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# We Honor Our Best: Six Receive Distinguished Alumni Awards at Law Alumni Association's Annual Meeting and Dinner

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## Alumni Association:

# We honor our best

Six receive Distinguished Alumni Awards  
at Law Alumni Association's annual meeting and dinner

**O**n an evening of celebration and kind words, six names were added to the long list of recipients of the UB Law Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award. The May 3, 2000, event at the Hyatt Regency was co-chaired by Kenneth A. Manning '77, president of the association, and Lawrence R. Schwach '83, and assembled by an 18-member committee.

Here's a brief recap of the honorees, their presenters' remarks and their own words.

**Paul I. Birzon**, of Birzon & Davis, P.C., was honored for outstanding service to the community by a non-alumnus.



**"Teaching has been a joy to me and a source of great repose. ... And the real joy is that when you are teaching, you learn."**

*Patrick C. O'Reilly '80:* "In the 21 years since I walked out of his class at the University at Buffalo, I have come to know him as a person who is always willing to give back his time and his effort both to the profession and to our Law School community. Paul has given us his time, his effort and his experience in the field for 37 years."

*Paul I. Birzon:* "Teaching has been a joy to me and a source of great repose. You feel like a lawyer again, particularly if you have been doing the same thing over and over again in a courtroom. And the real joy is that when you are teaching, you learn. It is a learning experience for the teacher. Students do something that we have forgotten to do, and that is, when you discuss something, they ask you why. Why is this the law? Why does this make sense in a particular situation?"



**John J. Nasca '46**, of Nasca & Nasca, was honored for his exemplary achievements in business.

*Peter J. Fiorella Jr. '63:* "In one span of 10 years, he has left a legacy of civic, business and charitable accomplishments that would be difficult, if not impossible, to duplicate, including recognition by the Pope as a Knight of St. Gregory and chairmanship of the United Fund Drive."

*John J. Nasca:* "As I look around the room, I see many other alumni who could just as soon be standing in my place. But as an alumnus of the Law School, I am proud of its history and its accomplishments, and certainly its graduates. I wish all of you the life that I have enjoyed. And let me say that without the encouragement and support of my wife, Gloria, a lot of this would not have happened."

**"As an alumnus of the Law School, I am proud of its history and its accomplishments, and certainly its graduates. I wish all of you the life that I have enjoyed."**

**Hon. Rose H. Sconiers '73**, justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Eighth Judicial District, was honored for her conscientious and diligent performance in the judiciary.

*Justice Samuel L. Green:* "In City Court, both the prosecutors and the defense attorneys always had great things to say about Judge Sconiers when they had occasion to appear in her court. Since she has been on the Supreme Court, Justice Eugene F. Piggott and I review her decisions, and I must tell you that they are well-reasoned and solid decisions."

*Rose H. Sconiers:* "I think it is most fitting and proper to acknowledge and share the limelight this evening with the many fine attorneys who have appeared before me in court on a daily basis, because you are truly the diligent ones who have made my job easier and have shaped my career on the bench. I will always remember the words of law professor Howard Manning, who instructed us that it is the lawyers who make the law, not the judges; it is the lawyers who research the law and make an argument, and we as judges adopt one position or the other."

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# Alumni Association:

**Kenneth B. Forrest '76**, of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz in New York City, was honored for his leadership by example as a private practitioner.

*Law School Dean R. Nils Olsen Jr.:* "Ken is described by a close friend and classmate as highly focused, a hard worker, honest and ethical to the nth degree, an attorney who always tells the truth, and I have experienced that in meeting with him on numerous occasions."

*Kenneth B. Forrest:* "I owe a debt of gratitude to the teachers I had at the Law School, such as Professors Wade Newhouse, Ken Joyce, the late Adolf Homburger and the late Heywood Burns. They taught us the law, but they also conveyed an enthusiasm for the law that has guided me during my years of practice. I would also like to acknowledge one of my classmates at the Law School. Ellen Katz Forrest was a wonderful study partner. Ultimately, however, I decided that that was not the appropriate role for her. I asked her to marry me, and fortunately she said yes."



**"I owe a debt of gratitude to the teachers I had at the Law School... They taught us the law, but they also conveyed an enthusiasm for the law that has guided me during my years of practice."**



**Howard R. Relin '68**, district attorney of Monroe County, N.Y., was honored for his commitment to public service.

*Michael R. Wolford '68:* "Beyond the innovative programs that Howard has introduced, he has been committed to hiring and promoting assistant district attorneys based on merit, regardless of their political affiliation. That hasn't always been the case in Monroe County."

*Howard R. Relin:* "Being a district attorney is not the easiest job in the world, but it is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling jobs that anyone could ever have. To work with victims of crime whose lives are shattered and help them through the labyrinth of the court system is something that only an assistant district attorney or a district attorney can know. That is something that is one of the most important parts of public service, to say to a victim, I will try to help you."

**"Being a district attorney is not the easiest job in the world, but it is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling jobs that anyone could ever have."**

# 38th Annual Dinner Supporters



**“My wife, Marilyn, and I and our family have always believed that if you live in a community, you cannot just take all that the community has to offer. You have to give back to the community.”**

**Irving M. Shuman '54**, of Gross, Shuman, Brizdle & Gilfillan, P.C., was honored for his many contributions to the betterment of our community.

*Law School Vice Dean Alan S. Carrel '67:* “We are honoring him for the valuable and extensive service he has provided to many organizations in Western New York and beyond. The scope, quality and quantity of his work for the benefit of others is monumental. Those close to him know that he also has helped scores of people quietly, behind the scenes. He willingly gives his time and financial support whenever he sees the need. He loves to help.”

*Irving M. Shuman:* “My wife, Marilyn, and I and our family have always believed that if you live in a community, you cannot just take all that the community has to offer. You have to give back to the community, your time, your effort, or your resources, and preferably all of them. It's not just the political and business structures that define a community. The volunteer, not-for-profit, religious, cultural and support services are a significant part of what makes up any community.”

The Law Alumni Association gratefully acknowledges the support of the following law firms and advertisers whose generosity helped make the dinner a financial success. All dinner proceeds sustain the work of the Law Alumni Association.

Table patrons were: Brown & Tarantino; Damon & Morey; Fiorella, Palmer & Zakia; Gross, Shuman, Brizdle & Gilfillan, P.C.; Hodgson, Russ, Andrews, Woods & Goodyear, L.L.P.; Kavinoky & Cook, L.L.P.; Lippes, Silverstein, Mathias & Wexler; Lipsitz, Green, Fahringer, Roll, Salisbury & Cambria, L.L.P.; Nixon Peabody, L.L.P.; Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber; and Renaldo, Myers & Palumbo, P.C.

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