Robert Cook '50 Creates Scholarship Fund for Veterans

Robert E. Cook '50 had a helping hand when he returned to college from the armed forces, and he would like today's service men and women to have similar opportunities.

Cook, a retired partner in the firm Cook & Franke, has made a gift of $100,000 to establish the Robert E. Cook Law School Scholarship Fund, which will assist U.S. military veterans who attend the University of Wisconsin Law School.

"In World War II, I was in the service for approximately three years as an air force pilot," he said from his home in Osprey, Florida. "When I got out and came back to the States, I had the G.I. Bill. That allowed me to go through the university as an undergraduate and get into the Law School, where I earned my degree."

Cook continues, "I was thinking, there must be several people serving in Iraq and elsewhere overseas who would probably make fine lawyers. This scholarship is a way for them to accomplish what I did with the help of the G.I. Bill."

While he was at the University of Wisconsin, Cook says, he concentrated on his studies. "Because I lost those years in the service, I pretty much stayed on campus and worked hard so I could get through in a shorter period," he said. "I lived in the SAE house and was a house fellow."

One summer, a friend of the family, Oliver Grootemaat, of the Milwaukee law firm Drought & Grootemaat, sent him briefs to work on and had him do some clerking.

"After I graduated, Ralph Drought and Oliver Grootemaat hired me," said Cook, a Milwaukee native who went on to have his own successful practice in the area.

Plans are under way to award the first Robert E. Cook Scholarship in the 2006-07 academic year.

— Chris Du Pre
UW Foundation

Save the Date! Class Reunions Coming in September

Plans are already under way for this year's Class Reunion Weekend, set for Friday and Saturday, September 15-16, 2006.


Carve out some time to meet your classmates for a weekend of reminiscing, lively company, great food and drink, and — optional — talking shop.

Highlights of the weekend will be the Badgers vs. San Diego State Aztecs football game and pre-game tailgate party, class dinners for individual classes, a cocktail reception for all classes, and a free CLE Ethics Program, taught by Professor Ralph Cagle.

The Law School reunion Web site at www.law.wisc.edu/alumni/reunion has information on weekend activities and hotel accommodations. Invitations will be mailed in June. You can also update your contact information on the site, to make sure invitations and other Law School mailings reach you.

When the registration process gets under way, you can even check the Web site to see who is coming from your class.

Mid-year graduates are also encouraged to use the Web site to let the Law School know if you would like to change your reunion class year.

www.law.wisc.edu/alumni
The Madison law firm of Boardman, Suhr, Curry & Field, LLP has announced a gift of $150,000 to the UW Law School to create scholarships based on merit, diversity, or need at the discretion of the Law School.

"We have an obligation to the profession, and the strength of the legal academy is important to the well-being of the profession," says Carl J. Rasmussen ’82, Chair of the firm’s Executive Committee.

Rasmussen adds two other strong reasons for the firm’s decision to create the Boardman Fund. "We practice in Wisconsin, and we benefit from the legal culture of Wisconsin. The UW Law School is instrumental in the vitality of the legal culture of our state.

"And our firm draws on the Law School for our own lawyers. Therefore, our ability to be a vibrant and successful firm in part relies on the vitality of the UW Law School." Forty-four of Boardman’s 54 attorneys are graduates of the UW Law School.

The firm’s Executive Committee spent time deliberating on how best to help the Law School and determined that scholarship support was the area on which it wanted to focus.

"Clearly, an institution like this has many needs," Rasmussen says. "We are concerned about the debt level that law students have to carry. When law students are compelled to worry about substantial debt, both in law school and after they graduate, it is not good for the profession."

Rasmussen adds that he and other Boardman partners spent some time studying figures on the amount of debt shouldered by law students. "We were surprised when we saw some of the numbers," he says.

"Among the various needs that the Law School has, scholarship funding is particularly striking. We see it as the most compelling need."

In addition, Rasmussen says, "It is important for the Law School to be able to make substantial scholarship offers to recruit outstanding students. The ability of Wisconsin to attract and retain excellent law students is critical."
Ruder Ware Establishes Fund for Faculty Research

A new fund to support UW Law School faculty working on research projects has been established by the law firm of Ruder Ware. The Wausau-based firm created the fund to help the Law School retain its most productive scholars and teachers in an age of active competition among law schools for outstanding professors.

The Ruder Ware Fund will be used for research fellowships to individual faculty members, and in other related ways at the discretion of the Law School dean. The current pledge toward the fund totals $75,000.

Attorney Lon Roberts '73, CEO of Ruder Ware, says the firm decided to concentrate on faculty research as their contribution after a discussion with the dean of the Law School on what they could do to help the school. "Ken Davis explained that faculty research was an area where the need was great, and that was a cause that appealed to us."

Ruder Ware has a strong connection to the UW Law School, Roberts says. "A lot of members of the firm are alumni: 27 of our 43 attorneys. We consider the Law School to be a valuable asset: it's an excellent educational institution with high visibility, and I think our relationship is mutually beneficial."

Roberts adds, "The Law School is doing a great job under some trying economic circumstances, given the current decrease of state support. We thought that a fund to help the Law School attract and retain talented faculty would be a great project."

In meeting with the UW Foundation to plan the way the fund would work, the Ruder Ware board of directors decided to structure the fund so that it would have an immediate impact, Roberts says. "We are making funds available to the dean to use them as he sees fit in the best interests of the school. We can add to it in the future as well."

Roberts offers a final thought on the usefulness of the fund: "Maybe what we've done will give some other friends of the Law School the idea to do something similar."