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Franklin Pierce Law Center: Leading the Way in Legal Education for New Hampshire

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Foreward

Franklin Pierce Law Center: Leading the Way in Legal Education for New Hampshire

JOHN D. HUTSON*

This issue of the *Pierce Law Review* is the first devoted entirely to the practice of law in New Hampshire. This venture is appropriate because the Franklin Pierce Law Center is the only law school in the State. We are truly New Hampshire's law school. Our Trustees, faculty, staff, and students feel this responsibility profoundly.

Pierce Law serves as both a state law school and a national and international school. While we send a greater percentage of our graduates out of state than any other law school in the country except one, our alumni comprise fully one-third of the lawyers in New Hampshire. (I should point out, too, that we have almost one thousand alumni in over one hundred countries.)

In 1973, Robert Rines and the President of Franklin Pierce College, Frank S. DiPietro, created a law school that was then part of the College. That relationship lasted for several years before the law school became the private and independent institution that it remains to this day. Walter Peterson, who later became governor, attended our first graduation in 1976 as President of Franklin Pierce College.

The "Center" part of our name is a reflection of the early concept that this would be more than just a law school. It would be a center for teaching and learning about the law at many levels. In many ways that tradition continues. On occasion we become a courthouse. For example, last year the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces heard a real case here as part of their outreach program. Later this year, the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit will hear a case here, once again transforming the Rich Room into a courtroom.

* President and Dean, Franklin Pierce Law Center. The author holds a J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School; LL.M in Labor Law from Georgetown University Law Center; and a B.A. from Michigan State University. Prior to his tenure as Dean of Franklin Pierce Law Center, Retired Rear Admiral Hutson served as Judge Advocate General of the Navy. Additionally, Dean Hutson was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with three gold stars), Meritorious Service Medal (with two gold stars), Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

Additionally, we regularly sponsor lectures open to the public in which we bring in well-known people to speak about timely topics of interest. Recently, these have included the executive director of the ACLU, a nationally renowned law professor and commentator, and the Chief Justices of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The Bownes lectures focus on civil rights and the Kenison lecture series is dedicated to the role of state courts.

Not surprisingly, Pierce Law features the largest law library in the State with many New Hampshire lawyers, both alumni and non-alumni, as members, as well as government agencies. We also make the library available to the students of several New Hampshire colleges and universities. As a member of the Federal Depository Library Program, government documents are available to the public.

Our legal clinic provides free legal advice on a wide range of civil and criminal issues to Granite Staters who otherwise could not afford a lawyer. You will often see our students actively representing clients in New Hampshire courts under the supervision of a faculty member in compliance with Supreme Court Rule 36. Such clients include small businesses, non-profits, tenants, authors, musicians, and aspiring publishers. Pierce Law students in the criminal practice clinic average 150 court appearances each year, covering the whole panoply of purposes including jury trials. Additionally, on average, they represent well over one hundred indigent criminal defendants every year.

Speaking of criminal law, I would be remiss not to mention the New Hampshire Appellate Defender which we house and support with Professor Chris Johnson, a tenured faculty member, who directs the Appellate Defender office. Of course, we are also very proud of Justice Duggan who was Chris's predecessor, as well as mine as dean.

Our externs earn six to twelve credits for working part-time or full-time in a wide variety of law firms, state offices, judicial chambers and the like around the state. This experience gives the students tremendous insight into the inner workings of legal offices and the lives of lawyers. It also, quite frankly, provides some talented and dedicated free labor to those offices.

Over the years our faculty has been very involved in legislative reform in New Hampshire, especially in the area of civil rights, tort reform, and domestic violence.

We also provide testimony and guidance to the General Court during legislative hearings on a variety of other topics in which we have particular expertise and insight. This is an important role, arguably even a duty, for law faculty to perform. In that vein, Pierce Law faculty provide a valuable public service by acting as a constant source of background analysis and

thoughtful commentary for the media, including print, radio, and television.

Each year one issue of the *New Hampshire Bar Journal* is dedicated to the Annual Survey, which our students support with their articles about recent developments in New Hampshire law. The Annual Survey provides a fine writing opportunity for the students and a valuable update for New Hampshire lawyers.

Everyone knows of our strength in intellectual property. Perhaps fewer are aware of the strength of our public interest law program. Many of our best and most dedicated students study public interest law with the aim of working in that area upon graduation. The Public Interest Coalition ("PIC") raises money to support students in public interest summer jobs through the very popular PIC auction, golf tournaments, and the Fun Run. We also raise money for a PIC fellowship named in honor of one of our all-time favorite students, Cindy Lonergan, who was tragically taken from us by cancer.

Moreover, one of our greatest assets is our stable of adjunct faculty. These lawyers bring great currency and credibility to the courses they teach. Some of these courses are among the most critical in the curriculum, including even required courses such as Professional Responsibility. The connection to the local bar provided by our adjuncts is absolutely critical to our continued success and is also a lot of fun for our regular faculty and, I believe, for our adjunct faculty.

That connection between the faculty and local bar is also reflected in other cross-breeding. A number of our faculty came to Pierce Law from local practice. Some have returned to it. Others serve in various "of counsel" capacities with local firms. This phenomenon is even reflected in our Board of Trustees, many of whom are New Hampshire lawyers – Jack Middleton, Judge Carol Conboy, Ken Brown, Cathy Green, Sherry Young, and Heather Merrill. Long time trustee, Mort Goulder of Hollis, is not a lawyer (which he proudly reminds us of at least once each meeting) but he is a prominent resident.

Our faculty, staff and spouses serve the community in a wide variety of ways from coaching soccer to serving on local school boards. We participate in local and state civic, religious, legal, and practically every other sort of capacity. As dean, I encourage individual public service. Law isn't practiced or taught in a vacuum. It is practiced in real life and therefore must be taught in real life. Getting out into the real world is critical to successful teaching.

Our international students engage in a variety of multicultural activities in the state. One of the favorites is that they are often asked to address

local schools about their homeland. They enjoy doing so and appreciate the opportunity to brag about their country.

If you visit the Law Center, you will have the opportunity to enjoy our art shows. We sponsor several shows each year in which New Hampshire artists are provided a venue to hang their work. As a school with a great strength in intellectual property law, sponsoring art shows seems to fit in quite nicely with our mission.

Using an approach provided by the Department of Education formula, we estimate that our 450 students and one hundred and five faculty and staff contribute in excess of \$21 million annually into the local economy.

Certainly, one of the best examples of the interplay between bench, bar, and school is the recent inauguration of the Daniel Webster Scholar Program. You are all familiar with it by now so I won't describe it other than to say that it would not have happened without the cooperation and dedication of the Supreme Court, Bar Association, Board of Bar Examiners, and the Law Center. The fact that this program is unique in the nation stands as proof of the level of cooperation that we enjoyed.

This school is joined at the hip with this state. We are truly more than a law school. Indeed, we are more than a law center. We are a social, cultural, and economic center for the state of New Hampshire. And we are very proud of that.