION with Phoebe Haddon, it's quickly apparent why she is universally described as a great listener by colleagues, friends, and family alike. Her smile is broad and luminous, her laughter uninhibited and contagious. She leans slightly forward across the tabletop, maintains a steady contact with her warm, dark eyes, and nods, gently encouraging you to go on. And an interview intended to provide the University of Maryland School of Law's new Dean with an opportunity to hold forth about herself – at length and without interruption – quickly becomes a conversation in which she listens almost as much as she speaks.

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well," said John Marshall. Dean Haddon's record of leadership and the broad respect she enjoys throughout the legal profession bear out the words of the U.S. Supreme Court's first Chief Justice.

Revealingly, the people she's most interested in hearing from are those who disagree with her.

"I'm always going to listen to what you say. I'm not afraid to engage the thoughts of others. They may be helpful in fixing what I'm doing wrong," Dean Haddon says, reflecting two other aspects of her personality repeatedly identified by those who know her best: self-confidence and respect for the views of others.

Over the last three decades, she has employed these strengths to improve institutions ranging from the American Bar Association's Council of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, to the American Law Institute-ABA Committee on Continuing Professional Education.

"Dean Haddon has been recognized as a national leader for years," says former Dean of the University of North Carolina School of Law Judith Wegner, who co-authored the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's 2007 landmark report, *Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Profession of Law.* "Maryland Law's unique strengths provide a perfect opportunity for Phoebe to employ her experience and vision for improving legal education in a way that will position the School even more prominently within the legal profession and the legal academy."



childhood in Passaic, NJ



parents Ida Bassette Haddon and Wallace James Haddon

Colleagues cite Dean Haddon's facility for bringing together an organization's diverse, sometimes antagonistic constituencies, and getting them talking. She listens, finds the common ground, and builds a coalition of supporters. Then she leads them in developing and implementing an approach that results in the achievement of a shared goal.

"Phoebe has a personal and professional philosophy that you can get more things accomplished with cooperation instead of competition," says I. Herman Stern Professor Emeritus of Law Frank McClellan, who has been Haddon's colleague on the Temple Law faculty since 1981, and her husband since 1985.

"It's an interesting approach for a lawyer to get people out of the adversarial approach and into a cooperative one where you're looking for similarities in what you believe, not differences. She doesn't see competition as the dominant model, and she's not looking to win if it means someone else has to lose."

But Dean Haddon's emphasis on collaboration shouldn't be confused with a lack of mettle, say those who know her well. Her scholarly expertise includes such famously contentious areas as torts litigation, and the jury. And when emphasizing a strongly-held belief, she'll remove her brown plastic-rimmed glasses and fix you with a look that leaves no doubt: Dean Haddon is a leader.

"Phoebe has a philosophy that participation and collaboration are key to the deliberative process. But what she's really good at is making things happen after the deliberations are over," says Joanne Epps, Dean of Temple University's Beasley School of Law and a faculty colleague of Haddon's for more than 20 years. "Some people have great ideas, but can't go from the idea to its execution. Phoebe is committed not only to arriving at a great idea but also ensuring that it is acted upon."

A strategic thinker who is deeply engaged in developments in higher education and the legal profession, Dean Haddon is in the beginning stages of organizing a strategic plan for the School of Law. Characteristically, this planning process has begun by listening. She has conducted a retreat with her deans, has begun to meet with members of the Board of Visitors, and – after hosting a breakfast for all Law School faculty and staff on the morning of her first day at Maryland – is now in the process of holding one-on-one interviews with every member of the faculty and law school administrators. And while Dean Haddon's plan for the Law School ultimately will reflect the shared views of a wide range of constituents, it will no doubt be shaped by her own vision for the future of legal education.

When the Carnegie Report was published in 2007, its challenge to law schools to focus more on developing students' ethical skills and commitment to justice was highly influential and groundbreaking. Dean Haddon had issued a similar call almost 15 years earlier.

In "Education for a Public Calling in the Twenty-First Century," 69 *Washington Law Review* 573 (1994), she wrote that law schools "have an opportunity to define good lawyering … as a public calling which emphasizes a professional obligation to promote equality in the legal system … to clarify the values important to the practice of law in contemplation of a more pro-active public role."

Today, she believes more firmly than ever that lawyers' moral obligations to advance justice extend far beyond their responsibilities as client advocates and officers of the court.

gaging



as *Duquesne Law Review* editor in 1976, with the school's Dean, Ronald Davenport

"That doesn't describe what I believe to be the richness of lawyers' societal obligations, which can be very broadly and richly defined, and clearly includes something more than simply following the rules of the court," she says.

In her article 15 years ago, Haddon cited Maryland Law as one of the few institutions that was addressing those issues. Today, Dean Haddon says the School is positioned to be a leader in reshaping not only legal education, but perhaps the legal profession itself. Location, prominence in clinical education, engagement in public service, and an outstanding faculty—committed to excellence in teaching and dedicated to scholarship that searches for solutions to real world problems—all play a part.

"Our location provides a tremendous opportunity to be part of not only a metropolitan statewide conversation, but of a national and global conversation," she says. "We can help define what justice is, and solve problems in ways that recognize the complexity of today's society. And we can be leaders in thinking creatively about the roles of teachers and scholars, of students, and the legal profession in today's world."

A fourth-generation lawyer and educator, Dean Haddon says it was clear from childhood that she would either study law or become an educator, and in her family, she says, "It was not unusual to do both."

Her father Wallace James Haddon, a dentist, moved the family in 1955 from Hampton, VA, to Passaic, NJ, after identifying it as a city where an African American could establish a substantial professional practice. Haddon's mother began her career as a mathematician at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NASA's precursor), then became a junior high school math teacher and high school guidance counselor when the family moved to New Jersey.

Throughout Haddon's middle class childhood, belief in the importance of education was a core value of her family. So, too, were a commitment to excellence and the determination to overcome any obstacles that might deter that pursuit. Dean Haddon points in particular to her grandmother, Phoebe Bassette, as someone from whom she inherited more than her name. Once, Bassette – notoriously late and frequently trying to juggle 20 things at once – was pulled over for speeding down the street in her hometown of Hampton. It was the 1940s, and undaunted by either his badge or his race, she told the white police officer of this small southern town, "I'm sorry, but I have some place to go. If you need to talk to someone, my husband's office is right down the street," and kept on going.

"I do that sometimes, too. I get so involved in what I'm doing that the fact that there might be some barriers or things that are in the way doesn't even occur to me as stopping progress," says Haddon.

While in high school, Haddon took a month-long trip to France with a student group, engendering a lifelong love of travel that has taken her to every continent except Antarctica and Australia. At Smith College, she earned a degree in government, with minors in economics and African American studies. The experience was so important to her that she remained deeply involved in the life of the College, serving on the Board of Trustees for a decade, including a term as Vice Chair.

After moving to Pittsburgh in the early 1970s, Haddon applied to several nearby law schools. One school offered her admission, as well as scholarship support through an affirmative action program that stipulated its

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participants take one fewer course than other students. She still bristles at the memory.

"Though well intended, this requirement was based on some notion that African Americans would not do as well, or meet the same standards, as other students. My background gave every indication that I would do as well, or even better than those gross stereotypical predictions suggested," she says.

"That kind of broad, overly inclusive assumption does not sit well with me. People have to be judged as individuals. That doesn't mean we don't think about how various groups have been discriminated against and try to address persistent structural barriers that continue to impede some groups from attaining equality. But you can't build your response to discrimination without being mindful of the subtle influence of stereotypes."

Dean Haddon instead enrolled at Duquesne Law School, where she received a full scholarship and went on to become editor-in-chief of the *Duquesne Law Review.* After graduating in 1977, she served as a law clerk for The Hon. Joseph F. Weis, Jr., United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and practiced at Wilmer Cutler & Pickering in Washington, DC, before joining the faculty at Temple law school in 1981.

At Temple, Haddon taught courses on constitutional law, torts, products liability, and race and ethnicity. She established herself as a national scholar on constitutional law and tort law, co-authoring several casebooks in those fields, and published numerous scholarly articles on equal protection, jury participation, academic freedom, and diversity.

"Whether it's writing about torts or con law, or teaching a seminar on the jury, there's always been a kind of civil rights edge to what I've been doing; my focus has always been shaped by a belief in equality, particularly respect for the rights of others," says Dean Haddon. "I don't fit the model of scholars who get interested in one particular substantive area of study and use the classroom and law journals to express their views divorced from the context of the lived experiences of people – I am particularly concerned about approaches that take account of people who are marginalized in the system."

Haddon's scholarship is a continuation of her family's tradition of social activism. Her father was an active leader in the NAACP. Her aunt, Rachel B. Noel, led public school desegregation efforts in Denver, culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1,* which made Denver the first city outside the South to receive instructions from the Supreme Court to address segregation.

Striving to improve access to quality education, at law schools and beyond, became her true academic passion. Haddon quickly attained national prominence for her efforts, earning appointment as a member of the executive committee of The Association of American Law Schools, a trustee of the Law School Admissions Council, and co-President of the Society of American Law Teachers. Today she is a member of the Council of the American Bar Association Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, the official accrediting body of American law schools, and serves on a number of committees of those other organizations.

"A real strength for Phoebe is her leadership in groups like the ABA and others

new faculty member at Temple Law



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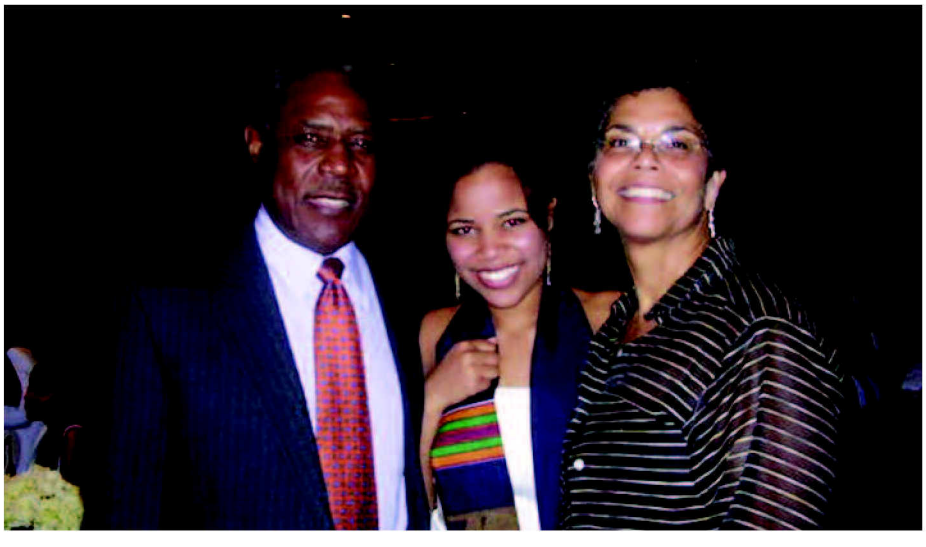
outside the academy. It's given her an opportunity to look at the challenges of legal education and the profession not just as a member of one school, or even as an academic, but from a very broad perspective," says Paul Bekman, Chair of Maryland Law's Board of Visitors. "At a time when law schools are facing a scarcity of resources, and the legal profession is rethinking ways of serving clients, she is the right person at the right time to be Dean of our Law School."

Other law schools had pursued Haddon for deanships in the past, but she always demurred. Her experiences had made her an expert in not only legal education, but in law schools themselves. Dean Haddon could tell when the fit just wasn't right, or if an institution wasn't poised for future growth. From her first visit to Maryland Law, she knew she had found a new home.

Haddon envisions a Law School that enhances its quality by making itself more accessible to students from a wide range of racial, educational, and economic backgrounds. She wants to broaden the definition of faculty excellence to embrace the range of problem-solving talents, of theoretical scholars, outstanding classroom teachers, policymakers, and practitioners providing experiential learning opportunities consistent with the mission and rich tradition of the Law School. In so doing, she wants to attract people who share her vision of a school both accessible and elite in its stature among excellent law schools.

"There are individuals here – faculty, staff, and students alike – who have the qualifications to go anywhere. But they've made a commitment to Maryland because they believe in what we can accomplish together. I see that as very different from many other institutions," Haddon says. "When I hear them talk about their reasons for choosing to be at Maryland, it's very energizing to me. It reinforces my belief that I made the right choice in joining them."





with husband Frank McClellan and daughter Cara