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Dobbs Not To Seek Reappointment An Era Ends

By J.P. Ballantine
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In a move which seemed to surprise all observers of the Hastings Board of Directors, Chairman Harold S. Dobbs announced that he will not seek reappointment to the board.

Dobbs' departure appears to signify the end of an era of the College which saw significant expansion along with a great deal of controversy, including particular criticism of Dobbs.

"I have advised the Governor that I will not be a candidate for reappointment," Dobbs announced at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board last Thursday. The announcement was not a scheduled part of the meeting agenda, and came at the end of the open session, before the Board went into a lengthy closed session to discuss problems with the College's West Block financing.

Dobbs noted that he "did not expect to be here for 22 years," and indicated that another 12 years on the Board would be too long.

The announcement comes at the end of months of speculation over whether Governor George Deukmejian would appoint Dobbs to a new 12 year term. Dobbs has served as a director since 1967, and his term expires on Jan. 1, 1989.

Under a statute governing the College, the governor has the power to appoint individuals to 12 year terms, subject to approval by a majority of the state senate.

Sources have told the *Law News* that appointments are impending, but the Governor's appointments secretary has been unavailable for comment. Numerous inquiries to Sacramento sources did not reveal the identities of possible appointees. Board member Jim Mahoney reported that the Governor was considering several names, but did not know the identities of appointees or when they would be made.

Board Vice Chairman Myron "Doc" Etienne, whose term also expires at the end of the year, has been unanimously endorsed for reappointment by the entire board and is widely expected to be named to a new term. Upon reappointment, Etienne would become the senior member of the board as is expected to be selected chairman.

Dobbs told the *Law News* in September that he would be "delighted to serve Hastings for another 12 years," but was not actively seeking another board term. However, several other Board members told the *Law News* that Dobbs was "pushing very hard" for reappointment which had generated significant controversy among members of the Board and other members of the College community. Board members Joe Cotchett, Jack Knox and Jan Lewenhaupt all publicly announced their opposition to a reappointment, with Lewenhaupt writing to the Governor urging against reappointment.

The board chairman was positive and upbeat in his announcement. He noted that with his recovery from a recent heart attack and surgery, he was ready to "get back to work and on with my life." Several observers commented that Dobbs appeared to have regained his health, and "looked very good."

Dobbs predicted a positive future for the College. He stated that "with all the turmoil behind, the College is going forward with the finest leadership of any institution of higher education in California," particularly stating his confidence in Dean Tom Read.

The turmoil to which Dobbs referred were the events involving discoveries that the Board misappropriated scholarship funds in the 1970's to purchase West Block properties, several subsequent investigations, and attempts to refinance them to repay the scholarships. These activities have consumed the Board's attention for the last two years, and problems repaying the loans persist.

These controversies were said to have undermined any reappointment attempt by

Dobbs. Recent reports by the *Law News* that the board, with the full participation of Dobbs, actually directed the conversion of scholarship funds to be used for expenses related to the West Block, have generated media attention in San Francisco. These disclosures directly contradicted Dobbs' previous claims that the board never knew about the conversions, and that the then-Dean had acted without Board authorization. The *Recorder* and *San Francisco Bay Guardian* newspapers both did recent stories regarding these diversions.

Dobbs was the last member remaining on the board since the time of the diversions. Another member at the time, Max Jamison, recently resigned as Hastings General Counsel, amid reported criticism by board members.

The *Law News* learned that several leading Democrats had urged the Democratic leadership of the Senate to oppose any reappointment of Dobbs. It was reported that any nomination of Dobbs by Deukmejian, both of whom are Republicans, would fail in the Senate.

A highly placed staff member who asked not to be identified stated that this opposition to Dobbs made his reappointment "politically impossible."

The mood on the board, which has been deeply divided in their support of Dobbs, was conciliatory. Mahoney moved to name Dobbs "Director Emeritus" at the conclusion of his term. This motion was seconded by Cotchett, and unanimously adopted. Lewenhaupt noted that Hastings "owed Harold Dobbs an expression of thanks for his hard work of 22 years."

Lewenhaupt stated that he felt that Dobbs' decision was the "best for all concerned." "I was glad to hear it, and hope that he [Dobbs] meant it" Knox stated, indicating that Dobbs previously stated that he would not run for board chairman and did. "I hope this time he will do what he says he will do."

Hastings Law News

Dobbs Not To Seek Reappointment

An Era Ends

By J. [Name]

The news that Justice Antonin Scalia will not seek reappointment to the Supreme Court has been widely reported. This marks the end of an era for the Court, as Scalia was one of the most influential and conservative justices in the current majority. His departure will leave a significant void in the Court's conservative wing, and it is expected that the new justice appointed to replace him will be a conservative, likely from the Trump administration. The news has also raised questions about the future of the Court's conservative majority, as several other justices are expected to retire in the coming years. The Court's decisions on issues such as abortion, gun rights, and federalism will likely be shaped by the new composition of the bench.

The news of Justice Scalia's departure has also led to speculation about the timing of the Court's next term. It is expected that the Court will meet in the fall, and the new justice will be sworn in at that time. The Court's decisions in the coming term will be closely watched, as they will likely have a significant impact on the country's legal landscape.