Exit Laughing: Smiles to Go at Fifth Annual Law Review Dinner

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Exit Laughing

Smiles to go at fifth annual Law Review Dinner

The staff of the Buffalo Law Review ended a tough fiscal year in great humor, at a fifth annual Law Review Dinner that at times seemed more like a "Tonight Show" monologue than a stuffy academic affair.

The dinner, which served to introduce three new faculty members of the Law School, also brought to a close a year in which the Law Review struggled with financing its traditional three issues. New York State supplies enough funding for only two issues a year.

"In the past we’ve funded the third issue with smoke and mirrors and rolling a budget deficit into the next year," said Editor in Chief John D. Craik, a third-year law student. "This year the smoke cleared, the mirrors cracked, and the budget deficit rolled over on top of us."

But, said Dean Barry B. Boyer, "we’re seeing a kind of springtime in Buffalo, at least in the financial sense." Boyer cited “favorable signals in Albany” and pointed to his own experience with Law Review as a student: "It was something in which I was a producer and not just a consumer of education. That’s something we need to honor and cherish, and spread throughout the curriculum."

Markus Dubber, the first of the three new-faculty speakers, told of the time his first student note was published in the Stanford Law Review. "All the hot students seemed to be in Law Review," he said. "It seemed to be a very dedicated though at times overworked set of students who at times seemed to take themselves a bit too seriously. ... You see why I couldn’t wait to join them."

Dubber, who titled his talk "How Law Reviews Changed My Life," said of the Buffalo journal: "After having experienced other Law Reviews, there’s no other Law Review that does a better job editing the kind of stuff I send to Law Reviews."

The next speaker, former New York State Sen. John B. Sheffer, said his work on the Syracuse Law Review was "truly one of the proudest parts of my past. I’ve got to admit, though," he said, "I had mixed emotions about all the work involved in Law Review. I spent half my time at the Law Review, and the other half fly-fishing on the Salmon River north of Syracuse."

Turning serious, Sheffer praised the University at Buffalo for allowing him to "be able to do work in policy issues I’ve worked at for a long time, but in an entirely new sector. This University, under President (William) Greiner’s initiative, has made a very aggressive effort in the area of policy studies, both in academics and in community affairs."

He spoke of the "spirit of exploration and discovery" that he has found at UB, citing his experience in the State Senate by way of example. "The very proudest and most memorable moments," he said, "came when some colleague was up there by himself, pointing to some landfall of justice or reform or policy that, were it not for him, this society would have sailed on by, never knowing it was there. ... It’s that spirit of discovery I think we cannot do without. It’s for that tradition that I’m grateful to be at the Law School."

The final new-faculty speaker, Nancy Staudt, acknowledged the disdain many have for her field of expertise. But, she said, "It’s simply impossible to get bored thinking about the tax code. I think the tax laws tell us a lot about who we are."