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With \$50M Donation, Duquesne Law Is Renamed to Thomas R. Kline School of Law

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Of the Legal Staff

Duquesne University School of Law will now be known as the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University after Kline, of Philadelphia's Kline & Specter, committed \$50 million to the school, the single largest commitment to the university in its 144-year history.

Duquesne University President Ken Gormley made the announcement during a press conference Wednesday, saying he was filled with "gratitude and awe and a bit of unabashed emotion."

Kline, a nationally prominent trial lawyer, had already held the distinction of being the largest donor to the law school, with a \$7.5 million gift in 2017 to launch the Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial



Courtesy photo

From left, Law Dean April Barton, Duquesne President Ken Gormley, Thomas R. Kline and Duquesne Board Chair Jack McGinley.

Education, which assists the courts in providing continuing judicial education to judges across the Commonwealth, according to Gormley.

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Duquesne's is the second law school bearing Kline's name.

The Thomas R. Kline School of Law at Drexel University was named for him in 2014, along with the Thomas R. Kline Institute for Trial Advocacy.

Gormley said that Kline, who grew up in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, was a middle school teacher before attending Duquesne Law.

Kline recognized Ronald R. Davenport in the audience, who was dean of Duquesne Law from 1970 to 1981 and was the first Black dean of a major American Law School,

according to Gormley and Davenport's bio on Duquesne's website.

"Today I don't really view as the present," Kline said in his speech, but "I view it as the future. I see this as a continued path for the now Duquesne Kline School of Law to prepare mostly young people for the challenges of being a lawyer," adding that the country's democracy depends on lawyers.

April Barton, who has been the law dean since July 2019, said, "I could not be more pleased that our school now bears his name," adding that it was a "herculean" effort to keep this announcement confidential.

Kline's commitment will broadly support student scholarships, faculty grants for excellence in teaching and scholarship, the law school's noted Bar Preparation

program, new clinical offerings that benefit the community and other strategic priorities, Barton said.

"Working with Tom Kline has been an inspiration and absolute joy," Barton said in a statement. "He is an exemplary embodiment of our distinct mission. He understands the history and value of Duquesne's commitment to educational access and our focus on the law as a tool to ensure the welfare of all people."

"It is enormously meaningful for Duquesne to have our law school named for an individual whose career success is synonymous with excellence in the legal profession," Gormley said in a statement. "We are grateful that Tom Kline has chosen to support his alma mater with such a

transformational gift, recognizing the many contributions to society and the profession that our students and alumni have made for more than a century."

"We're proud that one of our most distinguished alumni, who has represented Duquesne so impressively on a national and global stage, will now help shape the next century of our renowned law school," Gormley, who served as law dean from 2008 to 2015, said.

"I have long been proud of my alma mater and have been happy to have played a role in strengthening its future," Kline said in a statement, and told those at the press conference that Duquesne feels like "home."

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