Don Llewellyn and Bruce Rogow, 1978-79

Marc Rohr*
could work out a consensus. This was no easy feat. Larry chose to
downplay or even disregard most interpersonal conflicts, and frequently the
conflict just went away. Larry instituted an “attitude adjustment seminar,”
which turned out to be a cocktail hour or, on one occasion, a wine tasting.
It set the tone that cooperation and respect were to be accorded colleagues,
even colleagues with whom one disagreed strongly. The Nova faculty did
not then, or ever, degenerate into the armed camps which are so common
on law school faculties.
Larry was always a good sport. He never took any of the faculty politics
personally. At least he never let on if he did. He was always kind,
decent, and patient as dean and as colleague. Despite his inexperience with
law schools, Larry somehow kept the ship afloat. He navigated us through
the shoals of the early years and past the reefs of ABA inspections. With
Larry at the helm, we survived.
Just in case we never mentioned it, thanks Larry.

Don Llewellyn and Bruce Rogow, 1978-79

Marc Rohr

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age
of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it
was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the
season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of
despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we
were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

The 1978-79 academic year was all of those things at Nova Law
Center. The University’s financial position was dire, and a substantial
bequest upon which the Law Center was depending had become the subject
of litigation. The faculty became convinced that too high a percentage of
Law Center revenues was being siphoned off by the University, and
relations with the central administration were strained nearly to the breaking
point. Student morale plummeted, and wishful thinking of secession
abounded. We were, in the meantime, still housed, as joint tenants with an
odoriferous science lab, in a temporary structure that we knew would never
be acceptable to the American Bar Association; our building plans, so long
in the making, were scuttled by our fiscal morass.

It was a marvelous time to be alive.

It was against (and largely because of) this background that Professors
Don Llewellyn and Bruce Rogow rose to the positions of “Acting Co-
Deans” in the fall of 1978, and our spirits ascended with them. A wonderful
sense of unity of purpose pervaded that academic year, joined by an
exhilarating feeling of democracy; our leaders, dedicated but unalloyed by
personal ambition, were also our peers. Don was the administrator of in-
house details; Bruce was our minister of external affairs. A more capable
team would be hard to imagine.

It’s amazing how much was accomplished during that academic year.
A "new" building was located, leased, and renovated; the Law Center’s
relationship with the University was greatly improved; a new dean was hired
for the ensuing academic year; and, last but by no means least, faith was
restored. In the sunny spring of 1979, we were able to hire five new faculty
members, including some who remain among our brightest stars.

Is it perverse to remember a time of struggle and adversity with such
fondness? Perhaps so. But what is certain is that it was a critical period in
the life of our law school, and that we will be forever indebted to Bruce and
Don for their leadership during those challenging times.


Steven Wisotsky

Writing a tribute to former acting deans is a challenge: usually, it is
troubled times that push them to the fore, and one measure of success is
how quickly they can bow out and turn over the reins to a permanent
successor.

The first Nova dean was Peter Thornton, and when I interviewed for
a faculty job he was in office. By the time I came on board a few months
later, he had been replaced by Larry Hyde, a former judge. Barely three
years into Larry’s tenure, the university experienced a major financial crisis.
Counting its chickens before they hatched, the university was devastated
when a $14 million bequest from the late Leo S. Goodwin, Sr., progenitor
of the GEICO fortune, was withheld by the estate’s manipulative trustee.
Part of that $14 million was dedicated to the Law Center, and it was seen
as the key to our final ABA accreditation.

Although the situation was no fault of Larry’s, the faculty felt the need
to have strong crisis managers protecting the Law Center’s interests during
the deadly duel between the estate’s trustee and Nova University. Don
Llewellyn and Bruce Rogow, the two most senior, experienced faculty
members, emerged as the leaders. The plan was for them to serve as co-
deans, although, as Bruce later quipped, Don was the codeine and he was
the cocaine (or was it the other way around?). The plan was to divide the
deanship into domestic affairs under Don’s agis, and foreign policy,
meaning relations with the university, in Bruce’s bailiwick.

It was a very acrimonious time in the history of relations between the
Law Center and the university, as we came to realize the degree of
mishandling that had prevailed for so many years and the failure of the
board of trustees to take appropriate corrective action. Fortunately, the
immediate pressures of the crisis did not last too long, and by the end of
that academic year we had a new permanent dean, Ovid Lewis, to assume
office in a building off campus, formerly the home of the Operating
Engineers Union, at 3100 S.W. 9th Avenue.

We moved into the new facility, and things went pretty well for the
next five years or so. The student body grew, the faculty grew, the
Goodwin estate came through, and our final ABA accreditation was