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Santa Clara Law - looking back, looking forward

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Closing Arguments

Santa Clara Law—Looking Back, Looking Forward

BY MARY D. HOOD, B.A. '70, J.D. '75

As we begin our Centennial celebration, we are reflecting on our roots. Alongtime librarian here, I have been combing through the archives, discovering, or in some cases rediscovering, parts of our history.

Santa Clara Law was founded as the Institute of Law, the seventh Jesuit law school in the United States. In September 1911, a fulltime program was launched with classes offered in the evening, the faculty consisting primarily of local practitioners. The school's first classes were in Senior Hall, now called O'Connor Hall. Becoming the College of Law in 1927, the law school grew on campus and to several off-site locations. By 2009 the school expanded to all of Bannan Hall, thus consolidating the law school lawn outside Heafey, appeared on the into three central buildings on campus—Bergin, Heafey, and



Dean Mack Player, sitting at a desk on the cover of the first edition of this magazine

In the 60s, under the leadership of Dean Leo Huard, the school gained a more regional presence, and in 1962, the part-time program was instituted. The first female graduates earned their Santa Clara Law degrees in 1963, thus beginning the school's now well-known commitment to diversity. Huard continued to strengthen the program by adding key faculty members including Jerry Kasner, Mary Emery '63, Howard Anawalt, and Father Paul Goda.

For most of its first 60 years Santa Clara Law remained a local school with strong ties to the community. Class size remained small until the late '60s. The entering class of 1969—125 students—was the largest to date. With the '70s and the arrival of Dean George Alexander came rapid growth—the school grew from a student body of around 200 to almost 900. The most recent entering class demonstrates that Santa Clara Law has evolved from a local school to one with global impact, having applicants from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 29 foreign countries. The class statistics also show the impact of our commitment to diversity-47 percent women and 48 percent students of color

The location of Santa Clara Law has been instrumental in allowing faculty and students to take advantage of the wealth of technological innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit in Silicon Valley. By the late '70s, courses in computer law were introduced and became the seed of our highly regarded High Tech Law Institute. Santa Clara was an early adopter of technology, subscribing to Lexis (in 1975) and Westlaw (in 1980) as soon as they were made available to law schools. The school is now fully networked in both the classrooms and the law library.

In 1975 the school launched its first summer abroad program under the direction of Professor Dinah Shelton. The program focused on international human rights and was held in Geneva/Strasbourg. From that beginning the school now has 12 summer programs in 21 locations.

Each dean has brought many changes and improvements. Dean Gerald Uelmen helped to give the law school financial stability. Under Dean Player's watch, the school created the High Tech Law Program Dean Polden continues to strengthen these programs as well as spearheading a Leadership Initiative.

As part of a Jesuit institution, the law school has always embraced its mission to educate lawyers with an emphasis on ethics, social justice, and community involvement. In the early '70s the first legal clinic was opened, providing an important practical opportunity for students and offering legal services to those who could not afford them. The law school now boasts many highly active and effective entities, including the Katharine and George Alexander Community Law Center, the Northern California Innocence Project, and the Center for Social Justice and Public Service.

All the members of our community— current and former faculty, staff, students, and alumni—have reason to celebrate, because together we have made Santa Clara Law what it is today. From a local school that offered LL.B. degrees to a school that has a global perspective and offers J.D., J.D./MBA, J.D./MSIS and three LL.M. degrees, Santa Clara Law has advanced into the 21st century while continuing its commitment to excellence, ethics, and social justice.

Mary D. Hood B.A. '70, J.D. '75, began working at the Heafey Law Library in 1968 as an undergrad student employee She earned an MLS from San Jose State University in 1979.