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BLSA Symposium speakers slated

This year's Black Law Students Association's (BLSA) annual symposium will feature four prominent speakers: Clarence Pendleton, chairman of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Dr. Manning Marable, noted author and professor of political science and sociology at Purdue University, Hurley Goodall, Indiana State Legislator and Judge Alcee Hastings. 'Crisis in the Black Community: The Plight of the Growing Black Underclass' is slated as the symposium's theme. BLSA is asking the speakers to aid participants in determining why, during a period of relative prosperity and apparent national commitment to black progress, the gap between the black middle and under classes is continually growing.

BLSA hopes the symposium programs will lead those who attend toward some sense of possible political, legislative, judicial and social solutions for bridging the gap.

The symposium will be held on Saturday, February 21, from 10:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A banquet will follow at Jeremiah Sweeney's. Students with questions concerning the symposium may call 331-1307 or 335-5361.

Dickerson's "Last Lecture" upbeat, lyrical

Reed Dickerson has always gone against tradition. And he's always gone against the odds. Take Friday, for instance. He placed his bet against the graphs and stats of the A.B.A. which show law schools and the judicial system as the birthplace of all that's wrong in the legal process today. Reed Dickerson would rather place the blame on human frailties.

"Merely having a good system isn't enough," he told an intent group of students. "We need people who have ability and a sense of social responsibility. Personal integrity is important stuff."

See Dickerson, page 6.

"Gee mom, do I hafta study on Sunday?"
Do lawyers leap from their last bit of research and rush into the courtroom? Do professors jump from their latest gained piece of wisdom and apply it in the classroom or law review articles? The answer to those questions, obviously, is "no". In legal practice and in law school academics, a certain amount of time is allowed for final preparation. It's time to polish thoughts. Nevertheless for some inexplicable reason, Indiana University law students must perform a jolting intellectual hop from the last class to the final exam. That is wrong and should be changed. Our law school should adopt a "dead time" policy to allow a few days, or perhaps a week, class and the start of finals.

This proposal is being considered nationally by the Law Student Division of the ABA as Resolution 86-20. The resolution asks that the ABA accreditation committee set a requirement of at least four working days of "dead time" after classes end and tests begin.

This idea makes sense intellectually, academically, and psychologically. Intellectually, as we all have experienced, the mind simply needs time to do a final pulling together of all the information and wisdom gained in our courses. The faculty should indeed demand the highest intellectual effort on our examinations, but the faculty should also provide a small amount of time to let the student's cognitive process relax and reflect before such an endeavor. Finals preparations made in haste produce examination waste. Sure, a cynic (and professors who have forgotten their days in law school) may say that students should be preparing throughout the semester. And any "dead time" would simply be catch-up time for the "put-off" students. And that's probably true. But to evaluate any idea we must at least grant good faith to students and their study habits; even a true-blue law dog would agree that a "dead time" policy would be a good idea.

Such a policy is not in the interest of procrastinators anyway. Students who are truly prepared and then have that final bit of time to polish their thoughts will distinguish themselves even more from students who are less than diligent. Further, it will make the odds better for a well-prepared student who has, say, four finals in a row and another student who has three off-days before each final. No longer would the crunch of finals be dictated by a luck of the draw. (And, surely, we don't want students selecting classes just because of a finals schedule. Yet, that's what the current policy leads to.) Of all decisions, it seems those of the student should be the least driven by a rush-rush mentality.

In addition, some finals anxiety (though, of course, not all) might be relieved. A great deal of finals preparation is basically organizing and synthesizing information, and a small amount of time set aside for such organizing and synthesizing would add to more confident students and better written exams by everyone.

Finally, the most important reason our law school should adopt such a policy is because it would fundamentally help do what we're supposed to be doing here: stretching our brains. Anyone who thinks a small amount of time to polish one's preparation for a final examination would not add to that goal, is foolish.

Let's hope that the idea of "dead time" does not just fall on dead ears.

(Name withheld upon request)

Dean's Corner

What is the "life" of a law student at Bloomington? Is there "life" during Law School? What is the "experience" of a law school class? These questions and their companions seem to occupy periodically the minds and conversations of law students. Thoughts and discussions about the nature and methodology of legal education are as old as law schools. So also, undoubtably, have been attempts to communicate the experience of a legal education to parents, spouses, and close friends.

Perhaps this has been an unnecessary prelude to relating that we are planning a special "Parent's See DEAN, page 6.
Sports

SAC springs sports plans for semester

Your Student Activities Committee (SAC) would like to salute the newly revitalized Exordium, and its staff. Now down to business.

You remember us, don't you? The folks who brought you the Fall Picnic, the Tennis Tournament that's still theoretically in progress (even though someone stole the parings board), and the sweatshirt sales. Still doesn't ring a bell, huh?

Well, that's ok, because we're back this semester with even more excitement and activity. Watch for the upcoming usually annual Law School Basketball Tourney; hopefully a first-time-ever Law School Indoor Co-Rec Volleyball Tourney; and, of course, Son of Fall Picnic himself, better known as the Spring Picnic, or the always annual "Do You Think It's a Good Idea to Get Drunk This Close to Finals" outing.

Though this usually seems to take place the afternoon and evening before the Contracts final, we're considering moving it up this year to give Professor Bethel a full day to come up with some reasonable questions!

So watch for details, participate and enjoy! If you desire or just wonder about personal involvement in SAC planning and preparation, contact Courtney Nottage or Bill Kohn (this means YOU, 1st and 2nd years!!). We're eager to have you aboard.

Meanwhile, SAC will be hard at work bailing out the bankrupt Hoosier Basketball Network ("But Mommy, I don't want another Farm Bureau Insurance policy..."), and advising Coach Knight in all matters legal and sporting... See you on the courts!

Study Group

the following sessions:

- Resumes, Cover Letters and Other Wretched Things: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 4 -- Room 214
- Developing a Job Search Plan: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 18 -- Room 214
- Interviewing - How Not To Shoot Yourself in the Foot: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 25 -- Room 214

For those of you who will be doing a summer clerkship:

- How to Survive a Summer Clerkship -- Tips from Those Who Went Before. 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 11 -- Room 214

(Additional workshops to be announced later)

Placement announces job search sessions

For those or you beginning a job search, the Career Planning and Placement Office announces

- Resumes, Cover Letters and Other Wretched Things: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 4 -- Room 214
- Developing a Job Search Plan: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 18 -- Room 214
- Interviewing - How Not To Shoot Yourself in the Foot: 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 25 -- Room 214

For those of you who will be doing a summer clerkship:

- How to Survive a Summer Clerkship -- Tips from Those Who Went Before. 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 11 -- Room 214

(Additional workshops to be announced later)
You'll be hearing from us in a week." Three months later Kitty O'Donnell got her response. The letter began: "Sorry for the delay..." and turned out to be a "ding" which didn't really surprise O'Donnell. "At least they didn't forget about me completely," she says. Just this month Jeff Rollings received an answer to his October request for an interview. "They even sent back my writing sample," Rollings commented.

Delay was not the problem for Cathy Fitzgerald and Al Himelhoch. Both of them received at least one ding from a firm they didn't interview with. Ms. Fitzgerald got a letter from Ford Motor Company that said "...we enjoyed meeting you..." and thanked her for interviewing with them. "When I got the letter I thought my car was being recalled," said Fitzgerald. "I never talked to anyone from Ford." Himelhoch was equally surprised and wondered if there was something Orwellian about the whole thing. "I thought about interviewing with them, maybe that was enough," he said.

Many firms did not waste time getting to the point. Lisa Anderson said she deserves the "Golden Screw" award (noted in the Wall Street Journal) for rejection letters. "It was one short sentence," she said. Kevin Shiferl said one letter he received reminded him of Reader's Digest's response to a poem he sent in many years ago: "I got this little piece of paper with coffee stains on it, and it just said 'no'."

Another student who'd done her research, inquired into the reason for the low number of women at the firm. "He got this cold look on his face and 7½ minutes later, I was out of there," she said.

On a second interview in an eastern city, another second-year was asked why he didn't want to stay in Indiana. He replied: "I want to get away from people who get excited about the corn crop and how big the pigs are." The none-to-happy interviewer warned him he might be talking to a farmer, at which point the clerkship candidate looked on the partner's credenza and saw the silver sow. "I knew I was in trouble then," he said.

But there is more than one way to assure a ding. Another student, who asked not be identified, quashed his employment prospects during lunch with a partner and young associate. The associate was telling a long-winded story about how he used to be a MacDonalds manager. Apparently, simultaneously frying twelve Big Macs is called a "twelve lay", and he (the associate) was the fastest in town.

"He said, modesty aside, he was the best and everyone knew it; that when he walked in to any MacDonalds in the area his reputation preceded him," relates the interviewee, who then responded, "you mean as a quick lay?"

The associate was not amused, and the student was not hired. "I don't believe I said that," he says, "but I don't think I would have fit in anyway, I know nothing about hamburgers."

There is also more than one way to ding a firm. One Indianapolis firm which extended an offer to a second-year announced its salary in the offer letter. Upon seeing the paltry sum the student called the firm and recommended they do something about their archaic pay scale. Another student tried to decline the offer of another firm, but the firm wouldn't take no for an answer. He has a fly-back set for next year.

While receiving an offer is generally a positive experience, Boyd Farnam wasn't sure how to feel when he received an offer for Chris Nichols to work at the firm! Luckily Farnam also received an offer. Nichols commented, "I was kind of hoping I'd at least get Boyd's offer."
SLA Provides Student-Faculty Link

SLA spent last semester appointing students to faculty committees, getting the Exordium reorganized, compiling and distributing student course evaluations and dealing with the major earth-shattering day-to-day law school administrative crises such as where bulletin boards should be located.

As a result of suggestions from several students, SLA has voted to prohibit smoking in the first floor classroom hallway and in a portion of the student lounge. Signs indicating where smoking is allowed will soon be posted.

SLA also voted to request that the law library extend its hours, staying open until 2:00 a.m. on weeknights and until midnight on weekends. Ideally, the library could open an hour or so earlier in the morning, at least during examination study days. To date, there has been no response from Acting Dean Garth or Library Director Colleen Pauwels regarding this request.

Notable Quotables

We all know that professors love to talk. We, as students, are supposed to listen. Listening is our job, but it is not always an enjoyable one. Sometimes, however, a professor will say something which we actually notice—something extraordinary, meaningful, or even, yes, interesting. The "isms" are the bright points of our classes; they are our teachers at their best.

BAUDEISMS

Baude on Sex: "Man is a series of hormones in a hormonal bath." "The reasonable man is not impotent."

CONKLEISMS

Conkle on tax: "Let me tell you about the Principle of the Universal Application of Tax Law and then you can skip the course on the individual income tax--the government wins every case."

RUDNICKISMS

Rudnick on Her Students: "Everyone here looks so intelligent today. What happened?"

HOLLANDISMS

Holland Describing Res JUDICATA: "Unfortunately Mrs. Smedley, we've had this clam-bake."

DWORKINISMS

Dworkin on His Profession: "I hate the Restatements. They're so namby-pamby. They remind me of statutes. I hate statutes."

"Attorneys are fumble-poops."

SCHORNHORSTISMS

Schornhorst of Preparing for Class: "You don't need a book, you just need a brain in your head."

CONRADISMS

Conrad on Law Students: "Just talk. It may help you to think of something."

BOSHKOFFISMS

Boshkoff on Secured Transactions: "Don't think. Just read the code."

By Jeff Rollings
So went the flow of Reed Dickerson's "Last Lecture." Coaxing and cajoling, he urged his listeners to go against the high-money mentality which so often drives the up-and-coming lawyers of today; to remember what the fight for justice is all about.

If anyone knows how to fight, it's Dickerson. His resume reads like a Friday night jam session. Moving from brassy big band to cool blues rifts. He's been a struggling associate, a feverant battler for clarity and coherency, a revered legal drafter, a trumpeter and most recently "just" a professor.

Sadly, a professor whose hearing won't allow him to pursue his love of music any longer. But as a teacher, he's an inspirer, too.

"The greatest thing you can do in life is become a mature person. Find out what you're interested in and do it," he pushes.

"Some people won't move until they see a solution, thus they never move. Start...solve whatever pieces of the problem you can and move on. Persistence will carry you along."

Some counselors and mentors forget to tell students and young associates just how tough the legal road is. Dickerson plays it straight. He warns two-thirds of the work a lawyer will do will be drudgery.

"...But that's no reason to fall over and play dead...to stop enjoying yourself..." he muses.

No one will dispute Dickerson enjoys playing for an audience—even if that audience has ears tuned for words rather than notes. Two of his goals for Friday's group reflect this.

"[One]...Do what you can to get rid of legal-size paper. Aren't you inspired already? He urged the listeners. "If we don't, we might as well go back to being English barristers with wigs..."

"[Two]... Suppress two-thirds of all future judicial opinions before they are published."

Dickerson wound down his lecture with the same zest and enthusiasm with which he began, perhaps because he revelled in the fact that this wasn't his last lecture at all. And to those with whom he shared his observations of law and life, that fact made the sounds of Dickerson all the more sweeter.

Melanie Kuntz