center at 63rd and Kimbark. A portion of Mandel's donation was earmarked for more permanent room in the recently announced new University of Chicago Law School building on 60th Street.

Henry J. Kaganiec, an attorney at the Legal Aid Bureau's Woodlawrn branch, was named the first official director, a position he held for the next ten years. A. Conrad Olson Jr. '58, a third-year student from Ohio, served as chairman of the student committee that facilitated the legal aid work of a reported forty-seven students that year. The faculty committee consisted of professors Nicholas Katzenbach, Wilber Katz, and Francis Allen; Alex Elson '28 served as the committee's special advisor on operations and development.

Those early years have been described by more than one participant as "slightly chaotic" with only one lawyer to work with the nearly fifty students packed into the Woodlawn offices. When the new Law School building was completed, the operation moved into the space that currently serves as the Clinic's reception/secretarial area and front offices. Even from this location, the Clinic remained a neighborhood branch of the Legal Aid Bureau, with the Law School providing the facility.

Kaganiec left in 1968, and Phillip H. Ginsberg was named an assistant professor of law at the Law School and director of the Clinic. Then in 1970, when Ginsberg left, the Law School turned to Gary Palm.

"I was only supposed to be here for two years," Palm says. "But they kept inviting me back."

Those two years grew to twenty-one. Under Palm's leadership, the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic transformed from an extra-curricular activity to a core for credit.

When I first started, we were a neighborhood law office," Palm recalls. "We were involved in quite a wide variety of cases and we realized rather quickly that the law was becoming more complex in areas that affected poor people. In turn, our students were getting spread too thin. They were not making the kind of tough rigorous analysis that we wanted to teach them. So, we instituted a two-year program allowing them to focus in on one area of the law. The result was that when the Clinic began to specialize we were no longer a neighborhood office, but then we began to get referrals from attorneys around the city."

"Gary Palm deserves a great deal of the
mentally ill in state institutions and fought to ensure their access to benefits. They have, with the aid of social work students, provided legal and social services to the chronically mentally ill. They fought to defend people who could not get an attorney for criminal appeals. They fought for tenants’ rights. They fought for decent living conditions in public housing. They represented people who were discriminated against in their employment when they could not afford high retainer fees by independent attorneys. They have not won every battle, but the fight goes on each year.

Students, supervised by staff attorneys, oversee cases from start to finish. They get intensive training on criminal and civil procedures that go beyond the classroom, and they learn—by doing—what they need to do to provide comprehensive representation for real clients, which is something most attorneys learn on the job after law school.

They also learn about the difficulties of daily life for people living in poverty. Many of the students have to learn how to get in touch with clients who do not have phones, who may not have a permanent home, or who may move often.

**a special place for students**

Like Schmidt, many students at the Law School feel strongly about both connecting their classroom education with real experience and helping people in the community.

Mark Ter Molen ’87, for one, worked at the Mandel Clinic and gained a perspective that has shaped his career. Today, Ter Molen is an associate with Mayer, Brown & Platt in Chicago. He recently represented one of four men who were released this year after spending up to eighteen years in prison for a double murder they did not commit. He worked with his client, Vernell Jimerson—who was living on death row—to exonerate him in the 1974 murders of Lawrence Lionberg and Carol Schmal in Ford Heights, Illinois.

Ter Molen became involved in Jimerson’s case at the request of Albert Alschuler, Wilson-Dickinson Professor of Law and an expert in criminal law. Alschuler said he called Ter Molen because he had been a strong student who was interested in such criminal justice issues. In fact, Ter Molen had worked on an independent study project while studying with Alschuler. Ter Molen exhibits the enthusiasm that clinical education nurtures in its students, Alschuler says.

“There is a lot of value in clinical work for students,” Alschuler says. “Clinical work bridges the gap between practice and what happens in the classroom. I have kids in my class who will talk about the cases they have in the Clinic. They bring more to the classroom and they can see that what they’re learning in class does have relevance to practice. Participating in clinic programs allows you both to be engaged in the practice of law and to have time to reflect on it and see how it connects to what you’re learning in class.”

Ter Molen said he was surprised by Alschuler’s call. “He called out of the blue. He said: ‘I want you to save a life.’”

For the next five years, Ter Molen dedicated his efforts to a man who faced death for a murder he did not commit. It was a persistence that eventually paid off. On June 24, 1996, Ter Molen saw all charges against his client formally dismissed. It was a victory that had called for all the skills he acquired while working at the Mandel Clinic, primarily in efforts to permit low-income people acquire increased access to public utilities.

“Working in the Clinic, we got to know the people and really understand how they thought and what their lives were like,” Ter Molen says. “That’s important for everyone to know—not just lawyers. Most people hear about low-income people through stereotypes. Real life is just so different and it’s important to know what reality is.”

Ter Molen says he chose the University of Chicago Law School because, in part, it had a strong clinical program and was in a city where there was a variety of issues coming up for clients.

“The Clinic is pretty much what got me through law school,” he says. “I knew I’d be bored to death just studying for three years. I wanted to work and put it all together with the book learning and the practice. That’s exactly the way it turned out. It was a lot of fun.”

And a lot of experience. Before leaving law school, he learned how to prepare briefs, interview clients and argue in front of hearing officers. All these skills have been crucial in his professional career as a litigator.

For the case. I had the opportunity to draft various legal documents such as our response to a summary judgment motion and a pre-trial brief. Moreover, I had the opportunity to wrestle with several challenging legal and factual issues, such as questions of qualified immunity and municipal liability.

After more than five years of litigation, we finally had a trial date of September 1995. Randy had told me that I would try the case. Although the prospect of trying a case in federal court was daunting, I felt ready to accept the challenge. After so much work on this case, it seemed only right that I would watch the case come to fruition in my final year of law school.

In the spring of 1995, the federal government took over the CHA, and within days, we received a reasonable settlement offer that our client accepted. I had lost my opportunity to try the case. It had been hotly contested for more than six years, and it ended within a matter of days. Yet, despite its anti-climactic ending, my experience with this case had taught me more than any law school course. Most importantly, I think, the experience taught me the fundamental lesson that working in the law requires one to expect the unexpected.

**genito robinson ’96**

I often question my effectiveness as a student-attorney and the effectiveness of the Clinic as a whole. Are the other students and I actually capable of providing competent legal assistance? Prior to my first year of law school, I do not remember ever stepping foot into a courtroom. Clients, however, trust me and other students with similar backgrounds to handle their most difficult legal problems.

A Clinic attorney once explained to me that she had faith in the legal system because students make up in energy and enthusiasm what they lack in experience. Although I often have my doubts, a former case makes me inclined to agree.

In re ES was my first case assignment. ES was a fourteen-year-old girl charged with the murder of a twenty-three-month-old baby whom she had been babysitting. If she had been found guilty, ES could have been incarcerated until she reached the age of twenty-one. While I do not question the capabilities of public defenders in the abstract, I cannot imagine what would have happened to ES if her attorney represented one hundred additional clients. In the end, student energy and enthusiasm acquitted ES.

ES was held in custody for the one year between the actual incident and trial. During that one year, the presiding judge set the case for trial three times. Law students not only insured that various witnesses continued to show up for the new trials, but we also continued to actively investigate the case prior to each new trial date. I am unsure if a public defender would have had the time or desire to continue investigating a case which she had already prepared for trial. Through continued investigation, we were able to locate ES’s brother. This brother corroborated ES’s testimony that another...
a chance to grow

Since the early days, the Mandel Clinic has grown more adept and more stable. For example, until the past few years, staff attorney positions changed frequently and many attorneys sometimes felt detached from the Law School faculty. Recently, the Law School created ‘clinical faculty’ positions that have caused people like Palm and Schmidt to stay with the program and the students. These clinical faculty members specialize; for example, Palm focuses on anti-poverty projects, Schmidt on employment discrimination, Mark Heyrman on the Mental Health Project, and Stone on criminal defense work.

The number of students participating in the clinic work has gradually increased over the years, while specially funded projects have come and gone. Those involved with the Clinic hope that the expansion of the building will allow more students to participate. This is particularly important now because the Clinic has seen grants from the federal government and other sectors discontinued in the past year—and the Law School is having trouble finding new sources of funding to keep the program at its current size. Randolph Stone says over the past two years, the Clinic was unable to replace two attorneys who left. As a result, twenty fewer students will be able to participate this year. That's a severe loss for both for the student and the community.

Ter Molen hopes more funds will soon become available. “It's something that I hope all law students have a chance to do,” he says. “I hope both the Clinic alumni and other graduates come through with support so that all students who want to participate can. It's such a crucial part of the law school experience that it seems wrong to limit the number of people. It's like telling students that they can't take classes like contracts or civil procedure because they're full.”

While Randolph Stone hopes the new building will reinforce the whole point of clinical legal education, he is worried about declining funding for clinic programs as special grants for certain projects dry up.

“It's hard to find funding for programs like criminal justice representation because people accused of crimes, struggling with mental illness, or simply poor, are not popular,” Stone says.

The goal of the Clinic is to merge people's sense of what's right with the experience of law school. This will help make better lawyers, he says, no matter what area of the law they end up practicing.

“An important aspect of the clinical experience is to foster a continuing exploration for the connection between one's sense of values and the practice of law,” Stone says.

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Fall 1996: Members of the faculty and staff of the Mandel Clinic gather with some of the student participants. Each year, demand for student positions at the Clinic is so great that the eighty individuals chosen must be determined by lottery.

brother had regularly beaten the baby and was responsible for the baby's death. Without the brother's testimony, I do believe the judge would have found F.S. guilty.

The success in In re F.S. was not only dependent upon the energy and enthusiasm of law students. While F.S. was in custody, her mother was killed. Through weekly visits, one of the social work students working in the Clinic helped F.S. deal with her grief without acting out in a self-destructive manner. All the students working in the Clinic were responsible for helping F.S. regain her freedom.

adam bonin ’97

My clients sent me Christmas cards. That's when I was sure I was doing something right.

I work in the Anti-Poverty Project at the Clinic under Gary Palm. I started during the summer between my first and second years and have continued to this date. We represent women on welfare, or who have recently left the system, and attempt to secure the child support money owed to them so that they can stay off welfare.

Our opponents are not the deadbeat fathers of their children, but rather the various government agencies charged with protecting their legal rights. In the state of Illinois, the Department of Public Aid and the State’s Attorney’s Office is responsible for tracking down fathers, establishing paternity and favorable support orders, and then ensuring that the support orders are enforced.

Sadly, Illinois ranks forty-ninth of the fifty states in terms of the effectiveness of its child support services. Because of poorly prepared state's attorneys, sloppy record keeping, and bureaucratic incompetence, too many women fall through the cracks and fail to receive the money owed them. We represent these women against the state agencies in order to force them to do their job right, both for our clients and the women and children of Illinois at large. A large part of this involves forcing state compliance with federal regulations with regards to the deadlines by which the state must perform certain tasks in its efforts to obtain child support.

This leads Anti-Poverty students into a variety of forums. I have represented my clients at administrative conferences and argued in front of Public Aid and State's Attorney's Office officials. I go to court with my clients and attempt to work with the attorneys present in order to I have accompanied my clients to welfare offices for intake and procedural interviews.

Each student in the Project participates in direct client representation and works on systemic reform projects. Currently, I am involved with an effort to reform the State's Attorney's Office Division of Child Support Enforcement. We work with the Chicago Council of Lawyers and other reform-minded groups in this attempt to help these single-parent families to support themselves. It has been a long and frustrating process.

Still, I never doubt that I'm doing the right thing, and that my time is well-spent. And I always have my clients' Christmas cards to remind me.