Law Review Dinner Honors Albert R. Mugel '41

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A celebration of the best of the past year's work, and an entertaining tribute to one of UB Law School's premier professors, marked the ninth annual Law Review Alumni Dinner.

It was a good year for the Buffalo Law Review. Under the leadership of Editor in Chief Kathryn Bryk Friedman, the journal published three issues — Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of Volume 45 — and at year's end two others were in the works. Articles included three by UB Law School professors Michael J. Meurer, John Henry Schlegel and James B. Atleson, and two by UB Law students Gregory T. Miller and Abbie J. Cheessler. In addition, the Law Review sponsored a significant symposium, "Law, Sovereignty and Tribal Governance: The Iroquois Confederacy," which dealt with the legal issues and politics at the center of current confrontations among members of the Iroquois Confederacy, New York State and the federal government.

At the dinner, held at the Buffalo Club, former Dean Barry B. Boyer was thanked for his support for the journal. In accepting a plaque, Boyer said, "The Buffalo Law Review is one of the majors vehicles that communicate what the University at Buffalo Law School is all about, both to the legal profession and the outside world. You have done superb work with very limited resources."

Friedman then introduced Albert R. Mugel '41, a senior partner in the Buffalo law firm Jaeckle, Fleischmann and Mugel, and a UB Law School professor for more than 50 years. Mugel, a specialist in tax law, estates and future interests, was honored "for his years of dedication and commitment to teaching at the Law School."

"Even though classes are much larger today than they were 50 years ago," Friedman said, "his impact is still intensely felt by his students. A class taken with Al Mugel is regarded as more a rite of passage than an academic exercise. He, unlike some professors, does not teach because it is his career. He is one of those rare professors who teaches because of a passion for the law and a devotion to helping young lawyers. It is for his passion and his commitment that we are honoring him today."

Accepting his award to thunderous applause, Mugel entertained the after-dinner audience with some reflections on the work of the Law Review, leavened with a substantial helping of humor.

"Over the years the Buffalo Law Review has done such a great deal," he said, "Law Review is really a career-long experience. Whether you are putting out the publication or doing research or editing, the standards that you achieve in Law Review you are not always going to be afforded the luxury of time to accomplish when you are in practice. Your Law Review experience is probably the best credential that you have in securing either employment or a clerkship with a judge. It shows not only that you have a good grade record, but also that you have experience in research, writing and editing.

"Many people have heard me say that the best way to do research is to start with a casebook and look to the concepts that surround the question. Today the movement of the law is so fast, particularly in the tax area, that the casebooks are out of date. But the law reviews are up to date."

As an aside, Mugel recalled an earlier time at Jaeckle, Fleischmann when the firm first installed LEXIS-NEXIS legal-research software. The hourly rates were lower in the evening, he said, so a lot of the lawyers worked at night. Ever playful, Mugel said he put a limerick on the computer:

There was a young lawyer from Texas
Who in the evening worked on his LEXIS.
To get lower rates
He missed all his dates
And never discovered what sex is.

"Judges and legislators find that law reviews are exceptionally helpful," he went on. "Because all they see are briefs, which are adversarial documents and attempts to persuade them one way or another. By looking at a question they have and finding a law review article that discusses it, they have the opportunity to get a relatively objective review of the question, and this is very helpful. But it is a law school publication, there is a presumption that it is objective.

"I think you are all to be congratulated. I must say this is a great honor. The Law School is very important to me, and I think the Law School is going places in the next century. We are all very proud of the progress that has been made."