History of New Jersey Law School

The turn of the century found men aspiring to membership in the New Jersey bar either "reading law" in the offices of members of the New Jersey bar, or attending law schools in other states. The need of a New Jersey Law School teaching New Jersey law was obvious.

Realizing the value of such an institution, a little group of men headed by President Currier and the late Dean Mason founded the first law school in New Jersey, and fittingly called it New Jersey Law School.

The beginnings were modest. The first site of the New Jersey Law School comprised a single room in the Prudential Building, where, on October 4, 1908, the opening class of thirty members assembled. At that time only three years of high school work, or its equivalent, were prerequisite to admission, and only two years were required to complete the course and receive the L.L.B. degree.

In 1908, the State of New Jersey duly chartered the college, its corporate purpose being, "to maintain and operate, a law school and establish and maintain a library and to publish books.".

In 1909, The State Board of Bar Examiners officially recognized this institution as a law school of "established reputation" in accordance with the rules of the Supreme Court of this State.

It was provided in the Laws of 1912 that no degree should "hereafter be granted by any institution of learning within the State, without the approval of the State Board of Education." New Jersey Law School was immediately granted this approval. Thereafter, the course was extended to three years, and the entrance prerequisite raised to four years of high school work. In 1927, entrance requirements were raised to one year's attendance at a recognized college, and in 1928, this prerequisite was raised to two years. In keeping with its continued academic advancement, the Law School, in 1927, pursuant to permission of the State Board of Education, granted the degree of Master of Laws. In 1932, plans were approved for the maintenance of a regular graduate course.

During 1908, the school purchased an old house at 33 East Park Street. It marked the beginning of a succession of new buildings and additions. In 1915, it acquired title to 35 East Park Street, and thereupon, in 1924, erected a building of graceful Gothic architecture. The property adjoining was also purchased, and it later housed the School's law library. These buildings comprised the home of New Jersey Law School until 1918.

In 1927, the School purchased the Ballantine Building, at 40 Rector Street, this building becoming the seat of the pre-law and the affiliate schools, The Seth Boyden School of Business, and Dana College. After extensive alterations, on June 15, 1930, New Jersey Law School moved into its present quarters, where it proudly remains.

Our Alma Mater has judiciously grown from a body of thirty students, in 1908, to over six hundred in 1930. May she continue to grow and to prosper. And may she stir in the hearts of those who are to follow, the same feeling of gratitude and appreciation that she has stirred in us. In all her efforts to mould finer characters and better lawyers, we wish her Godspeed.