HELPING THE SCHOOL IMPROVE

Alumnus Steven Rappaport, a partner in a private equity investment firm, gives his time to chairing the National Council’s Strategic Planning Advisory Committee.

by David Linzee

"We are working with the faculty and administration to improve the law school experience for students," says Steven N. Rappaport, JD ’74, of himself and his colleagues on the School of Law’s National Council, an advisory body. "The current size of the School of Law—large enough to offer a diverse curriculum, but not so large that people get lost—contributes to the outstanding quality of the School."

The School was a lot smaller in 1971, when Rappaport, a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston, was part of a small minority of out-of-towners in his law class. He and his wife, Judith A. Garson, JD ’75, held positions as head residents of an undergraduate dormitory here and received scholarship support to enable them to attend law school.

Rappaport remembers forming attachments not only to fellow students, but also to members of the law faculty, especially the late Gary I. Boren, a tax professor for whom Rappaport worked as a research assistant. He and his wife later funded a scholarship award in Boren’s honor.

After graduation Rappaport practiced corporate law at Hartman & Craven in New York City for 15 years. He also earned a graduate law degree in taxation from New York University.

In 1981 he represented a group of investors who bought Telerate, Inc., then a small provider of real-time financial information to capital markets. At that time Telerate had 80 employees in a single office in New York City; by 1990 it had 2,500 employees in 100 offices in 80 countries. As executive vice president, Rappaport helped open most of these offices, spending more than 100 days a year traveling in Europe and Asia. “It was an exciting time,” he recalls.

After the company was sold to Dow Jones, Rappaport became a senior executive at Metallurg, Inc., a worldwide manufacturer of specialty alloys and a former client. He and his two partners then purchased Loanet, Inc., a leader in processing securities lending data for major financial institutions. They acquired and consolidated four other companies, which together were sold in 2001. He is now a partner in RZ Capital, LLC, a private equity investment firm, and a director of a number of public and private companies.

“I enjoy my work,” says Rappaport. “Each business you get involved in is different. The people, products, circumstances all vary. It’s never routine.”

Rappaport also continues to make time for the University and the School of Law. He is a member of the New York Regional Cabinet for Washington University and chair of the School of Law National Council’s Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, which is helping set a course for the next five years (see “Progress Report” on page 36 for more information on the strategic plan). But the Washington University role Rappaport most enjoys is father of undergraduate Peter Garson-Rappaport, Class of 2005.

Steven Rappaport, JD ’74, has been serving on the School of Law’s National Council since 2000.