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Pressure To Enter Law School Intense

By BILL PITTMAN

The News Indiana-Bloomington Bureau

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Pressure for admittance to the Indiana University School of Law is intense—nearly 2,000 applicants for no more than 200 seats for an entering class.

A new note has been injected into the law school admissions picture by Sen. Robert Sheaffer, R-Shelbyville. He has introduced a bill in the General Assembly to allow each legislator to appoint one qualified person to each state-supported law school.

Last fall 190 students were admitted to the I.U. Law School at Bloomington, had Sheaffer's bill been in effect, only 40 students would have been admitted by the school self.

Sheaffer said he knew of a pair of young Shelby County

men who graduated from Purdue with grade averages of 5.3 and 5.4 in a 6-point system, who were denied admittance to the I.U. Law School. "Now that's not right," he said.

Sheaffer said he would bring the bill to the floor of the Senate, but that he did not have any real confidence it would pass.

Law School Dean Douglas Boshkoff declined to speculate on the effect of such a law on the school, though he fears it would give the school a bad name.

Others in the school fear that if such a bill became law good students would be driven away by the injection of what amounts to political patronage, and good faculty would be impossible to engage.

Boshkoff acknowledged the extraordinary pressure to gain entrance to the law school.

"The only thing we can do is try to be as fair as we can; so that even if people are unhappy, they can respect the decisions. Any selection system will exclude someone. The question is, are we making errors? I think we have a good system.

"It would be simple to have a simple number score system," said Boshkoff. "But we take into consideration other factors than numbers. We want a representation of the

society, and we want good students who will make good lawyers."

He referred to a recent run-down of the admissions system published in the law school alumni magazine, Bill of Particulars. He wrote then:

"Our selective admissions system places a great deal of emphasis on previous academic achievement. We believe that persons with outstanding college records and scores on the Law School Admission Test are the most likely to make good use of the education we provide. That is not to deny that other applicants will be successful in law school and after graduation, if given a chance.

"However, we are playing the odds, and statistical studies tell us that previous aca-

ademic success is a factor which deserves a great deal of respect. Therefore, approximately half the class is admitted solely on the basis of performance on the admission test.

"The remaining 50 per cent of the class is admitted on a very individual basis that requires a painstaking evaluation of the candidate's file.

"We look for applicants who are mature and who are likely to be serious students. Those persons who have had work experience following college, military service, or have done advanced study in other disciplines fall into this category.

"We believe that all segments of our society should be represented in every phase of our system of justice.

Therefore, we pay particular attention to applicants who are women or members of minority groups.

"State of residence or relation to Indiana University are also factors which receive careful consideration. No single factor will be decisive in any case. Each factor will be considered in connection with all others and in conjunction with the applicant's academic record.

"The academic factor must weigh heavily in the admissions decision for, once admitted, all applicants are graded anonymously and all are held to identical and rigorous standards of graduation."

Dean Boshkoff went on to point out that admissions decisions are made by a committee headed by Prof. Wil-

liam Popkin, the admissions officer of the school. He said that it may become necessary as applications increase to boost the percentage of those admitted solely on the basis of grades and tests. Such a step would be taken, he said, only when it becomes impossible to handle at least 50 per cent on the basis of individual criteria.

"I don't know what the effect of that bill would be," said Boshkoff, "but it is not something I'd like to see happen."