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Subject: Law Tradition to Bend

RELEASE ON RECEIPT

AUSTIN, Texas (Spl.)--Tradition is about to bend, but not break, at The University of Texas Law School.

For the first time, some senior law students will wear caps and gowns to one of the school's two graduation convocations scheduled for May 23 in UT's Concert Hall.

Those convocations follow official University-wide Commencement exercises to be held on the evening of May 22.

An 11 a.m. convocation on May 23 has been reserved for about 100 senior laws who want to wear caps and gowns, according to Associate Dean T. J. Gibson. About 250 law seniors not wishing to wear caps and gowns will attend a 2 p.m. convocation.

"The break in tradition in having a cap-and-gown ceremony is being made at the request of students," says John F. Sutton, dean of the Law School.

Vivian Patino, senior law student from Houston and a representative of the third-year class to the Student Bar Association, says the move to permit caps and gowns came about because a lot of students had expressed a desire for "a more traditional ceremony."

She says a poll taken of senior law students earlier this year was "split down the middle" between those favoring and those opposing caps and gowns.

Traditionally at UT Austin, law candidates have not worn such regalia. That custom began at the turn of the century when law students became miffed at not being consulted on a decision of what to wear to Commencement. To show their displeasure, they decided not to wear the chosen caps and gowns. Instead, they elected to wear a "significant insignia," a sunflower, attached to their ordinary clothes.

To this day, the graduating exercise for UT law students is known as the "Sunflower Ceremony."

Associate Dean Gibson says the seniors will still receive sunflowers at both convocations on May 23. Also, law graduates may wear caps and gowns to the evening Commencement on May 22 if they wish, he says.

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