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By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT DECEMBER 18, 2014

An acclaimed law and public policy center formerly associated with Suffolk University is relocating to the Boston College Law School, BC officials announced Thursday.

The Rappaport Center, which began its work in 2000, shut down in August when Suffolk, its founding host, cut ties with the operation for financial reasons. It is scheduled to reopen at the BC Law School at the start of the spring semester, officials said.

The move to Chestnut Hill is backed by a \$7.53 million gift — a record donation for the 85-year-old law school — from the charitable foundation of Boston real estate developer Jerry Rappaport and his wife, Phyllis.

“It’s really become a valuable brand, so keeping that brand alive was important and having the center continue at a premiere law school is very exciting for us,” Phyllis Rappaport said by phone from the couple’s home in Florida. “Boston College Law School has lots of graduates who go into public service in the city and state.”

She and her husband said numerous local schools submitted proposals to take over the center after its closure at

Suffolk was announced.

“It was extraordinarily exciting to find out how important the Rappaport center has been,” Jerry Rappaport said.

The center educates, mentors, and offers financial support to students at area law schools — Boston College, Boston University, Harvard, Northeastern, Suffolk, the University of Massachusetts, and the New England School of Law — who are interested in government and public policy.

The foundation’s gift will fund a visiting professorship in addition to operations, which will include the continuation of a popular paid summer internship as well as research, lectures, and other events.

The center will be led by BC Law professor R. Michael Cassidy, who will hire an executive director to oversee day-to-day operations.

“I think it’s a natural alignment and a great fit for Boston College,” Cassidy said. “Solving public policy problems is an important part of the mission of BC.

“For aspiring lawyers, law students, their talents are needed in the public sphere and there are problems in our communities that lawyers are uniquely positioned to solve,” added Cassidy, who worked previously as the criminal bureau chief of the state attorney general’s office and served on the state ethics commission.

An advisory board, which is chaired by former Massachusetts attorney general Scott Harshbarger, will help guide the center’s work, and it will collaborate with the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston at Harvard University, officials said.

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