

From the Desk of the Chancellor, Dec. 5, 2011

On Thursday, Dec. 1, the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law was born. “Overwhelmed” was Bob McKinney’s reaction when he saw the atrium at Inlow Hall filled to capacity—students, faculty, and staff at least four-deep on the balconies at every level of the building looking on—as he accepted the thanks, applause, and multiple standing ovations that came his way after the [announcement](#) of his \$24 million gift to the school. With matching funds from the university, the value of his contribution to the school tops \$31 million, which will mean five endowed professorships, an endowment fund for student scholarships, and a vision for achieving the status of a top 30 law school in national rankings.

Bob McKinney’s breathtaking gift was deeply meaningful on many levels. He credited his “love for this place” to having begun his law school studies, part time, in Indianapolis under the GI Bill in 1949, working, as many students did, and still do, an 8-5 job. After one and a half years of study, he was called back to active duty for the Korean War and given only six months to report. This meant accelerating his studies if he was to finish his law degree. He decided to complete his degree in Bloomington, where more courses were available, but his appreciation for the opportunity to begin his studies at night school here endured.

Later, returning to Indianapolis to launch his own career in law and banking, Bob McKinney watched as our law school graduated thousands of talented students, who then went on to prominent roles in every sector of society—government, business, nonprofits. Having been educated in a law school with a long tradition of civic engagement, these alumni often became dedicated community volunteers, leaders in the community, whose life and work made a difference to the quality of life in our city.

Bob McKinney himself was such a person, so his gift to our law school is also a gift to the entire community—a perpetuation of the values that guided him. These were elegantly and aptly expressed in the quote from the late Robert F. Kennedy with which he closed his remarks at the press conference: “There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why . . . I dream of things that never were, and ask, ‘Why not?’”

Comments? Write chancellor@iupui.edu.



Chancellor Charles R. Bantz

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