

Howard University

Digital Howard @ Howard University

Selected Speeches

J. Clay Smith, Jr. Collection

6-30-1987

Dean's Statement

J. Clay Smith Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: https://dh.howard.edu/jcs_speeches



Part of the [Legal Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Smith, J. Clay Jr., "Dean's Statement" (1987). *Selected Speeches*. 86.
https://dh.howard.edu/jcs_speeches/86

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the J. Clay Smith, Jr. Collection at Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Selected Speeches by an authorized administrator of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact digitalservices@howard.edu.

DEAN'S STATEMENT

108A

On May 14, 1986, I succeeded John Thomas Baker as the dean of the Howard University School of Law. The circumstances surrounding my assumption of leadership of the law school 10 months after Dean Baker's appointment as dean is covered in Appendix 10 of this Annual Report. The class of 1986 was graduated under Dean Baker's leadership on May 10, 1986.

My assumption of leadership was not an easy one as there was no time to plan for the 1986-1987 academic school year. My first tasks were to restore collegial peace within the faculty, complete the enrollment process for the ensuing academic year, complete a recruitment bulletin, undertake the writing of a new student handbook, perfect the comprehensive examination, restore the confidence of the public and the law alumni in the law school, shore up several law school academic programs, raise additional scholarship money for students and increase the budget for new programs for the law school. All of these tasks required the cooperation and dedication of the faculty, students, alumni and central administration.

The last Annual Report filed on behalf of the law school was for the 1982-1983 academic year. There were no Annual Reports completed for the 1983-1984, 1984-1985, 1985-1986 academic school years. From 1983-1985 Oliver Morse was Acting Dean, from 1985-1986 John T. Baker was Dean. The content of this Annual Report covers the period from May 14, 1986 - June 30, 1987.

Throughout the 1986-1987 academic school year, a majority of the faculty met their obligations in all respects, and they, the student body and the administrative staff must share in any successes achieved during the year, along with the central administration which provided additional financial support to the School of Law.

Admissions. On May 14, 1986, there were fewer than 50 applicants admitted to the law school. We ultimately enrolled a class of 73 students in the first year class for a total of 344 in the entire law school.

Recruitment. The law school made vigorous efforts to recruit the best students for enrollment this year. The Recruitment Committee participated in four recruitment forums organized by the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) in New York, Chicago, Boston, and Los Angeles. The Committee also held a forum at the law school drawing students from Howard, Hampton University, the University of the District of Columbia, and other area colleges and universities. Given the circumstances of the previous academic year, we were pleased to have an enrollment of 73 outstanding students.

Recruitment Bulletin. A recruitment bulletin had been started by Dean Baker, but it was far from being completed. This required an exhaustive effort by the staff to complete this task before the recruitment period which was to commence in October, 1986. This task was completed, making it the first comprehensive bulletin in recent memory.

nt
otio:
star
as ste i
enriment
Anactst
s involve
southea

Student Handbook. The 1984 Law Students' Handbook was defective, as critical portions of it relating to graduation and other requirements had never been approved by the Board of Trustees. This situation had caused much confusion during Dean Baker's tenure as dean. Several special faculty meetings were held throughout the summer months and the ensuing academic year to address the defects while working under the outmoded 1979 Law Students' Handbook.

Comprehensive Examination. Full implementation of the Comprehensive Examination had been delayed during the previous academic year due to administrative problems. During the summer months, the faculty labored to reach consensus on the particulars of the Comprehensive Examination. Ten outstanding alumni were appointed as adjunct professors to read the examination which was administered out of sequence for the seniors in October, 1986, and in sequence in February, 1987. The Comprehensive Examination adopted as an instructional tool 10 years ago by the Law Faculty and the Board of Trustees was fully implemented for the first time.

Faculty Retreat. A faculty retreat was organized by a faculty committee and held at the Armour J. Blackburn Center on main campus on June 12-13, 1986. The retreat, attended by a majority of the faculty, directed its attention to the need for more seriousness of purpose by students, the need for more financial support for the law school by central administration and the need for salary increases for the faculty.

Faculty Retirements. On June 30, 1986, the law school faced the retirements, resignation and leave of 4 senior members of the faculty with the corresponding demand to make appointments and to rearrange the curriculum by the Fall of 1986. Retiring faculty included: Dr. Oliver Morse, Newton Pacht, Irving Ferman and James Cobb. Professor Peter Weisman, who was due to return from a two-year leave of absence, resigned.

Appointments and Promotions. Three associate professors on the faculty were tenured, effective July 1, 1986, one other was appointed full professor, one visiting and two new professors were appointed to the faculty.

Appointment of Associate Dean. There was no Associate Dean in place on May 14, 1986. During the summer months, Jeanus B. Parks, Jr., a senior member of the faculty with 27 years of teaching experience agreed to assume this position. Dean Parks, highly regarded by the faculty, brought institutional knowledge and history to the academic program of the law school.

Law School Budget. In February, 1987, a supplemental budget proposal by the Dean was approved for fiscal years 1987-1988 in the amount of \$350,000 by the President. This financial support was targeted to enhance several important areas in the law school:

1. Early Enrollment Program. This program is designed so that 10 students (at no cost) are able to spend 6 weeks in the study of law prior to the actual commencement of classes in the Fall of 1987.

2. Merit Scholarship Program. Under this program, 20 first-year students will be awarded academic scholarships of \$5,000.

3. Faculty Enrichment. Under this program, supplemental funds for travel and registrations were approved to allow faculty to attend and to participate in academic programs and seminars.

4. Faculty Research and Publications. Under this program, several computers with word processing capability were ordered to provide a greater incentive for faculty research.

5. Moot Court Teams. Until now, the Moot Court Teams had no budget to participate in national competitions. Funds are now available for competitive activity.

6. The Howard Law Journal. Funds were approved for student scholarships during the summer months in order to make the Law Journal a twelve-month operation.

7. Placement and Alumni Affairs. Until now, the Placement Office has had no budget of its own. Funds are available for travel, to purchase a computer with word processing capability and to publish an alumni newsletter, The Jurist, circulated to 2,500 living alumni.

8. Comprehensive Examination. Funds are now available to enhance the implementation of the comprehensive law examination.

9. Civil Litigation Clinic. One of the clinics allows students to work with a consortium program in the court system. The cost of participation in that program grew so that only 10-12 students could participate. With added funds, up to 20

students will be able to participate.

10. Labor Law Clinic. The Labor Law Clinic has never had a permanent budget. Early in its history, it was partially funded by grants and subsidized from other programs in the Law School. It now has a budget of its own.

11. The Office of the Dean. Additional funds have been allocated to the Office of the Dean for the purchase of a computer to better track student records, and for preparation of reports, as well as funds for secretarial development. In addition, there is an urgent need for executive level and operational and administrative support, to buttress the Office of the Dean as relates to the Dean's ability to do long-range planning and forecasting. The longevity of the Howard Law School has much to do with elevating the law school from a crisis management mode to predictable and measurable management systems. The Dean's Office must, with effective, productive, executive level management support, be able to engage in team-building in order to assure the necessary accountability centers in the law school.

12. Alumni Development Day. The alumni remain an important part of the development of the law school. Some funds have been allocated for special fund raising events.

Student Programs and Achievements. The student body settled down to its usual academic pursuits. Several academic programs during the academic year were recommended and implemented by students. These programs are set forth in the calendar of events

in The Jurist, contained in this Annual Report. Several programs were jointly planned or implemented by both faculty and students. The editorial staff of the Howard Law Journal worked diligently to publish several issues which were behind schedule. The Moot Court Teams competed admirably in several national and local competitions. One student on the International Moot Court Team received the highest score in oral advocacy in the Phillip Jessup International Moot Court Competition at Georgetown National Law Center. Two students represented the law school in Kenya, East Africa, under a program sponsored by Operations Crossroads Africa, Inc., and a number of the students were placed in a variety of jobs coast-to-coast. In addition, The Barrister, the student newspaper, was reactivated, publishing two issues in the Spring Semester.

Faculty Salaries. The need for increases of faculty salaries remains crucial in order to recruit and retain highly skilled law faculty. In the past year, two faculty pay increases were granted to the entire faculty by central administration. A special faculty committee has been appointed by the Dean to study salary adjustments based on merit. The two faculty pay increases awarded this year were not merit pay increases. Faculty salary increases remain an issue in the law school.

Publication of Scholarly Articles. Several members of the Law Faculty published articles during the last two years on a variety of subjects. The publication of such articles continues to bring

credit to the faculty and respect for the law school in the legal profession. Based on the stated ongoing research set forth in Appendix 9, more articles should be completed by the end of the 1987-1988 academic year.

Alumni Contacts. The law alumni continues their enthusiastic support of the law school both in their personal support and participation with students and programs within the school, financial support and assistance in the hiring and placement of the students in judicial, law office clerkships and other employment. In July, 1986, the Dean addressed the alumni during the Annual Meeting of the National Bar Association. In September, 1986, the Dean addressed the Howard University Law Alumni Association of the Greater Washington Area. In January, 1986, the Associate Dean visited the alumni in Southern Florida. In February, the Dean met with several alumni in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Tuskegee, Alabama. The faculty has been in touch with many of our graduates and continues to provide advice and other assistance to them. The publication of The Jurist has increased the number of inquiries to the law school on a variety of subjects and has made us more aware of the continued progress of our graduates throughout the world.

Bicentennial Celebration of the United States Constitution. The Law school has held several historical programs commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the United States Constitution. The dean participated on the initial planning committee of the

and Associate Dean to hold a series of meetings with the Dean of the School of Business. This important program is being shored up.

Construction of New Classrooms. Three new modern classrooms have been under construction since July, 1986. The classrooms, amphitheater style, are scheduled for completion by the end of 1987. Completion of these air-conditioned classrooms will greatly enhance the academic environment of the law school. The estimated cost of the three classrooms is \$500,000.

The American Bar Association and The Association of American Law Schools Accreditation Visit. On May 14, 1986, no preparation had commenced for the completion of the Self-Study to meet the annual seven year sabbatical of the ABA/AALS, then scheduled for the Spring of 1987. The Self-Study was completed in October, two weeks before the accreditation team was scheduled to visit the law school, having advanced its scheduled visit for reasons set out in Appendix 10. However, on November 1, 1986, the visit was postponed until January by the ABA due to the illness of the wife of the Chairman of the visiting team. In January, 1987, the ABA/AALS conducted an exhaustive review of the law school. The team consisted of four representatives from ABA and one representative from the AALS. Professor Harry Groves (from North Carolina School of Law) was the Chairman of the team. As the 1986-1987 academic year closes, the findings of the ABA/AALS has not been received. The final report is expected soon.

The Future. The law school faces a bright future. However, the faculty, students and central administration must pull together towards one aim as to where the law school will be in the year 2,000. The day-to-day administration of the law school is demanding, often too demanding to do long-range planning. However, at some point we must stop and systematically assess what role this law school will and must play in the new century. The nation is at a crossroads on Blacks in higher education with a fall off in the number of Blacks pursuing graduate and professional schools. Hopefully, this trend will reverse itself. However, if it does not, the law school must plan ahead in identifying all issues impacting a low enrollment, law school curriculum and programs.

Since 1869, this nation has needed the quality of instruction offered at Howard Law School. The new century will need this law school even more. The weighty issues of technology and related economic areas of the law will have as much impact on minorities in America as did issues relating to segregation and intentional race discrimination of yesteryear.

It is not my intent nor do I want to paint a dark picture for the future. However, much more thought, energy, discussion and action must ensue if Black Americans are to remain competitive, active participants, in lifting the plight of the slave progeny. This will happen because we have no other choice but to make it happen.

Conclusion. The Dean and the Faculty of Law have much to do as we face a new academic year and beyond. The future direction of the school in the area of instruction is of primary concern. Issues relating to admission standards must be resolved. The financial stability of the law school must be reviewed, especially its scholarship packages, in order to draw more students with strong academic credentials. There is an additional critical need to supplement the education of students with strong possibilities for success in the study of law, when admitted.

J. Clay Smith, Jr.
6/30/87