# law school profiles



Patrick Flaherty is a second-year law school student with a full-time course load, a wife, a home—and a vision for his fellow law school classmates. As president of the Student Bar Association (SBA), he has committed himself to the mission of the association. Flaherty's involvement with SBA began only weeks into his first year of law school when he ran for class rep. He was elected and placed on a committee that planned cultural and social events for students. He then ran for SBA president last April and was elected to a one-year term.

"I became involved in SBA in large part due to the influence of an upperclassman during my own orientation. He said great things about the organization, and I thought it would be a nice way to become involved in the school," says Flaherty.

All Marquette Law School students are automatically members of the Student Bar Association. There are no formal dues, but a \$25 fee per student comes out of tuition to fund the programs.

Flaherty says that the objectives of the Student Bar Association at Marquette University Law School are fourfold:

## • sponsor ethical, academic, professional, social, and cultural activities for its members

"For example," says Flaherty, "we brought in a well-known speaker, Professor Charles Whitebread of USC, to speak to the first-year students about exam-taking strategies and preparation, helping them to relax and organize." The SBA also hosts the Malpractice Ball that more than 400 people attend; it is a joint undertaking along with the Marquette Dental School and the

#### patrick flaherty

Student Bar Association president

Medical College of Wisconsin. In the spring, the SBA sponsors the popular Follies and in the fall a Halloween party. Other social events organized by SBA include a student-faculty softball game and possibly a tour of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

## • represent student ideas and concerns to the faculty and administration

The SBA recently invited the entire student body to an open forum, held during the lunch hour, to discuss concerns, questions, and suggestions about and for the school. "It was a very informal, fairly well-attended gathering of students, facilitated by the SBA, in which students shared their ideas, which were, in turn, shared with the administration," says Flaherty. "We talked about what is working and what can be improved upon." For example, through the SBA's effort last year, a proposal for a faculty advising program for first-year students was presented and has since been implemented by Associate Dean Peter K. Rofes and the faculty.

#### • serve as a communication link between students and the faculty, administration, alumni, and the Milwaukee community

"This goes hand-in-glove with the previous objective," says Flaherty. "We don't have a real need to act as liaisons because the Dean and faculty have great open-door policies and are very easy to have conversations with. But if the need arises, we are happy to take the initiative."

### • represent the American Bar Association to the student body

"This is done through Shanna Conner, a third-year law student," explains Flaherty. She lets the Student Bar Association at Marquette know what is going on at the ABA, and vice versa. This also affords students an introduction to the ABA, which Flaherty believes can be a useful resource for networking, professional development, education, and support.

The SBA was chartered in 1952 and is a good introduction to state and national bar associations and what they have to offer their members. "The SBA at Marquette Law School," says Flaherty, "is a great group of people with a fabulous work ethic, who are reflections of the Law School itself." •

#### sean reilly

#### Assistant Dean for Admissions

Sean Reilly's job, as the new Assistant Dean for Admissions, is Clear. "We want to enroll the strongest, most diverse class we can," he says. This is not to say it is easy. In the past three years, there has been a significant upsurge in applications to Marquette and other law schools. Last year, for example, Marquette Law School received more than 1,800 applications for some 200 spots. Competition among schools for top students has increased as well.

Reilly attributes the general upswing in applications to a confluence of factors, including the economy, technology, and the media. "The people who went back to college many years ago when the economy started to falter are now ready for graduate and professional school," he suggests. "And with the advent of electronic applications and the Internet, the information-gathering and application processes are much more accessible." Those aspects, coupled with many television shows that reflect on the positive aspects of lawyering as a profession, all contribute to the significant increase in inquiries and applications and interest in the legal profession.

As for the record number of applications to Marquette Law School, Reilly thinks it also has something to do with how the Law School has distinguished itself. "It is the strong sense of community that is pervasive among the faculty, staff, and students here," he says.

This is the same quality that drew him to accept the position this past fall when he was appointed the new Assistant Dean for Admissions. "There was an outpouring of interest and helpfulness from everyone," he says. Reilly, a New York native, was recruited by Marquette from New York University School of Law, where he was Associate Director of J.D. Admissions. Having arrived this past September, he wants to tap into the good will of the faculty, students, administration, and alumni to continue outreach to applicants and to keep the Marquette Law School community strong and growing.

This past fall, Marquette enrolled 168 full-time students and 56 part-time students. Only 40 percent of this year's incoming full-

time class came directly from undergrad schooling. And to a greater degree, the part-time class includes many people who are coming to law school from another profession.

The school starts reviewing applications on October 1, on a rolling-admission basis. "Each and every application is reviewed," explains Reilly. The Admissions Committee, consisting of seven faculty, takes into account a variety of factors when considering applicants, including undergraduate grade point average, how the student performed relative to his or her peers, trends in grades, LSAT score, involvement in extracurricular activities, and whether the applicant displays leadership skills. Also considered are work experience, letters of recommendation, and writing ability. "We are looking for talented people who will contribute to the law school community and the profession in a positive way," he notes.

Reilly says that he is enjoying his first year at Marquette and in the Midwest. This is not to suggest that he does not miss aspects of New York City. He gives one example: "I wouldn't mind finding a place that sells pizza by the slice."



#### kathleen mcmanus

A Pioneer in Legal Writing

Professor Kathleen H. McManus, L'85, retired this past spring after serving the Law School for many years as a legal writing professor and as director of the legal writing program. In a recent interview, McManus shared her reflections on the Law School and legal writing.

A role model for nontraditional students, McManus started law school when she was already a wife and the mother of four daughters. Law was her second career; her first career was as an elementary school teacher. Recalling her student days, McManus is grateful for the constant support and encouragement her husband Hugh McManus, L'65, and her children gave her at home. At school, McManus enjoyed the intellectual game her classes presented. "A Marquette education spoils a person for life," McManus says. "Students are challenged and inspired intellectually by professors who are completely accessible and who care about teaching."

According to McManus, one of the other distinguishing characteristics of a Marquette education is that its students learn in an environment guided by the Jesuit mission. The Jesuit mission, to be a person for others, is pervasive at the Law School, McManus believes. She says that Marquette law students learn they are privileged to practice law as a means to serve others.

After working briefly in private practice, McManus was offered a position as the director of the Law School's legal writing program. In those early years, legal writing programs were in their infancy across the country. McManus undertook to develop Marquette's program. Initially, McManus was assisted by adjunct faculty. Later, she helped to develop the program into one staffed by full-time legal writing faculty, like herself. McManus also gained some national attention for the Law School's legal writing program through her own scholarship and leadership in professional organizations.

Dean Joseph D. Kearney recalls Professor McManus's influence. "When the Law School determined a few years ago to go entirely with full-time legal writing faculty—we now have six such faculty—it was in many respects a tribute to Katie,"

Kearney says. "Our adjuncts were wonderfully talented, but we could see, through Katie's example, how much more time full-time faculty could give the students, particularly in one-on-one meetings to discuss the students' writing."

McManus applauds the emphasis the Law School places on legal writing. Students now study legal writing and research in their first year of law school, but they may also take advanced legal writing and research courses in their second and third years. These courses take legal writing and research one step further to reinforce established skills and expand on them. Professors in other areas of the law are aware of the connection between legal writing and their disciplines, so that legal writing is taught across the curriculum. Students can explore legal writing outside the classroom by writing in law journals or participating in moot court competitions.

Asked why legal writing is such an important component of a law school education, McManus is quick to point out the connection between legal reasoning and writing. McManus

explains that the writing process actually facilitates a person's thinking process.

Good writing can therefore lead to better legal reasoning.

McManus's legacy is without question a commitment to, and a celebration of, legal writing at the Law School. The Law School will always remember the spirit with which she has contributed to legal writing and to the education of countless Marquette lawyers. McManus is an enduring inspiration to her former colleagues and students alike. •



#### jessica price

Dedicated to Pro Bono Work

An attorney enjoys legal writing so much that she leaves the practice of law to teach the subject. But how to stay in the game herself? "Pro bono appeals," Professor Jessica Price answers. "Staying engaged in challenging legal writing projects of my own through pro bono projects has been a perfect complement to teaching writing."

Price was guided by her practice experience. When Price joined the Marquette law faculty in 2002, she left Foley & Lardner's litigation department, where she had done a substantial amount of appellate work. She also had served as a law clerk for Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Jon P. Wilcox during the 1999–2000 term. "My clerkship was a fantastic experience, and appeals work was always my favorite part of practice," she explains. "I appreciate the entire process of working on an appellate case—scouring the record, researching the law, developing a strategy to attack the decision, and forming that argument into a compelling appellate brief."

Price put her name on the list of attorneys willing to take cases

through the pro bono program of the Wisconsin State Bar's Appellate Practice Section. In March 2003, Appellate Practice Section Chair Colleen Ball contacted Price to ask whether she would be interested in taking an appointment as an amicus curiae representing the interests of a debtor in a Fair Debt Collection Practices Act claim, in the Seventh Circuit.

"I quickly realized," Price says, "that the main issue in the case, and the issue the court probably was most interested in, was a rather interesting one—whether a lawsuit filed to collect a debt can constitute an initial 'communication' with the debtor under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act."

In addition to researching and writing a new brief supporting the plaintiff's side of the argument, Price had the opportunity to argue the case before the Seventh Circuit—twice. After a 2-1 victory for Price's side, the development of a split with another circuit prompted the Seventh Circuit to rehear the case en banc. Price admits that she was pleased to have the unusual opportunity to argue before the full Seventh Circuit. But she may not be finished: she recently prevailed before the full Seventh Circuit, by a 6-4 vote, and Price therefore is waiting to see whether the losing party seeks review of the circuit split in the Supreme Court.

Price has found her work on a second pro bono case—an appeal on behalf of an asylum seeker—to be even more personally rewarding. Price first became interested in refugee and asylum law during law school. As part of her course work at the University of Minnesota Law School, she worked at the Refugee and Immigrant Program of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, a Minneapolis human rights organization which assisted certain asylum-seekers. "Before my work at Minnesota Advocates, I had an abstract understanding—from reading news stories and human rights reports—that people in other parts of the world lived through civil war and suffered through persecution or even torture at the hands of their own governments," Price explains. "But it was quite a different thing to actually sit across a table, face-to-face, and hear the story of one person's individual experience."

When Price was looking for pro bono appellate work in 2002, several years after leaving Minnesota, she contacted the program director, who was happy to give her one of the program's many pro bono cases, a case involving a woman from Africa who fled from severe persecution several years ago. Putting her legal skills to work on behalf of this woman has been immensely gratifying for Price. "My client's strength astounds me. Her ability to maintain her patience, dignity, and hope, despite years of suffering and uncertainty, is an inspiration. There are no words to express the satisfaction I experience in trying to help this client find a safe place to live her life in peace."

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