The University of North Carolina School of Law

By Rebecca E. Neely

The University of North Carolina School of Law resides within the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Founded in 1845, Carolina Law is not only one of the oldest law schools in the nation, it is the oldest law school in North Carolina.

Year after year, U.S. News and World Report has ranked the law school in the top-tier. In 2012, it was ranked 30th. In addition, Carolina Law was also ranked as one of the top 10 public law schools in the nation.

The school’s mission is to prepare outstanding lawyers and leaders to serve the people and institutions of North Carolina, the nation and the world. Carolina Law offers significant expertise in a number of areas, including civil rights, banking, environmental law, intellectual property, and entrepreneurial and securities law.

In 1845, William H. Battle, a Superior Court judge, and who later sat on the North Carolina Supreme Court, became the school’s first law professor. He managed the legal program that eventually grew into the UNC School of Law.

In 1920, the School of Law became a charter member of the American Association of Law Schools, and in 1928 it was both approved by the American Bar Association, and established its chapter of the Order of the Coif.

UNC is one of the most selective in the nation. Its average J.D. class size is 250; in total, the law school has only 700 students at any given time. As a result, it has a student-faculty ratio of 16.9 to 1, according to information at Wikipedia.com.

The law school is located in Van Hecke-Wettach Hall, but, as of 2008, the school will relocate to the new Carolina North satellite campus, where the expected completion date for the new facility is estimated to be 2012.

As part of a major research university, UNC School of Law houses numerous academic centers, which collaborate with other units on campus, along with universities, centers and nonprofits all over the country. These include the Center for Banking and Finance, the Center for Civil Rights, the Center on Poverty, Work & Opportunity, the Center for Law and Government, and the Center on Law, Environment, Adaptation and Resources (CLEAR).

The school publishes five law journals, all edited by students. These include the First Amendment Law Review, the North Carolina Banking Institute Journal, the North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation, the North Carolina Journal of Law & Technology (NC JOLT), and the oldest, the North Carolina Law Review, which was first published in 1922.

Additionally, UNC School of Law is home to over 50 student organizations, which give students opportunities to learn about specific areas of legal interest, gain practical experience, and make friends.

Through its Career Services Office, UNC School of Law offers students, alumni and employers comprehensive career planning resources.

John Charles Boger is the Dean of UNC School of Law, and a Wade Edwards Distinguished Professor of Law. He is a 1974 graduate of Carolina Law.