Cover and exterior elevations reproduced from original drawings prepared by the architectural firm of James Gamble Rogers, Incorporated, for the Yale Law School, October 18, 1929.

Text adapted from Description of the Sterling Law Buildings at Yale University, New Haven: 1931, based upon the Report of Dean Charles E. Clark to the President and Fellows of Yale University for the Academic Year 1930–1931.
First Floor Plan

Key

1 Main Floor Corridor
2 Dean's Office
3 Classrooms and Offices
4 Main Staircase
5 Courtroom
6 Courtyard
7 Auditorium
8 Faculty Dining Room
9 Dining Hall

Faculty Lounge, second floor overlooking
Wall Street

Library Reading Room, third floor
Wigs and Woolsacks
A Self-Guided Tour to the Yale Law School
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The Arms incorporate, with slight modifications, elements from those of the three founders of the School. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Seth Perkins Staples, B.A. 1797, started a law school and purchased and maintained a law library, which together became the Yale Law School. In 1842, Samuel J. Hitchcock, B.A. 1809, became the moving spirit of the School. Judge David Daggett, B.A. 1783, a judge of the Supreme Court of Errors of Connecticut, became lecturer in 1824 and Kent Professor of Law in Yale College in 1826, positions he held until 1847.

Mr. Staples is represented by silver staples, medieval in character, on a black field. Mr. Hitchcock is represented by an alligator on a green field, because his family emigrated to the British West Indies, where Jamaica was symbolized by an alligator. Judge Daggett is represented by a greyhound on a field of gold, because Doggett and Doget were early spellings of the name. The Arms were designed and executed by Theodore Sizer, Professor of the History of Art at Yale from 1927–1957, associate director and director of the Yale Art Gallery from 1929–1947, and University Pursuivant of Arms from 1962 until his death in 1967.
Introduction

The plan of a single building or group of buildings where law students might both live and work is modeled on the idea of the English Inns of Court. Long advocated by General Charles H. Sherrill, B.A. 1889, LL.B. 1891, M.A. 1892, and former president of the Yale Law School Association, the plan, under the careful leadership of Dean Thomas W. Swan, came to fulfillment when the estate of John W. Sterling, B.A. 1864, made a gift of $5,000,000 to be used for this purpose.

Work began in August 1929, and the entire structure was completed in less than two years. The architectural firm was James Gamble Rogers, Incorporated, of New York and the builder was The Sperry and Treat Company of New Haven. The limestone figures and decorations were carved by Rene Chambellan; the handsome stained glass windows were designed by Henderson Brothers of New York, with Frederick Kurtz completing the series of judicial medallions for the main staircase; and the elegant wood carving that is seen throughout the building was created by the Irving & Casson--A.H. Davenport Corporation of Boston.

The design of the Sterling Law Buildings follows what is generally known as Collegiate Gothic. In this instance, however, it has been interpreted quite freely to include Norman, early renaissance and modern Gothic motifs, carried out with limestone trim, part seam-faced granite and special-sized brick, steel casements, leaded glass windows, textured slate and copper roofs. The buildings are embellished inside and out with stone sculpture, wood carvings, and stained glass medallions.

Extensive use has been made of symbolism in the sculptured stone, wood and stained glass throughout the School building and the dormitories. Among these, the following may be noted: judges and lawyers in costume; noted persons connected with events of legal import; officers of the law; symbols of the law; objects and instruments, both historical and modern, associated with the capture, trial, and punishment of criminals; buildings, such as the Inns of Court, associated with the law; symbols of law and justice; and symbols of legal codes of all ages.
Many of the stained glass medallions were copied from illustrations in Les Cartes a Jouer, a book depicting the history of playing cards from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. The cards represent the game of life and all the aspects of human psychology. Greed, justice, love, war, hate, sorrow, passion and temperance are but a few of the many themes portrayed in these medallions.

It is hoped that this guide to the ornamentation of the Sterling Law Buildings will impart a flavor of the humor, drama, whimsy, and majesty that is contained in the architecture and decoration of the Yale Law School.

So, look up, down and around and enjoy the treasures of these buildings. Whether as a visitor or a member of the law school community, you are surrounded by works of art produced by master craftsmen. While the Sterling Law Buildings are not museums, but rather functioning spaces for teaching, research, domicile and recreation, they represent some of the finest examples of Collegiate Gothic architecture in the country and are unique in their blending of different forms of decoration, ornamentation and design.

Enjoy them, use them and care for them, for they are physical expressions of the philosophy and spirit of the Yale Law School.

**Exterior Wall Street**

The following description of the exterior ornamentation of the Sterling Law Buildings begins at the main entrance at 127 Wall Street and proceeds, in the direction of High Street, around the building and back to the main entrance. Individual segments are identified from left to right.

1 **Gothic Arches of Main Entrance Wall Street**

Figures symbolic of personalities within the legal system
+ Policeman apprehending a burglar
+ Judge passing sentence upon a criminal
+ Convict in stripes contemplating his crime
+ Convict cracking a stone
+ Burglar on a balcony
+ Client as a goat with money bags
+ Lawyer as a parrot
+ Policeman with a club and handcuffs
+ Judge passing sentence upon a criminal
+ Burglar on a balcony

2 **Above Front Arches and Beneath Large Second Floor Bay Window Wall Street**

Inscription

YALE SCHOOL OF LAW
STERLING LAW BUILDINGS
Wall Street

3 Beneath Third Floor Bay Window  Wall Street
Inscriptions  Preeminent Lawgivers and Legal Writers
✦ Bracton  ✦ Coke
✦ Justinian  ✦ Maitland
✦ Blackstone  ✦ Mansfield

4 Vaulted Arches of Main Entrance  Wall Street
Symbols
✦ Laurel wreath
✦ Ball and chain
✦ Jailer’s ring and keys

5 Over Doorways Leading from Porch into Law School  Wall Street
Scenes
✦ Courtroom with judge asleep
✦ Schoolroom with pupils asleep

6 Finial Above Large Bay Window  Wall and High Streets
Symbol
✦ Owl representing laws

7 Upper Corners of Large Bay Window  Wall and High Streets
Symbols
✦ Gargoyle representing doctor of divinity
✦ Gargoyle representing doctor of law
Wall and High Streets

8 Encircling Large Bay Window
Wall and High Streets

Inscriptions: Shapers of American Law
- Baldwin
- Taft
- Kent
- Holmes
- Marshall

9 Second Floor Level High Street

Terra Cotta Heads
- Policeman
- Lawyer
- Prisoner
- Judge

10 Atop Low Gable High Street

Figures
- Figures done in lead on the top of a small tower are fashioned after Pegasus, a winged steed.

11 Canopied Niche Over Law School Entrance
High Street

Inscription and Symbols

JUSTICE
(with scales)

LAW
(with owl)

12 Panel Over Door to Law School Entrance
High Street

Scene
- Portrayal of a sleeping law student with his books piled high about him and cobwebs around his shoulders
13 Finials On Gable Ends of Auditorium
High and Grove Streets
Symbolic Figures
✦ Client as a goat with money bags
✦ Lawyer as a bulldog
✦ Lawyer as a wolf
✦ Client as a donkey
✦ Lawyer as a parrot

14 Under Bay Window of Auditorium
Corner of High and Grove Streets
Scene
✦ Prisoner in stocks

15 Framing Windows of Auditorium
High and Grove Streets
Figures
✦ Roman senator
✦ Patriarch
✦ Medieval king
✦ Modern judge

16 Between Arches Over Law School Entrance
Grove Street
Figure
✦ Representation of Portia, posing as a lawyer in
The Merchant of Venice
17 Below Windows Over Law School Entrance
Grove Street
Inscription

STERLING BUILDINGS
LAW

18 Vaulted Arches of Law School Entrance
Grove Street
Symbols
✦ Ball and chain
✦ Handcuffs

19 High Finial of Building Near Law School Entrance
Grove Street
Symbolic Figure
✦ Lawyer as bulldog

20 Under Stone Balconies at Second Floor Level
Grove Street

✦ Figures
✦ Proponent and opponent are represented by a Puritan with a Bible and his adversary with a whiskey bottle and playing cards.
21 Under Window Sills at Third Floor Level
Grove Street
Symbolic Figures
✦ Square-toed shoes
✦ Traffic light

22 Above Windows at Third Floor Level
Grove Street
Symbolic Figures
✦ Policeman’s nightstick
✦ Motorcycle wheels
✦ Gloves and whistle

23 Corner Buttress Near Arch Over Entrance
to Dormitory Court  Grove Street
Figure
✦ Eagle

24 Either Side of Arch Over Entrance to
Dormitory Court  Grove Street
Symbolic Figure
✦ Scales of justice wrapped in red tape
Grove and York Streets

25 Above Arch Over Entrance to Dormitory Court Grove Street

Figure
❖ Justice blindfolded by a jester in cap and bells

26 Upon Arch Over Entrance to Dormitory Court Grove Street

Inscription
❖ Suggested by Professor Arthur L. Corbin of the Yale Law School:

LAW IS A LIVING GROWTH, NOT A CHANGELESS CODE

27 Above Three Bay Windows York Street

Municipal Seals
❖ The City of New Haven
❖ The United States
❖ The State of Connecticut

28 Top of Buttress Corner of York and Wall Streets

Figure
❖ Detective with derby hat, gum shoes and magnifying glass
29 Beneath Projecting Bays  Wall Street

Stone Heads
✦ Judge
✦ Thief with rope
✦ Woman
✦ Drunkard
✦ Policeman with nightstick
✦ Traffic officer
✦ Murderer
✦ Woman
✦ Thief with rope
✦ Police sergeant

30 Panels Beneath Third Floor Windows  Wall Street

Scenes
✦ Ordeal by battle
✦ Ordeal by fire

31 Base of Balustrades  Wall Street

Symbols
✦ Woolsack
✦ Judge’s gavel
✦ Judge’s wig
Main Floor Corridor

Beginning at the Wall Street entrance to the School and continuing throughout the first floor, the exquisite ornamental woodwork is particularly noteworthy. Designed to provide a harmony and warmth in relation to the severity of stone, brick, glass and metal, the carvings of oak (from a Crown preserve area in England), honey pine and chestnut reflect the talent and vitality of master carvers and sculptors.

The main corridor woodwork is of unusual design, the carved top being adapted from the fifteenth-century choir stalls in the College of S. Orso near Milan, Italy. Proceeding along this corridor from Wall Street to Grove Street, one encounters three sets of leaded glass windows on the left-hand side. The first set depicts:

- Pilgrim
- Ordeal by water
- Medieval gentleman

The second set of stained glass medallions, selected from The Book of Public Arms, represents various armaments and their use. Pictured are:

- Sword
- Battle
- Grapple

The third set of windows shows:

- A caricature of Thomas Chitty, a special pleader and legal writer, surrounded by ponderous tomes
- King Solomon judging between the mothers
- The building at Litchfield, Connecticut where Judge Tapping Reeve founded the first law school in Connecticut
First Floor Classrooms and Offices

The stained glass medallions in the lecture halls and offices were copied from Les Cartes a Jouer. The colorful, medieval figures add humor, warmth and a touch of whimsy to the more public rooms of the building.

In an office behind the Student Lounge can be found two stained glass medallions representing the Colonial Seals of Virginia.

Courtroom

The leaded glass medallions of the windows are copied from Les Cartes a Jouer and represent Justice and the Law.

Faculty Dining Room

The six stained glass medallions are copied from Les Cartes a Jouer.
Stained glass medallions in the six sets of windows depict scenes from the early history of the thirteen original colonies. The seals of forty-eight states are also portrayed.

Beginning with the first window overlooking Grove Street, starting at the top row from left to right, and moving clockwise around the room, the scenes and seals are as follows:

I
1. Vermont
2. Rhode Island
3. New Hampshire
4. Indians smoking the peace pipe
5. Judges’ Cave
6. William Penn with an Indian Chieftan
7. Maine
8. Connecticut
9. Massachusetts

II
10. Tennessee
11. West Virginia
12. Ohio
13. Virginia
14. Delaware
15. Indiana
16. New York
17. Pennsylvania
18. Kentucky
19. Michigan
20. New Jersey
21. Maryland
III  22  Alabama
23  South Carolina
24  Florida
25  The hiding of the charter at Charter Oak
26  The Dutch fort at Hartford
27  The founding of New Amsterdam
28  North Carolina
29  Georgia
30  Mississippi

IV  31  Nebraska
32  South Dakota
33  North Dakota
34  The Deerfield massacre
35  Momaquin giving a deed of conveyance of New Haven to Theophilus Eaton and John Davenport
36  The landing of the Mayflower
37  Iowa
38  Wisconsin
39  Minnesota

V  40  Oklahoma
41  Wyoming
42  Utah
43  Texas
44  Colorado
45  Kansas
46  New Mexico
47  Illinois
48  Arkansas

VI  49  Missouri
50  Louisiana
51  Arizona
52  Nevada
53  Oregon
54  Washington
55  The ride of Paul Revere
56  Witchcraft in Salem
57  The Boston Tea Party
58  California
59  Idaho
60  Montana
Dining Hall

Combining richly carved woodwork, stained glass and stone ornamentation, the dining hall embodies the very best of the artisans and craftsmen who helped to create the Sterling Law Buildings.

Over a fireplace are two stone panels representing Justice and Law. Throughout the rest of the room are various representations of the Inns of Court and the Inns of Chancery, which originated in the late Middle Ages as legal societies that prepared candidates for, and controlled admission to, the English bar.

Beginning with the left-hand window overlooking the courtyard, starting at the top row from left to right, and moving clockwise around the room, the following scenes, symbols and themes are depicted:

I
1. Crossed golden sheaves
2. Schotoki Taishi, first Japanese legislator
3. Seal of Furnivall's Inn
4. Alfred the Great
5. Seal of Barnard's Inn
6. Seal of Clifford's Inn
7. Confucius
8. Maat, Egyptian Goddess of Justice
9. Justice blindfolded by a jester

II
10. Galileo before the Inquisition
11. Louis IX as a judge
12. Seal of Lincoln's Inn
13. Death of Socrates
14. Justinian and his court
15. Christ before Pilate
16. Judgment of Solomon
17. Court of the Druids
18. Curse upon Tara, the royal city of Irish King Diarmaid
III 19 Oka, Japanese judge
20 Charlemagne
21 Seal of New Inn
22 King John signing the Magna Carta
23 Manu, the Hindu Law Giver
24 Moses and his tablets
25 Napoleon receiving the code from Cambaceres
26 Seal of Lyon's Inn
27 Pope Innocent III

IV 28 Seal of the Knights Templar
29 Inner Temple Court
30 Middle Temple Garden Gate

V 31 Griffin
32 Number Five King's Bench Walk
33 Sergeant's Inn
VI 34 Old Temple Bar, reign of Henry VII
35 Lyon's Inn

VII 36 Passage between Essex and Brick
37 Goldsmith's Tomb

VIII 38 Porch of the Church
39 Temple Church

IX 40 Middle Temple Lane
41 Middle Temple Library

X 42 Middle Temple Hall

XI 43 Seal of Inner Temple

XII 44 Seal of Middle Temple

XIII 45 Great Hall at Karnak
46 Hall of Justice at Nineva
47 Westminster Hall
48 Roman Forum
49 Seal of Gray's Inn
Archway Leading from Dining Hall to Courtyard

Three stained glass medallions over the arch represent:

1. Hanging
2. Man in stocks
3. Examination under torture
Dean's Office

Begin with the first set of windows to the left, overlooking High Street, and move clockwise around the room. Starting with the top row and looking left to right, the subject matter of the first set of windows is medieval ordeals:

1. Ordeal by pillory
2. Ordeal by brank
3. Ordeal by battle
4. Ordeal by flogging
5. Ordeal by water
6. Ordeal by fire

The stained glass medallions in the second set of windows overlooking High Street identify prominent administrators and professors of the School:

7. Wesley N. Hohfeld, Professor, 1914–1918
8. Simeon Eben Baldwin, Professor, 1869–1919
9. Francis Wayland, Dean, 1873–1903
10. Henry Wade Rogers, Dean, 1903–1916
12. Robert M. Hutchins, Dean, 1927–1929

The ten medallions in the window overlooking Wall Street depict:

13. Hendrie Hall, home of the School from 1895–1931
15. Heublein’s Cafe, second home of the School, which was located above the cafe in the Leffingwell Building
16. Ashbel Green Gulliver, Dean, 1940–1946
17. Home of Judge James Gould, joint proprietor and instructor at the Litchfield Law School from 1798–1820; sole director until 1833
18. The Litchfield Law School, founded by Judge Tapping Reeve in 1774
   Louis Halperin Pollak, Dean, 1965–1970
   Abraham S. Goldstein, Dean, 1970–1975
   Harry H. Wellington, Dean, 1975–1985
22. The Litchfield Law School under Judge Gould
Main Staircase

The leaded glass windows on the first and second floor landings contain copies of famous caricatures of English judges and chancellors, drawn by Spy, Ape and Kapp and originally published in English magazines.

On the first floor landing, starting with the left-hand side, are the following:

1. Lord Westbury
2. Lord Monk Button
3. Rufus Isaacs
4. Justice Farwell
5. Robert Collier
6. Baron Hewart of Buiy
7. Sergeant Ballantine
8. Ernest Pollack

On the second floor landing, starting with the top row at the left-hand corner as one faces the windows, the following caricatures are depicted:

9. Lord Hatherly
10. Vernon Harcourt
11. M.P., Viscount Finley of Nairn
12. The Rt. Hon. John Denison
13. Henry Sayard
14. Lord Chancellor Haldane
15 Robert Reid
16 Mr. Justice Avory

The second row, starting from the left-hand side:
17 Arthur Kekewick
18 Lord Penzance
19 Sir Frederick Pollock
20 Martimes Steyn
21 Sir James Stickling
22 Henry Dickins
23 Lord Chief Justice Cockburn
24 Alfred Tennyson

The bottom row, starting from the left:
25 Professor Robin Ellis
26 Justice Matthews of the Commercial Court
27 Judge Bovill
28 John Compton Lawrence
29 John Cumming MacDonna
30 Edward Widdington Byrne
31 William Gladstone
32 Sir Edward Marshall-Hall, K.C.
Six window medallions bear the names of the men from the State of Connecticut who signed the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. (Roger Sherman signed both documents.)

Facing the windows, and reading from left to right, one finds the following names:

1. Oliver Wolcott (spelled as Walcott)
2. William Williams
3. William Samuel Johnson
4. Roger Sherman
5. Samuel Huntington
6. Roger Sherman
Over the entrance is the inscription "Prudentis est Petere Fontes," quoting the advice of Lord Coke, in the preface to the third part of his Reports, that "it is wise to go to the sources."

The main reading room combines symbolic limestone carving, oak woodwork, stained glass and ornamental ceiling decoration to produce a majestic space 212 feet long and 36 feet wide, rising 39 feet from floor to ceiling.

Running along High Street are eleven windows, 21 feet high and 9 feet wide. Similarly, along High Street is a series of elaborately carved corbels alternately representing the themes of transportation, domestic relations, the arts and religion.

Transportation depicts Neptune’s head with a ship behind it on one side of the corbel, and the head of Mercury and the winged wheel on the opposite side.

The Arts are represented by the head of an artist with pallet and brushes in the background on one side, and the head of a writer with ink pot and quill in the background on the other.

Domestic Relations depicts a man’s head and a loaf of twisted bread on one side, and a woman’s head and a child on the other.

Religion shows the head of Moses with tablets of stone on one side, and the head of Christ with the Cross in the background on the other.

The end corbels symbolize:

Agriculture, which is represented by a peasant’s head with plough in the background.

Industry, which is represented by a laborer’s head with cogwheels in the background.

The lower parts of the main corbels portray a lawyer as a bulldog, as a wolf, as a parrot, and as a ram. The lower parts of the end corbels show a judge as an owl and as an English Chief Justice.
The ceiling of the reading room has been treated with polychrome on plaster beams. The distinctive design was carried out in oil paint with a flat tempera surface by George Davidson in a style reminiscent of the ceiling in the Palazzo Chiaramonte, at Palermo, Sicily, circa 1380.
The subjects of the fifty-two stained glass medallions typify some of the circumstances of modern life which involve the law.

Beginning with the window overlooking Grove Street, starting at the top row from left to right, and moving clockwise around the room, the medallions depict:

I 1 Bank teller's window
2 Broker's office
3 Typewriter
4 Gas reservoir
5 Dynamo
6 Modern printing press
7 Radio towers
8 Telegraph lines on poles
9 Fishing smack
10 Reaper

II 11 Prison interior
12 Divorce

III 13 Funeral
14 Lawyer with client
15 Christening scene
16 Marriage scene

IV 17 Old hand press
18 Moving picture machine

V 19 Traffic light
20 Surveyor at work
21 Student burning midnight oil
22 Mounted policeman

VI 23 Irrigation ditch
24 Wheat elevator

VII 25 Prison exterior
26 Church interior
27 Law court interior
28 Hague Peace Palace

VIII 29 Oil well
30 Coal mine bore

IX 31 Cement mixer
32 Steam shovel
33 Crane in factory
34 Skyscraper

X 35 Fire engine
36 House on fire

XI 37 Stone crusher
38 Communications tower
39 Paving machine
40 Tractor

XII 41 Revenue cutter and rum runner
42 Battleship

XIII 43 Trolley car
44 Railroad train
45 Automobiles in collision
46 Airplane
47 Dirigible
48 Pack horses
49 Four-horse truck
50 Ox cart
51 Ship at sea
52 Ship at pier
Pass through the iron gates at Wall Street and into a cloister.

To your right is a brick wall with oak doors that open into the School. On the left, the walkway passes under a hexagonal structure with a domed slate tile roof and past a Gothic arched doorway flanked by small windows.

At the cloister's center on the left-hand side is a grand arched opening into the courtyard. On the right-hand side, elegantly carved doors enter onto a short flight of stairs leading to the School's main corridor.

At the cloister's end stands a twin to the first hexagonal structure. All three openings lead to the courtyard.

In the center of the courtyard is a low, two-story structure containing six furnished suites for visitors. This building is arranged to create three courts within the quadrangle: a large one between it and the School building, and two smaller ones on the upper level. The view from the School into these courts, with the various roof levels appearing over the guest suites, encompasses most of the Collegiate Gothic motifs in one panorama.

Standing in the courtyard facing the guest suites, look to your left at the south wall of the building fronting Wall Street and move in a clockwise direction to locate the following:

1 Over Doorway to Dormitory Building Fronting Wall Street

   Stone Figures
   ♣ Policeman shooting at thief
2 Tympanum Over Doorway of Upper Courtyard Dormitory Building Wall Street Court

Scene
✧ Patrol boat after a rum runner

3 Above Second Floor Window of Guest Suites

Symbol
✧ Charter Oak

4 Finial Above Guest Suites

Symbolic Figure
✧ Judge as a bulldog

5 Corner of Guest Suites Grove Street Court

Figure
✧ Executioner with head of victim

6 Archway of Upper Courtyard Grove Street Court

Inscription and Figure
✧ Quotation from Mr. Justice Holmes

THE LIFE OF THE LAW HAS NOT BEEN LOGIC, IT HAS BEEN EXPERIENCE
✧ Mosaic panel of law
7 Large Stone Figure at West End of North Wall

Figure
sterol English judge

8 Buttresses of North Wall

Figures
sterol Law student
sterol American judge
sterol English judge
sterol Barrister

9 Stone Cornice at East End of North Wall

Symbolic Figure
sterol Snail, representing the speed with which the law works

10 Above Doorway at East End of North Wall

Figure
sterol Hebrew scroll of law

11 Above Two Large Bay Windows of Law School Building

Figures
sterol Puritan
sterol Indian

12 Panel Over Archway Entrance to Law School Building from Courtyard

Scene
sterol Momauquin giving deed of New Haven to Theophilus Eaton
The following sources will provide further details and information about many of the people, themes and characters that are identified in this guide, although space constraints have precluded an in-depth discussion.


———. The Inner and Middle Temple—Legal, Literary, and Historic Associations. London: Methuen & Co., 1922.


Acknowledgments

This project benefitted greatly from the assistance, encouragement, and support of the following:

Guido Calabresi, Dean and Sterling Professor of Law, Yale Law School

Peter W. Clement, associate, Herbert S. Newman and Partners.

Gene P. Coakley, Faculty Services Librarian, Yale Law School

Morris L. Cohen, Law Librarian and Professor of Law, Yale Law School

Lila Freedman, Director of Publications, Yale College

Gad Gross, photographer; p. 34

Ann J. Laeuchli, Associate Law Librarian, Yale Law School

John H. Langbein, Chancellor Kent Professor of Law and Legal History, Yale Law School


Joseph Murphy, President, Irving & Casson—A.H. Davenport Corporation

David Ottenstein, photographer; pp. 20, 21, 33, 40, 46

Fred R. Shapiro, Assistant Librarian for Public Services and Lecturer for Legal Research, Yale Law School

Conrad Totman, Professor of History, Yale University

Lori Vogler, Enchanted Glassworks, Consultant for Surveys and Glass

Allison Wolfgarten, Graduate Student, Yale Law School

Yale Architectural and Engineering Services

Yale Law School Office of Public Affairs

Stephen T. Yandle, Associate Dean, Yale Law School; photographer