

Law School Notes

He takes over and, presto, DePaul takes off

By Jerry Crimmins
Law Bulletin staff writer

When he took over as dean of DePaul University College of Law in 2002, the school was stuck in a third-tier ranking by a national magazine and the bar pass rate was 15 points lower than today.

Applications to the law school were 31 percent lower, and charitable giving to the school was less than half of today's, according to school figures.

Glenn Weissenberger looks back with pride at his accomplishments in five years, and with continued surprise at parts of the job of dean.

Weissenberger, 62, said he decided to try to be dean of a law school when his children grew up and he was an empty-nester.

"I thought, 'Well, what would I like to do for the rest of my life?' I knew a lot about legal education. I had watched a lot of deans do things right and wrong. I thought this would be a position in which I would derive a great deal of satisfaction."

When he took over at DePaul on July 1, 2002, he said, "This was a faculty that was ready to move. They just needed someone who could create the vision and coalesce the energy."

He wants to take another five-year term after his contract expires on June 30. He said he and the university "are close to having an agreement regarding my next term."

Among the surprises that Weissenberger found when he jumped from professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law to dean at DePaul — with no assistant deanships in between — is that "now I'm constantly on."

As a professor, he had to appear before the students only six hours a week.

Today, "I have to get up every morning ready and willing to be the face of the law school" for 10 hours a day or more, plus weekends.

He also discovered that a dean of a large law school has more "power over people and decisions" than he ever imagined.

"I was somewhat surprised as to how many decisions I had to make, and I realized there wasn't anybody else who could make them," Weissenberger said. "I simply had to make decisions or things come to a standstill."



Paul McGrath

Glenn Weissenberger

Standstill would not seem to be Weissenberger's style.

He's the author or co-author of 40 books, many with names like "Weissenberger's Federal Rules of Evidence," or Weissenberger's this or Weissenberger's that.

While he was a professor in Cincinnati, he was also an editorial consultant for Anderson Publishing Co. According to his bio, he "developed and executed a business plan for Anderson's entry into the law school casebook market and became the driving force behind the development of more than 200 titles."

Weissenberger said he had to come up with ideas for the books to give Anderson a place in the market, then find the authors and make it happen.

He held this job on the side while he remained a law professor from 1980 to 2002. The Anderson company was acquired by LexisNexis, and today Weissenberger is chair of the Publishing Advisory Board for LexisNexis.

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He also has a long list of community activities, such as former member of the planning commission for Montgomery, Ohio, and other such posts, along with bar association committees and work for the Ohio Supreme Court, and a role as elder and instructor for two Presbyterian churches.

At DePaul, perhaps his biggest outward accomplishment that made everybody "ecstatic," according to Professor Bruce L. Ottley, took place in 2006 when DePaul Law jumped upward at least 20 places in the U.S. News & World Report's law school rankings.

That got DePaul back into the top 100 schools, at number 80 — today it is 91.

DePaul's bar pass rate for first-time test takers last July was 88.5 percent compared to 73 percent just as Weissenberger took over.

The grade point averages and law school admission test averages for the entering classes are both up substantially, he said. And philanthropic support for the law school is at \$2,950,000 for fiscal 2007 and could surpass \$3 million. This compares to \$1,208,000 in fiscal 2002.

It's perhaps not surprising that he can perform magic.

"I've always had magic as a hobby, and I would do shows at the church and do shows for my kids when they were growing up." (He

became international legal counsel to the International Brotherhood of Magicians for two years.)

"I do a lot of different card tricks, little mind-reading tricks, sleight of hand, cups and balls, and I actually have at home a very professional guillotine that is absolutely a complete fooler."

His law school plans include a major capital campaign in which he thinks the school can raise about \$35 million, and seeking national ranking for the school's programs in trial advocacy and international law. The school has already been highly ranked by U.S. News & World Report for its health law and intellectual property programs.

He wants to build on the school's Schiller DuCanto and Fleck Family Law Center.

Plus, he has ideas for vertical expansion. The school occupies six of the first nine floors at 25 E. Jackson Blvd., and Weissenberger believes it is the law school's "manifest destiny" to occupy all nine.

"DePaul's law school has risen in prominence under Glen's guidance because of the innovative measures he has implemented," said John B. Simon, chairman of the school's Board of Trustees. "Importantly, this ascendancy has been accomplished while still embracing, expanding and fulfilling DePaul's commitment to diversity."