Hands Across New York: Alumni Luncheon Builds A Bridge Between Cities

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Recommended Citation
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Hands across New York

Alumni luncheon builds a bridge between cities

New York’s upstate-downstate divide melted away in good food and good feeling as UB Law graduates in New York City gathered for their annual alumni luncheon on Jan. 27, 2006.

The luncheon, subsidized by the UB Law Alumni Association, has become a January tradition. This year it featured a non-alumnus – Judge Albert M. Rosenblatt of the New York State Court of Appeals – whose affection for Buffalo, both historically and in the present, was evident.

In the upscale Union League Club in Manhattan, Dean Nils Olsen greeted the attendees with current news from Manhattan, and noted, in good food and good feelings as UB Law graduates in New York City gathered for their annual alumni luncheon on Jan. 27, 2006.

Because the luncheon immediately followed the annual meeting of the New York State Bar Association, Olsen added his congratulations to two UB Law alumni who were honored at that gathering: Lourdes Ventura ’98, president of the New York State Bar Association, and the Latino Lawyers Association of New York metro area. “We hope this will reconnect us with New York City,” he said.

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The jurist began by thanking those who hosted the Court of Appeals in its career with fewer of the usual helpful conditions than the University of Buffalo. It had no endowment, no lecture hall, no association with an established college. But it did possess a group of earnest people, judges and practicing attorneys living in Buffalo.

Continuing with a brief history of the Law School’s early days, Rosenblatt quoted the school’s first yearbook, and, said Rosenblatt, “districted himself in his very first case,” a landlord-tenant matter.

Rosenblatt and his wife, Julia Carlson Rosenblatt, are aficionados of Sherlock Holmes, each has published a book about the great fictional detective. And so as a member of the group of Holmes devotees known as the Baker Street Irregulars, the judge was keen to note that the first stage play about Holmes had its American premiere on Oct. 23, 1899, at the Star Theater in Buffalo. “It was a smash hit,” Rosenblatt said, “and, according to the review, was conducted before a large and critical audience. Which is to say, a very sophisticated group of theatergoers in Buffalo. It opened in New York City two weeks later, and Sherlock Holmes was launched on his way.”

In parting, Rosenblatt continued his historical theme by giving each attendee a calendar from the Historical Society of the Courts of the State of New York. Each month of the calendar features one of the state’s historic county courthouses, drawn from old postcards. And it starts the year off right: The old county courthouse in Buffalo, serving Erie County, is Miss January.

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The jurist began by thanking those present for its success; and Terrence M. Daniels, a State Supreme Court justice in Erie County who was drafted to serve as the school's first dean when the school was established in 1869, thus making him Rosenblatt’s historical colleague. On the court, Daniels authored 19 decisions and seven dissents, and, said Rosenblatt, "distinguished himself in his very first case,” a landlord-tenant matter.

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Continuing with a brief history of the Law School's early days, Rosenblatt called to mind the school's first class — 15 men meeting in a classroom in the school's original Ellicott Street Building. "Tuition," he noted, was $100.

And Dean Daniel? He served for one year on the Court of Appeals, in 1899, thus making him Rosenblatt's historical colleague. On the court, Daniels authored 19 decisions and seven dissents, and, said Rosenblatt, "distinguished himself in his very first case,” a landlord-tenant matter.

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