

"The Ideal Place ... for the Establishment of a Great Law School": History of Washburn Law School, 1903-2003 (forward by Thomas J. Romig only)
by James M. Concannon.
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FOREWORD

With eloquence and candor, former Dean James Concannon has compiled a historical piece about Washburn University School of Law that only he can deliver. His nearly 40 years of experience teaching and leading the law school as dean uniquely qualify him for a task of this magnitude.

Rarely will you find an organization that produces a detailed account of its history without gently “refining” the rough edges. Dean Concannon himself acknowledges that his book, however, is not a watered-down version of the law school’s history, or as he puts it, “This book is not a selective puff piece that focuses only on the school’s successes.” Thank goodness, for it’s this type of storytelling that intrigues and hooks the reader until the final period.

What you are about to read are authentic accounts of the law school’s storied life. Most revealing among the recollections of the devoted professors, staff members, students, and friends of the law school are the accounts of relationships forged during both turmoil and triumph, including the devastation and subsequent revitalization of the law school following the 1966 Topeka tornado that killed 16 and injured more than 500 residents. The tornado’s violent winds, estimated at 300 mph, damaged every building on the Washburn campus, totally destroying many of them. From the rubble, the dedicated individuals you will hear from built bonds for life while constructing a remarkable future for Washburn Law.

Like an archeologist carefully excavating a significant historical site, Dean Concannon has found rare nuggets of information from peers, former students, staff members, and friends of the law school. He delves beyond the bedrock to uncover the substance of relationships, including political strife within the law school walls.

As Dean Concannon points out, throughout changes in leadership and location, Washburn Law’s main focus always has been and always will be on

its students. In its 100-plus years of educating some of the brightest and most dedicated individuals ever to write a brief or argue a case, Washburn University School of Law has maintained its core values of respect for students, emphasis on student learning, faculty collegiality and camaraderie, and providing a caring atmosphere. I'm grateful for Dean Concannon's perseverance in compiling this comprehensive history of Washburn Law and for demonstrating how the law school's core values have created the cornerstone on which we continue to build.

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