

Maurer School of Law: Indiana University  
**Digital Repository @ Maurer Law**

---

Sheldon Plager (1977-1984)

Law School Deans

---

9-18-1977

## I.U. Law School Needs Help: Dean

Bruce C. Smith  
*Indianapolis Star*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/plager>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#), [Legal Education Commons](#), and the [Legal Profession Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Bruce C., "I.U. Law School Needs Help: Dean" (1977). *Sheldon Plager (1977-1984)*. 33.  
<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/plager/33>

This Writing about Dean Sheldon Plager is brought to you for free and open access by the Law School Deans at Digital Repository @ Maurer Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sheldon Plager (1977-1984) by an authorized administrator of Digital Repository @ Maurer Law. For more information, please contact [rvaughan@indiana.edu](mailto:rvaughan@indiana.edu).



**JEROME HALL LAW LIBRARY**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
Maurer School of Law  
Bloomington

# I.U. Law School Needs Help: Dean

9-18-77

By BRUCE C. SMITH  
STAR I.U.-BLOOMINGTON BUREAU

Bloomington, Ind. — The Indiana University School of Law at Bloomington needs 10 more professors immediately and a new building within five years, new Dean Sheldon J. Plager says.

In his first report to the I.U. Board of Trustees, Plager also disclosed that only 13 of the listed 30 faculty members in the law school here are on campus and scheduled to teach this fall.

By adding himself and a couple of former deans to the teaching faculty, he said 16 instructors can be scheduled for classes. The rest of the faculty roster includes 10 lawyers in private practice who teach parttime and help fill the need for full-time instructors.

Five professors are on leave now, some drawing salaries as they work on research projects presumed to be valuable to their students when they return to the classrooms in future semesters.

THAT "LIBERAL" leave policy has played havoc with scheduling classes for more than a semester in advance, and Plager said he is putting an end to it.

Actually, the leave policy was necessary, the dean quipped, because the present law building has office space for only 13 instructors and "if we had more, we would have no place to put them."

A student lounge will be remodeled this winter to make more space for the cramped law library — which is in violation of the American Bar Association's and Association of Law Schools' standards for study and bookshelf space — but Plager said the improvement would only be temporary and lobbied for a new law building for the Bloomington campus.

The 46-year-old dean, who was named head of the law school in January and has been on campus this summer after completing school last year as an environmental law professor at the University of Illinois, insisted that the school's outlook is not bleak.

HE TOLD THE trustees the school

ranks in the top 25 per cent of American law schools and its educational opportunities are excellent — although that status may not last much longer.

The faculty is experienced and talented and the size of the school, about 600 students, is slightly above the national average.

But attracting new instructors with teaching ability and a scholarship reputation will not be easy, he said, because the faculty pay average is ninth among the Big Ten schools and has fallen fast relative to other schools in the last few years.

Plager said he believes the rivalry between the I.U. law schools in Indianapolis and Bloomington has been over-played. The two schools' differences can be turned into complementary strengths, he said.

"ONE OF THE MYTHS is that Bloomington is teaching the research, theory and philosophy of the law while Indianapolis teaches lawyers how to perform in the courtroom," he said.

"Dean (William) Harvey (of Indianapolis) could not claim to have the first-class law school he has if the courses did not include a mix of theory and practice. Bloomington could not make the same claim if we did not have the same educational blend and a look at the class schedules will prove that," he said.

Plager said the schools' locations do give them access to different opportunities. Bloomington students can blend their law education into the research atmosphere of the campus here, while Indianapolis students have more access to internships and practical experience because of the city's many large law firms.

But the two deans have been meeting, Plager said, on how to establish more

exchanges so students can take classes and get clinical experience at both schools.

LAW SCHOOL competition will remain very intense for the foreseeable future, Plager said, noting that a replacement for the present 28-year-old law building should not allow for many more students.

About 30,000 lawyers are being graduated in the United States and they are finding jobs, but there is no need in the state or nation to educate them faster, he said.

Traditional barriers against women and minorities in the legal profession should be and are being broken, beginning with changes in law school admissions policies, he said.

The pasty several years' five-to-one ratio of applicants to accepted students will continue and average students will continue to be crowded out by the academic "stars," he said.

Asked by the trustees to predict the future for law school graduates, Plager

said more attorneys will be needed since the country's mood is to settle disputes of all kinds in court.

HE PREDICTED A form of legal insurance similar to health insurance in the not-too-distant future, especially for the 75 per cent of the population which is too poor to afford routine legal counsel but too affluent to qualify for government-financed legal aid.

And law schools face other sources of "tension" which cannot be ignored — the bench and the bar — he said.

Judges' and practicing attorneys' concern about the quality of law school education is justified because they have a clear stake in seeing that new practitioners live up to high standards of ability, he said.

Alarmed at an increasing percentage of graduates of Indiana law schools unable to pass the state bar examination, the Indiana State Supreme Court two years ago established some required classes and subjects the law schools must offer and students must pass.