

Since becoming dean in August of 1990 I have traveled tens of thousands of miles and attended scores of alumni activities and events. I cannot think of one that I did not enjoy, particularly the fine fellow alumni I have met across the country. With all that behind me you might find it curious that I would choose to lead off this column by highlighting one such event.



Dean Daniel O. Bernstine

In January Chris Richards, Ed Reisner and I flew to Houston for an alumni dinner, but a dinner with a difference. For the first time in our collective memories the event would take place in a private home. The dinner was primarily arranged by Ken McNeil ('81), who practices with Susman Godfrey in Houston. Ken is a relatively new member of the School's Board of Visitors and a tireless promoter of the School. Early in the preparations, Ken's partner, Tom Paterson ('84) learned that we planned to gather our Houston-area

alumni and volunteered his home for a dinner. On the evening we flew in, Ken picked us up at the airport, gave us a quick tour of the city, and took us to Tom's house.

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By the appointed hour, seven alumni (more than one-third of all our alumni in the area), several spouses, and Tom's wife Callie as well as his four-month-old daughter were gathered for a delightful dinner and a spirited discussion of our School. There was something special about the atmosphere of the event. With coats off, ties loosened, and seated on hassocks and rocking chairs, perhaps it was easier to see ourselves as part of one, big family with all the mutual responsibilities and mutual benefits.

In addition to publicly thanking Tom and Ken, I plan to encourage this type of event in locations where we do not have huge numbers of alumni. Of course, if you live in the Chicago area and want to volunteer your home for a dinner of 500, let me know.

I'm not picky about the menu and I really enjoy talking with fellow graduates about our school.

And now for something completely different: there is news to report from the building front. A few issues back we showed you a few scenes from around the building, illustrating our efforts to upgrade the facility. Those efforts have continued under the guidance of Prof. Howard Erlanger ('81). Carpeting has now been added to the first floor hallway, the stage areas in the larger lecture halls and several smaller class rooms. Walls have been painted throughout most of the building and then brightened by a collection of prints, posters and other art work. The change is tremendous and, I think, welcomed by faculty, students and staff who spend so much time in what was a rather institutional setting.

At the same time, we continue to move ahead on the major building addition and remodeling project. Discussions with state officials have hopefully reached an agreement on the scope of the project and we expect to have an architectural team at work by late spring. Final cost and the amount of alumni funds necessary are still to be determined but we do expect at least the funds necessary to upgrade from "base level" to the level we believe is consistent with a "top 20", national law school.

This fall Governor Tommy Thompson ('65), Secretary of Administration Jim Klauser ('64), acting UW President Katharine Lyall and other top administrators visited the Law building to see for themselves evidence



*Dean Bernstine, Governor Tommy Thompson and UW System President Katharine Lyall confer on building plans.*

of our serious overcrowding and technical obsolescence. The tour was arranged by the University to give state officials a better perspective when considering this campus's building requests.

Finally, we have just completed another admissions season — and set yet another record. As recently as 1986 we had just 1385 applications for 285 seats in the first-year class. For the Class of 1995, 2949 are competing for the same number of seats, more than doubling in the last six years. While we can be proud of the great qualifications of our applicants such numbers obviously create great problems, not the least of which is the disappointment to the applicants and their families when we inevitably have to reject huge numbers of talented and motivated prospective students.