Dean Cramton and Cornell Law School

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Few deans in the history of legal education have made greater contributions to their law schools than Dean Roger C. Cramton. During his seven year tenure beginning July 1, 1973 and ending on July 1, 1980, he sought to advance his institution with unflagging energy and discerning wisdom.

The Cramton deanship was a period of renewal. A large number of faculty retired. Under the Dean's leadership, there were eighteen new appointments and the size of the faculty grew from twenty-three to thirty-one. Today, Cornell's young faculty ranks among the most promising in the nation. The school's interdisciplinary contingent is outstanding and includes a philosopher, an economist, a sociologist, and an appointee with primary interest in history.

The faculty has become more visible and the school's reputation has grown accordingly. The Cornell faculty has long been a leader in producing casebooks and other teaching materials. But in the 1970s there was a substantial redirection of effort. Professors authored many more scholarly articles than before. Indeed, seven of the nine leading articles in one recent volume of the Cornell Law Review were by Cornell authors, far more than in any prior year in the Review's history. At the same time, the faculty published widely in other prestigious journals. Cornell professors also delivered dozens of lectures during these years at other universities, before judicial conferences and seminars, and at bar and other gatherings. At the same time, the faculty was more active in the service of government, local, state, and national, than in any prior period. Indeed, during one stretch, Cornell professors

served as chairman of the board of directors of the U.S. Legal Services Corporation, assistant attorney general in charge of the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, chief counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations of the U.S. House of Representatives, chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States, and chief counsel and director of the securities industry study of the Securities Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Banking Committee.

In all the foregoing fields of endeavor, Dean Cramton was participant as well as facilitator. Himself a distinguished scholar of the conflict of laws and administrative law, he wrote several articles during his deanship, including two that are among the most widely noted in the contemporary literature on legal education. And it was he who headed the board of the Legal Services Corporation. Among the many speeches and other presentations he gave away from Ithaca, a good number were annual university lectureships.

The Dean believed in facilitating research as few deans have. Unlike deans at nearly all sister institutions, Dean Cramton granted research leaves in addition to sabbaticals. He arranged reduced teaching loads for individuals who were finishing research projects. He introduced summer research awards and in his last year as dean, he increased both the size and number of these awards. He enlarged the individual research budgets of faculty members. He procured special resources for the library—including large new holdings in the field of legal history. He re-established the research character of an endowed chair originally founded primarily for that purpose. Only after his arrival did the faculty acquire a coffee lounge in which to jaw and to joust. Soon after the lounge opened, all books authored by the faculty appeared on these shelves.

During the Dean's tenure, the law school atmosphere became an increasingly stimulating one in which to discuss ideas, pursue research and to write. Early in his deanship, a regular research seminar was launched in which professors reported on work in progress and received constructive criticism. A separate workshop on law and economics was set up and met regularly to hear the presentation of papers, mainly by economists. The faculty also began meeting on Mondays for lunch during which faculty and guests spoke on diverse topics. The number of annual lectureships at the school was increased. So, too, the number and diversity of ad hoc guest lecturers.
It is fair to say that during some semesters Myron Taylor Hall was virtually inundated with ideas generated from within and without. Guests of the school included the philosophers John Rawls, Bernard Williams, Martin Golding, John Mackie, and Ronald Dworkin (himself an Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell), economists Kenneth Boulding, Peter Steiner, and Amartya Sen, and political theorists Roland Pennock and Theodore Lowi.

A number of Justices of the United States Supreme Court were guests of the school: Potter Stewart, Harry Blackmun, William Rehnquist, Byron White, and Thurgood Marshall. In addition, a great many other federal and state judges visited the school, including Joseph Sneed, Edward Weinfeld, Ellsworth Van Graafeiland, David Bazelon, Joseph Tauro, Clement Haynsworth, Thomas Fairchild, Leon Higginbotham, Robert Boochever, Aubrey Robinson, Charles Breitel, James Oakes, Clarence Newcomer, Edmund Port, Henry Friendly, Elbert Tuttle, Constance Baker Motley, and the late Harold Leventhal. Many distinguished legal educators were guests, including Erwin Griswold, Maurice Rosenberg, Willard Hurst, Peter Stein, Andrew Watson, Guido Calabresi, Donald Harris, Norval Morris, William Baxter, A.M. Honore, Kenneth Jones, Theodore St. Antoine, Patrick Atiyah, Philip Kurland, Geoffrey Hazard, William Twining, and John Ely.

Of course, special funding is essential to progress. Dean Cramton took a strong interest in financing the school. During his tenure, the law fund increased from about $336,000 in 1972-73 to over $500,000 in 1979-80. He also had a large role in securing new endowed chairs, including the Samuel S. Leibowitz Professorship of Law, the Frank B. Ingersoll Professorship of Law, the A. Robert Noll chair, and the Henry Allen Mark Professorship of Law.

The Dean's hand touched every facet of student life. He studied the admissions process with care, and uncovered strong evidence that the school was placing too much emphasis on the LSAT in making admissions decisions. A change was made. The growth of the faculty under his deanship greatly enriched the curriculum and the range of student electives. Efforts were made to provide placement opportunities on an unprecedented scale. Indeed, in 1979-80 over 280 firms and other employers visited the school. The number of judicial clerkships awarded to Cornell students increased dramatically, a matter in which the Dean took special interest. In 1978-79, twenty-nine students (of a class of
156) received clerkships, including several with federal court of appeals judges, and one with a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The various student organizations were beneficiaries as well. The Dean not only contributed to the *Cornell Law Review* himself but cooperated in many ways to help the Review secure outstanding manuscripts from Cornell law professors, from visiting lecturers, and from other sources. He similarly supported the *International Law Journal*. The Moot Court Board for the first time in a long while could look forward annually to a final bench presided over by a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The Legal Aid Society and the clinical staff received a large shot in the arm. The staff itself increased four-fold. The Dean was responsive to such organizations as the Women's Law Coalition, the Black Law Caucus, and the International Law Society. During his leadership, the functions of the Cornell Law Student Association grew and so, too, did the annual social calendar for law students (especially during the winter months).

Dean Cramton thought the rest of the world should know of events in Ithaca. To this end, he encouraged the faculty to respond to invitations, especially from alumni, to speak at annual luncheons and dinners in all parts of the country. He himself made many speeches elsewhere about the school and its life, sometimes as many as four or five a month. He also took keen interest in the *Cornell Law Forum* and facilitated the efforts of its editor and staff in important ways. (Indeed, it was only under his administration that the *Forum* became a faculty-edited publication).

The life of a law school dean is demanding, frustrating, and even lonely. He must often perform beyond the call of duty, yet away from view. Partly because of this, his efforts tend to be taken for granted in many quarters. And there will be some who do not consistently respond even to the best that the best deans offer. Roger Cramton bore these inevitable decanal burdens with good cheer and only rare complaint. He brought extraordinary zeal, firm dedication, lively imagination, high intelligence, and deep institutional loyalty to his task. The eleventh deanship of the Cornell Law School is certain to be remembered as singular in impact and distinctive in achievement.