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Alumni Association



The Distinguished Alumni, from left to right: Law School Vice Dean Alan S. Carrel '67, Frederick G. Attea, Richard Lipsitz '43, Margaret W. Wong '76, Hon. Thomas M. Van Strydonck '73 and William E. Mathias II '71

Celebrating our stories

Law Alumni Association dinner recognizes career achievements

Law School stories past and present were the focus as members of the UB Law Alumni Association gathered for their 45th annual meeting and dinner.

Highlighting the May 3 gathering at the Hyatt Regency Buffalo was a special presentation of the Harry Rachlin '26 Oral History Project, a massive effort to collect and archive the voices and wisdom of dozens of Law School alumni and faculty to make them available to the generations that follow them.

The project was co-chaired by Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83 and Robert L. Boreanaz '89, and Boreanaz played some excerpts from the oral histories that have

been collected. "Lawyers like to tell stories and to hear war stories," he said. "It is important for young lawyers to have that opportunity as well. We are trying to capture as many distinguished individuals of the Law School and the legal community as possible, and lay down their insight, their perspective, their advice, so they can be retrieved sometime in the future."

For example, he said, a future law student might see an interview with famed trial lawyer Herald Price Fahringer '56, then access the Oral History Project and hear Fahringer's voice recounting his days at UB Law. Ditto with Hon. Ann T. Mikoll '54, former Professor Lou Del Cotto, and former dean Jacob Hyman.

Boreanaz said the organizers hope to make the completed project accessible at such venues as Law School functions, the downtown public library, the UB Law Library and online.

The dinner was a special one for members of the Class of 1947, marking the 60th anniversary of their graduation, and the Class of 1957, marking their 50th. It was also bittersweet for UB Law Dean Nils Olsen, who is stepping down from administration in order to return to full-time teaching. Of all the things he did as dean, Olsen said, getting to know the alumni — some of whom he first met as law students

—has been the most enjoyable.

Following dinner, six Distinguished Alumni Awards were conferred. The recipients' acceptance remarks were included in the evening's printed program, and are excerpted here.

Dennis R. McCoy '77, president of the UB Law Alumni Association, presented the judiciary award to **Hon. Thomas M. Van Strydonck '73**, a New York State Supreme Court justice in the 7th District. Van Strydonck, who serves on the Dean's Advisory Council, is a former Monroe County Bar Association president and established a fund in that county to aid lawyers with addiction or mental illness issues.

"When I was elected to the Supreme Court in 1999," he wrote, "one of my partners suggested that I would find growing old as a judge was much easier than as a practicing lawyer. She was so right. I have tried to keep that in mind as I interact with the lawyers who appear in front of me. The pressures that come with the practice of law should not be exacerbated by unnecessary and unyielding demands from the bench."

Mary M. Penn '99 presented the award for private practice to **Margaret W. Wong '76**, managing partner of Margaret W. Wong and Associates. Wong's firm, with offices in Cleveland; Columbus, Ohio; New York City; and Detroit, specializes in immigration law. She herself emigrated from Hong Kong as a teenager.

"I feel so blessed that I am able to help thousands and thousands of immigrants to settle in the United States and to fulfill their dreams of living here," Wong wrote. "Not only to survive, but to thrive. I would not have been able to do this without the UB Law School and the scholarship foundation."

Boreanaz returned to the podium to present the Distinguished Alumni Award for community service to **Richard Lipsitz '43**, who is of counsel with the Buffalo law firm Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria. Lipsitz built his career on labor law, and serves as counsel and president of the Coalition for Economic Justice.

"I have spent substantial non-billable time with a number of not-for-profit organizations, mostly involved in the advance-



Mary M. Penn '99, co-chair of the dinner.



Dennis McCoy '77, president of the Law Alumni Association, presents a surprise award to Executive Director Ilene R. Fleischmann on behalf of all the past presidents.

ment of civil liberties and civil rights, and in programs for assistance to economically disadvantaged persons," he wrote. "That time was made possible by my partners' indulgence and support, for which I thank them."

McCoy made the next presentation, the award for public service to **Law School Vice Dean Alan S. Carrel '67**. Carrel has spent 30 years at the Law School, among other achievements founding the Dean's Advisory Council and the alumni magazine, UB Law Forum. He also built the UB Law Alumni Association substantially as its director, and has been instrumental in the success of the school's development efforts.

"The best thing about my job," Carrel wrote, "is that it has enabled me to interact

with thousands of terrific students, alumni and co-workers, whom I respect, whose company I have enjoyed and from whom I have learned much. They are an important part of my life, and many have become close friends."

Penn presented the award for achievement in business to **William E. Mathias II '71**, managing partner of Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman. His firm focuses its practice on corporate business loans and equity and debt issues, representing businesses from small family firms to large publicly held corporations.

Wrote Mathias: "Over the years I have had the opportunity to work with many of the highly regarded national corporate law firms, yet I continue to be impressed by the skill and professionalism of my fellow members of the local corporate bar, many of whom are UB graduates."

The award for service by a non-alumnus, presented by **Laurie S. Bloom '83**, went to **Frederick G. Attea**, a partner in Phillips Lytle and a member of the Dean's Advisory Council. Through the state Bar Association, Attea is working to include the Law School on an initiative to overhaul the state's Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.

"Those of us who, for many years, have been a part of the legal community in Western New York are fortunate to have had a law school which has taken such an active and vital role in shaping our legal community," Attea wrote. "Unquestionably, Phillips Lytle's capabilities have been greatly enhanced by the Law School's alumni."

To close out the honors, McCoy presented **UB Law Vice Dean Ilene R. Fleischmann** — who is marking her 23rd year as executive director of the Alumni Association — with a special award, a Steuben glass sculpture inscribed with appreciation for her "tireless and exemplary service."

Bloom and Penn were co-chairs of the Annual Dinner Committee, whose members also included **Hilary C. Banker '96**, **Richard F. DiGiacomo '76**, **Gayle L. Eagan '85**, **David P. Flynn '87**, **Donald W. O'Brien Jr. '77**, **Raymond J. Stapell '75**, **Kevin D. Szczepanski '95** and **Mark W. Warren '83**.