Richard Masland, Medical Pioneer and Former Chair of the Department of Neurology, Dies at 93

Richard Lambert Masland, who led a landmark study of the causes of birth defects that became a template for U.S.-funded biomedical research, died Dec. 19 of pneumonia at his home in Englewood, N.J. He was 93.

From 1959 to 1968 Masland served as the director of the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He is best known for leading the National Collaborative Perinatal Project, a nationwide study of pregnancy and child development, in the years between 1959 and 1966. The project generated hundreds of scientific articles and produced major findings, such as the link between virus and mental retardation. In 1968, Masland left NIH to chair the Department of Neurology at the College of Physici ans and Surgeons of Columbia University and direct the Neurological Service at the Presbyterian Hospital. He stepped down as Henry and Lucy Moses Professor of Neurology in 1973 and became H. Houston Merritt Professor of Neurology, Emeritus, the following year. Masland also campaigned to raise public understanding of epilepsy and dyslexia. At the time, many teachers considered children with these often treatable conditions as being mentally retarded.

Masland is survived by his wife, Mary Wootton Masland, of Englewood, who works as a speech and language pathologist; two sons, Richard of West on, Mass., and Thomas of Cape Town; two daughters, Frances of Newton, Mass., and Sarah of Colorado Springs; and seven grandchildren.

Oscar Schacter, Law ’39, Professor Emeritus, Dies at 88

BY HAYLEY MILLER

Oscar Schachter Law ’39, a pioneer in international law and a faculty member at Columbia Law School for more than 28 years, died on Dec. 13, of complications from heart disease. He was 88 years old.

After graduating first in his class from Columbia Law School in 1939, Schachter, a native New Yorker, pursued work in private practice and federal offices until joining the United Nations Legal Department in 1946. In 1952, he was named director of the General Legal Division, where he would help create the legal structure for the United Nations. In 1966, he became director of the U.N. Institute of Training and Research, which trains representatives from international governments to the U.N. headquarters about international affairs management, social and economic development.

According to a statement issued by the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, “Professor Schachter did more than any other official in the United Nations to help shape the rule of law, and was the architect of the legal framework which has guided United Nations peacekeeping for more than 50 years.”

After decades of service to the U.N., Schachter decided to join the Columbia Law School faculty in 1975. In 1980, he was appointed the Hamilton Fish Professor Emeritus of International Law & Diplomacy and in 1985 was given emeritus status. He continued to teach until spring 2003. According to David Leeborn, dean of the Law School, “He was a teacher beloved by generations of students, whom he inspired to enter careers in international law.”

Throughout his long and prosperous career, Schachter was respected by international leaders, peers, and students. He also belonged to various professional organizations, and penned numerous books and articles on topics ranging from international law and institutions to world peace and security.

Columbia Law School Dean David W. Leebron announced on Dec. 17 that he would be resigning after nearly eight years of deanship and 15 years of teaching to assume the presidency at Rice University.

During his tenure, Leebron solidified the Law School’s position as a premier global legal institution through the recruitment of dynamic and accomplished scholars, the admission of some of the most promising legal minds, as well as the retention of dedicated faculty and staff. Leebron also oversaw the expansion and improvement of the Law School’s buildings, which was made possible through a $130 million investment by graduates and friends.

Leebron, who is both excited by this new opportunity but saddened by his imminent departure, said, “I am confident, with the depth of leadership on our faculty, and the esteem in which the Law School is held around the nation, that the faculty and President Lee Bollinger will identify an outstanding individual to lead the law school in the important years ahead.”

Business School Boosts Female Enrollment

BY DAVID W. LEEBRON

Business school deans and women’s business groups have long seen business schools as having a gender gap: For the past decade an average of only 30 percent of those entering business schools have been women. The Forte Foundation, a consortium of corporations, nonprofit groups and graduate business schools, including Columbia, has been holding forums this past fall to address the problem.

Columbia, however, has made strides in its own in enrolling a greater proportion of women, some 34%, in its business school for a couple of reasons, according to Amanda Carlson, an assistant director of admissions. She said that student groups and high-profile graduates, such as Shelly Lazarus, chairperson and CEO of Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide, and Sallie Krawcheck, chairperson and CEO of Smith Barney, have helped in recruiting women to Columbia’s business program.

Be Fit to Be’ne’Fit

Columbia University Medical Center and New York-Presbyterian Hospital kicked off a campaign to help employees keep their New Year’s fitness resolutions. The ongoing program began with a power walk on Jan. 8. A recent study showed that two-thirds of Americans are overweight.

John Reeves, Athletic Director, Announces Retirement

John A. Reeves, Columbia’s athletic director, announced his retirement last month, effective June 30. President Lee C. Bollinger accepted Reeves’ retirement with regret and appreciation for his many accomplishments over the last 12 years.

“During his tenure, athletic facilities have substantially improved and, more importantly, the opportunities for all students to participate in competitive programs have been enhanced significantly,” said Bollinger.

Reeves joined Columbia in 1991 from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where he served as director of physical education and athletics. Before that, he directed sports and recreation at the University of Rochester and Drew University, in New Jersey.

In announcing his retirement, Reeves said, “It is the right time for me to begin to make room for someone else to lead physical education and athletics at this great university,” adding that his decision “comes at a time when, I believe, Columbia is poised, given the university’s continued support and commitment to excellence, to become a perennial contender in all Ivy League sports.”

Oscar Schachter