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# EUGENE O. KUNTZ—THE ADMINISTRATOR

ROBERT E. L. RICHARDSON\*

Professor Eugene Kuntz became Dean of the University of Oklahoma College of Law on September 1, 1965. He served as Dean until September 1, 1970. After his resignation, the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma awarded him the title of Dean Emeritus. The following letter was delivered to Dean Kuntz on March 27, 1968, the date on which he announced his resignation to the College of Law faculty.

March 27, 1969

Dear Dean Kuntz:

Since you will be announcing your resignation to the faculty this afternoon, I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the job you have done during the past four years.

Next to Rose, I doubt that anyone realizes as much as I the enormous amount of time and energy you have spent during these four years. I have been aware of many of your frustrations. I have no doubt helped create some of them.

On many occasions you have expressed concern as to the attitude of the faculty toward your goals and decisions. I am confident you do not realize the respect and admiration the members of the faculty have for you. Your resignation will not only be a shock to most of them, but it will also be a deep personal loss.

There is the attitude that anyone can be replaced. This is only partly true. Another can always take a person's position, but that does not mean that he has in fact replaced. You will be substituted for—not replaced.

Fortunately, you have done something as a Dean which is extremely difficult and rare. You have *accomplished—truly improved the school*. Your successor will take control of a law college (center) which does not compare with the one of which you accepted the Deanship in 1965. As examples; the book budget of the library has tripled; the student-faculty ratio is twice as good as it was (with some help from the draft); the salary structure of the faculty has improved greatly (the improvement is certainly much more than a simple cost-of-living increase); the secretarial staff has doubled; the curriculum is far superior to what it was; etc. Through your work the potential for an outstanding Law

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Center is foreseeable—to a certain extent, through the proposed Legal Education and Admission to the Bar Commission, it is assured.

This letter could obviously continue for pages. May I say that you can justly be satisfied with your tenure as Dean. You caught a glimpse of the disappointment your resignation will cause from Judge Murrah and Dave Boren. I am sorry you are resigning—but I do understand your attitude and position.

Let me say personally that I have always found you considerate and just. Working with you has been a true privilege and an honor. I have always believed it worthwhile because *you have accomplished*.

Bob Richardson

Dean Kuntz did accomplish. During his tenure the quality of the College of Law was greatly improved. Let us look briefly at three of the areas in which progress occurred.

### *Funding for the College*

In the few years before Professor Kuntz became Dean of the College, the enrollment had increased from under three hundred to in excess of four hundred students. A corresponding increase in funds was not made available to the College. Under the administration of Dean Earl Sneed, the law students had voluntarily approved an increase in their tuition in order to assist with faculty salaries. This was beneficial for the employed faculty members, but it did not solve the problem of the rapidly increasing number of students admitted to the College.

At the time Professor Kuntz became Dean there were 10.5 full-time faculty positions. The College had an Assistant Dean, a Law Librarian, and a faculty member who served as Legal Counsel to the University of Oklahoma. These faculty members, as well as the Dean, taught on a half-time basis.<sup>1</sup> The enrollment for the 1965 fall semester at the College was 465. The faculty-student ratio was one faculty member per 42 students. The first-year class had 240 students and most courses only had two sections. Dean Kuntz immediately sought additional funding from the University of Oklahoma administration. A minimal increase in funding was made available to the College, but it was not sufficient to overcome the financial difficulties.

In evaluating the formula used by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, it was discovered that the faculty-student ratio used in setting the budget for graduate and professional education was one faculty member for every eight students. Since the ratio at the Col-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Kuntz only taught on a half-time basis before he became Dean. The University administration agreed to add one member to the faculty for the 1965-66 academic year with the departure of Dean Earl Sneed. This increased the full-time faculty equivalent to eleven.

lege was one faculty member per forty-two students, it was obvious that the funds coming to the University for the College of Law were not being distributed to the College.

Dean Kuntz continued his request for adequate funding for the College and presented the above information on funding to the appropriate authorities. Because of attitudes expressed by most members of the University Budget Council and many members of the University administration, it became obvious that sufficient funding would not be made available through the University.<sup>2</sup> This led to a request that the College of Law be granted a separate budget from the remainder of the Norman campus by the University of Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. It was pointed out that the College of Medicine and the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University, the other professional schools in the state system, both had separate budgets. Through continued effort, a separately identifiable budget and eventually a totally separate budget was approved for the College by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.<sup>3</sup>

The improvements caused by increased funding for the College are obvious. When Dean Kuntz entered full-time teaching in September of 1970, the student enrollment was 463. There were twenty-one full-time equivalent faculty members. The faculty-student ratio was one faculty member for every twenty-two students. The College had a full-time Director of Continuing Legal Education. A second Assistant Dean, who did not teach but worked primarily with placement, had been employed. The position of Assistant of the Director of the Law Center had been budgeted. A larger library and secretarial staff had been employed. Faculty salaries had been greatly improved. For one year during Dean Kuntz's administration, the faculty salaries at the College ranked nineteenth in the nation.

### *Rapport With College of Law Constituencies*

Dean Kuntz created excellent rapport with the many constituencies of the College. In addition to meeting regularly with the Student Board of Governors, he regularly held sessions that were open for all students who wished to attend. At these meetings, problems and goals were discussed. Dean Kuntz always listened closely to the suggestions

<sup>2</sup> Dean Kuntz once stated that it appeared the University would be happy so long as the College could cram more students into the large classrooms in Monnet Hall without increasing the number of faculty members.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Senator David Boren, a student at the College from 1965 through 1968 and a member of the Oklahoma House of Representatives while a law student, was instrumental in securing the separate budget for the College.

and ideas expressed by the students. A close personal relationship was also maintained with all faculty members. Dean Kuntz even held orientation sessions for new faculty members to acquaint them with the policies and procedures of the College and the University. Rose Kuntz, the Dean's wife, actively worked with the Law Wives Club and almost always had a birthday cake available in the faculty lounge for faculty members' birthdays.

Because Dean Kuntz had been an active member of the Oklahoma Bar Association since coming to Oklahoma in 1952, he was able to work closely with the Bar for the betterment of the legal profession and the College of Law. He also had excellent relations with the Oklahoma legislature and various agencies of state government. Generally speaking, Dean Kuntz had an excellent working relationship with the central administration at the University of Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup> Dean Kuntz also created an atmosphere for good relations with the general public through personally rendering public service and advocating that the faculty members do likewise. To assist in this goal, the administrative offices of the College were open on Saturday mornings and staff members visited the other educational institutions throughout Oklahoma to discuss legal education with prospective students. Dean Kuntz also successfully created better relations with the law schools at Oklahoma City University and Tulsa University.

### *Planning*

Upon becoming Dean, Eugene Kuntz actively engaged in current and long-range planning for the College. He soon realized that the College was incapable of adequately educating all persons who applied for admission to the College. In a short period of time he sought and secured permission from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for the College to limit its enrollment. The State Regents established the standards for admission.

Even though the new Law Center building was not constructed until after Robert R. Wright became Dean, Dean Kuntz worked with architects on the planning for the structure. One of his goals was to make certain that the new building did not contain many large classrooms. It was his belief that the central administration of the University might again realize that budget limitations could be placed on the College by cramming large numbers of students into large classrooms.

<sup>4</sup> The only exception might have been Dr. Herbert Hollomon, President of the University from 1968-1970.

The present Law Center building has only one classroom that will seat more than 75 students.

The curriculum of the College was completely revised during the administration of Dean Kuntz. Additional courses were added to meet the educational requirements for future lawyers. In coordination with the establishment of a structured continuing education program, students and practicing attorneys attended classes together on Saturday mornings. It was the Dean's belief that this would benefit both groups. These classes are still conducted at the Law Center. The first non-lawyer, a psychiatrist, was added to the faculty on a part-time basis. A structured system of smaller class sizes was instituted. First-year courses were divided into four sections. The importance of clinical education was recognized by Dean Kuntz, and initial programs were established with the Legal Aid Agency in Oklahoma County and the Federal Reformatory in El Reno. Dean Kuntz had his staff work closely with the Oklahoma Bar Association in establishing the Legal Internship Program for third-year law students. During the formative years of that program, 67 of the 112 students granted Limited Licenses were from the College.<sup>5</sup>

At the request of Dean Kuntz, President Herbert Hollomon appointed a commission to study the long-range needs and goals for the College. The Law Center Commission was chaired by Judge Alfred P. Murrah, the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Among its members were such legal scholars as Irwin Griswold, former Dean of the Harvard Law School. The Law Center Commission recommended that the College be recognized as a center of excellence at the University. It established the structure under which the College now functions. Its report recommended an expanded scope through the establishment of a "Law Center." The basic purpose was to remain the education of law students, but it recommended the establishment of additional units for the service of the public and state. In addition to an organized continuing education program and an expanded clinical education program, the Center for Criminal Justice<sup>6</sup> and the Space Law Institute were created during the years while Eugene Kuntz served as Dean.

Before resigning, Dean Kuntz structured a strong committee sys-

<sup>5</sup> Ralph Thomas, *Legal Internship in Oklahoma*, Oklahoma Bar Foundation (1970), at page 10.

<sup>6</sup> The first grant awarded by the Oklahoma Crime Commission from United States Law Enforcement Assistance Administration funds was awarded to the Law Center.

tem within the College so the faculty could maintain an important role in the governing of the Law Center.

Many other accomplishments could be discussed, but it is hoped that those mentioned will at least give an idea of the progress made during Dean Kuntz's administration. And through it all, he was always a gentleman.