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Rare Book Donation Adds to Library Collection

2/09/04--Boston College Law School is delighted to announce that it has acquired a very special gift of documents and manuscripts graciously donated to the Boston College Law Library by Robert E. Brooker, III. The Brooker Collection will be housed in the library’s Daniel R. Coquillette Rare Book Room. View selected highlights

“This is a significant gift of remarkable size and scope,” said BC Law Dean John H. Garvey. “We are enormously grateful to Mr. Brooker for his generosity. His gift will add a new dimension to our Coquillette Rare Book Room.”

Encouraged by his maternal grandmother, a rare book and manuscript dealer, Mr. Brooker began collecting historic documents and manuscripts at an early age. Over the course of years he gradually amassed a collection of approximately 2,500 carefully selected documents and manuscripts, most of which are unique and one-of-a-kind.

“In another 10 years, every conventional casebook for law students will be available online,” said Daniel Coquillette, Monan Professor of Law. “What will never be online are the unique manuscripts that show how law was practiced. The reason Mr. Brooker’s gift is so important is that these manuscripts show how lawyers actually practiced law through the past few centuries. The gift fits in beautifully with our existing collection, and this is why our Law Library will be so unique and special in the years to come.”

Focused primarily on Boston and the New England area and spanning two centuries, the Brooker Collection provides abundant opportunity for the study of early American land use and transfers, law and legal systems, town governance, family matters and daily life. Documents include deeds of land and other property, contracts for goods and services, legal documents such as complaints, deposition testimony and wills, business papers such as invoices and receipts, and evidence of everyday life as glimpsed in letters and estate inventories.

“All of us are so grateful to Robert Brooker, both for his foresight in acquiring such a remarkable collection and for his generosity in sharing it with Boston College,” said Karen Beck, the law library’s Curator of Rare Books. “These documents offer a unique look at the human side of law practice, and will be a wonderful addition to our scholarly resources.”

Mr. Brooker is the Chief Executive Officer of ICLUBcentral, a software company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Brooker earned an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA from Harvard College.

Highlights from the Brooker Collection are on display in the Law Library’s Daniel R. Coquillette Rare Book Room from January through May 2004. You are invited to view the exhibition anytime the room is open: generally Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.