

# McGILL LAW JOURNAL

*Montreal*

*Volume 13*

1967

*Number 2*

---

## The Opening of the New Law Building

A Message from the Dean

From time-to-time every institution undergoes changes in tempo, direction, and perhaps over-all aspirations. The McGill Law Faculty is the oldest university law school in the Commonwealth, with its beginnings in 1848. Since that time its history has been the history of Nineteenth Century Quebec and of Federal Canada. While essentially a Civil law school, the courses taught and the ideas discussed have reflected, and increasingly mirror, the two great systems, the civil law and the common law, both operative in Canada, with the related legal patterns of the United States acting as a modern catalyst and model for the growth of Canadian and Quebec law, particularly in their effects on Canadian legal education and, therefore, on the activities of the McGill Law Faculty itself.

Only in 1950 did the Faculty acquire a building of its own when it moved into Chancellor Day Hall, formerly the home of Mr. J.K. Ross. For sixteen years the Ross house, now named Chancellor Day Hall after McGill's first Chancellor — and one of the Commissioners appointed to draft the Quebec Civil Code of 1866 — was the home of the Faculty. But a student body that had grown to over 200 in the B.C.L. course, over 50 in the fourth year Bar preparation course, and from 30 to 50 post-graduate students from over 20 countries in the world, required facilities of a different order of magnitude.

The new building, officially opened on January 21, 1967, and increasingly occupied since late November, 1966, is now able to provide the Faculty with the library and classrooms it needs for its further development. The Institute of Air and Space Law founded in 1951, and the Institute of Comparative and Foreign Law founded in 1965, will both be served by the four Library floors, the three large classrooms and three seminar rooms and the striking Moot

Court, together with many small study places to accommodate post-graduate students. The Library itself, one of the better Law Faculty Librairies in Canada, is planned to expand to perhaps over 100,000 volumes within the next fifteen years.

Above all, the Law Faculty will serve the needs of the new Quebec and the new Canada, embracing the civil law and comparative-common law courses within a Canadian Federal legal and political system now undergoing severe trials. As a civil law school and a comparative law centre, training for the Bar, encouraging legal scholarship and legal reform, the Faculty now has a building worthy of its established programs and its new objectives.

MAXWELL COHEN,  
Dean of Law  
*McGill University*

\* \* \*

The above words of Dean Cohen are highly indicative of the general feelings of pride and accomplishment which accompanied the opening of the new Chancellor Day Hall on January 21, 1967.

The opening of the new building was an auspicious occasion for several reasons. First and foremost it brought to fruition the dreams and efforts of many former and present members of the faculty. Today both the student body and the staff have, so to speak, a "home of their own" where their legal studies may be carried on in surroundings which are both physically and academically conducive to intellectual development.

The building itself is a six storey complex, modern in design and spacious throughout. The library, which occupies the top four floors of the building, has a fine collection of over 35,000 volumes, including the acclaimed Wainwright Collection, comprising the personal library of the French legal historian Olivier Martin.

While the library is perhaps the outstanding feature of the new building, the new Moot Court must not go unnoticed for it will play a large and important role in training the student in courtroom procedures.

The opening January 21 was especially significant in that it brought together several eminent jurists of world fame, each of whom received the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* at a special convocation. Those honoured were:

The Honourable Robert Taschereau, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, who officially opened the new building;

The Honourable Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, who gave the Convocation Address;

The Right Honourable Lord A.T. Denning, Master of the Rolls, London, England;

The Honourable Ivan C. Rand, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and sometime Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario;

Professor Jean Carbonnier, Faculté de Droit et des Sciences Economiques, Université de Paris, France;

The Honourable George S. Chailles, Associate Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec.

Thus, it is with no little degree of pride and anticipation that the Students and Faculty settle down in their new surroundings where they will attempt to keep alive the spark of juristic learning which has for so long been the hallmark of the Faculty of Law.