

For Immediate Release  
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## **Gauthier Family Donates Wing to Loyola College of Law**

(New Orleans)—The first major physical expansion of the law school in 20 years is nearly complete. The memory of Wendell H. Gauthier, L'70, who spent his life helping people and making the world healthier and safer through litigation, will be honored by the dedication of the new Wendell H. and Anne B. Gauthier Family Wing at noon on Saturday, May 5, 2007, at the Loyola College of Law.

The four-story, 17,657-square-foot addition at the corner of Pine and Dominican Streets was funded thanks to a generous family gift from Anne Gauthier, the largest gift the College of Law has received from an individual. The wing will connect to the current building and provide state-of-the-art facilities for students, including seminar rooms, a lecture theater, additional offices, and additional parking.

The physical expansion of the College of Law was essential. The American Bar Association, in its most recent accreditation process, stipulated that Loyola needed to add more space. Also, since the college is now competing for students at a more national level, it is important to keep pace with competing law schools. “We want to provide the best facilities and faculty for our students,” says College of Law Dean Brian Bromberger. “The right learning environment is essential for success, and we want our students to have everything they need for a successful law school career.”

After researching the various means and costs of expanding the college, it was determined that the best solution was to add a new wing. The architectural firm of Mathes

Brierre Architects was engaged to design the new wing, which has also worked on the J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library, the Communications/Music Complex, and the original renovation of the law school building.

Wendell H. Gauthier was best known as being one of the nation's most creative and effective personal injury lawyers. Gauthier stood up for victims of industrial disasters and those harmed by large corporations, facing off with the tobacco industry, Shell Oil, Pan American, Continental Grain, and hotel chains, and achieving record-setting judgments for clients.

Gauthier wanted to help people who didn't have voices, and he achieved that goal throughout his career. As one of the top trial attorneys in the country, he made a name for himself based on a number of high-profile cases which he worked on, beginning in 1974 with home explosions in Jefferson Parish. His investigation caused Orleans and Jefferson Parish officials to rewrite their building codes to prevent future explosions. From the 1980s on, Gauthier focused his practice on public health issues, including going up against the tobacco industry and taking on health care abuse cases. His firm, at the time named Gauthier, Downing, LaBarre, Beiser & Dean, was one of five dozen law firms from around the nation who joined forces to battle the tobacco companies. Gauthier himself was the force who brought and held together the large group of plaintiff attorneys, corralling egos and keeping them all on the same track. Without Gauthier, the case would have fallen apart. Gauthier received the "Breath of Life" award from the American Lung Association in 2000 in recognition of his tireless work against the health hazards caused by smoking.

Gauthier was extremely successful financially and politically, but he came from local and modest roots. He was born in Crowley and raised in Iota, La., and attended the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, where he met his wife, Anne Barrios. Upon deciding to enroll in the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, Wendell and Anne moved to New Orleans and taught in the New Orleans and Jefferson school systems while Wendell attended law school at night.

Wendell and Anne both felt that education was very important. Without Wendell's acceptance into the College of Law, none of his success would have been possible—including Anne's generous gift to the school. Her gift will aid future students in following Wendell's ethic of fighting for others. "Wendell and I both believed it was important to give back to Loyola since the university, particularly the College of Law, is one of the main reasons we have had so much success in our lives," Anne explained. "Wendell strongly believed in supporting education, so I am thrilled to aid the College of Law in its continuing educational endeavors in his honor." His daughters, Celeste, Cherie, and Michelle, agree that this was what their father would have wanted and that he would be thrilled by the gift.

"Dad worked extremely hard to put himself through law school and become a successful attorney—this gift is our way of giving back and thanking Loyola for what it enabled Dad to do for those who often do not have a voice," said Celeste, who is carrying on her father's legacy by working at Gauthier, Houghtaling, and Williams. "As an alum of the College of Law myself, this connection with Dad and the law school are very much tied together, and I am thrilled that the family will have an integral part of the law

school's current and future success." As well as being a Loyola alumna, Celeste is a member of the Loyola Law Visiting Committee.

Wendell Gauthier served as a visiting member of the Loyola faculty and frequent lecturer, and he authored a number of articles, several of which examined the social and legal consequences of global warming. He helped to create the Wendell H. Gauthier-Michael X. St. Martin Eminent Scholar Chair in Environmental Law and the Peter J. Castano Scholarship for the Loyola College of Law. Gauthier also served as chairman of the Castano Group of Anti-Tobacco lawyers, chairman of the Jazzville Casino Group, and former interest-owner of the New Orleans Saints football team. He was one of *National Law Journal's* Top 10 Trial Lawyers and 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America and was featured in national articles on a regular basis, including the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. Gauthier also served as chairman of the LSU Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center's fund raising drive and helped create an endowed chair through LSU and the center dedicated to cancer research. In the political arena, Gauthier served as a delegate to the convention that rewrote the Louisiana Constitution in 1973, and he served as counsel to the mayor and city of New Orleans.

Gauthier died in his home of cancer at age 58 on December 11, 2001.

Construction for the new College of Law wing will cover 14,430 sq. feet (17,657 including the first floor garage). The new area will consist of first floor-parking, additional library space on the second floor, a new Dean's suite, financial aid, Continuing Legal Education, Skills Curriculum, international programs, and student records offices on the third floor, and a 170 seat lecture hall on the fourth floor. Renovations that are being made to 25,590 sq. ft. of the total 100,381 sq. ft. of the existing building include

three seminar rooms, a clinic classroom, clinic offices, career services, 10 faculty offices, and a staff break room. “We feel that we have reached an ideal number of students,” says Dean Bromberger. “Our focus is on the quality of education that we offer, not the quantity of students we offer it to.”

For more information or to RSVP for the dedication on May 5, 2007, please contact Susan Dempsey at (504) 861-5741 or [smdempse@loyno.edu](mailto:smdempse@loyno.edu)

Loyola University New Orleans is a Jesuit-Catholic institution with a total student enrollment of 4,724 including 800 law students.