



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



40th Anniversary for Tulane Maritime Law Center

New Orleans (Louisiana)-located Tulane Maritime Law Center celebrated its 40th anniversary on November 2 this year.

The event was marked by a special lecture by one of the law centre's most recognised graduates, Judge Barry Ashe (1984) of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

According to a statement by Tulane, since being founded in 1982 under the guidance of Professor Robert Force, the law centre has “graduated hundreds of students and firmly entrenched Tulane as a global behemoth in maritime law”.

“The centre was formally founded in 1982, when, by what some consider a stroke of luck, Professor Force’s car had broken down and [the-then law] Dean Paul Verkuil pulled over and offered a ride,” it stated.

“The ride turned into a discussion about a Maritime Law Center at Tulane and within a short time, Verkuil and others had raised more than US\$1 million to fund it.”

Those “others” included:

- attorneys John Sims of Phelps Dunbar and Bob Acomb of Jones Walker – both Tulane adjunct professors at the time
- John and Virginia Weinmann who initiated a US\$50,000 challenge to raise the million dollars needed for the programme
- the family of the late Niels Johnsen, who later established the chair in maritime law currently held by Professor Force

“From there, led by Professor Force – a giant in the field – the programme grew to include not only a JD [Juris Doctor] programme, [but also] an extension of studies to students in Panama and an LLM [Master of Laws] programme as well.”

Although Professor Force is understood to remain fully engaged as a faculty member and collaborative partner, in 2004 the baton of director of the law centre passed on to Professor Martin Davies.

“A world-renowned expert in the field”, Professor Davies was recognised by Oxford University last May for his global leadership with a Doctor of Civil Law degree.

“Oxford conferred the degree based upon a comprehensive review by academic referees finding that Professor Davies’ scholarship has transformed the field of admiralty law.”

In recent months, Tulane has provided the foundation for an extension of its “global leadership in the field of space law”.

“The rapidly-expanding field of space law is rooted in principles drawn from maritime law and Law of the Sea. With support from a US\$1 million gift by admiralty alumna Darleen Jacobs, Tulane Law is now leveraging its dominant position in admiralty law to become the leading academic centre for space law.”

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