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Hilary P. Bradford '53 Creates Hyman Scholarship

"You should always be alert to the important role you will be playing in improving society through the practice of law. It is not a responsibility to be accepted lightly."

The University at Buffalo School of Law has received a $100,000 endowment for scholarships from Hilary P. Bradford, a 1953 graduate of the school and a longtime member of the Buffalo law firm of Cohen Swados Wright Hanifin Bradford and Brett. The gift was given in honor of Jacob D. Hyman, who was dean at the time of Bradford's graduation and currently is a professor at UB Law.

"Jack was an outstanding dean and teacher with a wonderful attitude," said Bradford, reminiscing about his law student days. "He always made us believe we could be lawyers."

"I am deeply touched and honored by Hilary Bradford's very generous tribute," said Hyman. "He was always a strong, thoughtful student and became an outstanding lawyer. I cannot begin to describe the value and significance of his gift."

According to the endowment, the Jacob D. Hyman Scholarship will provide aid for students who have financial need, demonstrate exceptional character and ability, and possess a strong commitment to professional and community service. In addition, preference will be given to students who have graduated from public high schools in Western New York. Bradford explains that this is his way of saying "thank you" to the region where he built his life and achieved his professional success.

Hyman joined the faculty of the Law School in 1946 and served as dean from 1953 to 1964. He still teaches at least one course each semester. Previously, he had been in private practice. He also served as an attorney with the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division, and as an associate general counsel in the Office of Price Administration.

For Bradford and countless other lawyers-to-be, Hyman served as both a role model and mentor. Keenly aware of pressures and responsibilities that could deter students from pursuing an education, Hyman responded with innovative reforms, such as the 1954 development of a four-year, reduced-load curriculum. At that time, many students were not receiving benefits available to others under the GI Bill. Students without benefits had no other option but to work full time in order to pay for their education. The reduced-load curriculum allowed them to maintain a balance between work and school — and still does today.

Hyman also led valuable, enthusiastic alumni efforts. He is credited with revitalizing the Law Alumni Association in 1962. He also created fund-raising programs to help support important seminars and retain top-quality faculty, in spite of shrinking state budgets.

The creation of the Legal Methods Program in 1968, which has had a significant impact on the Law School, is also credited to Hyman's vision. The program provides tutoring and academic support to law students. It is aimed at attracting and retaining capable, promising students who show skill and talent, but come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

"The Legal Methods Program meets a need which is real in American society. Over the years I've been pleased that we could offer opportunities for people to get into law who otherwise wouldn't have been able to — and who have made real contributions," Hyman says.

Barry Boyer, dean of the Law School, credits Hyman with many of
the innovative approaches being used in the school's curriculum today. "Jack envisioned UB as one of the nation's best law schools. He put many of the pieces in place that are moving us toward that status," says Boyer.

In regard to Bradford's gift, Boyer recognizes that an important connection has been made.

"Hilary is connecting his positive memories and experiences with the opportunities for tomorrow's students. He will give them the same chance to learn and explore that he had. Hilary is also demonstrating the substantial power that private gifts can have."

Imagining how this gift will help students in the future, Hyman has indicated that he would like every student who wins the scholarship to be handed an envelope containing the award as well as a special note:

"The gift you are receiving comes as a result of Mr. Hilary Bradford, a generous person who is a model practitioner of law with a sense of the broader responsibility of lawyers to society.

"You should always be alert to the important role you will be playing in improving society through the practice of law. It is not a responsibility to be accepted lightly. I wish you well."

"Hilary P. Bradford '53, right, and Jacob D. Hyman"