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THE FUTURE OF FORDHAM UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

JOHN F. X. FINN*

AS THE atomic age merges into the ultrasonic, the philosopher is inclined to pause for a fleeting moment and to endeavor to encompass the totality of things, even as the poet

“ . . . dipt into the future, as far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be.”

In that mood, we recall a recent observation that

“It is a vicious business to look backward unless the feet are set steadfastly on a forward road. . . . An open and flexible mind, which recognizes the need of transformation and faithfully sets itself to apprehend new conditions, is a prerequisite of man’s usefulness.”

In moulding the future of Fordham University’s School of Law, its faculty is determined to be useful, open minded, flexible and forward-moving, whether or not we occasionally glance backward.

Looking both backward and forward, we adhere to Life’s absolutes. The floating dock of our philosophy of Law rises and falls with the tides of time and circumstance, yet it also remains ever fast to its moorings.

In our dreams we behold many oases, castles in Spain, and perhaps mirages, but we behold them in vivid delineation.

We think in terms of a tangible new Fordham Law Center, a new law library with at least double and perhaps quadruple the present number of books, new Moot Court Rooms, both trial and appellate, for our revitalized Practice Courses, a vigorous quarterly Law Review, a thriving and effective Student Bar Association, adequate dining facilities for students, faculty, alumni, their guests and their friends, a revamped curriculum, orientation courses, courses in Legal Method, Brief-Writing, Legal Drafting, Public Speaking from the standpoint of addressing juries and courts in Motion, Trial and Appellate Practice, “getting the facts,” closed-circuit television from courtrooms, from administrative tribunals, from title closings and the like, seminars, symposia, guided research, a Law School newspaper, a Law School magazine, significant books and learned articles published by an augmented faculty, an Insurance Institute, lectures for practising lawyers, a Graduate Law School, and so on.

Perhaps God in His wisdom will add all of these things unto us; perhaps not.

On the other hand, the ultimate test of a law school is its faculty, its student body and its end-product. If we keep our standards high, raise

* Dean and Professor of Law, Fordham Law School.

them, indeed, and if we continue the selfless devotion of the teachers who currently move in the tradition of Fuller, Chapin, Keener, Gifford, Shealy, Loughran, Carmody, Kennedy, Dee, O'Connell, Wilkinson and Kane, we shall all come trooping home together,—with the guidon of Fordham borne aloft more proudly than ever.

Over the years our teachers have seen Fordham Law students vibrate to teachers and the teachers vibrate to students just as Toscanini vibrates to music.

And there lies the richest future of Fordham Law School: the upturned countenance, the reflective eye, the wholehearted quest for the far horizons of the mind and the high horizons of the soul,—the vibrant response to the flame of living ideas wrung from the crucibles of the legal laboratory, and

“the ardent face, when boyhood gives, as boyhood can,
Its love and faith to a fine, true man.”

To that inspiration we respond, with the earnest resolution that we shall never fail for lack of trying, for lack of zeal, for lack of vision, or for lack of humility.

Is it too much to hope and pray that before we pass from the scene, the record of Fordham Law School's first fifty years will prove to be but the prologue of the glorious future of one of the greatest University Schools in the history of creative thought?