

# Pace Law School to Get \$1 Million Gift

By JULI S. CHARKES

**I**N 70-plus years of practicing law, Theodore W. Kheel has negotiated with some of New York's most intractable parties, brokering deals between labor and management representing the air, rail and newspaper industries, among others. As head of the National War Labor Board, he oversaw more than 100 disputes a week; as a mediator for New York City's Labor Relations Division, he settled a contentious newspaper strike and several transit strikes.

But Mr. Kheel, 93, says those challenges pale in comparison to what he believes is at stake when it comes to mediating issues on the environment.

"Climate change is the most serious problem the world faces," he said, "and resolution between the environment and development is absolutely critical to the survival of life on this planet."

To reinforce his conviction that the environment is where the legal profession can make a profound impact in the years to come, Mr. Kheel said last week that he would donate \$1 million to Pace University Law School in White Plains. The money will go to expand existing programs dedicated to environmental legal issues, Pace officials said.

Speaking from his Manhattan office, where he still puts in a full day's work five or six days a week — "retirement is not nearly as interesting as working" — Mr. Kheel spoke of the need to provide skilled mediation between corporations and environmental groups in areas like climate control, global warming and carbon emissions standards that do not



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have laws to mandate behavior.

He emphasized what he believed were the inherent qualities that make lawyers especially suited to mediating these and other environmental issues.

"Lawyers are particularly skilled in getting the facts; that's their fundamental training," Mr. Kheel said. "You don't have the facts, you can't come to a sensible conclusion."

He said Pace Law School was his only choice for the donation

## FUTURE IMPACT

Theodore W. Kheel is giving a million-dollar donation to Pace University Law School, above, for programs dedicated to environmental legal issues.

because of its standing as a pioneer in environmental law. Last fall Pace celebrated the 30th anniversary of its environmental law program, one of about two dozen across the nation, school officials said.

Nicholas A. Robinson, co-director at the school's Center for Environmental Legal Studies, first met Mr. Kheel during the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. He invited Mr. Kheel to speak at the school, where he talked about the importance of mediation in environmental disputes.

Later, Mr. Kheel and Pace focused on how to incorporate the mediation skills he had practiced — including the significance of finding common ground even between parties that seem to be

completely at odds — into a course of study. "These are issues that don't lend themselves to litigation," Mr. Robinson said, referring to the environmental topics students will study. But, he said, mediation can be effective when dealing with such disputes.

Richard L. Ottinger, a former United States representative who is dean emeritus and co-director of the Center for Environmental Legal Studies at the school, said Mr. Kheel's donation, coupled with his reputation as an expert mediator, would enhance the center's ability to train lawyers to work within the corporate world.

"Mediation is a tool that is underutilized, but has tremendous potential to resolve climate control problems, which we look at as the greatest threat to humanity," Mr. Ottinger said.

Finding solutions to issues in dispute has been a lifelong passion, Mr. Kheel said. By his own account, he was an arbitrator for 30,000 cases, distinct from mediations in that the findings were mandated by existing law.

Far fewer were the mediations involving so-called interest disputes, or issues not resolvable by the law, "but they were major in terms of their impact," he said.

His goal with the donation, Mr. Kheel said, is to train future lawyers to apply mediation techniques to what can appear to be competing environmental issues.

"We're creating the mechanics by which lawyers can be active in the field of global warming," he said. "We're creating a center to address the interest disputes that can't be handled in the courts, but still something must be done."