



School of Law
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Prepare.
Connect.
Lead.

Digital Commons @ University of
Georgia School of Law

Other Law School Publications

Digital Archives

12-1-1987

A Letter from the Dean to Alumni

C. Ronald Ellington

University of Georgia School of Law

Repository Citation

Ellington, C. Ronald, "A Letter from the Dean to Alumni" (1987). *Other Law School Publications*. 236.
https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/lectures_pre_arch_archives_other/236

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Archives at Digital Commons @ University of Georgia School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other Law School Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of Georgia School of Law. [Please share how you have benefited from this access](#) For more information, please contact tstriepe@uga.edu.



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SCHOOL OF LAW

*File
for our files*

A Letter from the Dean to Alumni

Seasons Greetings!

Fall term is almost over. Students are taking exams, and I wanted to write to share with you some thoughts I have had about our Law School. I am deeply honored to have been chosen to lead the Law School as its new Dean. My mandate is to continue the progress of building a premier national law school, albeit one with a Southern accent.

During the few months since I was named as Dean, I have been tremendously encouraged by the letters and words of support that I have received from many of you. It is heartening to know that as alumni your aspirations for your Law School are so high and that you support the goal of moving the Law School permanently into the front ranks of law schools in this country.

This Law School enjoys substantial resources: human resources, financial resources, and physical resources. A new dean impliedly takes an oath not only to preserve, protect, and defend an institution like the Law School, but also to improve it. I am reminded of the Biblical passage from St. Luke: "To whom much is given, of him will much be required." All of us into whose care the Law School has now come have a binding obligation to keep the faith with those who built before we came and those who will come after us. This is a solemn pact with our history and the future, and it is one that the faculty and I will honor.

This Law School is blessed with a talented and diverse faculty. I am proud to serve on a faculty with men and women who have chosen to devote their talents and lives to working with young people in that most challenging and stimulating of undertakings, the study of law. No one deserves higher praise from us as lawyers than those teachers whose classrooms and writing first and steadily opened our minds and spurred our understanding about the nature of law and instilled in us respect for the nobler ends of law in our society. I am proud that such teachers and scholars are on the faculty at Georgia.

We do have a richly talented faculty of many interests and many different backgrounds. It is a special responsibility now to see that new appointments made to the faculty add a significant measure of quality. We must continue to seek scholar-teachers of the first rank to join our faculty while recognizing and rewarding those already on the faculty whose scholarship and teaching mark them as outstanding.

A Letter from the Dean to Alumni

The Law School has a rich resource in our students. Another outstanding class entered this fall, the Class of 1990! There are 218 new first-year law students drawn from 28 states and 82 undergraduate schools. Seventy-eight percent of the entering class are residents of Georgia. Forty-five percent are women, and nine percent are minority students. The University of Georgia is our largest feeder school with approximately one-third of the first-year class receiving their undergraduate degrees on this campus.

We cannot take for granted that students of high quality will come inevitably to law school here in Athens however. Other law schools, both in this state and nationally, compete with us for students of the calibre we want. It is important that we do more to develop financial resources to enable students of outstanding ability to attend this law school.

I am particularly pleased that we have a graduate program in law under the direction of Gabriel Wilner. This year we have twenty-one students pursuing a Master of Laws degree. Twenty of these talented young lawyers come from Germany, Belgium, China, Taiwan, Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Ghana and Nigeria. It is a tremendous boon to this state that young lawyers trained in other countries in different legal systems can come to the University of Georgia for a year of study in American law and then enter careers of international practice either in this country or back at home. Thanks to this program, there is a growing University of Georgia alumni club in Western Europe!

This School has benefitted from the efforts of many -- and I should single out my predecessor, Ralph Beaird, by name -- to develop private resources to make possible a measure of quality exceeding that which public funding alone could sustain. In law schools, as in other human endeavors, complacency is the enemy of excellence. We need your help to develop additional resources to move this School to a position of preeminence. We need to create a significant endowment to support the Law Library, to provide scholarships to J.D. students and fellowships for LL.M. students. We need to develop private endowment to support proven co-curricular programs such as the *Georgia Law Review*, the *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, the Moot Court program, the new and exciting Mock Trial program, and other student activities. We need to develop additional private funds to support faculty research and professional development through making available personal computers for faculty offices and increased research and travel support.

We enjoy beautiful physical facilities but there is an additional need. Plans have long been made to construct an additional building as part of the Law School complex -- the Dean Rusk Center. The General Assembly appropriated \$100,000 last year to hire an architect to design the facility, and we are hopeful that funds will be appropriated by the General Assembly in 1988 to construct this facility.

I have named a number of our important assets: human, financial, and physical. But I have held until last one important subjective quality that may be our most precious asset. I have been impressed time and again that the faculty, the students, and the alumni of the Law School with whom I have spoken share a vision of greatness for this School and have high aspirations for what it can accomplish. I am pleased to report that President Knapp shares our aspirations.

A Letter from the Dean to Alumni

When my appointment as Dean was announced, I received letters of congratulations from a number of former students and alumni whom I had come to know over my eighteen years on the faculty. One letter in particular stood out. A young lawyer in Savannah wrote, "I hope the Law School is doing all it can to communicate to students that their education is the central focus of the School." I hope that by keeping this letter handy in my desk drawer I will never get so busy with the minuscule details of Law School administration or the important tasks of recruiting faculty, developing resources and building buildings that I ever forget that our central mission is to educate young people for the profession of law. That should be our fixed star.

Some years ago, the portrait of former Governor Ellis Arnall was presented to the Law School. Governor Arnall spoke of the Law School as "hallowed ground."

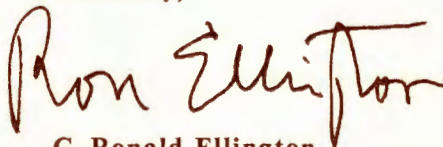
Why should it be regarded as such by a graduate fifty years later? I have pondered this question over the years and have reached this conclusion: Law School is special, a time apart, because it is a place of unlimited intellectual challenge. It is a place where young people will be challenged to give their best effort and, thereby, to grow and gain confidence. Here they will experience joy and great happiness as well as disappointment and frustration. They will make friends for life and create legends. It is here, now, that they will start their life's work.

Justice Holmes once wrote that, "it is possible to live greatly in the law." He did not say it was easy, only possible. I ask your continued help and support to make our law school one that can enable its graduates to take a back seat to none and realistically to strive for that glorious end, "to live greatly in the law."

I hope that when you are asked to make a gift to the University of Georgia Foundation in the Annual Giving Campaign, you will respond generously and earmark at least part of your gift for the Law School Fund. I hope you share my pride in what this Law School is and what it can become and my belief that it is worthy of your support.

With best wishes for the Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Cordially,



C. Ronald Ellington
Dean
December, 1987