



## Chapman University School of Law

[by Tom Horne]

Southern California's Chapman University may not have the long history of some law schools, but this new kid on the block has a lot to offer and is growing in popularity as a result.

Although it was established less than 10 years ago, the Chapman University School of Law has already made great scholastic strides in terms of its prestige. Chapman became ABA-accredited after only 2.5 years, for example, and has competed exceedingly well against many well-established schools in the annual U.S. News and World Report rankings. That's a remarkable feat for a school so young. And when you take those merits and add in the beauty of Orange, California, you can see why Chapman's momentum is growing.

Chapman is the only law school in Orange County on a university campus. Before it opened its law school in 1995, Chapman University had a rich history dating back to 1861. It later merged with California Christian College, and still maintains its Christian heritage, although no religious courses are required and admission is open to all.

Chapman also offers a Tax Law Emphasis certificate program to students pursuing their Juris Doctor degrees. It's the only school in California to offer this. With core tax courses and rich clinical experiences, the tax law program provides interested students with solid foundations in the field of tax law. Students are also permitted to enroll in tax law courses in the LL.M. in Taxation program while pursuing their JD degrees.

In addition, a joint JD/MBA is available in conjunction with the AACSB-accredited George L. Argyros School of Business and Economics. Offered to full-time students, the program requires four years of study and

acceptance to both the Chapman University School of Law and the Argyros School of Business and Economics. The JD/MBA program gives students the opportunity to obtain two highly marketable professional degrees.

In the area of career services, Chapman boasts some extraordinary numbers for its alumni. Eight months after graduation, 89% of their students have jobs, many with regionally or nationally renowned employers. Some Chapman alumni have accepted clerkships for U.S. District Courts in California, Nevada, and the Virgin Islands, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, the Minnesota State Court of Appeals, the Colorado State Court of Appeals and the U.S. Department of Labor. This demonstrates not only the value of Chapman's Career Services Center, but also the value of the education it's providing to the students.

Chapman emphasizes smaller classes with one-on-one attention from very distinguished and diverse faculty members, almost all of whom have had their works published in various journals. Professors view themselves as teachers and mentors and are available to students for personal intellectual partnerships as well as academic and career advice. The Socratic Method is only one of their teaching tools. Professors also employ lectures, small seminars, student study groups and simulation courses.

The school also stresses ethics and citizenship in its legal training; they view themselves as a community dedicated to fostering the intellectual and personal development of good people...who also happen to be great

lawyers. And the impressive results listed above seem to demonstrate this.

Orange, California, adds to the appeal. The city sits close to three of Southern California's biggest hubs: Anaheim, San Diego, and Los Angeles. In addition, for those with an international flare, the Mexican border is just a bit further south of San Diego. There's always something to do in the warm sun where it seemingly never rains. ABA standards require full-time Chapman Law students to devote substantially all working hours to the study of law. (Students shall not engage in remunerative employment for more than 20 hours per week, for example). But when you really need some time away from work or studying, you can take a day trip to Hollywood, Disneyland or Sea World. They're all just a short drive away.

Chapman is open and flexible when it comes to paying its tuition. In the 2003/2004 academic year, that was \$25,350. Grants and other forms of financial aid are available, in addition to a staggered payment plan that eases the burden of the other alternative: making one lump sum payment. Also, for the 2003/2004 academic year, Chapman awarded \$2.5 million in academic merit scholarships. More than 80% of first-year students received scholarship awards averaging more than \$10,000. Merit scholarship awards are made by the Admissions Committee, and all applicants are automatically considered without the need to submit additional material.

While Chapman does have the basic required



courses (Torts, Property, etc.), it also gives extra credit for students who, for example, engage in approved competitions. Credit is also available for students who conduct directed research in a field not regularly taught at Chapman. This enables students to explore virtually any area of law, even if that area isn't covered at Chapman (but most are).

So as you can see, Chapman has a lot to offer. One of the most interesting things is that this law school is definitely still on its way up. It's relatively new, but growing. The statistics point out the value of a Chapman Law education, and this is a school that's not even 10 years old. What it lacks in history, it seems to make up for in quality. Student testimonials rave about the Chapman Law experience. Those testimonials, plus the fact that so many Chapman grads seem to find quality jobs, speak volumes for this school.