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Loyola's Faught covers range of duties

By Jerry Crimmins
Law Bulletin staff writer

If you ask James J. Faught what he does at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, he says, "My job is hard to describe. ... My duties range from ceremonial to janitorial."

Faught is associate dean for administration. "I never considered myself a faculty member," he said.

Nevertheless, Faught, 61, will be given the universitywide "Dux Mirabilis Award" June 11 at Loyola's Founders' Dinner at the Lake Shore Campus.

The name of the award is Latin for "extraordinary leader." It is presented to a member of the faculty or staff for "extraordinary contributions to the university and its mission."

That Faught is a leader is evident from some of the duties and titles he has.

Faught oversees the "general operation of the law school, including admissions, registration and career resources," the law school's website said. He is director of Loyola school of law's externship program and founder and director of the school's London Comparative Advocacy Program. That's a summer program he has run in London for law students for 23 years. And he teaches legal history every fall.

"He is in essence, the chief of staff, chief operating officer," said Dean David N. Yellen. "I'm sure to many or most of the students, he's the most indispensable person at the school."

"In a lot of ways," Yellen said, "he's the heart and soul of the law school. No. 1, he's been there so long and No. 2, he conveys such a deep commitment to the school and the students and he deals seemingly effortlessly with everything from minor annoyances to major crises."

Born in Detroit in 1949 and raised there, then in Toledo, Ohio, then north suburban Northbrook, Faught graduated from Notre Dame University in 1971.

It wasn't until he was 20 years old, he



James J. Faught



F. Vern Lahart

said, that "I saw myself in some kind of career" and he thought he'd go to law school. "It gave you time to develop your interests and to make some decisions."

He is amazed that when he went to Loyola school of law in the 1970s, "it was so cheap. I never took out a loan in my life."

Faught said he made enough money in his summer jobs to pay his way through law school. "It's staggering, the idea of making your tuition money and more with your summer job," he said. "You never hear of that anymore."

During college and law school, he was a tennis pro for eight summers at a country club in Northbrook and he once gave lessons to the actor Charlton Heston.

Faught also was a "roadie" for the rock group, The Buckingham, in the 1970s and 1980s.

After he got his law degree, he said he practiced family law in Chicago for three years with the firm of Rinella and Rinella Ltd. "Wonderful people," he said. Then he moved to Paris where he said he "strung tennis rackets" for a while.

In 1979, he came back to the U.S. and Charles W. Murdock, then-dean of Loyola law school, asked Faught to become assistant dean. That's when Faught's duties suddenly became "ceremonial to janitorial," he said, "and it hasn't changed in 32 years."

In those years, Faught also became, "the most beloved, kind, funny and famous

former student and law school administrator to walk the halls of Loyola school of law, an all-around good guy, one of those rare souls who doesn't have an enemy in the world," said Elisabeth B. Brookover, director of communications for the law school.

Faught also serves on many outside committees of local and national organizations for the law school and is chairman of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission, a state of Illinois commission that that promotes ethics in public service.

He is married today to "my spirited Italian wife, Nina," and they have three children.

When he heard he will receive the "Dux Mirabilis Award," Faught said his first reaction was, "Why me? It makes you look at the big picture of the university. ... There are dozens and dozens of people I work with every week who are just so dedicated to the students and the university. I am really humbled."

Another Loyola school of law alumnus, F. Vern Lahart, who got his juris doctorate there in 1951, will receive the "Damen Award" at the same Founders' Dinner, given to an alumnus for leadership in industry, community and service to others.

After practicing intellectual property law, Lahart became from 1974 to 1995 president of Resources for Christian Living Enterprises, which provides schools with religious educational materials.

Along with the late Dick Leach, Lahart also established the Lahart-Leach Scholarship Fund at Loyola school of law, which has provided support to more than 48 law students over the past 18 years.

Lahart served on a blue ribbon committee to study the future of the law school, and from 1998 to 2003, he was on the President's Advisory Council for the school of law.

Lahart is "a humble, giving guy who wants to do what he can to give back to the school and the students who came after him," Yellen said.