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ALUMNI UPDATES

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Frederic White ’70, ’73L has completed his first year as dean of Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco. He is the first African American to serve as dean of an ABA-accredited California law school. Before becoming dean on January 1, 2004, White taught at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law for 26 years, including five years as associate dean.

White was born and raised in Cleveland and became the first member of his family to graduate from a four-year college. A political science major at the College, he participated in student activism on campus. “In effect,” he says, “I was fighting the system that I’m now a part of.”

White was accepted by the Law School and the Journalism School, and says his experiences during the demonstrations helped him decide. “When we students took over buildings,” he told Class-Action, the magazine of Golden Gate Law, “I was impressed by the quality and fervor of the African-American and white lawyers who represented us. They weren’t doing it for money. I said to myself, ‘I ought to do that.’ That’s what drew me to law school.”

White was a municipal finance attorney for 5 1/2 years at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey in Cleveland before going into teaching, “the best decision I ever made.” As for his present job, he says, “In my wildest dreams, I never thought I’d be dean of a law school. I remember taking over buildings in 1968 and railing against the system. I remember walking out during law faculty meetings in 1978 or 1979 because of what I thought were injustices of race or gender or other problems.

“I have learned that growth includes realizing that what you said or did 20 years ago may not have validity today. Everybody has the capacity...
today. Everybody has the capacity for adaptation. One thing I want to do here is help our students adapt to the changing times. Law is different now from 10 years ago, and 10 years from now it will be different. We must make sure our lawyers know that they are in the forefront of a new century. Some of the things they learn and do now will have implications on the next generation. It’s wonderful for me to be a part of that.”

Alex Sachare ’71