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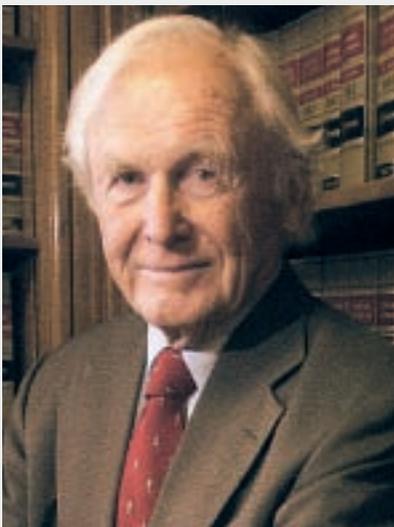
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Alumni Profiles

UB Alumni Association honors two UB Law alumni



Hon. John T. Curtin '49, U.S. District Court judge for the Western District of New York, and Kenneth A. Manning '77, partner in the Buffalo-based law firm Phillips Lytle LLP

The University at Buffalo this spring conferred honors on two UB Law School graduates for their service to the community and the University. **Hon. John T. Curtin '49**, U.S. District Court judge for the Western District of New York, was honored with the Community Leadership Medal; and **Kenneth A.**

Manning '77, a longtime partner in the Buffalo-based law firm Phillips Lytle LLP, received the Philip B. Wels Outstanding Service Award.

"His longtime tenure in one of the nation's busiest federal courts (ranked sixth out of 94 in number of pending cases) has made Curtin well nigh irreplaceable," *UB Today* magazine noted in announcing the judge's award. "His judicial attentions – in landmark cases

dealing with Love Canal, the Attica prison riots and the desegregation of Buffalo's schools, among others – have contributed to his stature as a jurist of eminence."

The magazine noted Curtin's concern for those who find themselves in

the judicial system for the first time, and said that his sentencing decisions, rather than strictly adhering to federal sentencing guidelines, have always been tempered by the defendant's prospects for better conduct in the future.

The Community Leadership Medal is presented in recognition of, and in appreciation for, outstanding accomplishments in making the UB community a better place to live and work.

A letter of nomination from Dean Nils Olsen said of Curtin, "He has presided with wisdom and courage over some of the most important cases in the history of this area, and his decisions have had a significantly positive impact upon the residents of Western New York and beyond."

Olsen noted in particular the judge's careful stewardship of the 1976 Buffalo school desegregation case: "Curtin's patient, sensitive monitoring of that case for 20 years helped create what was widely acclaimed as the model for integration of a major public school system. At a time when the quality of Buffalo's schools was deteriorating, Curtin's order stemmed white flight and gave all Buffalo children a chance at a better education. By involving parents in the process, he skillfully and carefully helped create a program of magnet schools that became the national and international model."

The Philip B. Wels Award is given to those "who have contributed to and advanced the University for a specific purpose, or served UB in a voluntary capacity for a significant period of time."

Manning, who received his undergraduate degree in engineering from UB in 1974, was recognized partly for

Three and counting

State Bar Real Property Section has UB Law alums lined up for service

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– Dean Nils Olsen, speaking of Judge Curtin

his volunteer advocacy work in Albany on behalf of UB, the Law School and the School of Engineering. Indeed, his ties to the latter are more than historical: He is completing a master’s degree in engineering at UB.

“Manning seems to value the ability to give more than any other aspect of his personal and professional life,” said *UB Today*. “He not only gives his time to UB, but he also gives his strategic acumen.”

“I was honored to receive any award named after Phil Wels,” Manning told *UB Law Forum*. “He has contributed so dramatically to UB over so many years. I have tried to emulate some of his efforts to try to move UB forward in ways I can contribute, with respect to my time and my effort.

“The University is a fabulous resource for the community, and I would like to see that continue and grow, especially under our new leadership.”

Three in a row! That was UB Law School’s scorecard for the chair of the Real Property Section of the New York State Bar Association. One of the state bar’s most important sections, it is also the largest – it includes more than 5,000 members. For three successive terms, its chair has been a UB Law alumnus.

The list begins with **John Privitera ’77**, chair of the section in 2002-03; **Matthew J. Leeds ’77**, in 2003-04; and **Dorothy H. Ferguson ’87**, in 2004-05. “Not only is that a frightening coincidence,” Leeds says tongue-in-cheek, “but each of us is from a distinct part of the state and in a different-size practice.”

The Real Property Section comprises attorneys with interests in real estate law and law that affects real property transactions, such as environmental law. It is charged with advancing the cause of legal reform in this area, as well as public service and professional development.

The three-in-a-row coincidence, says Leeds, “was so hidden from us that none of us realized it until the third term. We were not in touch. We just happened to meet in this organization.”

Leeds practices in the area of sophisticated real estate law, with a specialty in condominium and co-op law, as a partner in the New York City-based firm Bryan Cave. He says of his work with the Real Property Section: “It is very rewarding. The Executive Committee is composed of people who all contribute to different kinds of projects. Not until you are actually the person who is fully responsible do you realize you have to be that much more decisive and circumscribed in what you do.”

The chairmanship, he said, is a lot of work, but pays benefits. “What you are doing helps you professionally,” Leeds said, “both in terms of contacts, education and visibility. You learn a lot about things

that are happening in your area of the law.”

Privitera, who practices with McNamee, Lochner, Titus & Williams, in Albany, started working with the Real Property Section on environmental liability issues. He noted that serving as chair of the section means designing and executing two Continuing Legal Education programs, work for which UB Law prepared him.

“When I was at Buffalo,” he said, “I was a teaching assistant for a professor when I was a third-year student, and I have always given one or two lectures at different law schools each semester. That has helped me maintain my interest in CLE. Becoming a leader of a section is in large part working on Continuing Legal Education projects.”

Of the succession of UB Law alums as chairs, he said, “It is a feather in the school’s cap, because it has been one of the biggest sections in the Bar Association. We work hard on legislation, practice issues and ethics issues. It is a good group of smart lawyers to work with.”

For her part, Ferguson – who is in a solo practice in Rochester – said, “The chair of the section is offered a wonderful opportunity to work with the best and brightest real property attorneys in New York State. Although I can’t pinpoint any particular reason why the three of us chaired the section consecutively, perhaps the fact that UB is a state school attracts students inclined to volunteerism.

“Also,” she said, “the culture of the Law School – which is an incredibly friendly and supportive environment— possibly has something to do with it. Certainly I enjoyed my three years there immensely and have greatly enjoyed my real property practice over the last 18 years. Anyone making the commitment required of a NYSBA section chair would have to be quite enthusiastic about his or her area of practice.”