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## Three and Counting: State Bar Real Property Section Has UB Law Alums Lined up for Service

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*“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.”*

*– 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 and counting

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

**T**hree 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.”