

*"The Ideal Place ... for the Establishment of a Great Law School": History of Washburn Law School, 1903-2003* (preface only)

by James M. Concannon.

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## PREFACE

Books commonly are published to celebrate the centennial of an institution. I was the logical person to write that book about Washburn Law School. I learned much about its history during my years on the faculty and thirteen years as Dean. In addition, research for my article about other law schools of early day Kansas broadened my understanding of the legal profession and legal education in Kansas near the time the Law School opened. Still, this project has taken far longer than I anticipated, and I am amazed how much of this history I did not know.

A history of the Law School was written more than forty years ago by Ellen Sue McLane, a non-lawyer staff member for the Washburn Alumni Association. It was published as a special issue of the University's alumni magazine, *The Washburn Alumnus*, in September 1969, coinciding with the dedication of the new law building constructed after the 1966 tornado. Its title was "A Home at Last: A History of Washburn School of Law." It was only seventeen pages long, including many photographs. Thus, it was short on detail and it emphasized the positive. It is clear from the text that Ms. McLane solicited written recollections from graduates of early classes and may have interviewed some of them personally. Efforts to locate the source materials Ms. McLane compiled have failed. Sadly, they likely were not preserved.

There are many wonderful stories here that will make Law School graduates proud of their school and help faculty members, present and future, appreciate what a unique institution it is. However, this book is not a selective puff piece that focuses only on the school's successes. Times of struggle and times when the school's survival was in doubt are integral to its history. I have attempted to tell the full story, challenges and all. Of course, there are a few stories that prudence dictates not be told yet, but there aren't many. I urge readers who

know stories that should be in this book but are not to send them to me so they can be included in a subsequent history of the school.

I was a member of the faculty for the last thirty of the school's first 100 years. The chapters covering those years are longer than earlier chapters, in part because I was a witness to many of the events I describe but also because we had so many more students and so many more faculty members doing so much more than in earlier years.

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Any profits from this book will go to the Washburn University School of Law Alumni Association for the benefit of the school and I thank the alumni Board of Governors for underwriting publication costs.

Chapter 1 reprints, with minor modifications, my article about the early years of the Law School in the Centennial Issue of the *Washburn Law Journal*. Unless noted otherwise, unpublished material cited in the footnotes is on file at Washburn Law Library or in administrative files of Washburn Law School.

James M. Concannon  
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