

Remarks of Professor Thomas Golden

Dedication of Thomas Jefferson School of Law February 7, 2013

In thinking about the dedication of our law school family's new home, I cannot help but reflect on the transition from our former home.

At our Old Town location we experienced incredible growth.

We went from being a California state and Western Association of Schools and Colleges accredited law school whose students were mostly part-time and mostly from San Diego County to an ABA accredited and Association of American Law Schools member school whose students came from every state and even other nations, and kept getting younger all the time.

We went from occupying less than two floors of a three story building to occupying that entire building, then the building across the street, and then the one next door. We grew to the point that our presence was burdening the neighborhood. With the law school building we dedicate today we have transitioned from being a burden to being a contributor to San Diego's downtown redevelopment at its current epicenter – the East Village district.

Students, faculty, and staff no longer have to cross a busy street to get to or from a class or meeting, instead incurring only the risk of an elevator ride. We now hear the pleasant elevator voice instruct to stand clear of the closing doors instead of an angry motorist shouting to get the hell out of the street.

When the school reduced its physical footprint from three buildings to one, it also reduced its ecological footprint. From the generation of electricity on our roof, to water efficient landscaping, to access to public transportation on the ground we are now less of a burden on the environment and have been recognized for, among many other things, our energy efficiency and use of sustainable resources.

Our beautiful new home goes beyond the school's own history and reflects hundreds of thousands of years of the history of the land itself, both in materials and nomenclature. Sea shells now visible in the floor were discovered in the strata of earth during excavation, as were the remains of three prehistoric beasts: a mammoth, a whale, and a sloth. I recall driving down through the parking levels of the building for the first time, going through the mammoth level, then the whale level, and feeling tremendous relief when parking level 3 turned out to be labeled "shell" and not "sloth." Thank God for those prehistoric mollusks!

The state of the art technology in our new home not only contributes to efficiencies in classroom teaching and legal scholarship, but has assisted in Thomas Jefferson School of Law's being at the forefront in distance learning. And just as distance learning enables the school to operate globally, we have also reached out in other ways to the rest of the world. Our residential LL.M. programs have brought students from distant nations, contributing not only to their education, but to the rich cultural diversity of our campus. And since moving to our new home we have expanded our international programs and outreach beyond Europe and Asia to include South America, where our relationship with both governmental and educational institutions in Brazil is already well underway.

Many lawyers will tell you that the practice of law would be much more pleasant if it did not require clients. That is one of the things that makes being a law professor such a great job. We get to jump

into the law and speculate about problems of our own hypothetical creation without a lot of the messiness with which other lawyers must deal. And just as those lawyers would also tell you that the practice is more effective when the surroundings are comfortable and the necessary resources are close at hand, we find being professors the more effective because our new home provides those things.

When I look at my faculty colleagues who rose earlier, I firmly believe that any of us could and would teach in a cornfield if called on. But our jobs are more pleasant, and hopefully more productive in terms of what we contribute to the future lawyers who cross our paths and to the legal profession on the whole, as a result the new home of Thomas Jefferson School of Law that we dedicate today.

