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Seventy-Five Cents

## Abraham Relishes Torts, Sports

by Rachel Witmer

He'll surely become known for his quick, unpredictable hypothetical cases. "Now, suppose Abraham was seen driving blind-folded down Emmett Street . . . and hits a pedestrian. But, the facts are not clear. Some witnesses testify it may have been merely a loose sweatband falling down over his eyes." First years revel in the animated teaching of Kenneth S. Abraham, a visiting professor from the University of Maryland.

Abraham's class schedule consists of Torts and Products Liability. He's also busy finishing his book, *Distributing Risk*, which he'd like to complete by year's end. Then there is the commuting schedule, since his wife, an architectural historian, lives about 120 miles north of the school. Abraham's favorite recreation activities include jogging, tennis, Oriole games, and "true escape junk" novels of international intrigue. Despite the fast pace he seems to keep, this professor's office door is generally wide open, and students are received with no sense of hurry over the hundreds of pages of manuscript likely to be lying on his desk.

When asked about "The University," Abraham responds enthusiastically, "I think it's a very pleasant place and I like it a lot. This is a very different atmosphere from the University of Maryland, which is in a big city. This is more like being in an office." And the school? "I like the faculty very much, and I'm beginning to get to know the first year students. My class is much larger than at Maryland. Of course, I've gotten to know the students in Products Liability much better by now. So far, I like everything about the school."

Abraham's forthcoming book, *Distributing Risk*, concerns "economic and philosophical perspectives on risk distribution,

especially in insurance." He plans to submit the manuscript first to Yale University, where he received his J.D. in 1971 and later worked as research consultant to the Yale Institute for Social and Policy Studies. That his book zeroes in on the complex questions in the area of insurance reflects Abraham's special interest within his general interest in torts.

"Torts is always the thing I've liked best. I've always taught torts. I care about economic analysis. What is most interesting these days is the relationship between economic theory and moral questions. I'm very interested in the tension between cost benefit analysis and considerations that run counter to economic calculations, like fairness. Fair risk consideration is also an important goal." One is tempted to lean over and try to skim a bit of the

manuscript, realizing that there is where Abraham's ideas about these questions, that tension, are elaborated.

Abraham simply wasn't suited to a practice like the one he had in Bergen County, New Jersey in the early 70's. In 1974 he began teaching at Case Western Reserve and then at the University of Maryland the following semester. He's continued at Maryland, occasionally teaching a graduate course at Johns Hopkins on the nature of interpretation. He smiles, and summarizes: "I got tired of practice. I love teaching. I like research just as much. I'm basically a self-directed, self-starting, autonomous person. I like the autonomy."

Abraham is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the Toxic Substances Advisory Board, and the Environmental Law Institute.

## SBA Meets, Reports, Debates And Appoints

by John Laskey

The SBA meeting on Monday, September 19, went by with little debate, until the subject of the secession referendum came up.

The debate focused on whether the SBA should provide alternatives to the petition presented last year which would require the SBA to move to secede from the University honor system. A referendum on the petition will be held next month. SBA President Tom Byrne said he would like to see students offered a choice of three different proposals. He would like to have students choose among secession, an academic review board, or the status quo.

Other SBA members thought that other questions might further confuse students on the issue of secession. Other students expressed concern that

the wording of the petition that was presented to the SBA last spring is so ambiguous that it shouldn't be run as is. Byrne pointed out that the SBA cannot modify or refuse to run the petition.

Byrne asked that proposals for other referenda be presented at the next SBA meeting. He said that the SBA will know by then exactly when the election will be in October.

In other matters, Byrne reported on two topics which were carried over from last spring. He read a letter addressed to the SBA and BALSAs from Dean Merrill which was a response to last spring's petition by BALSAs to hire black faculty members. In his letter, Merrill said he would work hard to recruit black faculty. Byrne also reported that the week-long Thanksgiving vacation



Lichtman photo

Cramming for interviews: Student Studies Marindale-Hubbell

which was approved in a referendum last spring was rejected by the faculty.

Several SBA members reported that last Friday's happy hour in the garden was a great success. The party was well attended by students from many different graduate schools. Byrne noted that the SBA took in one half of the profits from the party and would seek to sponsor another one next month. The SBA also discussed providing different brands of beer.

Byrne reported on a meeting he had with librarian Larry Wenger at which he expressed the concerns of the SBA about the limited access to the library for students while faculty members could still remove books from the library without going through the detection device. According to Wenger, a

detection device was not installed on the third floor because it would cost \$10,000 and would have been ineffective without someone to monitor it. Several SBA members expressed an interest in continuing the effort to have more student access to the library.

Byrne made appointments to three student/faculty committees while holding off on appointments to three other committees. Named were Frank Leone to the Building Committee, Hillel Weinberg and George Schwab to the Library Committee, and Art Lowry and Barbara Bower to the Legal Writing Committee. Byrne wants to increase the number of students on the Placement, Curriculum and Academic Review Committees so he did not make any appointments to those committees.

## School Receives \$2.8 Million Grant

University officials announced this week that \$2.8 million has been donated to the Law School from a private trust established by the estate of Lacy Withers Armour of Lake Forest, Illinois. The funds will be used to establish permanently endowed scholarships in her name for outstanding law students. Armour, who died in 1981, was the widow of meat packing executive Hearne Armour, of Armour and Co.

Six students in the first year class have already received financial aid through the Armour fellowship fund. Law School Dean Richard Merrill says that the number of Armour scholars may vary each year, depending on need and the income from the fund. "There probably won't be a fixed number since it (the fund) will be tailored to meet the financial needs of the student," he said. "There might ultimately be twenty per class." He added that "we hope to plow some of the income back into the principle to help keep pace with inflation," so the fund won't diminish over time.

In recognition of this gift, the University will name the Law School building after Armour's father, the late Henry Malcome Withers, who attended the Law School in 1868 and 1869. This naming, according to Merrill, would apply only to the building; the Law School would not become the "Withers School of Law."

Merrill plans to have a naming ceremony at the Law School, "certainly no earlier than next spring." "I'm encouraging the University and the donors to schedule the event for next fall . . . to combine the naming ceremony with an evening dinner with the scholar," said Merrill. He feels that "this should be viewed as a people gift rather than a building gift, making 'the group of talented and needy students' the focus of the celebration. Merrill would like to see an annual dinner honoring the Armour scholars.