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By Rhea Hirshman

"Get a passport," said the dean of Temple University's Beasley School of Law to JoAnne Epps '73 when Epps was the school's associate dean for academic affairs. "I'm taking you to China."

That 1999 trip, Epps's first overseas, was the beginning of a series of travels and explorations that has taken her all over the globe to teach law, monitor international legal proceedings, and see how the law intersects with the cultures in which it is practiced. By 2008, when she assumed the deanship of the law school, Epps had helped train Sudanese lawyers representing victims of the Darfur crisis, taught jury trial advocacy

to over 20,000 members of the Japanese Bar Association, joined other international law faculty in teaching advocacy skills to prosecutors at the United Nation's ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) in Tanzania, and taught courses in advocacy to Chinese lawyers enrolled in Temple's "rule of law" graduate program and to lawyers from the Beijing Supreme People's Procuratorate (the Chinese prosecutor's office).

Trinity—the importance of institutions

Epps's route to the Temple law faculty and her foreign travels, and ultimately to the law school deanship,

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began in suburban Philadelphia, then took her to Trinity, Yale Law School, and positions as deputy city attorney for the City of Los Angeles and assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

“We were lower middle class,” she says of her growing-up years, “never hungry and always loved, but we never took a vacation. Neither of my parents went to college — there was only one college graduate in the family. My mother always told me the story of wanting to be a doctor, but having her high school counselor literally laugh at the idea of a black girl’s going to medical school. So she encouraged me to dream big.”

Although Epps knew that college was in her future, she didn’t know that the school might be Trinity until she got a call from a Trinity student who had

graduated from her high school, but whom she hardly knew. “For whatever reason,” she says, “he had decided that I was just the sort of young woman who should be in Trinity’s first co-educational class, and he offered to bring me up to visit the school on his way back there from spring break.”

Epps liked what she saw during that visit and, the following fall, she was a Trinity freshman. It was her first time away from her family, and it was a time of turmoil on the Trinity campus. “When I got there,” she says, “I saw big signs saying ‘co-eds go home.’ My dad told me that he would come to rescue me any time. But I stayed and survived and flourished. That time is among my fondest memories. I was deeply influenced by my years at Trinity, learning to figure out who I wanted to be. Trinity showed me the

importance of institutions in shaping people.”

After Yale Law School, and before coming to teach at Temple, Epps spent four years as a deputy city attorney for the City of Los Angeles and then another five as assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. “I loved legal practice,” she says. “Being a trial lawyer combines intense attention to detail with creativity. In one sense, it’s all about you because your personality is in it—no two people will try a case exactly the same. But what’s most important is that law is a service profession—you are always serving your client. That’s been the guiding principle of my career.”

To make changes in the world

Now, Epps serves an institution whose mission is to train the next generation of legal

professionals. Although she says that she had never seen herself as an academic, her legal practice often included teaching others, and encouragement from peers led her to think about a career in legal education. In 1985 she began her academic career at Temple, teaching courses in criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence, and trial advocacy. She still offers a class in litigation basics to first-year students every fall. “It’s important for me to get to know our students,” she says. “And I believe that leaders of institutions should know what the people around them are thinking and doing.”

Under her leadership, in turn, Temple serves both its students and the larger community. Epps notes that while part of her job is being a CEO—running an enterprise with a \$40 million budget—her priority is delivering a high-quality education and “maximizing the opportunities for greatness” for the school’s students and faculty.

At the same time, she says, “This institution should be centered in what is happening in the larger world.” She notes that the school is deeply involved in a number of initiatives focusing on the city of Philadelphia, including launching a Center for Social Justice. The center will partner with the city’s public-interest entities to pursue legal and policy responses to a range of social justice concerns.

“My vision for everything we do at Temple,” she says, “is based on both ‘how





will this help our students?’ and ‘how will this make an impact beyond our walls?’” Epps has been deeply involved in social justice issues throughout her professional life, starting with her Yale Law School days, when she was a national officer in the Black Law Students’ Association, and continuing to the present with her work in helping some of the world’s most war-torn regions to embrace the rule of law.

In her community, Epps’s activities have included chairing the Mayor’s Task Force on Police Discipline, serving as an outside monitor of Philadelphia’s compliance with a settlement over stop-and-frisk procedures, and service as a member of panels that included the Pennsylvania Commission for Justice Initiatives, the Pennsylvania Women’s Forum, the Advisory Council for the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and the Pro Bono Task Force of The Legal Services Corporation. “I’ve always looked to be involved with organizations whose beneficiaries may need others to help speak for them,” she says.

Epps is the author or co-author of numerous academic publications, focusing particularly on evidence, procedure, and advocacy. She is in demand as a speaker locally and nationally, including having testified at the Senate hearings on the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to be associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. She has received dozens of honors, including being named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania, being cited as one of the most 100 influential black lawyers in the U.S., receiving the Sandra Day O’Connor Award from the Philadelphia Bar Association, and receiving the Wiley Branton Award from the National Bar Association for “demonstrating leadership on the cutting edge of law for civil, social and economic justice.” Trinity honored her with the Alumni Service Award in 1998 and recognition in 2009 for career achievements in law.

With all her accomplishments, Epps refers to herself as “a pretty ordinary servant” who is keenly aware both of progress made and work still to be done. “I’ve achieved more than I could ever have dreamed of, and met wonderful people, some famous, many not,” she says. “I have been blessed beyond measure to be in a profession I love, to help make changes in the world, and to work with those launching their own careers.”



Trinity graduate named president of Temple University

Temple University not only enjoys the leadership of JoAnne Epps '73 at the helm of their law school, but now it has chosen another Trinity alumnus as its president. Neil D. Theobald '78 began his

tenure as Temple’s 10th president on January 1, 2013. Theobald came to Temple from Indiana University, where he had been senior vice president since 2007. He previously served as the senior vice provost at the University’s flagship campus in Bloomington and as special assistant to IU’s president.

In addition to his administrative responsibilities at Temple, Theobald holds a professorship in education finance. His research interests in the appropriate role of decentralization in educational financing and in modeling educational labor markets are reflected in more than \$1.5 million in funded research, numerous books and book chapters, dozens of articles published in professional journals, and nearly 50 policy reports for state governments across the United States. At Indiana University, Dr. Theobald directed a research center that assisted state governments in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, and Washington in devising education funding processes that equitably facilitated academic excellence. In addition, Theobald was a three-time winner of IU’s Teaching Excellence Recognition Award.

A native of Peoria, Illinois, Theobald had planned to enter an electrician’s apprenticeship after high school. However, an Illinois Scholarship made it possible for him to attend Trinity, and he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1978. After a short time in the corporate world, Theobald began his education career as a secondary school mathematics teacher in the State of Washington, where he also coached baseball. He subsequently served as both an assistant professor and an associate professor at the University of Washington, where he earned a doctoral degree in educational finance in 1988.