

3-2007

March 2007 Alumni Newsletter

New York Law School

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Recommended Citation

New York Law School, "March 2007 Alumni Newsletter" (2007). *Alumni Newsletters*. Book 9.
http://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/alum_newsletters/9

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ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Your Lifetime Network of Support | March 2007

Meet the Network



Building Buzz

Our new building is making use of a construction technology called a slurry wall. This same technology was used when the World Trade Center was first built.

Slurry wall construction has been used in Europe and the U.S. since the 1940s. It offers an economical solution to the problem of building on a site that has groundwater control problems. The use of slurry helps hold back the flow of the groundwater.

Bentonite slurry is the most common form of slurry. Bentonite is a clay that occurs in nature. There are two kinds of bentonite: sodium and calcium. Sodium bentonite, used in slurry walls, expands when wet and can absorb several times its dry weight in water.

The technique involves pouring slurry into dug-out portions of the construction while reinforcements are added. Then, concrete is poured in and the slurry rises and is replaced by the concrete.

Did you know?

- New York Law School's bar passage rate for first-time takers was 83.8 percent in 2006.
- That is an increase of almost 10 percent over 2005.
- New York state's average is 79 percent.



Professor Andrew Berman, Director



Professor Berman with Alan J. Schnurman '71 (left), Andrew S. Penson '84, and Steven B. Jason '90

Center for Real Estate Studies Debuts

Real estate always has played a central role in the life of New York City and in the life of New York Law School. A significant number of the Law School's graduates have careers in real estate, and interest among students continues to be high.

Recognizing the importance of real estate to the City, alumni, and students, New York Law School has established the Center for Real Estate Studies (CRES) as its seventh academic center.

Headed by Andrew R. Berman, Associate Professor of Law, CRES will become one of the leading academic research centers devoted to the study of the private practice and public regulation of real estate. The Center will sponsor conferences, symposia, and continuing legal education programs; present distinguished speakers; and develop innovative legal education programs for students.

CRES debuts on March 13 at a breakfast at 8:15 a.m. in the Ernst Stiefel Reading Room. The keynote speaker will be Stephen M. Ross, Chairman and CEO of RELATED and Chairman of the Real Estate Board of New York. The topic of Mr. Ross' talk is "Will New York City Remain the Capital of Real Estate?" Stroock and Stroock and Lavan is sponsoring the symposium. Ross F. Moskowitz '84, a Stroock partner and prominent real estate attorney, is a member of the Center's Advisory Board.

"The practice of real estate law has undergone tremendous change in the past 20 years. CRES will help bridge the gap between private practice and academic study, and will become one of the premier places for the study of real estate," Dean Richard A. Matasar said.

For more information about the Center for Real Estate Studies or to view a list of the Center's distinguished Advisory Board, visit www.nyls.edu/realestate.

New York Law School Heritage

Meet Elmer Rice, Class of 1912



Before there was *Dreamgirls*, there was *Dream Girl*, a major Broadway hit of 1945, written by Elmer Rice, New York Law School Class of 1912. *Dream Girl* was the latest in a long line of successful plays written by Mr. Rice, who dropped out of high school, but graduated from New York Law School cum

laude at the age of 20. His first play, *On Trial*, produced on Broadway in 1914 when he was only 22 years old, signaled the arrival of one of the most prominent playwrights and theater directors in America during the first half of the 20th century.

Born Elmer Leopold Reizenstein in New York in 1892, Elmer Rice changed his name in 1915 after the successful run of *On Trial*. That first play earned its young author \$100,000, an enormous sum for 1914. *On Trial* was notable not only for its financial success, but also for its innovations. The play pioneered the use of the flashback on stage, and was filmed three times.

In spite of its success, Mr. Rice was not satisfied with his writing and he began to study drama intensely at Columbia University. Then, in 1923, he wrote *The Adding Machine*, an expressionist play about the new, soulless automated workplace. *The Adding Machine* was not a success initially, but it is still studied in drama courses and often revived. Forty-six years after its initial production, *The Adding Machine* was made into a film in 1969 with an eclectic cast that included Milo O'Shea, Phyllis Diller, and Sydney Chaplin.

In 1928, Elmer Rice wrote the play for which he is most famous, *Street Scene*. Set in a New York tenement, *Street Scene* tells a tragic story of violence erupting in a poor neighborhood. Mr. Rice also directed the play, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1929. *Street Scene* was made into a successful film starring Sylvia Sidney and directed by King Vidor in 1931.

That same year, Mr. Rice had another Broadway hit with *Counsellor-at-Law*, starring Paul Muni. The screen version of *Counsellor-at-Law* featured John Barrymore in what is generally considered his finest screen role. In 2005, the Peccadillo Theater Company, an off-Broadway group dedicated to reviving great plays of the past, presented a successful revival of *Counsellor-at-Law* starring John Rubinstein.

With the exception of *Dream Girl*, Mr. Rice's later plays were less popular. In Hollywood in the early 1940s, he wrote screenplays, including *Holiday Inn* (1942), which introduced the Irving Berlin song "White Christmas." His last play, *Love Among the Ruins*, was produced in 1963. He died in 1967 at the age of 75.

Elmer Rice never gained fame as an attorney, but he created numerous memorable lawyers and helped popularize the "courtroom drama."

Alumni Corner

Elmer Rice '12 gained fame as a writer and director. Can you answer these questions about other New York Law School graduates who gained fame outside the practice of law?

1. Elmer Rice won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1929. Name another New York Law School graduate who also won a Pulitzer Prize for writing.
2. This 1939 graduate of New York Law School invented xerography. Who is he?
3. The Mendik Library is named in honor of Bernard Mendik '58. In what field did Mr. Mendik achieve his greatest fame?
4. Colby Chester, Class of 1900, was President of the Postum Cereal Company. In later years, this company was known by what name?
5. Edward Duffield, Class of 1894, served as president of what university?

To take this quiz and see the answers, please visit the Alumni & Friends page on the New York Law School Web site, www.nyls.edu.

Alumni in Brief

Kenneth D. Werner '78



In the past few years, technology has begun to change the world of entertainment in an incredibly dramatic and accelerated manner. According to Kenneth D. Werner '78, President of Warner Brothers Domestic Television Distribution, the fact that entertainment “is capable of being digitally moved in a fairly easy

fashion” has resulted in a somewhat chaotic environment because no one possesses any degree of certainty as to how people will consume media in the future. While some of those involved in the entertainment industry experience this uncertainty with a great deal of trepidation and concern, Mr. Werner said, “I see it as an opportunity.”

The greatest challenge, Mr. Werner commented, is to maintain short-term focus while making judgments about how the business will change in the long-term. Mr. Werner said his goal is to plan for the future by positioning assets strategically for the long term, while at the same time maintaining Warner’s leadership in the current business paradigm.

Mr. Werner is uniquely qualified to manage that balancing act because of his extensive background and experience in the entertainment industry and the legal education he received at New York Law School.

Mr. Werner began his career in entertainment as an attorney and Assistant Executive Director of the Dramatists Guild, Inc., the professional association for playwrights. He found his first job through a posting at the Law School.

“It was the strangest bit of serendipity,” Mr. Werner recalled.

As a student, Mr. Werner had three primary interests: civil rights, criminal defense law, and entertainment. Eventually he decided that his skills were in the entertainment area, and “that was the opportunity that luckily presented itself.”

Throughout his career, Mr. Werner has held executive positions with a variety of entertainment companies, including Columbia Pictures Television, Viacom Enterprises, The Walt Disney Company, and CBS, Inc.

Mr. Werner joined The WB network in 1997 as Executive Vice President of Distribution. He assumed his current position in August 2006.

Although Mr. Werner has worked in the entertainment industry exclusively, he has maintained his interest in civil rights. Twelve years ago during a period of great unrest in Los Angeles occasioned by the beating of Rodney King, he was asked by Frank Wells and Michael Eisner to lead the Disney Company’s response. Working with the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest African American church in the U.S., Mr. Werner helped create L.A. FAME Renaissance, a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the economic empowerment of underserved communities. Disney and L.A. FAME created a number of unique initiatives, including a micro loan program and a speakers program that brought leading entertainment executives, including Michael Eisner, Richard Parsons, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Barry Diller, and others, to the community to speak to students, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. The speakers program continues today in a more academic form at the University of Southern California (USC) Marshall School of Business.

While some of those involved in the entertainment industry experience this uncertainty with a great deal of trepidation and concern, Mr. Werner said, “I see it as an opportunity.”

Mr. Werner has fond memories of three outstanding New York Law School professors: James Simon, Eugene Cerruti, and Charles Morgan.

“I found Jim Simon’s seminars incredibly interesting and engaging,” Mr. Werner said. “I gained enormous insight from Eugene Cerruti into how lawyers really operate in the criminal justice system, and Charles Morgan was very influential, not so much relative to case law, but more about tactics and insights into the differing roles lawyers can play in society.”

Mr. Werner said each of these professors helped him strengthen the “walking around sense” he described as the most important part of education and life.

ALUMNI

CONNECTIONS

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Free for Alumni

– **Tuesday, March 13 at 8:15 a.m.**

Center for Real Estate Studies
Breakfast Forum

Ernst Stiefel Reading Room
www.nyls.edu/realestate

– **Thursday, March 22 at 12:30 p.m.**

Spotlight Luncheon on Litigation,
in the Wellington Conference Center

For more information or to register to attend these free events, go to <http://alumni.nyls.edu/events>.

For more information about other Law School events, visit the Calendar page on the Web site at www.nyls.edu.

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