



A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

FOR COOLEY LAW SCHOOL



REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
DECEMBER 2007



Service to Soldiers Program

Our men and women in military uniform bravely give of themselves to preserve our freedoms. But before and after serving abroad, they often need assistance with wills and trusts, powers of attorney, guardianships, family law matters, taxes, and similar problems. Cooley Professor Pat Kruse suggested that we establish a clinic to help. Taking his cue, Heather Spielmaker, Cooley's Coordinator of the Center for Ethics, Service, & Professionalism, this summer organized a unique program by which Cooley acts as a referral clearinghouse for Michigan attorney volunteers – most of whom are Cooley alumni – to provide *pro bono* legal services to hundreds of our servicemen and women. Only Cooley has organized a program like this. Your gifts allow us to do it.



REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

December 2007

The year 2007 will go down in history as a transformative year for Thomas M. Cooley Law School. We have acquired a new campus, increased our admissions criteria, improved bar examination results and job placement rates, expanded our teaching offerings, enlarged our student body and faculty, attracted a major program grant to improve access to education, entered into new long-term financing arrangements to leverage the school's substantial resources, and markedly improved the reputation of the law school. We may now legitimately call ourselves a top-20 law school.

Everything we do at Cooley is designed to fulfill the school's mission and key visions set forth in the school's five-year strategic plan adopted in 2002. You can read the plan on the web at www.cooley.edu/overview/strategic_planindex.htm.

Our goal is to provide our students with the knowledge, skills, and ethics necessary for the competent practice of law. We set out to be the nation's largest law school; the nation's most affordable, unsubsidized private law school; the nation's best school at preparing its graduates for law practice; the nation's most innovative and flexible law school; and to remain financially strong.

This fall, Cooley's Board of Directors received a full assessment of the school's performance under the five-year strategic plan we adopted in 2002. I invite you to read this assessment on the Cooley website at www.cooley.edu/overview/Strategic_Plan_5_year_Assessment.pdf. I think that you will conclude that, through the efforts of our talented faculty and dedicated staff, and supported by financial donations from alumni and friends like you, we have largely succeeded.

I thus am proud to offer you this report on the great successes at Cooley in 2007. And in various sidebars to this report, I will highlight many ways in which financial donations to the school have helped us achieve these successes.

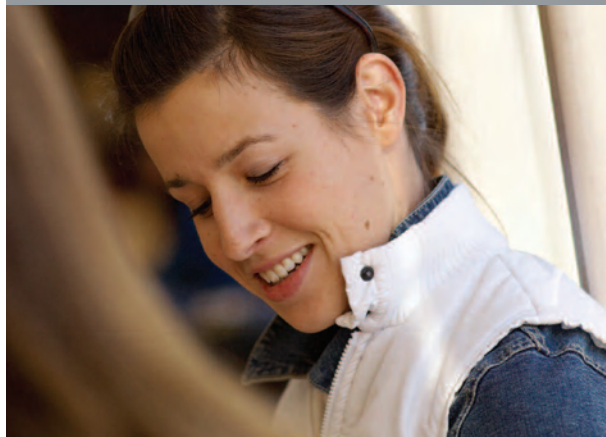
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 2008, we will mark the 35th anniversary of the opening of Cooley Law School. We have gone from a school with no assets, no students, no full-time faculty, and no facilities to become the largest law school in America in enrollment, the second largest in physical plant, the sixth largest in full-time faculty, the second largest in total faculty, and the 30th largest in net assets. Last year, Cooley ranked second in tuition revenue and fifth in total revenue. Our endowment ranks 103rd among the 195 ABA-accredited law schools, which means that we have already surpassed 44 schools that existed at the time we gained accreditation. And we have nearly 12,000 living alumni, more than many older schools, ranking us 32nd among all law schools.

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Student Professionalism Portfolio

An important new highlight of our ABA award-winning Professionalism Plan is this innovative project in which students create their own professionalism portfolio based upon goal setting, consultation with advisors, self-reflection, and training in personal responsibility, ethics, and service. The portfolio documents the student's professional development and personal code of conduct and offers employers insight into an applicant's character. Overseen by Amy Timmer, Cooley's Associate Dean for Students and Professionalism, the portfolio project was developed with input from many Cooley departments to be sure that students avail themselves of Cooley's substantial resources in the professionalism area. Your gifts help fund this trail-blazing program.

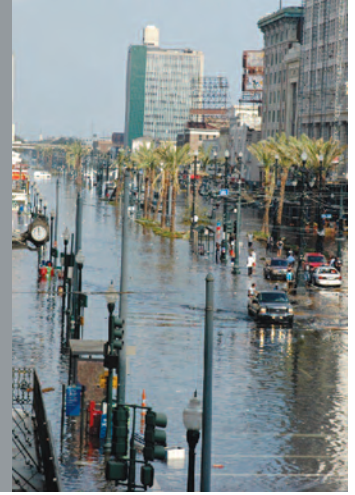


Professional Exploration Program

Not all students with the ability to succeed in law school perform well on standardized tests. Working with a standardized testing agency, Cooley has developed and validated an alternative means for law school admission, using writing samples, skills training, substantive law instruction, and academic and career testing. Students participating in Cooley's PEP program thus have the ability to earn their way into law school by demonstrating their skills to us. This innovative program shows such promise that the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation, one of the nation's largest loan guaranty agencies, this fall donated \$277,000 to Cooley to help us expand and evaluate the program. Cooley is the only law school with a program of this type.

Hurricane Katrina Legal Relief Services

More than two years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast, thousands of citizens remain in dire need. Cooley's Assistant Dean for Planning, Programs, and Assessment, Christine Church, worked in conjunction with Cooley's chapter of the ABA Law Student Division to take more than 50 Cooley students to the afflicted area during this summer term break. Alumni gifts helped these Cooley students provide volunteer legal assistance with drafting wills and trusts, deeds, and mortgages, assisting with banking and landlord-tenant problems and family law matters, and helping to preserve the civil rights of citizens from illegal searches and seizures. Our students lived in difficult conditions themselves while cheerfully serving numerous clients, thus gaining insight and experience that can only come from working with the most disadvantaged in American society today. Only Cooley has participated to this extent.



MEETING THE STRATEGIC GOALS AND VISIONS

In the past six years, our enrollment and net assets have doubled, we have opened new campuses in Grand Rapids and Oakland County, our LSAT scores have increased by nearly five points, and our Michigan bar results have increased to slightly over 80 percent. We have become the second largest school in minority enrollment and the largest in African-American enrollment.

We have created an eight-room courtroom complex and opened two new classroom and office floors in the Cooley Center. We remodeled the first, fourth, and sixth floors of the Temple Building.

We built and bought a 100,000 square-foot law school facility in Grand Rapids, and have a 66-acre, 133,000 square-foot law school complex under construction in Auburn Hills, the first phase of which will open in January 2008.

We were able to secure an investment grade financial rating and a AAA insurance rating, allowing us to issue bonds with a very low interest rate cost to us.

We did all of this while keeping our tuition in the bottom 10 percent of all private schools and increasing the gap between our tuition and the median private school tuition by \$3,000. We have kept our tuition increases under 5 percent, while the other schools averaged over 6 percent. We are now \$7,000 per year less expensive than the median for private schools. For a tuition comparison, see the Cooley website at <http://www.cooley.edu>.

With 3,711 students currently enrolled for the fall, Cooley remains the largest law school in the nation. Of this number, 2,677 students are based in Lansing, while 589 are at our Auburn Hills branch and 445 are at our Grand Rapids branch.



Grand Rapids and Auburn Hills Campuses

We built and bought a 100,000 square-foot law school facility in Grand Rapids, and have a 66-acre, 133,000 square-foot law school complex under construction in Auburn Hills, the first phase of which will open in January 2008. Your giving helps us continually improve our facilities.





Scholarly Excellence

Your giving allows us to support important faculty scholarship. A great example is Professor Joseph Kimble, Chair of Cooley's Research & Writing Department, who this summer received the prestigious Burton Award for his work as drafting consultant for the newly rewritten Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The new rules, which took effect on Dec. 1, 2007, are the product of an intensive four-year effort by federal judges, practicing lawyers, law professors, and Professor Kimble. These rules will have great practical and symbolic importance. Judges, lawyers, and law students will find the rules to be shorter; clearer; plainer; more internally consistent, and much better organized. At the same time, the new rules will help put to rest the mistaken notion that laws and rules must be written in the archaic, inflated, verbose, and convoluted style that has come to be known as legalese.

A NEW DAY IN LEGAL EDUCATION

In legal education, the old day is dying and a new day is dawning. From this day, Cooley considers itself to be a top 20 law school. Here's why.

First, according to our ranking system in *Judging the Law Schools*, a system that was created by Justice Thomas E. Brennan and me and is based on the ABA's published consumer information, Cooley ranked 16th for the second consecutive year. You can learn more about the rankings at www.cooley.edu/rankings.

That system, using objective data gathered by the ABA, ranks these schools in order as the top 10: Harvard, Georgetown, Texas, Virginia, Northwestern, New York University, Columbia, Yale, Michigan, and Minnesota. While some might challenge the absence of one particular school or another, using the ABA data creates a top 10 list that is quite defensible and quite consistent with other ranking systems.

Next, in order, the second 10 are George Washington, Pennsylvania, UCLA, American, Fordham, Cooley, California-Berkeley, California-Hastings, Stanford, and Brooklyn. Again,

this list is hard to question, except—What is Cooley doing there?

Critics of the system use the peculiar logic that if Cooley is near the top of the list, it must be invalid. Oddly, they don't say that about the appearance of Yale and Stanford. In fact, removing Cooley and Brooklyn from this list and replacing them with, say, Duke and Chicago from the top 30 list, would make the rankings unassailable.

Cooley and Brooklyn are in the top 20 because using these objective factors, which the ABA says are "designed to provide prospective law school applicants with basic information in a simple format that will facilitate comparisons among schools," Cooley and Brooklyn score very well. In fact, Cooley scores in the top quartile in 22 of the 32 factors considered in the rankings, and is in the top half in 26 of the 32 factors the ABA says are appropriate to use for comparison in law school selection.

On objective items, like enrollment, physical plant size, and cost of attendance, Cooley ranks very high. Demand



for admission shows that Cooley was 13th in the number of applications received. Nine of the 12 schools ahead of Cooley were from the top 20 list. True to our access philosophy, among the Michigan law schools we receive the most applications, accept the highest percentage of applicants, and capture the highest percentage of those we accept.

When *U.S. News and World Report* does its rankings, Cooley will remain in the lowest tier. That is because those rankings are based upon two factors that favor elitism.

First, the schools that don't admit students are favored over those that do so, and those that admit only the so-called best students are favored over those that favor democracy in law school access.

Second, reputation among law school academics and the professional elite dominate the determination of reputation.

I say that a new day is dawning because the elite firms are beginning to say that the product of the elite schools is deficient, that they want people who can practice law. And the products of those elite schools are increasingly more vocal that the life in the elite firms is not satisfactory.

What schools produce the best-prepared lawyers? Largely, the so-called fourth tier schools like Cooley.

What lawyers declare themselves to be the most satisfied with both their practice and their lives? The graduates of those fourth-tier schools.



Soifer Family Endows Lecture in Sports and Entertainment Law

Through a gift of more than \$75,000 this year, Cooley has completed the first stage of its campaign to endow the Howard Soifer Memorial Lecture in Sports and Entertainment Law. The gift was guided to Cooley from the estate of the late Dr. and Mrs. Leon J. Corbin by their daughter, Ms. Ronnie Sampson, and their son and daughter-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Jay Corbin, who are Howard Soifer's cousins, and their family counsel, Joel M. Schwartz, all of the greater New York City area. The Soifer Lecture brings to Cooley sports and entertainment lawyers, athletes and entertainers, allowing Cooley students and the public to learn not only about the business of professional sports and entertainment but, more importantly, about the dynamics of the relationship between a high-profile client and a skilled, trusted advisor. The Soifer Fund was created by Howard's wife, Sandra Soifer, and daughters Halie and Marci. Donations now exceed \$125,000, with the result that Cooley will be able to host the lecture series for years to come. Cooley hopes to reach the \$200,000 level in the near future. Sandy Soifer stressed the importance of donating in her husband's memory: "There is no better way to honor a loved one than through something that will carry your loved one's name. We want this to be an example for other families – that helping to educate others is a great legacy."

Among the Michigan law schools, we receive the most applications, accept the highest percentage of applicants, and capture the highest percentage of those we accept.

You need not accept my view of this. The Carnegie Foundation report on the education of lawyers describes the practice-preparation deficiencies of the elite schools; the American Bar Foundation reports the disconnection between the elite schools and the elite firms.

Put this mutual disaffection together with the fact that both the elite firms and the schools are dominated by an older generation that is on its way out and you have a combination that will lead inevitably to change.

Over half the lawyers in the United States today are now within 10 to 15 years of retirement. The next generation of lawyers defining what is and what is not good about law schools will be much more female, much more racially diverse, and much less impressed with the large-firm world. The reputation factor as presently constituted will be gone within the decade.



Cooley's research and writing, lawyering skills, and clinical programs produce graduates who are among the best prepared for practice in the country.

COOLEY IS ON TRACK TO BE THE BEST

Cooley certainly is on the right track. In fact, our practice preparation mission established 35 years ago is today the cutting edge for the rest of legal education.

We have already created a professionalism program that recently won the American Bar Association's Gambrell Award. Cooley has the most comprehensive ethics and professionalism program in the country. And it has ingrained it in every aspect of the school.

Our skills programs, including the research and writing, lawyering skills, and clinical programs, produce graduates who are among the best prepared for practice in the country, a view reinforced by the reviews of externship supervisors across the country.



Your Gift Makes a Real Difference

You might wonder why Cooley asks you for a gift each year. The plain and simple answer is that your gift will allow us to do many additional things that improve our students' educational experience and will help us to better serve the public.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

What are our challenges? Well, you can guess the first. No matter what the facts may be, the *U.S. News* rankings and the old-fashioned view of reputation is still a challenge. The current job market is still a challenge. The enrollment of so many out-of-state students who choose to transfer is still a challenge. The rise of technology and training lawyers for tomorrow's practice is an increasing challenge. Maintaining the Cooley culture as we expand is a new challenge. And, of course, the ABA is still a challenge. Those are the challenges most of you are familiar with.

But there is one new challenge that arose during our work with the Wall Street investment and insurance rating agencies.

We have met our basic mission of practice preparation; emphasized knowledge, skills, and ethics; retained our access-oriented admissions philosophy; and maintained our academic rigor.



The Collaborative for a Certainty of Opportunity: Pontiac Schools

The financially strapped Pontiac Michigan Public School District has limited resources but unlimited spirit. Joan Vestrand, Assistant Dean at Cooley's Oakland County campus, has single-handedly inspired a collaboration between Cooley students, Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Fred Mester, General Motors Corporation, the Pontiac Northern High School alumni, the Oakland, Wolverine and Straker Bar Associations, and many area law firms and businesses to provide assistance to the Pontiac school district and its students. Asked merely to be a speaker at a school function, Joan arrived to find no computer for her PowerPoint presentation, filthy classrooms, restrooms with no light bulbs, an auditorium with a boom box for a P.A. system, and students who could not afford the clothing required by the district's dress policy. Joan and her Cooley students have literally scrubbed clean the classrooms, collected hundreds of dress shirts and belts, provided prom dresses, taken school children on field trips to places such as the Detroit Science Center, trained and provided mentors for students, and resolved a dispute between rival groups who were suspended for fighting. They have organized programs on choices and consequences, character and personal success, academic tutoring, A.C.T. preparation, gangs and violence, exploring the law, kid crime, constitutional rights in the public schools, and mock trial. They brought in many outside speakers ranging from Rod Paige, the former U.S. Secretary of Education, to a successful hip hop deejay from a popular radio station in Detroit who gave the students his personal "Tips for Success." Through the strength of Joan's and her students' moral character and courage, Cooley is making a real difference in the lives of these children. Only Cooley does this.

In the financial world, Cooley has only one major defect, which is actually a two-part issue. That defect is that we had never conducted a capital campaign intended to raise money from our graduates.

Although they recognized that Cooley had demonstrated phenomenal success and had a great business plan, they were critical of both the size of our endowment and what they considered to be the low level of fundraising.

So, we will continue to work on the traditional challenges. But we now turn to you, Cooley's alumni and friends, to work on the second.

Toward that end, I ask you for a year-end gift to Cooley. Your gift allows us not only to provide the finest legal education available, but it allows us to provide many programs such as those illustrated throughout this report that give our students the valuable practical experience they need as they enter the legal profession.

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We already know that Cooley is a top-20 law school by any objective, comprehensive measure. Your support will help us convince the rest of the country of it.

So, the state of Cooley Law School is very good. We have implemented most aspects of the school's strategic plan, we have stuck to our basic mission of practice preparation, emphasized that we provide our students with the knowledge, skills, and ethics required to be good lawyers, retained our access-oriented admissions philosophy, and maintained our traditional academic rigor.

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Best wishes for the holidays and for a happy, healthy, and successful new year:



Don LeDuc
President and Dean

Your Gift Makes a Real Difference

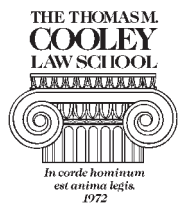
Giving to Cooley has substantial benefits. By giving to Cooley, you can help us:

- Improve the value of a Cooley degree
- Keep tuition low
- Increase scholarships to students
- Reduce student borrowing
- Improve campus technology
- Improve the Moot Court and Trial Practice programs
- Expand the award-winning Professionalism Program
- Serve thousands of senior citizen clients
- Help children in our community
- Increase Academic Resource Center offerings
- Add new degree programs
- Upgrade the Cooley Center, the Temple, and the Brennan Law Library
- Expand our Auburn Hills and Grand Rapids facilities
- Develop new externships and foreign study programs
- Sponsor national conferences and student competitions
- Endow a lectureship or a scholarship
- Honor outstanding teachers or beloved alumni and friends
- Improve the reputation of the school

The Best Website in Legal Education

Click on www.cooley.edu for the latest information about student activities, faculty achievements, alumni events, our impressive facilities, our inspiring history, and everything else you might want to know about Cooley.





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