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Building for the Future: Affordable Housing Clinic Launches Endowment

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Law School Report

CLINICS: IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY

Building for the future

Affordable Housing Clinic launches endowment

One of UB Law School's signature clinics is building on the momentum of its 20th anniversary celebration to launch an ambitious endowment campaign.

The Affordable Housing Clinic, established in September 1987, marked the anniversary with a series of events. They included the fourth annual Upstate Affordable Housing Conference, which attracted about 330 people to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery; an economic justice conference called The High Road Runs Through the City; a roundtable on affordable housing and the environment; and a symposium on supportive and senior housing, held at UB's Center for Tomorrow. In recognition of the anniversary, the University also recognized September as Affordable Housing Month.

Clinical Professor George Hezel, who has directed the clinic since its inception, told WBFO Radio: "We are celebrating the fact that we have helped to build or rehab 2,000 housing units in Western New York. We are celebrating the fact that we have brought \$165 million of economic boost to the western region of New York. And we are celebrating the fact that we have equipped our students at the Law School with the skills necessary to take them into the marketplace where they can get good, productive jobs serving the public interest."

UB President John Simpson has cited that combination of educational value and community service as he advances his UB 2020 strategic growth plan and works to expand the University's strategic strength in community engagement and public policy. The president's "Buffalo Believers" campaign has featured Kathleen Granchelli, chief executive officer of the YWCA of Niagara, who is enthusiastic about the help

her organization received from the Law School's clinics as the YWCA built Carolyn's House, a residence for women who have suffered domestic violence.

Now, as the Affordable Housing Clinic enters the next phase of its work, it has launched a campaign to build a substantial endowment that will ensure its future. As the Law School and the University continue their transition away from dependence on state funding, Hezel said, it will become increasingly important to generate operat-



Left to right: Anthony J. Rizzo, senior vice president and regional manager of corporate banking for Citizens Bank, presents a check for \$75,000 to Clinical Professor George Hezel and Dean Nils Olsen as a grant for the Affordable Housing Clinic.

ing funds from sources like endowments. Until now the clinic has been funded by a patchwork of grants, fees, gifts and tuition dollars.

Fortunately, he said, the endowment campaign is a relatively easy sell for the Affordable Housing Clinic. "The significance of housing for homeless people is hard to ignore," he said, "and it is hard not to feel warm about it."

Income from the endowment will help to fund faculty positions in the clinic, as well as make it possible to bring in adjunct faculty from time to time. "If I am running

the program alone," Hezel said, "there are a limited number of students I can work with and a limited number of clients we can serve. We want to continue the good work we have done over these 20 years, and we want to magnify that."

Administrative support and guidance for the endowment campaign, which will continue over several years, are being provided by Deborah J. Scott, vice dean for development.

The effort has already secured more than \$100,000 in gifts and pledges, and five corporations have provided substantial support:

Citizens Bank, which also gave a grant of \$75,000 to support the Community Homeowners Resource Center at the Clinic.

- Community Preservation Corp.
- Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP
- Local Initiatives Support Coalition/National Equity Fund Inc.
- R&P Oak Hill Development, LLC

In addition, two Law School faculty members – Hezel and an anonymous donor – have each pledged \$25,000 toward the endowment.

The development effort on behalf of the clinic to which he has devoted much of his profes-

sional life is a new endeavor for Hezel. He has done fund-raising for Canisius High School, where he served on the board, and for other not-for-profits, but never with this ambitious scope. But he is enthusiastic about the possibilities.

"What we are doing in the clinic is a great service to the community," he said. "In our clinics generally we are providing a very valuable service. The people who are working on the programs know the best and know what the benefits are for the community, so it is only natural that we should be working to ensure their future."



George M. Hezel
Clinical Professor

UB
University at Buffalo Law School
The State University of New York

1987
St. Ann's Apartments

1990
Princeton Square

Hope House

1991
Ellicott Town Center

Francis
John
Apartments



Benedict House

1996
Gratwick Manor

St. Patrick's Village

Thomas Wojnar
Apartments

1997

Trinity Park
Senior
Apartments



2001
Heritage Christian Home

2005
Carolyn's House,
YWCA of Niagara

2006
Cornerstone
Manor,
Buffalo City
Mission



Affordable Housing Clinic

*Celebrating 20 years of creating
high-quality, low income housing*



UB Law students have leveraged more than \$165 million in the past 20 years funding 2,000 units of affordable housing in Western New York for low income families, the elderly, targets of domestic violence and persons with disabilities.

THE UB LAW SCHOOL'S CELEBRATION OF 20-YEARS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:

