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THE FUTURE OF FORDHAM LAW SCHOOL

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LAST summer on the Island of Nantucket, I came upon a native sitting on a rock and staring solemnly at a distant lighthouse. When I asked him what he was doing, he responded: "Lighthouse, no good for fog. Lighthouse, whistle, blow, ring bell, flash light, raise hell. But fog come in just the same."

This profound perception has universal appeal to all ages and to all professions. To me, however, the lighthouse is the Law School and, try as I may, I cannot shed the notion that the problems I face today at the Law School are no different from those faced by Paul Fuller seventy-five years ago. They are probably no different from those that will be faced seventy-five years hence by a dean whose mother has not yet been born.

The twenty-first century is barely twenty years away. The year 2000 will see a profession radically different from the one that existed when I became Dean. In 1970 there were about 325,000 lawyers in this country. In 1979 alone, 46,000 new lawyers were admitted bringing the total well above one-half million. By the year 2000, therefore, the Bar will have to support in excess of one million lawyers.

It used to be said that where there was one lawyer in a town, he was impoverished, but where there were two, both were rich. Whether this canard has any validity will surely be tested as the nation's law schools continue to produce vast numbers of lawyers with that lean and hungry look. Perhaps Prepaid Legal Services will have something to do with the answer. It will not be long before ninety percent of Americans live in cities. The success of the *Fordham Urban Law Journal* reflects the deepening interest of our profession in the problems that are peculiar to an urban society. Our curriculum will have to be refined to focus on the difficulties of municipal financing, mass transportation, and public employment. We have long visualized our society as a pyramid with young, productive workers at the base supporting a small, retired corps at the top. In twenty or thirty years, this pyramid may well be inverted, making new demands on the estate planners and the tax consultants, to say nothing of ERISA.

Environmental Law, which only ten years ago was an academic novelty, has already produced a separate CCH service. Water rights, oil, and gas law will be making increased demands on the law school curriculum in the near future. The growth of the computer Leviathan will cut a broad swath across contract and tort law, not to mention antitrust law (with a nod to the pending IBM and AT&T cases). Simi-

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larly, advances in the biological sciences will require re-evaluations of basic constitutional values, as well as the orthodoxies of family law.

I have little doubt that within the next twenty years we will have followed our medical brethren through clinical education into specialization. Precisely how the law schools will train specialists—if indeed they can be expected to—remains unclear; but it is certain that the move by the organized bar toward specialization will have a ripple effect in the law schools. Unless law school education is extended beyond the traditional three years—an unlikely prospect despite its attractiveness to university fiscal planners—law school faculties will have to become even more selective in their coverage. If Justice Holmes could describe his 1864 legal education “as a ragbag of details,” there is a clear and present danger that legal education in the year 2000 may degenerate into a nightmare of pother.

I do not perceive this, however, as a serious risk at Fordham. We have a tradition of following Sir Edward Coke’s sage counsel: “Non multa sed multum—Not many things but much.” The Fordham Law School faculty has never pursued the will-o-the wisp to teach everything a lawyer ought to know, but rather has sought to impart those essential skills that no legislature can repeal. A sound legal education is what is left after what has been learned has been forgotten. Fordham has a rich history, reaching back through Mulligan and Wilkinson to Paul Fuller, of providing such an education, and I am confident that our tradition will survive through the bumbblings of the current Law School administration.

Within a few years we will add substantially to the Law School building. This will enable us to accommodate our 1,100 students and, if dormitory facilities are constructed, will enhance our appeal to students from all over the nation. Meanwhile, we shall continue to make every effort to attract the best students from all walks of life. This diversity of talent and intellect will permit us to turn out that unique product we have come to know as the Fordham Lawyer.

As we begin to plan our Centennial celebration, I will make no promises now as to what we will do, for I believe that we can do far more than we can now promise.

