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## Judicial Education Center Opens With \$7.5M Gift and Help From Pa. Law Schools

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Pennsylvania's law schools are teaming up to teach the law, but don't expect to see introductory classes like torts or contracts on the course list.

The nine law schools will provide free continuing legal education to the state's judges in advance of a new education requirement for sitting jurists. It's a first-of-its-kind CLE partnership across law schools that are typically competitors. The Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts is also involved in planning the CLE curriculum for the more than 600 judges in the state.

The new Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education, unveiled Tuesday, will be housed at Duquesne University School of Law. Faculty from each of the partner law schools will teach the educational sessions, which will be offered throughout Pennsylvania.

"If you have a judicial ethics expert at Penn, or cybersecurity people at Pitt, or neuroscience in law people at Duquesne, you tap into the faculty and expertise of those schools and develop centers of excellence," said Duquesne president

Ken Gormley, who conceived of the judicial education center years ago when he was dean of the Pittsburgh institution's law school. "You're also getting law students involved so they get exposure to judges."

The new center is being funded with a \$7.5 million donation to Duquesne's law school from alum **Thomas R. Kline**, a partner at Philadelphia personal injury firm Kline & Specter. It's the single largest donation in the law school's history.

"It gives me great pride to help establish the Kline Center for Judicial Education, which for me personally is the intersection of my pride in my alma mater, my commitment to legal education, my respect for the judicial process and the need for the highest standards for lawyers and judges," Kline said.

State Court Administrator Tom Darr said that officials were "sensitive" to the possibility that Kline's funding of the judicial education center could present a potential conflict of interest, and thus built "significant safeguards" into their agreement with Duquesne. First, the court must approve all the courses offered through the center,

Darr said, and the agreement can be canceled if problems arise.

The Pennsylvania courts in 2016 adopted mandatory CLE requirements for all the state's judges, which went into effect this year. Judges must complete three credits annually on judicial ethics, as well as an additional nine credits in other legal areas. Starting next year, at least four of those mandatory credits must be delivered by the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts—the free courses offered by the law schools in partnership with the courts will fulfill that requirement.

The new CLE requirement came in the wake of numerous judicial ethics embarrassments in Pennsylvania. Among them: Two Supreme Court justices were forced off the bench in 2014 and 2016 after they were caught up in a scandal sharing pornographic emails with other state employees; another Supreme Court justice was convicted on corruption charges in 2013 for using court staff on her judicial campaign; and two trial judges are currently serving time in federal prison in connection with the so-called "kids-for-cash" scandal.

"Our goal is to assure that judicial officers in Pennsylvania have

the requisite skills and knowledge to fulfill their judicial responsibilities with integrity, adherence to the rule of law, and the highest standards of ethical behavior," said Thomas Saylor, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in a written statement.

Gormley said he first pitched the idea for the judicial education center to Kline several years ago, when he hoped to secure a major donation for Duquesne's law school. Kline instead gave \$50 million to Drexel University's law school in 2014, which is now named for him.

But Kline liked the idea of the center, which got a major push with the recent adoption of mandatory CLE rules for judges, Gormley said.

A handful of other law schools offer courses and programs for judges, including the University of North Carolina School of Law, Duke Law School and the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University. But the Kline Center is the first such collaboration between all the law schools within a state, and Gormley said he hopes it becomes a model for other jurisdictions. The deans at each of the state's other law schools quickly signed on to the project, he said.

Law schools are uniquely positioned to educate judges in specialized areas such as evidence, juvenile law and family law, Gormley said, and they can harness other campus resources in their judicial education offerings.

"You can even go beyond the law schools and into the universities," Gormley said. "If you're teaching judges about Marcellus Shale, they may need to know about the science of fracking, for example."