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Scholarship and research mark new IU law dean

By JOSEF FANCHER
IU News Service

Sheldon Plager is a jogger, a sailor and new dean of the Indiana University Law School.

He is personable, meets people easily and expresses confidence in the importance of research and creative scholarship in his profession.

"We need to have a better understanding of the society and the law's role in that society," said Plager.

He noted domestic problems once were solved through tradition, custom and the influence of the church.

"Now, these are given to the courts to handle," Plager said.

It is not equipped to solve a lot of little problems.

Statistics show in three years, there is a need for its boundaries of federal policies, laws and issues.

A blue ribbon committee determined IU should have two law schools with different missions, and Plager feels each will have something to offer the other.

It is addition to its obligation to the state, Bloomington IU Law School is viewed by Plager as a "national law school."

He said "it is a resource that has importance far beyond the state of Indiana," and there is a need for its participation in the development of federal policies, laws and issues.

Sheldon Plager

New law school dean is a jogger and a sailor with strong beliefs.

By JOHN FANCHER

Sheldon Plager is a jogger, a sailor and new dean of the Indiana University Law School.

Plager is a specialist in international law, and reports the IU Law School has two such specialists, although it is losing one of them — Nicholas White, who has accepted a position as dean of the Law School at Memphis, Tenn. The other specialist is Dan Tarlock, who is author of one of the leading case books in the field.

Law is a popular field with many young people, and Plager said the IU Law School had 1,200 applications for 200 seats to this fall's entering class.

Statistics show in three years, 111,451 lawyers will be graduated from the nation's American Bar Association-approved law schools.

"This will be about a 25 percent increase over today's 46,000 practicing lawyers," said Plager, but he is not concerned about the number of lawyers, because he views the legal system as a "problem-solving mechanism."

"Resolution of conflict is a major function," he said. "We recognize the legal machinery is not equipped to solve a lot of little problems."

The IU Law School has about 30 faculty members and tries to maintain an enrollment between 500 and 600 students.

He said the school "was a clear and important obligation to the State of Indiana to support and aid its legal institutions."

The Bloomington school also is interested in working with the IU Law School in Indianapolis, and Plager already has talked with Dean William Harvey about that.

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