3-1976

A Brief History of the University of Baltimore, Our School

James F. Schneider

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/lf

Part of the Law Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/lf/vol6/iss3/9
expresses the components of asocial existence: historical rootlessness, lack of respect, self-alienation, material alienation, self-affirmation through physical violence, survival by force and fraud, and despair. How did Hobbes express it? “In such condition, there is no place for industry...and which is the worst of all, continual fear of danger and violent death; and the life of humans solitary, brutish, poor, nasty and short.” (Leviathan)

The purpose of these reflections was to expose the relationship between criminal actions as perpetrated by individuals and society. In fact, every action is an action of an individual. However, the individual exists from its very beginning as a social individual. Thus, the absence or presence of a habitat where this dimension can be lived out is of vital importance to the way in which human existence realizes itself.

A Brief History of the University of Baltimore

by James F. Schneider

For as many years as there has been a University of Baltimore, there has been a University of Baltimore School of Law. The law school and a business school were founded together in the summer of 1925 to fill a widespread public demand for a quality professional education.

The establishment of the University came in response to actions taken by already-existing institutions of higher education in the Baltimore area. In the middle 1920’s, the University of Maryland lengthened its evening law program to four years and began to require two years of college as a prerequisite to law school; Johns Hopkins added two years to its Commerce School course. Rising standards of admission meant that many competent people would be prevented from obtaining a legal or business education.

These changes seemed entirely unnecessary at a time when the only requirements for admission to the bar were a high school diploma and a law degree; many practical members of the legal and business communities refused to accept the changes.

A meeting of indignant citizens was called in June 1925 at the University Club at Charles and Madison Streets by Dr. Maynard A. Clemens (1879-1961), an innovative leader of higher education in Maryland who had already found the Baltimore College of Commerce, and the College of Commerce at the University of Maryland, and who would in the future found Eastern College (1928) and the Mount Vernon School of Law (1935), to decide what should be done. Among others at the meeting were Eugene A. Edgett, Assistant State’s Attorney for Baltimore City; Clarence W. Miles, Peoples Counsel; and Howell A. King, then associated with the School of Business Administration at the University of Maryland. A decision was reached to found the University of Baltimore to satisfy the need for a downtown law and business school where young men and women could receive a practical education without frills and their resultant expense. In August 1925, the University was granted its corporate charter by the State of Maryland.

Charles W. Heuisler, a seventy-years old Judge who had retired from the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City the previous November, agreed to serve as the first Dean of the law school. A law faculty of competent career lawyers who could teach in the evenings was constructed.

The first location chosen for the school was on the southeast corner of St. Paul Street and Mount Vernon Place. The first classes of the University of Baltimore began there on October 1, 1925, for sixty-two law students and one hundred and fourteen business students.

The first class of thirty-eight law stu-

MARCH, 1976
April 1947. The building, now known as Charles Hall, was built in 1904. Once renovated, it provided needed offices, classrooms and recreational areas. In 1952, the University purchased a forty-five acre campus, located in Mount Washington, from St. Paul’s School for Boys. The area became the center of athletics at the University of Baltimore.

The corner property adjacent to Charles Hall was purchased in 1959, and the two-story structure already existing there was enlarged to four stories. Completed in August 1961, the new building housed the library, administrative offices and classrooms. The fall of 1961 saw the introduction of the College of Liberal Arts. With those accomplishments, President Wilson retired after more than twenty years of service, and was succeeded by Wilmer DeHuff, former principal of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.

The University of Baltimore was first founded, national accreditation did not seem too important; he school fulfilled its role as a place where employed persons could get an education and maintain their employment. But in forty years, ideas changed, and the prestige attached to accreditation could not be overlooked. Dr. Thomas G. Pullen, former head of the Maryland State Department of Education, assumed the Presidency of the University in 1964, and the Board of Trustees backed him up on a drive toward accreditation. Dr. F. D. Ribble, Dean of the University of Virginia Law School sent their law librarian, Miss Frances Farmer, to the University of Baltimore to evaluate the law library and point out areas of needed improvement. Upon her recommendations, the Board of Trustees spent $25,000 to bring the library up to American Bar Association standards.

In 1964, the University acquired property on the corner of Maryland Avenue and Oliver Street for the site of a new library. Completed in April 1966, at a cost of more than $2 million, the library was named for R. Loran Langsdale, the last surviving member of the original Board of Trustees. The undergraduate school petitioned for regional accreditation and became a recognized candidate for approval in December 1967.

In the Spring of 1969, the University purchased the former site of Kelly Buick Motor Sales. Built in 1906, the building was designed by Clyde Fiz, designer of the Central Branch of the Pratt Library and the Standard Oil Building at Preston Gardens. The northeast corner of Maryland and Mt. Royal Avenues was acquired at the same time. “By 1980,” Dr. Pullen predicted, “this entire section of the city could be one of the state’s largest and most vital cultural and educational centers” Renovation of the Kelly Building, known as the “Academic Center,” was completed in time for fall 1971 classes and the visitation of an accreditation team from the Middle Atlantic States Association and the American Bar Association.

Upon the retirement of Dr. Pullen in November 1969, H. Mebane Turner (1931– ), former provost of the University, became President. Several months earlier, Joseph Curtis (1914– ), former Dean of the Marshall-Whyte School of Law at the College of William and Mary, took office as the first full-time Dean of the Law School. With the addition of a three-year day law program and the extension of the evening law program from three to four years, chances for ABA approval were enhanced. In September 1970, the University of Baltimore merged with Mt. Vernon School of Law and its parent institution, Eastern College.