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Personal injury lawyer gets another namesake law school with \$50 mln gift

By Karen Sloan

Plaintiffs lawyer Thomas Kline now has two Pennsylvania law schools named for him

His \$50 million donation to Pittsburgh's Duquesne University will fund scholarships and bar preparation resources

Sept 8 (Reuters) - Philadelphia personal injury lawyer Thomas Kline on Wednesday became the only living attorney to have two law schools named for him.

Duquesne University announced a rebranding of its law school following a \$50 million commitment by Kline that it called the largest gift in the university's history. The Pittsburgh school is now called the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University.

Drexel University's law school has also been the Thomas R. Kline School of Law since 2014, when Kline donated \$50 million to the Philadelphia institution.

Kline graduated from Duquesne law in 1978 before launching a successful career as a trial attorney and co-founding injury and malpractice law firm Kline & Spector, which has more than 50 attorneys and five offices.

The firm secured an \$8 billion verdict against Johnson & Johnson in 2019 involving the anti-psychotic drug Risperdal. Kline has also represented parties in litigation over the 2015 Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia that killed eight people and in the Penn State University Jerry Sandusky molestation case.

"I have long been proud of my alma mater and have been happy to have played a role in strengthening its future," Kline said in an announcement of the donation and name change.

Kline in 2017 gave Duquesne Law \$7.5 million to establish a judicial education center for Pennsylvania judges and court personnel. His latest donation will fund scholarships, faculty grants for teaching and scholarship, bar preparation and new clinics, the university said.

Two law schools are currently named for early 19th century U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, though a third dropped his name in 2021 and another is weighing a similar move after new information surfaced about the number of slaves Marshall owned.

The law schools at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Maryland both bear the Carey name following donations from the W.P Carey Foundation, but they are named for different deceased members of the Carey family.