



“The generosity of those members of our faculty is a major source of pride for our institution, and a major reason for our success with our own students.”

Dean's Column

BY GUEST WRITER PROF. ROBERT CORRALES

BOYD FACULTY IN SERVICE TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION

The State Bar of Nevada and the William S. Boyd School of Law are committed to promoting diversity in the legal profession. The importance of this emphasis has been highlighted by national events. Recently, the Regents of the University of Texas System voted to rename a dormitory at the University of Texas at Austin that had formerly carried the name of law professor and former KKK leader, William Stewart Simkins. Among other things, Simkins was known for his public statements against the admission of black students to the law school. Ironically, the student dorm had carried the Simkins name since 1954, the year *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided. The renaming of this dormitory serves as a reminder that legal educational institutions once played a major role in the racial segregation of U.S. society, and of how much that role has changed over the last few decades.

A few years before *Brown*, the University of Texas had refused admission to Hermann Sweatt, a black applicant to its law school, simply because of his race. In an unusual maneuver, the trial court stayed the case for six months while the University of Texas built a separate law school which Sweatt could attend. The trial court's decision was upheld by both the Texas court of appeals and the Texas Supreme Court. While the U.S. Supreme court did not eliminate the “separate but equal” doctrine in overruling the Texas courts in *Sweatt v. Painter*, it nonetheless laid the foundation that would lead to the dismantling of segregation throughout U.S. society. By stressing the importance of making legal

education equally accessible to people of all backgrounds, the Supreme Court sent a reminder to law schools of their primary role in the fight to promote a just society.

A similar point was made more recently by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, where the court ruled that in order to cultivate a set of leaders with the trust of the citizenry, law schools must provide a path to leadership to talented and qualified individuals from different races, ethnicities and backgrounds. In other words, commitment to diversity is not just about opening the door to individual opportunity, but also serves a law school's responsibility to help promote a just and inclusive society.

The Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) was founded in 1968 as a non-profit project of the American Bar Association's Fund for Justice and Education, partly in response to the slow pace of voluntary desegregation. CLEO's primary mission was to expand opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school. Since its inception, more than 8,000 students of all backgrounds have participated in CLEO's programs, passed the bar and joined the legal profession. CLEO alums, many of whom had less than traditional indicators of success, are today represented in all areas of practice, law school teaching, state and federal judiciaries and legislatures across the country.

CLEO's work is made possible, in large part, through the efforts of volunteer legal educators

who donate their talent and time to challenging and inspiring potential law students through CLEO's summer programming. Over the last several years, the Boyd School of Law has been amply represented at CLEO. For several years, the last two as a member of the CLEO governing council, I have had the privilege of coordinating the "Attitude is Essential" program for students who will be attending law school the following fall semester. I have been routinely joined by other members of our faculty, including Dean John White, Associate Dean Kay Kindred, Assistant Dean Frank Durand and current or former Boyd Professors Terrill Pollman, Steve Johnson, Chris Blakesley, Peter Reilly, George Mader, Raquel Aldana, Ann Cammett and Jennifer Carr. They taught subjects ranging from Ethics for Law Students to Torts, Criminal Law, Tax Law, Test Taking Skills, Legal Writing, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Academic Success.

In addition to teaching, faculty also participates in workshops designed to instill confidence and a sense of purpose in students. In fact, it is not unusual for professors to keep up with individual students throughout the students' law school careers and to become mentors to those students. The generosity of those members of our faculty is a major source of pride for our institution, and a major reason for our success with our own students. One of the cornerstones of this law school is its commitment to providing a high level legal education to a diverse student body, for the benefit of Nevada and the nation. Another Boyd cornerstone is our faculty's commitment to service to the state and the nation. Our faculty's selfless and inspired work with CLEO is representative of our contribution on both fronts. ■

PROFESSOR ROBERT CORREALES is a founding faculty member of the William S. Boyd School of Law. He teaches torts, evidence, products liability and workers' compensation. Professor Correales also serves on the governing board of the Council for Legal Education Opportunity and coordinates the summer programming for CLEO in Atlanta and Los Angeles.