



An Interview with Earle I. Mack

Chairman, Cardozo Board of Directors

Earle I. Mack has been chairman of the Cardozo Board of Directors since 1992, working diligently with faculty and administration in building the financial and physical infrastructure, as well as the personality, of the Law School. He is a businessman, political advisor, and arts advocate who has played a major role in the life of New York City and of Cardozo. Susan Davis, editor of Cardozo Life, sat down with him recently to discuss the Board, his role on it, and his goals.

DAVIS: When did you join the Cardozo Board?

MACK: I joined the Board in 1980, becoming the youngest person on it. I think the other Board members were hop-

ing I would bring a young spirit and energy. I hope I haven't let them down. The first Board meeting I attended was an unforgettable moment in my association with Yeshiva University and Cardozo. It was 23 years ago and seems like yesterday!

I came to the meeting knowing only that Cardozo was a work in process—something new. At that meeting, Morris Abram, Cardozo's outgoing Board chairman, gave the most eloquent eulogy I've ever heard. Dean Monrad Paulsen had just died and Abram, a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton & Garrison and an advisor to five presidents, a most distinguished man, spoke about

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Monrad and his great leadership—highlighting his enormous dedication and passion and his relentless work toward putting Cardozo on a path for future greatness.

I was truly inspired and energized, and I became very enthusiastic about the School and quickly began to feel that I was part of a winning team.

My involvement on the Cardozo Board became a very important association for me. Immediately, I got to know the students and faculty. Those who came to Cardozo in the early days were pioneers, and that spirit was awe-inspiring. I saw the passion and dedication of the faculty. It was clear that their goal was to build a law school that was going to achieve greatness. These early experiences created my passion for the School.

Then Monroe Price was appointed dean in 1982, and the transition was easy and very special for me. Monroe had been involved in the entertainment industry as had I, so we had lots in common and worked well together to build the Board, faculty, and School. During Monroe's tenure, I was appointed chairman of the Board's nominating committee. I believe Monroe hoped that through synergistic energy we would build an enthusiastic, com-

mitted board that included prominent New Yorkers. And we did.

The Board chairman was then Charles Ballon, who died several years ago. He was a wonderful person, a senior partner at Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin, Krim & Ballon, a major law firm. He was one of the key attorneys in the evolution of Calvin Klein. Later, that association was instrumental in bringing Barry Schwartz, the current chairman and CEO of Calvin Klein, to the Cardozo Board. Mr. Ballon wanted to strengthen the Bet Tzedek Clinic, which I was also very interested in, so we worked together to make it an important part of Cardozo.

DAVIS: When you were building the Board, what did you feel were the most important qualities to look for in Board members?

MACK: We needed people whom we hoped would contribute financially and intellectually and build upon their relationships for the good of the School.

DAVIS: What do you tell people about Cardozo if you are interested in their joining the Board?



As Board Chairman, Earle Mack is a key figure at many Cardozo events. This page: He is shown greeting Israel's former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife. Opposite, from left: He is shown with Board members Frank Lautenberg and Nate Kacew '98, and with former Dean Paul Verkuil and television journalist Barbara Walters.

MACK: I am very enthusiastic about many aspects of Cardozo and its programs and try to get them enthused as well. I speak about the special people associated with the School—faculty, the dean, and our esteemed Board members. As you may know, nine alumni are now members of the Board, and two are vice chairmen, which is particularly gratifying.

I talk about the wonderful tradition of Cardozo being the first and only law school under Jewish auspices. I emphasize the great progress made by our current dean, David Rudenstine, whose energy and dedication are nothing short of amazing. I explain that he is a loved professor and a distinguished legal scholar specializing in constitutional law, the First Amendment, and labor law, and is the first dean to have come from the Cardozo faculty.

I speak of my vision and that of the dean's—our absolute conviction that Cardozo is on the move and will soon be in the top tier nationally. It's important for prospective board members to know about the quality and achievements of our students. They need to hear about the increased national recognition we are garnering, as reflected in last year's 40 percent increase in applications and the continued rise in applications this year, which will lead to yet another high-achieving incoming class: students who are academically strong, eager to achieve, and ready for success.

And then I point to tangible programs such as our LL.M. program, developed under Dean Paul Verkuil; our clinical programs like the Innocence Project, which has exonerated 121 wrongfully convicted individuals; our top-ranked intellectual property and dispute resolution programs; and our soon-to-be-completed capital improvement program.

DAVIS: What kind of roles do Board members actually play?

MACK: It is important for prospects to know that we have recently expanded the roles for members of our Board. For example, Rachel Warren '92, a vice chairman, has taken on responsibility for Board/alumni relations. We have a well-organized nominating committee chaired by Justice Sandy Feuerstein '79, an active budget and finance committee cochaired by Mark Lieberman '84 with attorney Terence Todman. Mark is also a vice chairman for special fiscal matters. Sheldon Solow, a major NYC builder and developer, chairs the building committee and has worked diligently over the past several years. I salute them all for a job well done.

Not many people realize that we will have spent approximately \$40 million since 1996 upgrading our physical plant. In those years we have added a residence hall on 11th Street, we've just opened a spectacular new floor of the library, and in the next few weeks we will complete the lobby and a new technologically enhanced Jacob Burns Moot Court Room. The facility improvements are going to have a tremendous impact on the students and faculty. They show that Cardozo is not content with the status quo and has the vision and resources to enhance the law school experience for all who attend.

DAVIS: And what about the future of Cardozo?

MACK: To sum it up? The best is yet to come.

Let me tell you my four highest priorities and goals:

One: To upgrade the School's physical plant—which has been nearly accomplished. I'm extremely proud that we have raised more than \$20 million of our \$25 million capital campaign goal.

Two: To have alumni take over leadership of the



Board. We already have two who are vice chairmen. So again, we are close to achieving this goal.

Three: To do what I can to keep a stellar faculty. Cardozo has one of the best faculties in the country, not just the city, and they are increasingly being coveted by other law schools. While I'm chairman I'll do everything possible to ensure that they remain happy at Cardozo.

Four: To increase funding for scholarships.

DAVIS: Over the years, you have worked with nearly every dean. Will you tell us your impressions of each of them?

MACK: From the outset, the founders of Cardozo envisioned a very distinguished, top-tier law school—one that is ambitious and determined, and whose primary goal is to demand excellence.

Monroe Price, Frank Macchiarola, Paul Verkuil, each had wonderful, important, qualities and visions for the job of dean. They placed indelible and personal stamps on the School—and each has been extremely important to its growth and strength. They have successfully driven the building of this great school that began with the vision of Dean Paulsen. Now with David Rudenstine, we have the best-suited and hardest-working person to finish the job so effectively started by his predecessors. I am convinced that their plans and dreams can be crystallized and realized by David.

DAVIS: Over the years you have been involved in virtually every aspect of the Law School. Is there one achievement of which you are most proud?

MACK: I am most proud of the School's growth and track record, and extremely proud of my association with it over the past 23 years—almost 11 as chairman. It has given me much satisfaction.

What we have achieved has been accomplished by a team. The University had faith in the Law School and gave it the tools and financial support it needed. The

deans were dedicated to excellence and allowed Cardozo to grow from strength to strength. The distinguished faculty, the very hard working Board of Directors, the dedicated and enthusiastic students, and the administrations of YU and the Law School have worked together to nurture Cardozo from a fledgling school to a strong, thriving part of the University.

DAVIS: Beyond your extraordinary efforts for Cardozo, I know that you have been very active in the arts, business, and politics. Can you tell us something about your recent activities?



MACK: This past November, I went to Argentina as a member of the Appeal of Conscience, an international group of clergy and business and community leaders. We went to promote and encourage religious and human rights. We met with the current President of Argentina, Dr. Eduardo Duhalde, as well as with former presidents, members of the nuncio, several ambassadors and religious leaders, and members of the Jewish community. It was an extremely educational and productive trip.

I remain an advisor to Governor Pataki, who appointed me chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a position I held from 1996 to 1999. I'm especially proud that while chairman of NYSCA, I initiated the Empire State Partnership, which put arts education back into many of the public schools. I continue to consult with the governor on cultural initiatives.

DAVIS: Are you still involved in the arts?

MACK: I maintain my passion for the arts, and advise and sit on the boards of several organizations. Among the most important to me are the New York City Ballet, where I have a very long association, and the Alliance for the Arts, a New York arts advocacy organization. But, most important, I'm a tenacious fighter dedicated to making this Law School one of the best in the country. ■

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