

Dean Thompson Resigns

Editor's note: Perhaps by now you have heard the sad news that Dean Thompson will step down as dean next summer. He stunned the faculty on 5 October 1989 with his surprise announcement following a "State of the Law School" talk. The faculty's first question was, "Are you serious?", and then suggested that they might not accept the resignation. What follows is the text of the press release issued by the University.

Law School Dean Cliff Thompson announced his resignation on 5 October, saying "new blood" was needed during a new phase of development at the school he had worked hard to improve.

Thompson, 55, assumed the post in August, 1983. His term was marked by accomplishments in a host of areas, including faculty compensation and recruitment, private financial support, and planning for future building needs.

Thompson will serve through next summer and then take a sabbatical leave. He intends to return to the Law faculty, specializing in property and contracts law, and Third World developments.

"All the things I identified to accomplish when I started have been pretty well fulfilled with the support of the chancellor, faculty, students and alumni," he said. "It became clear to me that the Law School was entering another phase, which includes the beginning of a new capital campaign and the final drive to achieve a new building addition. That's the time when you need a new person at the helm."

Added UW-Madison Chancellor Donna E. Shalala: "Cliff Thompson has served this University with distinction, and the Law School made great strides under his leadership. We're sorry to see him step down, but at the same time we are grateful for the solid footing he established for the school."

During Thompson's tenure, faculty retention became a high priority for the Law School, which in the past had a policy of not making counteroffers to faculty being courted by other institutions. Changing that policy, along with judicious distribution of catch-up pay, helped the School fend off numerous offers from other leading law schools, Thompson said.

As a result, Law School faculty salaries, which were at the bottom of the Big Ten when Thompson became dean, are now "significantly improved, in comparison with both the Big Ten and the rest of the nation," he said.

The School also gained in recruitment, particularly of minority faculty. In January, the Society of American Law Teachers recognized the UW Law School with its annual award for "genuine commitment to affirmative action" in faculty hiring.

In an era of scarce resources, the Law School raised over \$6 million during an endowment fund drive that originally had a goal of \$3 million. Alumni annual gift-giving, which had been about \$75,000 per year, has more than doubled during Thompson's term as dean.

A major reason for the success was Thompson's per-

sonal commitment to the Law School alumni association, said John Skilton, 1988-89 chairman of the School's Board of Visitors.

"Cliff has done a very good job of bringing alumni into the Law School," he said. "He enthusiastically became a part of the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association, and he took a very personal approach in his dealings with alumni.

"These kinds of day-to-day things were a trademark of his. I believe that, because of his work, alumni organizations will be able to contribute even more in the future."

Soon after taking office, Thompson recognized that space needs were becoming critical at the Law School building, which was constructed to accommodate about 650 students, but which served about 900 since 1975. A consensus has been reached with Law School faculty on a building plan to add the needed space to the facility while improving functional and aesthetic qualities.

The project has been given a high priority by campus planners, and Thompson "is hopeful that funding and construction can be achieved within a reasonable period of six to eight years."

Other major accomplishments during his term include: integration of the Law School and UW Extension's Continuing Legal Education Program; student endorsement of a tuition increase to add about \$400,000 a year for Law Library improvements; the recent hiring of a permanent development director to help with annual giving; and the faculty's creation of a new Institute for Legal Studies. Thompson gave high priority to keeping in touch with students, both by informal contacts and by occasionally teaching courses.

"The quality of the Law School has improved considerably over the past six years," said Jeffrey Bartell, president of the Wisconsin Law Alumni Association. It's a tough job in that the dean has a lot of constituencies he must deal with, but perhaps Cliff's most outstanding quality is his ability to understand the objectives and motivations of those constituencies and to try and satisfy them.

"I, like a lot of alumni, will be very sorry to see him go."

Thompson—a Rhodes Scholar, Phi Beta Kappa key-holder and 1982 Distinguished Fulbright Scholar—will spend his sabbatical writing a book on revolution in the Third World. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard College who also won a degree at Oxford University, he has taught in the Sudan, Zambia, Ethiopia, New York, Texas and Hawaii.

Before arriving at UW-Madison, he was dean at the University of Idaho Law School for five years. Before that, he was dean and professor of law at the University of Hawaii.

He will continue as dean of the Law School through the summer of 1990.