Changing of the Guard

NEW DEAN OF LAW SCHOOL

In August, 1983, Cliff F. Thompson became the 11th Dean of the University of Wisconsin Law School, succeeding Orrin Helstad, who returned to full-time teaching. At the time of his appointment Thompson was Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Idaho, where he had served since 1978.

A native of Kansas, Dean Thompson received his AB degree magna cum laude from Harvard College in 1956 and his JD from Harvard Law School in 1960. He attended Magdalen College, Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, receiving a BA degree in 1958 and a MA degree in Law (with honors) in 1962. While at Oxford he continued to excel as a fencer, a sport in which he had earned all-Ivy League honors, and is an Oxford Fencing Blue.

Dean Thompson's career in legal education has been unusually varied, as well as distinguished. Upon receiving his law degree he joined the Ford Foundation as a program officer for the Near East and Africa, thereby beginning a twelve year period of research and teaching in African Law. Between 1961 and 1973 he taught on the law faculties of the University of Khartoum and the University of Zambia and, from 1969 to 1973 served as Dean of the School of Law at Haile Sellassie I University in Ethiopia. From 1961-65 he was Director of the Sudan Law Project, a major effort to collect, organize and assess everything that could be found that would throw light on Sudanese law. His three volume *The Land Law of the Sudan* (1965, reprinted 1969) remains the basic work on the subject. In July of this year he returned to the Sudan as a Senior Fulbright Scholar.

In 1973 Thompson returned to this country, accepting a position as Professor of Law at Southern Methodist University. In 1977 he went to the University of Hawaii Law School as Dean and Professor of Law. A year later he joined the University of Idaho as Dean of the Law School.

Dean Thompson's teaching and academic interests include property, contracts and evidence, as well as African law and law and society. Married, he and his wife, Judith, have four children.

FROM THE DEAN

The Law School has an outstanding reputation nationally, and as a newcomer I have been pleased to discover so many of the specifics which create the favorable impression. At the same time, I have become more aware of difficulties facing the school, especially financial, which encouraged me, when I was a candidate for dean, to think that it would be an exciting and challenging task.

Ultimately, I believe the reputation of a law school turns on the performance of its graduates and the contributions of its faculty. If so, both the cause of our eminence and the key to its continuance are clear. Because the faculty makes rigorous demands on highly qualified students, our graduates will continue to provide professional service which benefits the public and brings credit to their university. The faculty's depth of expertise and the breadth of their contributions to scholarship and public service are breathtaking.

I am honored to have a role in helping to maintain the record that the Law School has established. In later editions of the Gargoyle, we will share with you specifics of this record, and the ways in which it is being continued. To the maintenance of our tradition, I want to assist in providing a momentum which will generate our full potential. One of my first priorities has been to become well enough informed to have sensible priorities. That process continues. I have enjoyed and benefited from meetings with our graduates, and I look forward to many more meetings.

Presently we are preparing information for the Governor's Commission which is addressing the competitive salary problem the University faces in recruiting and retaining top faculty. We hope the state will be responsive to this serious need. Even if the situation improves, it is clear that public law schools which aspire to the highest rank must also have private con-

tribtions to achieve a margin of excellence. I am heartened that the Law School started a capital campaign last year, and that it is doing well. My mood as I begin is optimistic and in part it is because I believe you will give what is needed: your advice and your support.

— Cliff F. Thompson