



August 19, 2022

Dear Future Marquette Lawyer:

Welcome to a new academic year at Marquette University Law School. The school begins its 131st year since the convening of the Milwaukee Law Class in 1892 and the 115th year since our incorporation into Marquette University in 1908. Yet even for those of us who have been here for what we might tend to regard as a long time (I joined the faculty 25 years ago this month), *each* new year brings opportunities. Our great interest is *your* time in law school, and we hope to help you embrace just about every moment.

I write primarily to convey some law school news. To begin with an introduction, Palma Joy Strand of Creighton University joins us this semester as the Boden Visiting Professor of Law. She will teach Alternative Dispute Resolution and a seminar with Professor Gregory J. O'Meara, S.J. Professor Strand has wide-ranging interests in the law and civil society, and her background includes clerkships with Justice Byron R. White of the U.S. Supreme Court and, no less intriguingly, Judge J. Skelly Wright of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Please welcome Professor Strand into our community.

A most notable development is the retirement of Professor Thomas J. Hammer, L'75, at the end of this coming academic year. In addition to his other work since joining the faculty in 1980, Professor Hammer has served as the Law School's director of clinical education since 2001. He has led the Law School in creating an extraordinary, impressive set of opportunities for our students in curricular placements in government offices, nonprofit agencies, and judicial chambers. To be sure, his retirement is from active teaching, and after this year Professor Hammer will be a valued emeritus faculty member.

Professor Hammer's successor in his clinical role is Anne Berleman Kearney. If the name is familiar to you, it may be because Professor Kearney has been a member of our community at least since Dean Howard B. Eisenberg appointed her to the adjunct faculty in 1999. During that time, in addition to teaching a variety of courses, both first-year and upper-level, she has had extensive experience in this region's legal community, working at Foley & Lardner, in her own appellate law practice, and as a government lawyer. Continuing as a part-time faculty member, Professor Kearney will be learning the ropes during the coming year and then will take the helm from Professor Hammer.

Newly joining our part-time faculty this year is Antoinette Vacca, L'05. Professor Vacca will serve as adjunct professor of law and coordinator of our alternative dispute resolution program. This includes teaching our Small Claims Mediation Clinic, a course that we offer through a collaboration with the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. Professor Vacca has volunteered as a supervisor in that clinic for many years, and she served as the mediation coordinator for the family court division in the Washington County Circuit Court from 2006 to 2018. We are delighted to have her back in an important role.

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There are other developments also. One is a loss: Professor Atiba R. Ellis has announced that this will be his last semester at the Law School, in order that he may then join his wife, a philosophy professor, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Professor Ellis joined us from the law faculty of West Virginia University in 2018, and we are grateful for his several years of service here. Another is an addition: Nathaniel V. Romano, S.J., is adjunct professor of law. In a return (he received his undergraduate degree here), Father Romano is now assistant director of campus ministry at the university, and this semester he will teach a section of the Law Governing Lawyers. Professor Romano is a Wisconsin-licensed lawyer and has taught law at both Creighton University and Boston College. We welcome him. For a different sort of development, the new administrative title for Professor Kathleen M. Pagel is director of bar preparation. The change in title is slight, but this is an appropriate opportunity to acknowledge Professor Pagel's valuable work with our students who anticipate taking a bar exam.

This letter also provides an occasion for me to suggest a broader point about your legal education. The Law School acts through people, and there are many others, in addition to those mentioned in this (or any) letter, who make up our community—including, not least, externship placement supervisors, judges, and lawyers in firms, who in such a wide variety of ways provide experience in the field to students. I am so grateful to *all* members of our community, broadly defined, who support the Law School's work.

This is not the extent or even the crux of the broader point. *That* is that the Law School gives you opportunities to engage with people. It is up to you to *seize* them (the opportunities, to be clear). Some of these are clearly marked as curricular offerings—classes. In other instances, the “signage” may be more subtle. Consider our distinguished-lecture series (back in full force this semester, with the Boden Lecture on September 22 by Northwestern University's James B. Speta and the Barrock Lecture on Criminal Law on November 15 by the University of North Carolina's Carissa Byrne Hessick); the “On the Issues with Mike Gousha” event on August 30 premiering former U.S. Senator Russ Feingold's important new book about Article V of the Constitution; the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic and other pro bono opportunities provided through our Office of Public Service; and more purely social occasions such as an autumn gathering welcoming all members of the Marquette Law School community on September 29 (called “Fall in the Forum”) and, on October 27, what we know as PILS Fest. All are true opportunities, and the twice-weekly *Law News* will be a “must read” for informing you of these and many other possibilities.

Relying on more than a century of institutional experience and evidence, I am confident that if you take the opportunities that Marquette University Law School and its community provide, you will position yourself well to embrace, as I often say to graduating students, the joys of a life in the law.

Sincerely,



Joseph D. Kearney  
*Dean and Professor of Law*