Historical Background

Rutgers University Law School received its first class in 1939 when it was founded by Richard Currer as the New Jersey Law School. Greatly assisting the founder were Charles G. Barnard and Charles M. Mason. The latter held the office of Dean from 1910 to 1927. In 1959, the Law School was recognized by the Board of Bar Examiners, and in 1912, permission to grant the L.L.B. degree was given.

Nineteen hundred and twenty-six was the year of another significant milestone in the history of the school. In that year, the Mercers Merchants Law School was founded by Stanley Fraser. In 1927, this school was the third largest law school in the country with an enrollment of 2,335 students. Mercer Bensley and the New Jersey Law School merged in 1935, and Mr. Fraser assumed the office of Dean.

At a meeting in downtown Newark in 1935, representatives of five schools met and established the University of Newark. The participating schools included New Jersey Law School, Mercer Bensley Law School, Dana College, Newark University and Seth Boyden School of Business Administration. The first class was graduated in 1937.

In 1941, after continued expansion, the Law School was accredited by the American Bar Association. Dean George S. Harris guided the Law School through these formative years.

The Law School, in 1946, became a part of Rutgers University. This merger brought the well-established Law School into the fold of one of the oldest universities in America, Queens College, now Rutgers University, was founded in 1766. Finally, in 1948, the State University was created by the Legislature of New Jersey and the Board of Trustees of Rutgers University. The State, acting through its Board of Education, has increased its participation in the operation of the University.

growth. From the date of its founding, the School has never relaxed in its efforts to better itself through constant change and improvement. Its history is rich in the spirit and courage that are typical of the American educational system. Rutgers University School of Law stands today well staffed and completely capable of training young men in the honored profession of the law. The recently inaugurated program of legal aid to indigent criminals has brought the Law School into closer working cooperation with the Bench and Bar, as well as the people of the state.

In the post-war years, the Law School has achieved wide recognition through its service and contributions to the public and the legal profession. There are currently enrolled in the Law School about 600 students who are receiving a legal education that ranks high by academic standards.

In 1950, the Board of Trustees of Rutgers University appointed Alfred C. Clopp Dean of the Law School to succeed the retiring Dean Harris. The history of the Law School is one that reflects initiative and imagination on the part of those who have assisted in its