Justice O’Connor Speaks Here

On October 26, 1994, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor gave an informal talk to a capacity crowd of 350 students and special guests at Westminster Hall. Justice O’Connor’s visit to the School of Law was the first by a sitting member of the United States Supreme Court since Justice Brennan was a guest here in 1982 at the dedication of the Thurgood Marshall Law Library.

An eloquent speaker, Justice O’Connor blended humor with real life anecdotes about the role of a Supreme Court justice. Her presence instantly commanded the attention of the audience. After her remarks, she fielded questions and talked informal-ly with students during a brief reception.

Justice O’Connor became an associate justice in September 1981, the first woman to hold a position on the Supreme Court. She is a 1952 graduate of Stanford University School of Law, where she served on the Board of Editors of the Stanford Law Review. After graduation, she worked as a deputy county attorney in California, practiced law for three years and served as an assistant attorney general in Arizona. She was appointed to the Arizona State Senate in 1969 and served as a member until 1975, when she was elected a trial court judge. In 1979 Governor Bruce Babbit appointed her to the Arizona Court of Appeals, where she served until President Reagan appointed her to the United States Supreme Court.

Bernstein Accepts Position in LA

William S. Bernstein, assistant dean for development and alumni affairs, will leave the law school this spring to become associate executive vice president of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles. In that position, he will direct the annual campaign and marketing programs for the Federation and its agencies. The 1994 annual campaign of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles exceeded $40 million.

Since coming to the School of Law in November 1993, Bernstein has focused on major gifts development, enhancing the membership of the Maryland Law School Club and developing strong alumni programs in regions throughout the United States. His efforts helped successfully conclude the first capital campaign in the law school’s history, an effort that raised over $11 million and helped secure gifts for a new professorship and the Technology-Assisted Learning (TAL) Center.

Dean Gifford commented, “Bill will be sorely missed at the law school. We wish him well in his new assignment and the challenges he will certainly face in California.” A search is under way to fill the assistant dean position.

Moot Court Team Takes Regionals

The National Moot Court Team of third-year day students, Ranjit Dhindsa, Asher Rubin and Michelle Lapides, won the regional competition in November, as well as best brief honors. The Maryland team defeated Georgetown in the finals and the University of Baltimore in the semifinals. Professor David Hyman coached the team.

(from left) Ranjit Dhindsa, Professor David Hyman, Michelle Lapides and Asher Rubin.

Christmas Times

The December 25, 1994 New York Times included two articles written by University of Maryland School of Law faculty members: Richard Booth’s commentary entitled “Stop the Misuse of Punitive Damages” and David Luban’s review of Mary Ann Glendon’s book, A Nation of Laws. The review is entitled “The Law Is a Mess, Perhaps an Idiot.”
Superintendent Mitchell

Our congratulations go to David Mitchell, third-year evening student, who has been appointed superintendent of the Maryland State Police. In this capacity, he will head a 2,400-person staff of uniformed and other state police employees. Mitchell was formerly chief of the Prince Georges County Police Department.

“Crystal Ball” Conferences Look at the Profession

by John Fritz

Few lawyers today are sole practitioners working in small towns. For most, long hours and hard work are the way of the world in a largely urban, intensely competitive field. What will the profession be like 20 or 40 years from now? What do these changes mean for young men and women embarking on a law career, and for the law schools charged with preparing the next generations of law professionals?

To explore the present and future states of the legal profession, the School of Law sponsored two special seminars last fall on “The Future of Legal Education.” On September 29, Dean Donald G. Gifford moderated a panel of legal professionals in the Thurgood Marshall Law Library. Panelists were Talbot “Sandy” D’Alemberte, president of Florida State University and a former president of the American Bar Association; Cory Amron from the Washington, D.C., office of Semmes, Bowen and Semmes and former chair of the ABA’s Commission on Women; and Marc Galanter from the University of Wisconsin School of Law. Galanter is a leading critic of the idea that there has been an explosion of litigation in the United States.

Seminar highlights included a prediction that technology will help level the playing field between the sole practitioner and the large urban firm, thus allowing for what D’Alemberte called “the possibility that law could once again become a cottage industry.”

Citing the growing numbers of women in the profession, Amron predicted two scenarios, “one rosy and one likely,” where women would continue to advance and gain power, or would eventually burn out and leave the profession because of “glass ceilings” in management, home life and society. “There are many barriers,” she said. “Crashing through one doesn’t open up the next.”

Recalling the long, often humorous, history of public disaffection as evidenced by lawyer jokes, Galanter said the legal profession had improved by becoming more representative of the society it serves, though it needs to recover its commitment to the community.

Faculty and students attended a similar panel on “The Future of Legal Education” on October 20.

Panelists were Marilyn Yarbrough, former dean of the University of Tennessee Law School; Betsy Levin, former dean of the University of Colorado School of Law and former director of the American Association of Law Schools; Henry Manne, dean of George Mason University School of Law and director of GMU’s Law and Economic Center; and Thomas Leahy, an Illinois practitioner who has actively promoted the adoption of new, but controversial, law school curriculum guidelines proposed by the ABA’s MacCrate Report.

Most of the seminar’s discussion was oriented towards Leahy’s critique of traditional law school curricula and his preference for a more practical, hands-on approach to legal training, lessons he says he learned during an internship in his last year of law school. “I learned more about being a lawyer through that one experience than through all of my law school classes combined.”

Alan Hornstein, chair of the law faculty’s Institutional Assessment Committee, which sponsored both seminars, notes that a review of the legal profession and the education it provides students helped prepare the School of Law for its own self-study review required by the ABA’s accreditation board this year.