



joseph.kearney@marquette.edu  
(414) 288-1955

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Dear Future Marquette Lawyer,

The press of business has caused me to send you these greetings and this information somewhat later than has been my usual opening-day-of-the-semester custom. Permit me, therefore, to begin by saying that, even a couple of weeks in, I hope that your semester has begun well and that your energies remain high.

The second semester admittedly is a bit less of a new beginning in these parts than the first (no new students, most importantly). Yet there is some newness since I last wrote. Alan J. Borsuk, one of the region's most highly regarded print journalists, joined the Law School this past November as senior fellow in law and public policy. His appointment is the most recent reflection of the Law School's developing interest over the past several years in serving as a driver of public-policy discussion and debate in this region (an interest that we pursue without use of your tuition funds). Just this month, we are privileged to welcome a new full-time faculty member, Susan M. Bay, who comes aboard as associate professor of legal writing. Prof. Bay, who previously taught legal writing at Mercer and Penn State, succeeds our longtime colleague, Prof. Jill Koch Hayford, who played a key role in the past decade in the dramatic strides in our legal-writing program and whose current obligations have taken her to another state.

Change and continuity are thus intermingled. Other examples of this phenomenon include Mike Gousha's "On the Issues" programs, wherein visitors will enrich our community on an almost weekly basis again this semester, and our distinguished-lecture series: I very much hope that you will join us on Tuesday, March 9, when the Hon. Mark R. Filip delivers this year's Hallows Lecture, and on Thursday, April 8, when Ohio State University's Prof. Joshua Dressler presents our annual Barrock Lecture (4:30 p.m. in each instance). Both will speak on important aspects of criminal law, and I believe that their remarks will be of broad interest. For another matter, the now well-established faculty blog has something new from one of my faculty colleagues just about every day—and, occasionally, from one of you.

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To be sure, it is your own work—first in your reading and note-taking, then in the classroom with the faculty, and then in your reading, writing, and synthesizing, whether singly or in study groups—that is the most important activity at the Law School. Thus has it always been. This work is sufficiently varied that one of the few universally true and succinct things I can say of it, beyond the foregoing, is that it demands your attention—your industry, your curiosity, your humility—if you are to grow in knowledge and habits. You must know this.

I referred at the beginning of this letter to the press of business that caused my slight delay in writing. Aspects that are perhaps of particular interest to you include these: (a) The Law School recently concluded a revised financial agreement with the University, ensuring that the practice, well established since 1998, of directing law school resources only to the support of the Law School will continue (including university services that directly support us). I am grateful to the president, provost, senior vice president, and vice president for finance for their attention to this. (b) The diploma-privilege litigation continues in the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, with trial calendared for August of this year. The Law School is monitoring the litigation, although it is not a party. (c) The Law School will host, from February 28 to March 3, a team of visitors representing the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools. Such site-team visits occur at each accredited law school every seven years or so and are preceded by an immense amount of work (there being not much greater interest on the part of any law school than being accredited).

On this last matter (and any number of unmentioned other matters), the Law School's work is led principally by Prof. Peter K. Rofes. For the past six years, he has served as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the second-in-command at the Law School. Prof. Rofes decided this past summer that, as is the tradition of the Law School, he wishes to return to full-time faculty duties, and he will do so after this year, with my thanks and admiration for our work together. I have been especially impressed by Prof. Rofes's ability—even while administering the academic program, including determining course offerings, working with full-time and adjunct faculty, overseeing the schedule, and running the Academic Support Program—never to lose sight of the *individuals* with whom he works and never to fail to make time, for example, for the *individual* in need of time, attention, or assistance. There is a lesson for you in his work. For your work as a lawyer also will be in support and service of others; indeed, the work of the lawyer inheres most basically in the attention to and care for another. I express at graduation my hope that you have found some models in these, your early days in the profession. You—we—would do well especially to consider the important ways in which Prof. Rofes is an exemplar.

It will be good to see you in the classrooms and hallways of the school, during this—our final—semester in our hallowed Sensenbrenner Hall.

Sincerely,



Joseph D. Kearney  
Dean and Professor of Law