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Meet Thomas J. Farrell

He has some ideas for you

You might say that Thomas J. Farrell is living on the edge these days. Not that Farrell — UB Law School's new assistant dean for development — is doing a lot of sky diving or bungee jumping. He's concerned with the cutting edge of quality education and how to keep it strong at UB Law. He wants to build relationships with the school's alumni and let them know that private support "at the margins" is the only way to maintain UB Law's excellence.

"My goal," he says, "is to increase awareness of the need for private support in order to maintain and improve the quality of the legal education the school provides its students.

"To compete with the best institutions in the field, we need to be able to fund the enhancements, curricular and otherwise, which often define great law schools.

"Private funding supplements our public assistance and is really the essential resource stream for the school. It gives us the necessary flexibility we need to create a truly exemplary legal education program."

Farrell came to UB in January 1995 after taking the short trip down the New York State Thruway from the University of Rochester, where he spent the last four years working in alumni relations and development for the University. "The move to UB Law has been a great learning experience for me," he says.

"Coming from private education to public education has made me more aware that the public sector needs to emulate many of the alumni relations

and development concepts the privates have practiced for decades."

Part of that task means reaching out to the alumni in ways that SUNY in general — and the Law School in particular — hasn't in the past.

"What we're trying to do is to re-establish relations with the alumni," Farrell says. "No one has ever gone out and actively done this work before, in terms of working with alumni one-on-one. We're really just trying to get a better feel for who the alumni are and their attitudes toward the Law School."

So far, that goal has taken him to Florida, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Rochester to meet with UB Law alumni, with more travel sure to follow. It has been gratifying, he says, to hear what these UB-educated attorneys have to say about their days in Buffalo.

"The people that I've met have all been very positive about their experiences at the Law School," Farrell says. "There's an incredible amount of goodwill to build on in terms of alumni loyalty."

That's important, he says, because several factors are impelling the Law School toward a whole new way of thinking about how to pay its bills.

"The recent SUNY cutbacks are a harbinger for the future of funding for this law school," Farrell says. "The federal and state governments are broke, in essence, and their role in financing higher education is changing dramatically. The traditional partners in financing higher education will also change as the result of the government's reduced commitment. More dependence on tuition revenue and private

funding will be necessary for all institutions of higher education, public and private.

"UB Law School is the crown jewel in this university's organization. We're SUNY's only law school, so we're New York State's law school. And for a school of our size and stature, our endowment resources are grossly inadequate. There's no getting around it." The Law School currently maintains an endowment of roughly two million dollars.

Farrell says alumni support runs the gamut from smaller gifts of \$10,000 or less, generally accrued through the Annual Fund, to major gifts of \$25,000 or more. That doesn't necessarily mean simply writing out a check.

"Many major gifts are planned gifts," Farrell notes — such strategies as arranging to donate a home or other real estate, establishing a gift annuity, or designating gifts of life insurance or through a will provision.

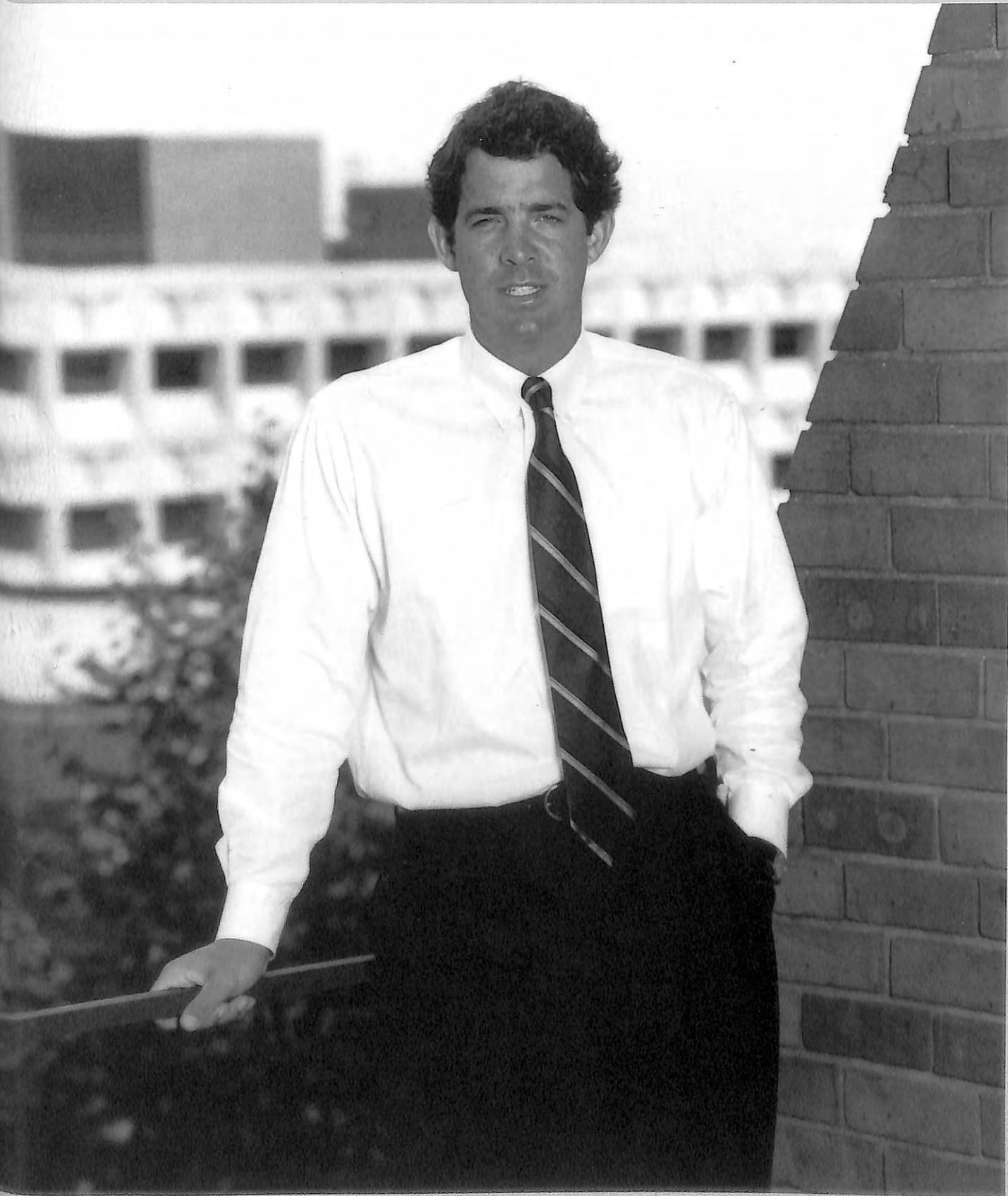
"Part of my challenge," he says, "is to be able to share with people creative, often tax-wise approaches to contributing to the Law School."

Farrell, who grew up in rural Spencerport, N.Y., came to the development field after taking a double-major bachelor's degree at the University of Rochester, in European history and political science. He also holds an M.S. degree in education from the University of Rochester.

After stints teaching high school social studies, marketing securities and working as a grant coordinator for an environmental organization, he joined the University of Rochester's development department in 1990.

It was only natural that he return to a university setting. His father is a professor at SUNY's Brockport campus, his mother teaches English — and his brother, Michael Farrell, is a 1987 graduate of UB Law School, now working in private practice in Brockport, New York.

Tom Farrell can be reached at (716) 645-2113. He just may have an idea for you. ■



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