Gary Palm: Ten Years of Success with the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic

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In the relative quiet of the Law School this past summer, Gary Palm, Associate Professor of Law, celebrated his tenth anniversary as Director of the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. Under Mr. Palm's guidance, the Clinic has become a nationally known and respected leader in the field of clinical legal education while at the same time providing sorely needed legal services in Chicago's Woodlawn community. As Mr. Robert B. McKay, Chairman of the Clinical Committee of the A.B.A. Council of the Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, stated in a recent interview, the Mandel Clinic is "considered one of the strongest in terms both of teaching quality and community service." Others obviously agree, as many of Mr. Palm's former students and staff attorneys have gone on to direct clinical programs at other law schools.

The Clinic's outstanding reputation is also reflected by the fact that it recently received a Challenge Grant from the Council on Legal Education for Professional Responsibility (CLEPR), which is the recipient of Ford Foundation funds for the support of clinical legal education. Under the terms of this grant, the Law School will receive $50,000 for the Clinic if the Clinic raises $150,000 by October 1, 1980, a goal which the Law School hopes to reach by early in September. Through its alumni fundraising campaign, which is primarily aimed at recent graduates who participated in the Clinic while at the Law School, the Clinic hopes to attract and maintain a core of donors who can be counted on to provide regular annual support after the matching campaign is concluded.

Although CLEPR has advised Mr. Palm that no other law school has undertaken an alumni fundraising campaign for clinical education, he is confident of its success and the long-range financial stability of the Clinic, even in the face of increased expenses and possible cutbacks in other sources of funding.

The Clinic continues to be extremely popular with the students at the Law School. Of the approximately 160 students in the Class of '82, 116 have applied to participate in the Clinic this year. Unfortunately, the Clinic will only be able to accommodate 40 of them, as well as 40 third-year students, although Mr. Palm expects that normal attrition will allow more to participate eventually. Professor Palm's success in developing a popular clinical legal education program is best demonstrated by the fact that, except for a separate trial practice which he conducts for 36 students each year, students receive no academic credit for the 10 to 20 hours they are expected to devote to the Clinic each week.

Under Mr. Palm's direction, the Clinic has changed greatly in the last few years. The Law School has provided more space for Mr. Palm and his staff, which includes four other attorneys and a social worker. From its originally experimental and uncertain role, the Clinic now occupies an accepted and important place within the Law School community. All of Gary Palm's present and former students join with the Law School in saluting him for his accomplishments over the past ten years.

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