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Celebrations Highlight Centennial Weekend

Recognizing the special significance of this once-in-a-century event, hundreds of loyal alumni turned out for the kick-off of the Law School’s year-long 100th anniversary observance held Friday, September 11th and Saturday, September 12th. Dignitaries and news stories waxed eloquent over our illustrious past, our energetic present and promising future. But most graduates came simply to share the nostalgia of the good old days, to visit and reminisce with former classmates and friends, to renew acquaintances with faculty members and deans – and, of course, to celebrate a grand occasion.

After a year of planning, events proceeded on schedule, and thanks to a hard-working committee, with remarkable style. Edwin F. Jaeckle ’15 is honorary chairperson and Margaret Lillis-Snajczuk ’84 is chairperson of the Steering Committee responsible for coordinating the year-long observance.

Catherine T. Wettlaufer ’85 and Linda J. Nemi ’83 head the events subcommittee and were responsible for planning the dinner dance. Diane McMahon ’78 was in charge of the cocktail party, and Associate Dean John Henry Schlegel and Professor Jacob D. Hyman organized the academic symposium.

The celebration officially began at a 5:30 p.m. cocktail party on Friday. The setting – the expansive mosaic-tiled lobby of the 19th century Ellicott Square building on Main Street – was perfectly suited to the occasion. In the early part of the century, the Law School was housed there in a couple of small rooms upstairs.

Despite a drizzly night, more than 500 alumni and guests toasted the Law School, nibbled on hors d’oeuvres and tapped their feet to lively musical entertainment provided by former law students and faculty members: Kenneth W. Africano, Howard E. Berger, Sandra K. Cassidy, Lynn A. Clarke, Louis A. DelCotto, Carl S. Feinsinger, John P. Freedenburg, Sharon Stern Gerstman, Julian C. Johnson, David Pajak, Erin M. Peradotto, Thomas M. Rizzo, Stuart B. Shapiro and Ramsey Tick.

The verdict was unanimous. The groups were found guilty of being incredibly talented and were sentenced to play at future Law School events.

Saturday morning, the focus shifted to John Lord O’Brian Hall, where a distinguished panel comprised mostly of former faculty gathered in the Moot Court Room to discuss the topic: “Legal Education for a Changing Profession.” The lead speaker was Bayliss Manning, former dean of Stanford University Law School and a partner in the prestigious New York City law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton & Garrison.

Also on the panel were Associate Dean John Henry Schlegel, Marc Galanter of
University of Wisconsin Law School, George Priest of Yale Law School, and Joan Hollinger of the University of Detroit Law School. The discussion ranged from the desirability of making law studies an undergraduate major; to futuristic law firms of 5,000 partners; to the ethical issues facing attorneys involved in surrogate mother cases.

Gleaming woodwork, colorful state flags and lighted ficus trees set an impressive stage for the main event, a dinner dance held Saturday night held in the historic Connecticut Street armory attended by close to 500 friends of the school. Centennial Speaker Hon. Sol Wachtler, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, spoke on individual liberties and the Constitution. Also speaking at the dinner were Dean Wade J. Newhouse, President Steven B. Sample and Edwin F. Jaeckle of the class of 1915.

Jaeckle, a prominent Law School alumnus who is senior partner in the Buffalo law firm of Jaeckle, Fleischmann and Mugel, spoke about what it was like to practice law before the invention of carbon paper or typewriters.

"Tuition in 1915 was $50," he told the crowd. "My employer asked my mother if it would be all right to pay me $8 per week. We've come a long way, baby."

Other Centennial Steering Committee members are James R. Amone '85, Terence F. Barnes '82, Harold J. Brand, Jr. '67, Douglas S. Coppola '75, Louis Del Cotto '51, Hon. M. Dolores Denman '65, Mark G. Farrell '72, Hon. Thomas P. Flaherty '50, Christopher T. Greene '74, Thomas E. Headrick, Andrew C. Hinton, Jr. '55, Barbara Howe '80 and Jacob D. Hyman.