New Prize Named for Harry Rachlin

UB Law Forum
“They are realizing that their contribution is a critical element in preparing our school for the next century and will make the difference in defining this place as either a good law school or a great one. It is up to us to help them focus on the issues that will lead to the continued betterment of our institution.”

The new player on the development team, Deborah Scott, will assume responsibility for the annual fund, which represents contributions by friends and alumni in the form of unrestricted gifts. These monies, which once provided the “extras,” now support essential needs of the operating budget. They also provide Dean Olsen with the flexibility necessary to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

Scott plans to expand the structure of the annual fund program through a variety of enhancements. In addition to the traditional fall phonathon, for example, she will implement a class reunion giving program — common in institutions throughout the nation, yet still unfamiliar to UB Law graduates. The annual fund has established and announced a goal of $500,000 this year — about 10 percent more than last year. It is the first time in many years that such a goal has been publicly set, according to Scott.

The Law School is also fortunate to have strong alumni leadership with Robert Fine ’68, a partner in the Buffalo law firm Hurwitz & Fine, serving as chairman of the annual fund.

“This school gave us the tools to practice our profession. I believe that we should give something back to express our appreciation for the great education we received and to make it possible for others to follow,” said Fine, who serves as an adjunct professor and is a past president of the UB Law Alumni Association. “We are informing the alumni that there are outstanding, innovative programs at the Law School which cannot be supported by state funding. We need the continuing and increased help of alumni to make this one of the finest law schools in the nation.”

The University at Buffalo is continuing its transition from a largely state-supported institution to a more self-sufficient entity. State tax revenues now support less than 40 percent of the total expense of operating the Law School.

For Deborah Scott, coming to the Law School has been the fulfillment of a career goal. A native of Canada, Scott moved to Buffalo in 1980 and became an American citizen two years ago. She holds a degree in psychology from Queens University in Kingston, Ontario.

She brings expertise in a wide variety of fund-raising and administrative areas, including three years in the UB central development office.

“This is a great time to be at the Law School,” Scott said. “Many exciting and positive changes are in the works. Dean Olsen has a well-articulated and focused vision. He is firmly dedicated to making this institution one of the top law schools in the country. I feel extremely privileged to work on such an experienced, well-directed and committed development team. We all believe that, with the support of our alumni and friends, we will be able to give UB Law School a rock-solid financial foundation for the future.”

New prize named for Harry A. Rachlin ’26

A family gift to the University at Buffalo Law School has become a living tribute to the memory of Harry A. Rachlin, Class of 1926. Harry’s son, Lauren D. Rachlin, a partner in the Buffalo law firm of Kavinoky and Cook, and other family members contributed $25,000 to the Law School to establish the Harry A. Rachlin Alumni Prize in Property and Real Estate Law.

According to Lauren Rachlin, it was a joint decision among the siblings and grandchildren “because they knew the Law School was very important to my father, and they wanted to continue the connection between his name and the Law School.”

Harry Rachlin was a leading authority on the lien law in New York State. Senior partner in the law firm of Rachlin & Rachlin for more than 50 years, he was of counsel to Kavinoky & Cook at the time of his death.

Born in a small town in Russia, Harry Rachlin was brought to Canada as a small child and grew up in the Toronto area before attending law school. He was a past president of the Rosa Coplon Jewish Home and Infirmary and a former chancellor of the Knights of Pythias.

“My father had a great interest in the welfare of law students and young lawyers — particularly in the area of property law,” Lauren Rachlin said. “This award,” he said, “helps recognize both the school and its students. I hope this gift can serve as a catalyst for other alumni to give back.”

The first two Harry A. Rachlin prizes were awarded at this November’s Alumni Convocation to Steven Sturman ’97 and Sarah Rudell ’99. Sturman received the award for his efforts on behalf of the Edwin F. Jaeckle Government Law Center, which provides research assistance to state and local governments and agencies, as well as public and private sector research in land use planning, environmental law and land use development and finance.

Rudell received the award for her research, academic achievement and excellent performance as a Government Law Center fellow.