

Law school dean 'good-old-boy'

Fullerton does not plan to shed image as dean

By JEFF TINNELL
University Daily Reporter

Texas Tech Law School Dean Byron Fullerton tells a story about a friend's remarks concerning Fullerton's image as dean.

"This old boy told me that I'd improve my image if I got rid of my cowboy boots and turquoise belt buckle," Fullerton said. "I thanked him and told him how I thought he could improve his image, and that was that."

Fullerton will not discard his cowboy boots anytime soon, nor is he likely to shed the good-old-boy image that has been his trademark as law school dean at two Texas universities, as Texas assistant attorney general, and as a lieutenant governor candidate (and running mate of George Bush) in 1970.

Fullerton was named Tech Law School dean in late 1980 after being named interim law school dean earlier in the year.

Before coming to Tech, Fullerton was dean of the University of Texas at Austin Law School.

The new dean said he did not consider himself a prime candidate for the Tech law school post until an old schoolboy pal, Tech President Lauro Cavazos, and several law school faculty members talked him into the idea.

Fullerton said he was looking forward to retirement after 14 years as UT Law school dean, but thought a 14-month stint as interim dean at Tech wouldn't hurt him.

But at Cavazos' urging, Fullerton said he put his name on the list of full-time candidates.

Fullerton said he has not regretted the decision to move from the familiar grounds of Austin to Lubbock, "the Hub City."

"I like the school and the city a lot. I think this (Lubbock) is a good place to live," Fullerton said. "The Tech Law School is a good school, with excellent students and excellent faculty."

Fullerton's goals for the school include a renewed emphasis on the students, he said.

"Last year we concentrated on getting more benefits for the faculty to attract the best law educators possible, and we were successful," Fullerton said. "This year is going to be the year of the student."

Fullerton said he hopes to see additions and improvements in student services this year, specifically

through the law school review, the Student Bar Association and a law school yearbook.

"We're excited to start up the law school yearbook," Fullerton said. "Having a



Fullerton

University Daily/Jeff Tinnell

yearbook will help increase our visibility and should have a good effect on student unity. Last year we started a school newspaper, and that was really successful."

The law school has experienced several improvements since his arrival, Fullerton said, but he takes little credit for those improvements.

"Any success I have here (at Tech) is so dependent on other people in the school that there's no way I can take any credit," Fullerton said. "No dean can be successful without the support of others around him, including the faculty, staff and students. I consider myself lucky in that I've had real good support from everybody."

Fullerton believes the dean of any school or college should be easily accessible to the students.

"I've always been accessible to the students in the school here (at Tech). I like talking to the students,

answering anybody's questions, listening to complaints," Fullerton said. "Sometimes that means I get behind on all the paperwork, but that's the way I see my job."

Tech Vice President for Academic Affairs John Darling said other Tech administrators approved of Fullerton's style as dean.

"I can say we really appreciate having a guy like Byron Fullerton around," Darling said. "You could say he's got a style all his own, and I mean that in a good way."

After his years in public office and administration, Fullerton said he is ready to savor the slowed pace of civilian life, but not yet.

"I want to leave Tech feeling like I made some contributions, because I really like the school," Fullerton said. "I realize that no one person can change the world, but I'd like to think I had some influence here."

Among his priorities upon

retirement is an extended visit to the New England area, Fullerton said. Fullerton and his wife plan to continue some favorite hobbies, including antique collecting and restoring old homes.

But Fullerton said he would not return to politics.

"I've always been intrigued by politics and I always will be, but I've just really grown tired of all that," he said. "Texas politics is full of dirty tricks and false stories. It's (Texas politics is) a fascinating business, a game in many ways, but it's not for me any more."

One of Fullerton's best traits, he says, is an ability to see humor in almost everything.

"My sense of humor is the one thing that helps me make a lot of long days go by faster," Fullerton said. "I've seen that people are really funny in a lot of ways, mostly good."