



1-1-1969

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Recommended Citation

James J. Barba, *Notre Dame Law School--The Present*, 44 *Notre Dame L. Rev.* 1071 (1969).

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol44/iss6/7>

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NOTRE DAME LAW SCHOOL — THE PRESENT

*James J. Barba II**

I am honored to have an opportunity to address this distinguished grouping gathered here to celebrate the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the Notre Dame Law School. And, I am especially pleased to be able to report to you concerning the state of that law school at present. Today, at the end of the first centennial, the Notre Dame Law School finds itself in the midst of a transition, whose generative force has been a most rigid self-analysis by students, faculty and administration alike. Since the advent of our new administration last summer, we have begun to reappraise our role in legal education, and to question how we might better fulfill it. Oftentimes, our answers lay in commitment to policies of the past. At other times, our response has taken the form of innovation. In short, our introspection has revealed three basic truths regarding our role, and these truths underlie our present position.

Primarily, the challenge of our profession is a challenge of change. Learning grows in law at a rate as fast, or faster than in any other discipline. We have no choice but to maintain the pace. At Notre Dame, we believe in change.

This year, for the very first time, we have students studying abroad at the University of London. It is our hope that their new learning will be brought back to us and shared by our entire legal community. This represents change.

Again this year, for the first time, courses in the other graduate schools of the University have been opened to law students, so that they may widen their perspectives and supplement their legal knowledge. This represents change.

And finally, our system of elective courses has been greatly expanded to provide our students an opportunity to specialize in areas of interest to them. All of this represents honestly conceived, carefully deliberated, well-ordered change.

We have recognized a second truth. It is one which has eluded some even among our own profession. Law becomes justice only when it is made available to all on equal terms. Once having appreciated this fundamental, its immediacy could not be denied. Last semester, several of our students toured universities in the South and East in a sincere effort to encourage members of minority groups to come to Notre Dame for a legal education. It is our hope that active solicitation will attract those who might otherwise never learn the law; those who will be willing to bring its force and influence back to their own communities. The obligation of our profession to create a lawful society demands that such programs be pursued. We have made a commitment to that pursuit.

Because we feel the need for knowledge about the problem of legal equality, before we can hope to suggest solutions, our curriculum has been revised to allow for courses that will help us toward that knowledge. Presently, courses in Political and Civil Rights, Social Legislation and Social Problems and the Law are being offered by the Law School; they are designed to provide for our students an appreciation of the fundamental questions in this most sensitive, yet critical, area. And, daily employing this knowledge on a most practical level, our Legal Aid

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and Defender Society offers constant and thorough legal aid to the poor and indigent, both here and in the State of Michigan. People who in the past have experienced the law's worst features, its expense and its delay, have been invited, at last, to partake of its benefits.

The third and final truth which has become apparent to us is, perhaps, the most simple. The best lawyer is not necessarily he who is the most academically superlative. Roscoe Pound, speaking at the Law School a quarter century ago, said of lawyers, "they must be learned men." What we are striving for is the development of lawyers who *are* learned, well-rounded, versatile, sensitive to their fellow man — men who are at home in the arts, in an interview with their clients, in the courtroom on their feet, in a library doing research, or in the political arena promoting democracy. In short, we seek those intangible qualities of leadership which make men an honor to their profession.

Thus, as we turn toward a new century, I may confidently report to you that the state of the Law School at present is one of change, movement, innovation, enthusiasm, aspiration and firm confidence in the future. We have every reason to believe that our tide is running strong.

As for our goal: it is well said that when a society forsakes its law, it forsakes equally its liberty. We, who are students at this Law School, pledge to you that our goal is the preservation of liberty, through the preservation of law.

God willing, that goal will be achieved.



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