

NEWS

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WIGGIN AND DANA

Counsellors at Law



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Wiggin and Dana LLP Partner Robert F. Cavanagh Pens New Book: *From The Colonies To Today: Over Three Centuries of Law and Lawyers in New Haven*

Wiggin and Dana LLP announced today that Robert F. Cavanagh, a partner in the firm's New Haven office and former managing partner, authored a new book entitled *From The Colonies To Today: Over Three Centuries of Law and Lawyers in New Haven*. The book traces the history of law in the Elm City from the inception of the New Haven colony to today, and was published by New Haven County Bar Association ("NHCBA") in conjunction with its Charter Centennial Celebration.

"This book is a tribute to the attorneys that were the pioneers and brilliant architects of a legal system that has survived and thrived over the past 100 years," said Cavanagh. "In these pages, I hope to capture their passion as champions of diversity and integrity, and their unrelenting pursuit of justice for the common good that has become the foundation of modern law in Connecticut."

In addition to having had a long career as a talented lawyer, Bob is well-known throughout the New Haven community as an authoritative source of legal history," said Wiggin and Dana's Chair, Maureen Weaver. "We congratulate him on his work to preserve the fascinating story about the evolution of the legal profession in New Haven and Connecticut."

Cavanagh brings to life the "famous cases and famous faces" that shaped the legal landscape in the area, and in some instances, the country. It also highlights the extraordinary attorneys who have made enduring contributions to the law. Among these "visionaries" are:

- **Roger Sherman**, who was admitted to the bar in 1754 and is known for his contributions in establishing a national government;
- **James Hillhouse**, who served in the Revolutionary War and later as U.S. Senator, was a leader of antislavery forces. Locally, he is credited for draining and leveling the New Haven Green and planting elm trees making it the center of the community that it is today; and
- **Mary Manchester**, who was the first female partner in a Connecticut Law firm. A graduate of Yale Law School in 1924, Mary received the highest score on the Connecticut Bar exam, but was rejected for employment by many area firms.

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The book also follows the evolution of state and local laws. In 1638, when the New Haven colony was originally established, among the capital offenses punishable by death were murder, treason, and disobedience to one's parents. In time, the laws and the lawyers who wrote them evolved, and New Haven became a source of legal ingenuity and a model for other cities and states. The book highlights notorious trials in the New Haven courts. Most well-known was the *Amistad Case*—the trial involving mutiny and murder aboard the slave ship that ended with the clever interpretation of the 1820 Spanish law granting the slaves aboard the *Amistad* their freedom.

New Haven also saw the first use of an insanity defense in the case of William Clark who brutally murdered a suitor's new husband in a jealous rage. Forensic evidence was first admitted in the murder case of Mary Stannard to prove that the arsenic used to kill her was the same type purchased by her murderer. Scientific investigation would also be used three years later in the Jennie Cramer case that included the dramatic indictment of Walter and James Malley, son and nephew of the owners of New Haven's largest department store. These cases and more determined how evidence is gathered, how cases are prepared and how laws are interpreted for generations to come.

In addition to the book, the NHCBA has been celebrating 100 years since its formal incorporation in 1907 with the historical exhibition, "The New Haven Bar: From the Colonies to Today," which is currently on display at the New Haven Museum and Historical Society.

"The book, which is based on the exhibition at the New Haven Museum, beautifully captures the important people, places and events of these centuries and puts the stories from the exhibition into the context of the politics, society and religion of the time," said Carolyn B. Witt, Executive Director of the New Haven County Bar Association. "We are lucky to have Bob so active with the association's Centennial, for he contributed countless hours to bring life to this book."

The author, Robert F. Cavanagh, is a partner at Wiggin and Dana LLP, where he served as Managing Partner from 1987 to 1993. He is a graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School, and his practice includes the representation of both business corporations and exempt organizations, including colleges, schools and hospitals. He is an associate fellow of Ezra Stiles College at Yale University, a director emeritus of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, and a member of the New Haven County Bar Association's Charter Centennial Committee.

From The Colonies To Today: Over Three Centuries of Law and Lawyers in New Haven is available through the New Haven County Bar Association, the New Haven Museum, Atticus Bookstore and the Yale Bookstore. Proceeds support the bar's programs and services provided to both members and the community.

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The New Haven County Bar Association is a professional organization dedicated to supporting and educating its membership of 1,500 attorneys, judges and other legal professionals, and providing to community programs and services to the Greater New Haven area. For more information, please visit the New Haven County Bar Association's website at www.newhavenbar.org.

Wiggin and Dana LLP is a full service firm serving clients domestically and abroad from offices in Stamford, New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut, New York and Philadelphia. For more information on the firm, visit its website at www.wiggin.com.

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