

University of Colorado Law School
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David Getches, *University of Colorado School of Law Makes History in Higher Education*, 35 THE COLORADO LAWYER 9 (September 2006).

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Bar News Highlight

The "Highlight" page of *Bar News* spotlights recent activities and special events around the Bar, and presents brief stories that deal with the legal profession, lawyer activities outside the practice of law, or short profiles of estimable individuals. If you have print or digital photos of a recent event to share, if you would like to recommend a colleague to be "highlighted," or if your local or specialty bar or legal organization has marked a notable milestone and there's a short story to tell about it, consider the "Bar News Highlight" as your forum. For more information or to submit an article, contact Leona Martínez at leonamartinez@cobar.org.

University of Colorado School of Law Makes History In Higher Education

by David Getches

Dean, University of Colorado School of Law

The University of Colorado ("CU") School of Law will make history with the dedication of the new Wolf Law Building on the Boulder campus in September 2006. Never before have students of an entire campus voted to tax themselves for construction of a new law school building. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer will dedicate the 183,000 square foot building on September 8.

The Wolf Law Building will feature state-of-the-art classrooms, two high-tech courtrooms, 50 percent more space for law journal offices and law clinics, and the largest resource collection and most technologically advanced law library in the twelve-state Rocky Mountain region. In keeping with the outstanding national reputation for environmental law, CU School of Law is striving to make the Wolf Law Building the first Gold-certified public law school building in the country, under the exacting standards of the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certificate (LEED Certified). That means 39 percent less indoor water usage than a conventional building, 100 percent renewable energy electricity, and recycling 90 percent of all construction waste.

Since the school's founding in 1892, CU School of Law has developed a tradition of excellence that will be enhanced with the new Wolf Law Building. The journey to a new home began in 1995, when an American Bar Association ("ABA") report found the Fleming Law Building inadequate. By 1998, a plan was assembled and approved by the CU Board of Regents for a new building. That is when the alumni network and private donors stepped up. The seminal moment in the "birth" of the new building and the inspiration to break ground came from a \$3 million donation from Marvin and Judi Wolf, Erving and Joyce Wolf, and Elaine Wolf in honor of Leon and Dora Wolf.

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education approved the law school's proposal for the building and more than \$20 million

was committed to the project. Law students voted overwhelmingly for an annual \$1,000 tuition increase to help fund the project, and private fundraising began in earnest to finance the balance.

Groundbreaking was scheduled for May 2002. At the time, Colorado's budget was in a tailspin, fueled by the TABOR amendment to the state constitution, which restricted state expenditures. Legislative appropriations were abruptly rescinded as the state plunged into a financial crisis. In 2002, all capital construction funding ground to a halt and all of higher education, not just the law school, was suffering badly from major cuts.

Seven years after finding the law school's facilities inadequate, the ABA came calling again. In 2003, the ABA Accreditation Committee not only found the CU School of Law in noncompliance because of the condition of

its facilities, but it also threatened to take action.

After months of intense negotiating within CU student government, in the fall of 2004, campus leaders took the fee to a vote of the entire student body. The proposal resoundingly passed a capital development fee to fund the state's share of the law building and three other projects on the Boulder campus. Every student will pay \$400 per year,

which will produce more than \$100 million in capital investment on the CU campus. Construction on the Wolf Law Building began in January 2005 with \$21 million from student funds.

Private donors also invested heavily in support of the effort. They raised nearly \$13 million toward the total cost of \$46 million. The building was completed in August and the law school completed its move before classes began on August 27, 2006.

The tradition of excellence at CU School of Law will thrive in this magnificent building. The Wolf Law Building provides a new home that will continue to produce scholars who shape the nation and the world. It is a building worthy of the ideas and learning that will take place within its walls.

