

# Demand for law places outstrip supply — Vasciannie

The demand for law places at the Faculty of Law at the University of the West Indies (UWI) has far outstripped the number of available places.

According to Professor Stephen Vasciannie, principal, Norman Manley Law School, UWI, the quota arrangements on which the UWI and the region's three law schools were established in the 1970s may have been adequate then, it is not today.

Professor Vasciannie was speaking at the launch of the law firm, Page & Haisley, at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on June 22.

The principals, Kevin Page and Garfield Haisley, are recent graduates of the UWI and the Norman Manley Law School.

Professor Vasciannie revealed that recently the university received over 1,800 applications to pursue degrees in the Faculty of Law and that increased demand was also reflected in increased applications to Norman Manley and other law schools for places through entrance examina-

tions. Noting that the entrance exam is open to persons with LLB degrees from universities other than the UWI, Professor Vasciannie said that last year the Norman Manley Law School admitted 26 such applicants due to the carrying capacity of the school.

In order to do this, he said the school set the effective pass mark at 61 per cent, which means that "some people did not get into the law school even though they had degrees from universities of repute and obtained more than 50 per cent in the entrance exam."

## Expanded options

Professor Vasciannie said that views vary across the board on the need for expanded options for the training of lawyers. His personal view however, is that "the legal profession would benefit from increased competition in the provision of services."

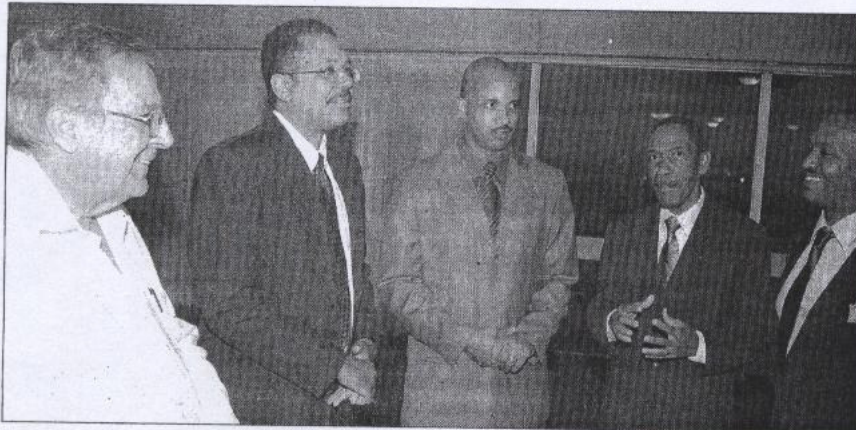
"There will however, need to be upper limits on the number of lawyers produced for our societies

but at the present time there is scope for increased numbers in my view," he asserted.

Professor Vasciannie said that the Norman Manley Law School can now accommodate 126 students per year for the two-year programme "and in the short run, we should at least seek to ensure that we meet this carrying capacity."

He commended Page & Haisley for taking the bold step of setting up their own firm. Noting that "the general economic climate is not propitious," Professor Vasciannie said that "given the problems of structural economic dependence, low productivity and income inequality that have bedeviled Jamaica, one could say that challenges consistently form the backdrop for the start up of new firms in the country."

Page & Haisley, he said, "will therefore need to chart its course knowing that it will not always be easy but that good, honest work by people of talent tends to prevail even in the face of economic adversity." ■



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Abe Dabdoub (left), partner, Dabdoub & Dabdoub; Professor Stephen Vasciannie, principal, Norman Manley Law School, University of the West Indies (UWI); Garfield Haisley, partner, Page & Haisley; Kent Pantry, dean, Faculty of Law, University of Technology and Kevin Page, partner, Page & Haisley at the launch of Page & Haisley at the Jamaica Pegasus on June 22.