September 29, 2009

Dear Widener Law School Community:

We have learned of two recent incidents of racist graffiti inside bathrooms in the Main Building of the Delaware campus of the Law School. These isolated incidents appear to be perpetrated by the same person. We of the Law School community are rightly proud of a campus culture that is inclusive and supportive of all members of our community. These shameful acts, while an aberration, are an assault on our community of civility, tolerance and good will.

All of us in this community are aware that we are expected to maintain the highest standards of social conduct. For those of us who are lawyers such high standards are a professional obligation, a violation of which may result in sanctions. Our academic code similarly provides that it is a violation to commit any act that reflects adversely upon a student’s fitness to practice law or constitutes unprofessional conduct. If, for example, an individual who committed these acts happened to be a student or an employee, and we sincerely hope and trust this person is not, then he or she would be subject to a series of sanctions including dismissal from school or employment. Our Anti-Discrimination policy and the criminal law of the defacing of property and vandalism apply to all including visitors to our campus. These policies exist precisely because we want to maintain a supportive environment for everyone.

As a community we all realize that the Widener University School of Law is an important public place that is and must remain a center for civility and tolerance. In the past week alone the Governor and the Lt. Governor of the State of Delaware, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware, the Publisher of the Philadelphia Inquirer, a delegation of Taiwanese judges, an American Bar Association inspection team and over 100 members of the PA, NJ and DE bar have all visited the Law School. No member of the public or member of the Widener Law School community should be subjected to such offensive acts. If you have any information about these or similar acts, please contact Steve Udovich at 302-477-2202.

We know that Widener students, faculty and staff have the highest standards of behavior. We of the Widener community are committed to making the Law School a sanctuary for reasoned dialogue and mutual respect as well as a model for the wider community at large. Please join us in supporting these values.

James T. Harris III, D.Ed.
President
Widener University

Linda L. Ammons, J.D.
Associate Provost and Dean
Widener School of Law

The Executive Board of the
Student Bar Association