

One Final Honor for Antonin Scalia

In the course of his illustrious legal career, the late Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonin Scalia was recognized with many great honors, but this last one is among the greatest.

George Mason University, the largest public research university in Virginia—and named for one of the greatest influences on early American politics—recently announced it would rename its prestigious law school after Scalia. The school will now go by the name The Antonin Scalia School of Law at George Mason University.

The name change is pending approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, which is expected to be a mere formality. A formal dedication ceremony will occur in the fall.

Simultaneous to the announced name change, the university also announced its foundation had received \$30 million in donations to support the law school. The gift includes \$20 million that came to George Mason through a donor who approached Leonard A. Leo of the Federalist Society, a personal friend of the late Justice Scalia and his family, and as a condition of the donation asked that the university name the law school in honor of the justice.

“The Scalia family is pleased to see George Mason name its law school after the Justice, helping to memorialize his commitment to a legal education that is grounded in academic freedom and a recognition of the practice of law as an honorable and intellectually rigorous craft,” Leo said.

The remaining \$10 million came from a grant from the Charles Koch Foundation, which supports hundreds of colleges and

universities across the country. The gifts, combined, are the largest in university history, and will help establish three new scholarship programs that will potentially benefit hundreds of students seeking to study law at GMU.

The scholarship programs are:

- **Antonin Scalia Scholarship**—Awarded to students with excellent academic credentials.
- **A. Linwood Holton, Jr. Leadership Scholarship**—Named in honor of the former governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this scholarship will be awarded to students who have overcome barriers to academic success, demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities or who have helped others overcome discrimination in any facet of life.
- **F.A. Hayek Law, Legislation and Liberty Scholarship**—Named in honor of the 1974 Nobel Prize winner in economics, this scholarship will be awarded to students who have a demonstrated interest in studying the application of economic principles to the law.

“This is a milestone moment for the university,” said George Mason University President Ángel Cabrera. “These gifts will create opportunities to attract and retain the best and brightest students, deliver on our mission of inclusive excellence and continue our goal to make Mason one of the preeminent law schools in the country.

“When we speak about diversity, that includes diversity of thought and exposing ourselves to a range of ideas and points of view. Justice Scalia was an advocate of vigorous debate and enjoyed thoughtful conversations with those he disagreed with. ... That ability to listen and engage with others, despite having contrasting opinions or perspectives, is what higher education is all about.”

Scalia, a resident of nearby McLean, Virginia, spoke at the

dedication of the law school building in 1999 and was a guest lecturer at the university. His colleague and, by all accounts, good friend, Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, said the honor of naming the school for him was appropriate.

“Justice Scalia was a law teacher, public servant, legal commentator and jurist nonpareil,” she said. “As a colleague who held him in highest esteem and great affection, I miss his bright company and the stimulus he provided, his opinions ever challenging me to meet his best efforts with my own. It is a tribute altogether fitting that George Mason University’s law school will bear his name. May the funds for scholarships, faculty growth and curricular development aid the Antonin Scalia School of Law to achieve the excellence characteristic of Justice Scalia, grand master in life and law.”