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Montana State University Law School annual report

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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The Montana State University Law School opened and closed the school year with major events that set the tone for activities covered in Dean Robert E. Sullivan's annual report to the president of the University. The report, reviewing achievements of the past year and previewing plans for observance of the school's 50th anniversary in 1961, is published in the July issue of the Law School News.

The year was launched with an accreditation survey conducted for the Association of American Law Schools by Dean William Lockhart of the University of Minnesota Law School. Dean Lockhart found that, considering the limited resources available, the Law School "has been doing an outstandingly good job."

The year culminated in approval by the Board of Regents of plans for a new law building to replace the present antiquated, cramped quarters. Ground was broken for the new structure July 1, with the target date for completion set for the fall of 1961, to coincide with the school's golden anniversary. The new physical facilities will meet what recent accreditation reports have called the school's greatest need.

A milestone noted in Dean Sullivan's report is the inauguration in April of the Law School Development Fund. The primary goal of the fund for 1960-61 will be the equipping of the new law building. Long-range objectives include scholarship aid, additions to the Law Library collection, research funds and endowed professorships. The school's board of visitors, made up of Montana attorneys, will start soliciting contributions to the fund this fall.

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Another highlight of the year was the adoption by the Montana Bar Association of a resolution authorizing negotiation with the New York Life Insurance Co. for a group insurance plan for MBA members, with a provision for payment of any return of premium or dividends to the MSU Law School for financial assistance to students.

The report cites statistics showing that the school's selective admission process continues to be effective in holding dropouts to a minimum and explains new academic rules that will exclude poor students at the end of the first year of law study instead of the second.

The document comments on the contributions to the school's progress made by the board of visitors and alumni. It notes the addition of 793 volumes to the Law Library, including substantial gifts from Sen. Mike Mansfield, Orville Gray, Jewell & Root, and Judge W. D. Murray.

Other aspects of the Law School's operation dealt with in the report include the placement program (all graduates placed), relations with the profession (tax school, water resources conference, faculty cooperation with the profession in research projects), and student activities.

Dean Sullivan's report concludes with a plea for public understanding of the Law School's program and problems and alludes to Dean Lockhart's observation that the school will not be adequately financed "until those who provide its funds can be made to understand that a satisfactory professional education can only be provided at a cost substantially higher than undergraduate, college education."

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