

# Building the law school

**M**y favorite workday of the year is also my least efficient: When I have the privilege to appear before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and move the admission of Marquette law graduates to the practice of law, the number of well-wishers and the size of the courtroom mean that the Justices and I go through these sessions four or five times. No one involved seems to mind much: If I recall correctly, each time I have done this as dean the entire Court has been on the bench for the entire session, when only one Justice is strictly necessary.

The day is a perfect reminder, of course, of our primary undertaking as a law school—helping our students to transform themselves into Marquette lawyers. It is an undertaking of which, when I became dean three years, I pledged never to lose sight. In fact, much of our effort as a law school during that time has been directed toward improvements to the curriculum and academic offerings of the Law School. A leading example of this can be seen in our excellent intramural moot court program, which culminates in the Jenkins Moot Court Competition. (See article beginning on p. 7.) The desire to grow stronger academically pervades the law school community.

But we are about even more than this primary undertaking. Marquette University Law School is the premier civic institution in this region for exploring matters involving law and public policy. Thus, we carry out our core responsibility of research and teaching about law and public policy not only in classrooms and libraries, but also in scholarly publications and conferences, in public meetings, and in community service projects.

Our concentration is intense, and our reach is extensive and growing. Even just recently:

- If you wanted the best analysis of school desegregation in Milwaukee, you came to the *Brown v. Board of Education* conferences at Marquette Law School.
- If you wanted to hear Judge Richard Posner's latest ideas on intellectual property law, you came to the Nies Lecture at Marquette Law School.
- If you wanted to hear Wisconsin leaders candidly discuss Wisconsin tax policy, you came to the Wisconsin Tax Policy Colloquium at Marquette Law School.



- If you wanted to hear experts assess the progress and problems with the new Medicare drug benefit, you joined a diverse group of professionals in a conference at Marquette Law School.
- If you wanted to hear the Solicitor General of the United States discuss the role of public service in the life of the lawyer, you came to the Marquette Law School commencement ceremony.
- If you wanted to hear Judge Diane Sykes, now of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, critique the recent jurisprudence of her former court, the Wisconsin Supreme Court, you came to the Hallows Lecture at Marquette Law School.

In fact, to benefit from these events it was not even strictly necessary for you to have attended any of them. In each of these instances, most of the speeches or proceedings were (or soon will be) available in the pages of the *Marquette Law Review*, *Marquette Intellectual Property Law Review*, *Marquette Sports Law Review*, and *Marquette Elder's Advisor*, along with this magazine, *Marquette Lawyer*. (The last item mentioned, Judge Sykes's Hallows Lecture, closes out this issue of the magazine.)

In short, through these and many other programs, we mean to give students, lawyers, judges, public officials, scholars—and every citizen who wishes to further build the civil society—reason after reason to come to Marquette Law School. We are building Marquette Law School into the intellectual powerhouse that Wisconsin needs and the nation and the world will notice.

To be sure, it is not a story of continual progress in every particular. We have our setbacks, like any complex institution performing in a competitive environment. This past year, for example, two of our top young faculty members were recruited away by other law schools; as we hire more stars on our faculty, this has become a greater problem. And, even as we work vigorously with the University to address the deficiencies of the Law School's physical facility, our physical plant restrains some of our progress.

Nonetheless, the conclusion that we have made great strides as an institution is inescapable to those familiar with the Law School. The generosity of hundreds of alumni and friends in supporting us financially (also reflected in this issue of the magazine) has been a huge contributor to our progress. We are also deeply grateful to our many alumni and friends who teach on the adjunct faculty, judge moot court arguments, supervise externs, hire our grads, work at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic, and commend us to law school applicants. With the help of this vast network of caring alumni and friends, we seek to be good stewards and even builders of the vital civic treasure that is Marquette University Law School.

J.D.K.