

Bowen adds to law-school legacy

Ex-dean gives \$1 million to UALR, hopes to spur other donors

BY JOHN KRUPA

ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

William H. Bowen, a former lawyer, banker and aide to then-Gov. Bill Clinton, has given a \$1 million gift to his namesake law school at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, officials said Tuesday.

While most donations are earmarked for specific purposes like scholarships or construction projects, the W.H. Bowen School of Law can use the donation as it sees fit.

“An unrestricted gift of \$1 million means you can work



W. Bowen



C. Bowen

on scholarships, you can work on academic excellence, and you can do it in a way that fits your needs at the time,” said Dean Kumpuris, chairman of the UALR Board of Visitors. “It

means a lot to the law school.”

The donation was also made in the name of Bowen’s wife, Connie.

Bowen, who was the law school’s dean from 1995 to 1997, said he saw the need for more unrestricted gifts during his tenure. He hopes that the donation spurs other philanthropists to consider similar gifts.

Raising money with no strings attached is a challenge, particularly at a publicly funded university, Bowen said.

“At the time, the attitude was, ‘This is a tax-supported school.

Why do you need gifts?’” he said. “You had to climb over a pretty big wall to get over that attitude.”

Bowen, 85, has long-standing ties to the legal community in Arkansas.

He earned his law degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1949. He returned to Little Rock to practice law in 1954.

He later turned to banking, serving as chairman and chief executive officer of then-First Commercial Bank in Little Rock.

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