

Fordham University Law School's campus is located on the corner of 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and Columbus Avenue in the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The school is accessible by all forms of public and private transportation and is within walking distance of every sort of amenity. The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is nearby, as are numerous jazz clubs and eateries. Furthermore, the location of the school provides easy access to federal, state, and local courts. The school is close to several movie theaters, a host of museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, and even health food stores and vegetarian restaurants. Wall Street is merely a subway ride away, as are Greenwich Village, SoHo, Tribeca, Little Italy and Chinatown, all of which have their own unique offerings. In short, the school is centrally located, providing students access to all that New York City has to offer. As one student put it, "Fordham is probably closer than any law school in the world to stores, restaurants, theaters, clubs, bars, museums and sporting events."

The overwhelming majority of Fordham students characterize the Fordham experience as an exceptionally positive one, both academically and socially. Although some Fordham students are competitive, they also tend to be compassionate towards others, cooperative and mutually supportive. New construction and renovations have recently given the school a boost. If the trend continues, and there is no reason to think that it will not, Fordham Law promises to become an even more exciting place over the next several years. ®

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THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN LEGAL EDUCATION:  
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY SCHOOL OF LAW  
by Neil J.P. Sieffing, Contributing Writer

In 1693, the British Crown granted a Royal Charter to the Virginia Colony to create Their Majesties' College of William and Mary. The institution was to be located in the town of Williamsburg, in the colony of Virginia. In 1699, the capital of Virginia was moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg, and the College found itself near the epicenter of colonial governmental affairs; the College's main building, the Wren Building, was only a mile away from the Capitol.

A hundred years later, in 1779, the Governor of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, suggested that the College take on the task of providing legal education. In the traditional method of legal education, aspiring lawyers would apprentice with practicing attorneys, read legal tomes in their spare time and finally be required to pass an exam that would admit them to the BAR. Jefferson, an alumnus of the College, believed that this method of legal education in the newly independent United States was lacking. He envisioned a more systematic, philosophical and academic program in which to train future lawyers. Importing legal education into the college setting would, he believed, accomplish these goals.

Governor Jefferson tapped one of his former professors at William and Mary, George Wythe, to hold the Professorship of Law and Police. Wythe began lecturing in 1780 and established moot court teams for his students. John Marshall, who later became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was one of Wythe's first students. Wythe continued to teach law at the College until 1804. By that time, legal studies at the College were quite established and on a firm foundation. Another of Wythe's former pupils, St. George Tucker, succeeded him at the helm of legal education at the College. Tucker was to become not only a famous lecturer at the College, but also a publisher of an American edition of Blackstone's *Commentaries* (comments on the evolution of the law), with his own observations.

Tucker's work influenced generations of law professors, students and practitioners. William and Mary had thus established itself as a training ground for aspiring lawyers and a center of legal scholarship in the United States. Jefferson's intent, as realized through the efforts of Wythe and Tucker, was to create lawyers who not only understood the law, but who were cognizant of their responsibilities as citizens. Reflecting this philosophy, many lawyers who were trained at William and Mary have gone on to hold elective office—a contributing factor to the College's moniker as the Alma Mater of the Nation.

From these distinguished origins rose the modern School of Law at

William and Mary. The Law School offers a unique program based on its historical interest in creating citizen-lawyers: the Legal Skills Program. All students are required to participate in this innovative program that puts students in mock "firms" where they are required to write legal memos, meet with fictional clients, conduct research, and make legal motions. Dean Reveley of the Law School believes that the "two-year Legal Skills Program stands at the cutting edge of programs all over the country that seek to give students a real sense of a lawyer's life." The Legal Skills Program also allows students to gain exposure to legal ethics and legal professionalism. Thus, the Law School produces students who are both fluent in black letter law and cognizant of the need to keep ethics and professional conduct at the forefront of their careers.

Not only do graduates of the Law School appreciate the advantages of the Legal Skills Program and the exceptional preparation of the other, more traditional, classes in the Law School, but employers and educators also recognize that William and Mary graduates are well rounded and well prepared. Ninety-nine percent of those who graduated between 1996 and 1998 reported employment or pursuit of advanced degrees by nine months after graduation. The majority of employed graduates (53 percent) entered private practice, a large number of graduates obtained judicial clerkships (18 percent), and a smaller number began studies for advanced degrees (4 percent). For those employed, salaries ranged from \$24,000 to \$91,000, with the median starting salary in the private sector at \$60,000, and the median starting salary in the public and non-profit sector at \$38,500. Employment of the Law School's graduates was dispersed throughout the country: 35 percent in Virginia, and 65 percent elsewhere. Graduates were employed in a total of 37 states, as well as in the District of Columbia and three foreign countries.

Faye F. Shealy, Associate Dean for Admission, summed up the admission philosophy at William and Mary: "We look for students who have strong academic backgrounds and a sharp intellect during the admissions process, but we also look for those with drive, commitment, and compassion." According to *U.S. News and World Report*, the GPA for first-year students entering in 1998 ranged from 3.0 to 3.5, and LSAT scores ranged from 159 to 164. The acceptance rate was 33.6 percent.

To supplement the traditional J.D. degree, the Law School provides three joint degree programs. The J.D./M.A. in American Studies is administered by the Law School and the American Studies program, and requires three and a half years of study. Students interested in law and business can apply for the four year J.D./M.B.A. program, which is provided in cooperation with the Graduate School of Business. Applicants considering careers in law and public policy can apply for the four-year J.D./M.P.P. program, which is run in conjunction with the Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy. Finally, the Law School also offers an LL.M. in the American Legal System. This course, which provides advanced training for lawyers from

outside the United States, consists of one year of study.

The Office of Career Planning and Placement (OCP) is committed to providing career planning to current students, as well as to graduates. The OCP provides skill workshops and programs, speakers, panel discussions and print and electronic resources. Students may also make individual appointments throughout the year to consult with experts in the OCP in furtherance of obtaining employment and advanced graduate work.

Since its august inception into its current role as a premier law school, William and Mary School of Law combines the assets of a legal education anchored in a proud tradition with the innovations and flexibility of a modern law school. A current second-year student, Dana Fitzsimons states, "I initially was attracted to W&M because of its nationwide reputation for legal excellence ... I am impressed constantly with the legal giants on the faculty." Law school applicants interested in a challenging legal education with a variety of joint degree opportunities and excellent employment prospects upon graduation, should consider William and Mary School of Law. ®

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The author is a student at the College of William and Mary School of Law.*