



The Notre Dame London Law Centre:

Suffolk Street

A Reexamined Profession

Since 1968, the London Program has been offered for second year Notre Dame Law School students; it is one of the few programs to offer American students the opportunity to study international law abroad on an academic-year basis. Since 1970, the Summer London Law Program has been offered for American law students; this is the oldest American summer law program to be conducted in London. Since 1997, both of these programs have been housed in the London Law Center at 1 Suffolk Street on the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square in central London. What follows is a brief history of the two most recent sites of the London programs.

Albermarle Street



Late in 1980, the University received a \$4 million gift from the estate of Mrs. Dagmar Concannon, which enabled it to enter into a long-term lease at 7 Albermarle Street in London. Albermarle Street became the home of the London Law Centre and its Concannon Programme of International Law. A year after her death, this bequest was announced.

Mrs. Concannon was the widow of Matthias Concannon, a prominent Chicago lawyer who died in 1953. Mr. Concannon was a founding partner of the Chicago firm Concannon, Dillon, Snook & Morton as well as chief counsel and director of the Kellogg Company and chief counsel and trustee of the Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. He had also been chief counsel of *The Chicago Times* from 1944 until 1947.

The 7 Albermarle Street site was located in London's Mayfair district and had been built in the early 18th century. Housed in the "legal London," it had been the site of some of the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Paris of 1783; in the early 1800s, it became a fashionable hotel that counted among its prominent guests Louis XVII of France, who resided there for several days in 1814 before returning to Paris to be restored King.

On July 29, 1983, the London Law Centre was dedicated, with an evening reception and dedication dinner that included an address by Warren E. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States. His talk was titled "The Role of the Lawyer Today." During his talk, Justice Burger remarked:

I think I have a better understanding of the richness of our common law heritage from my visits to England, sitting as a guest judge in the courts and in the Inns of Court...In more than the quarter of a century that I have been on the bench, my visits to courts wherever I traveled have given me a better understanding of how those systems work. Observation of other systems is essential to improving any system of justice.

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Justice Warren Burger

Father Hesburgh and Justice Burger

Justice Burger's belief in the value of studying other systems of law is echoed in remarks, by four alumni of the London Law Program, found on the following pages.

As the London Law Program and other University academic programs offered in London expanded, the need for a new site became evident. Through a bequest from Charles K. Fischer, the University of Notre Dame was able to take over the Crown leases for 1 Suffolk Street in June 1997 and then undertake a ten-month renovation of the property.



Just as Albermarle Street had enjoyed a rich and colorful history, so too had Suffolk Street. The first building on this site was constructed in 1823, serving as the club house for the United University Club (UUC) with membership of graduates from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Among the 500 members were fifty-one peers, equal amounts baronets and knights, 284 members of the clergy (including the Archbishop of Canterbury), and some 200 politicians.

By 1906, the finances of UUC had become meager, at best, and a new lease for the building was negotiated and the property was entirely rebuilt, including ten bedrooms for members, which brought in an income of nearly 200 pounds a year for the club. World War I, however, severely impacted the membership of the club, as staff and members were called into active service and food shortages became commonplace.

In 1914, the UUC exchanged a lease it held for another property on Suffolk Street for a combined lease on numbers 2, 3, and 4 Suffolk Street. The renovation of the expanded property was completed in 1924. During the next decade, many clubs were





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As we all found out, the first year of law school does not leave much time for outside pursuits. Developing outlines, grasping the concepts of legal research, and attending classes and study groups can consume the vast majority, if not all, of your time. As a first year, it is difficult to imagine how the next two years will be any different. However, as we soon found out, after first year, you actually do have a bit more time on your hands.

Despite all that South Bend may have to offer, as with any mid-sized city, cultural opportunities are limited, especially once you leave the manicured quads of the Notre Dame campus. Putting aside the usual complaints, law school is the last time most of us will have our mornings and/or afternoons free, possibly until retirement. Driven to find alternatives for the last years of my academic life, I chose to spend the 1996/1997 academic year in London.

The opportunity to spend the full second year in London makes Notre Dame Law School different from any other U.S. law school. The Concannon Program, with its small classes and wide range of extracurricular activities, allowed me to set myself apart and gain unique legal experience. I interned with the in-house legal department of a multinational corporation, attended courses taught by prominent international professors, and met and studied with lawyers from around the world who were participating in the LLM program. I was also lucky enough to work in London during the all-important second-year summer as a summer associate, thanks to Professor Bennett, the Director of the London Program, who introduced me to the hiring partner of a London-based firm with a strong boutique practice.

The non-academic aspects of the London program were equally beneficial. I travelled around England and Scotland and a host of European cities, including Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Geneva, Paris, Prague, Rome, Salzburg, Venice, and Vienna. In addition, while living in London, I attended cutting edge theatre and visual art performances as well as formal events with professional legal associations at the prestigious Inns of Court.

By the end of my year in London, I noticed positive influences and personal and academic development from the international experience both in myself and the other London participants.

In addition, the London programme participants ended up with interesting jobs after graduation. Compared to the overall graduating class, we had a disproportionate number of classmates accepting jobs in New York, Los Angeles, and, of course, London, after graduation.

After graduation, I spent a year in New York but was anxious to return to London. My firm had an office in London, and as soon as I was able, I transferred back to this amazing city. I would recommend the London program to any law student looking for a bit more out of law school and, possibly, even life in general.

Anastasia Tonello, '98 J.D.
Laura Devine Solicitors
London, U.K.





forced to close or merge; the New University Club, facing dissolution, joined with the UUC, thus expanding membership. Two extra bedrooms, squash courts, and separate quarters for entertaining women visitors were added to meet the growing needs of the club.

During World War II, the Westminster City Council notified the UUC that it was legally obligated to provide air raid shelter to 200 members of the general public. In order to do so, dinners were not served after 7:30 p.m. and a dorm with bunk beds was set up for members. An unfortunate ancillary outcome of the fall of France was a restriction of the sale of burgundies and clarets to odd days of the month.

As a result of neglect during World War II, declining membership, and rising inflation, the building on Suffolk Street fell into great disrepair. In order to preserve itself, the UUC merged with the Oxford & Cambridge Club and moved into headquarters on Pall Mall Street. At this time, Coutts and Company, a prominent banking establishment, assumed the remaining years of the building's lease, taking possession of the property in 1973. The company remained there until 1980.

In 1980, the British School of Osteopathy assumed lease of the property. While the BSO restored to their original size some of the rooms that Coutts had partitioned, it also created many small partitioned spaces to meet the needs of space for clinical examinations, faculty offices, and tutorial spaces. Eventually, the tension between the need to meet health and safety regulations while also maintaining the historic preservation restrictions of the English Heritage Society led the BSO to seek more modern space for itself.

The renovations that Suffolk Street had undergone over the years and through its various owners had left some of it rabbit-warren-like. While vestiges of the building's original grandeur remained, such as ceiling moldings and ornate fireplaces, there were other places of disparate levels and small, almost unusable spaces.

With the funds from the Fischer bequest, a ten-month renovation of the site began and, in July of 1998, the London Law Centre moved from Albermarle Street to Suffolk Street, officially named the Marion Kennedy Fischer Hall. The Notre Dame Law Centre is now housed in a building suited for its needs and meeting all requirements of the American Bar Association, such as a Courtroom and law library.



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David P. Quint, '75 J.D.
RP&C International
London, U.K.

Without question, my career has been influenced by my experience with the Notre Dame London Law School Program. I attended the program in 1973–74 and was fortunate to be exposed to a number of high-quality professors, including Reginald Maudsley (an acknowledged expert on wills and trusts), Keith Uff (a fine teacher who made evidence interesting), and Professor Alexandewitz of the London School of Economics (who taught us about the Treaty of Rome from the standpoint of his own involvement with its drafting). **The experience in London was wonderful and it imbued me with a true love of everything international.**

Upon graduation from NDLS in 1975, I entered the practice of law with a firm based in Cleveland that did a modest amount of international work. Through perseverance, I was assigned to the firm's international projects which included M&A and capital formation transactions. In 1977, that firm merged with a Washington D.C.-based practice that represented the Japanese steel industry. From that point onward, I worked almost exclusively on international projects, often involving international trade legislation (anti-dumping and countervailing duty statutes) as well as international investment transactions.

In 1982, one of the firm's clients, a large, privately-owned oil and gas company, asked me to create an international financing arm for its business. I moved my family to London in 1984 and have lived there continually since. For the most part, my work has involved sourcing international capital, which has included the formation of investment vehicles to accommodate investor needs as to privacy, taxation, and corporate governance. Although I no longer practice law, I have found it to be an invaluable discipline.

In 1992, when the oil and gas company did an IPO in America, I set up my own investment banking firm, which today has offices in London and New York. Our shareholders include Nationwide Insurance and JP Morgan, and we specialize in the management of international real estate funds and the placement of convertible securities for companies engaged in a variety of businesses in the U.S, Europe and Asia.

Last year, our firm purchased a building in St. James's Square which traces its roots to England's most prominent Catholic family, the Dukes of Norfolk. Our building, which was constructed in 1772, housed the Duke's estate manager during the late 1700s and holds a position at the junction of St. James's Square and Pall Mall which has been witness to a number of significant historical events. Nearby are the royal residences of Clarence House and Buckingham Palace. Next door, in Norfolk House, Dwight Eisenhower oversaw the combined allied forces during the Second World War and, a few hundred yards away, Winston Churchill inspired the British people from the Cabinet War Rooms. A friend summarised the London experience best when he said "you live in a museum."

During his remarks at the dedication of the Concannon Programme, Justice Burger expressed a sense of the things needed to be done to restore the legal profession and its members to their intended roles as “healers and peacemakers”:

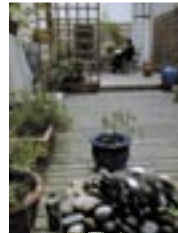
First, the moral basis of law must be emphasized, for without that foundation the law would be, or it would become, a set of sterile, mechanical rules, devoid of real meaning in terms of human values.

Second, and closely related, professional ethics must have far greater attention from the profession. This should begin on the first hour of the first day in the law school.

Third, standards of civility and decorum are as imperative at the negotiating table as in the courtroom. This too must begin in the law schools. Civility must be seen as the coolant of the excessive ardor of the adversary system. I regret to say that civility is in short supply in our courtrooms, and its importance is far too little mentioned in law school.

Notre Dame has now carried on the work of a great university with concern for traditional values for nearly a century and a half. The London branch of its school of law, with that inspiration and sponsorship, can lead the way to a more honorable and more effective profession.

As the voices of alumni of the program will attest, the London Law Program has had a significant effect on both their personal and professional development. Whether they have chosen to practice law in London or in the United States, London alumni practice their profession with an expanded appreciation for what Justice Burger called “the richness of our common law heritage.” In 1983, Justice Burger declared that the London Law Program had “a rare opportunity to encourage a reexamination of the moral basis and the jurisprudential assumptions on which our legal system and our legal education are based.” London Law Programme alumni stand as a testament to the efficacy of this reexamination.



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Joseph P. Shannon, '88 J.D.
Dolan & Shannon, P.C.
Chicago, Illinois

Spending my second year in London in the Concannon Program has had a profound influence on my legal career.

Actually, I applied to Notre Dame Law School because it had a second-year program in London. I strongly believed then, and still do, that a large part of education takes place outside the classroom.

I remember well how excited I was to spend my second year of law school in London and can remember arriving in the city like it was yesterday. My classmate, Todd Nelson, and I stayed in a youth hostel while we searched for housing. I had no money so I also learned how to juggle two jobs, a running career, and studies while in London. The whole experience pushed my survival skills to the limit and helped me to develop a set of skills I'm confident I would not have tapped had I stayed stateside.

You cannot attend school abroad and have it not alter the way you view things. I learned to get along with a diverse group of people, especially as London is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. I joined a running club there, and we traveled throughout Europe, running races. I learned to acknowledge political views that were far left, far right, and in the crowded center. And, I must admit that while living there, I learned to appreciate our country, the Constitution, and our legal system more than ever. **I began to fully appreciate how our country protects and celebrates the rights of each individual. Essentially, I view the world differently from having lived in London.**

As an attorney, it is pivotal to be able to see numerous perspectives. Having been raised in a rural area, my London experience taught me to appreciate living in a big city. There's something to be said for going to the National Gallery during the day, seeing *Les Miserables*, and adjourning to a pub with friends. I believe that I live in Chicago because I spent my second year in London.

But my life is not the only one that changed because of my second year's study in London. My parents saw Ireland for the first time because they came to visit me while I was in London. I spent two weeks driving them through the land of their ancestors.

Today, I still use the skills I learned in London. And I don't limit myself to what I've done before. London affected me profoundly. I would study there again in a minute.



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Many students are unaware of the London Programme until it is advertised to them as 1Ls. Even as a law school applicant, I had my eye on practicing internationally although I was uncertain of how I could achieve this without years of US practice first. I must admit that the London Programme was one of the unique selling points of NDLS for me, with no other top-tier law school providing such an opportunity.

In 2000, we had one of the largest classes of 2Ls make the exodus to London. A number of LLMs from all over the world joined us, and together we had quite a memorable year.

Upon graduation, my heart won over my head as I decided to forgo an offer in my home state and instead move to London soon after marrying. The two years since then have been a whirlwind, with my requalifying as a Solicitor in England and practicing as a film finance lawyer at Davenport Lyons, a full-service firm specializing in media, technology, and entertainment in London. It's challenging to deal with parties to a transaction who are physically located across the globe but quite rewarding to know that the end result is a theatrically released film. Dealing with US-based clients is particularly enjoyable, especially with the instant rapport an American voice can bring on the end of a telephone.

Many ask how I ended up practicing in London and are often surprised to hear about the London Programme, despite their recognition of Notre Dame itself. Given that it is one of our best-kept secrets, we should ensure that it does not remain that way!



Katrina Stagner, '02 J.D.
Davenport Lyons
London, U.K.