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Under Advisement: Buffalo Law Review Dinner Highlights Successful Mentoring Initiative

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Student Events



Under Advisement

Buffalo Law Review Dinner highlights successful mentoring initiative

Robert B. Conklin '68, recently retired president of the Buffalo-based law firm Hodgson Russ LLP

While there is no teacher like experience, an experienced mentor in the legal profession comes close. UB Law School's successful mentoring program, partnering practitioners with law students eager to learn the practicalities of the profession, was the focus of the 16th annual *Buffalo Law Review* Dinner, held April 21

at The Buffalo Club. The Class of 2005 was the first to benefit from this mentoring program, an idea that was conceived during a meeting of the school's Dean's Advisory Council. Editors of the *Law Review* honored Robert B. Conklin '68, who first proposed the idea and has been instrumental in its success.

Conklin, recently retired president of the Buffalo-based law firm Hodgson Russ, served on the *Law Review* himself in 1967-68. Dean Nils Olsen has said, "Mentors offer advice and assistance to law students as they embark on their le-

gal careers. Without Bob Conklin's support, this program would not have been launched."

It was a productive year for the *Buffalo Law Review*, said outgoing editor in chief John L. Rudy. His class, he noted, was the first to produce eight issues of the review – four annually. Among other accomplishments, he recognized a streamlined publication process and a restructured Web site. Vol. 52, No. 3, of the journal also made history as the first issue entirely devoted to essays – an accomplishment Rudy celebrated by pre-

senting a framed cover to Professor David Westbrook, who helped guide the project. Planned this spring is a symposium issue on the challenges facing hospitals and the delivery of health care services.

In his remarks, Conklin said that "my part in starting the mentoring program was simply copying an idea from the Medical School. A core group of alumni and staff in the Law School made it work. Now in its third year, it is flourishing, and to the extent to which I have been involved, I am very proud."

Before an audience that included his family and many of his colleagues from Hodgson Russ, Conklin reflected on some of the people who have been his mentors over a long and distinguished career:

- Max Slopy, who was on the *Law Review* editorial board in 1967-68 and "patiently dealt with me and pushed me.

... I was a late bloomer, so it was wonderful to be given that opportunity.”

- Legendary trial lawyer Herald Price Fahringer. Conklin said he never forgot arriving early to his student job at Lipsitz, Green and seeing Fahringer practicing before a mirror the summation of a case he would deliver that afternoon – a stirring example of hard work and preparation.

- Bob Fleming Sr., a professor of corporate law who “gave me one of my lowest grades in law school” but tipped him to a clerkship with U.S. District Judge John T. Curtin.

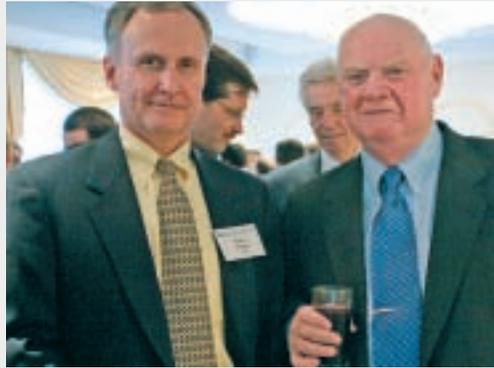
“There are all kinds of mentoring in this world. If someone has mentored you in your life, pass it on.”

- Judge Curtin, “an extraordinary human being who gave me a chance to see what lawyering was all about from the other side of the bench.”

- The lawyers, past and present, with whom he has worked at Hodgson Russ, including the senior Hugh Russ (“he taught me that litigation is a team sport”); Grover James, who went tooth and nail with his own brother when they were opposing counsel on a case; Bill Larson (“he gave me a winning case in my first six months at the firm. This gave me the confidence to do what I wanted to do”); Steve Kelly, who developed multiple sclerosis but “showed me the courage of a lawyer who loved to practice law and did so until the end”; and his present colleagues at the firm from which he will soon retire.

“There are all kinds of mentoring in this world,” Conklin concluded. “If someone has mentored you in your life, pass it on. And if you want, we will be happy to sign you up for next year’s mentoring program!”

The evening concluded with presentation of the Carlos Alden Award, for the person who has made the greatest contribution to the *Buffalo Law Review*, to John L. Rudy; the Philip Halpern Award, to a third-year student for excellence in writing, to Nicole R. Hart, assistant executive editor; and Associate Publication Awards, promising publication in the 2005-06 issues, to Jonathan Bevilacqua, Andrew O. Guglielmi, Angel M. Overgaard, and Sachin Kohli, the incoming editor in chief.



Left to right: Robert B. Fleming Jr. '78 and SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Kenneth F. Joyce



George F. Bellows '85



Left to right: Professors James A. Wooten, Janet S. Lindgren, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Elizabeth B. Mensch and Clinical Professor George M. Hezel



Left to right: Alexandra Maloney '06, Megan E. Misiti '06 and Stephanie M. Palladino '06



Danielle Eisen '05, center, with guest, and Molly Mallia '05, right