

Stewardship, the Law School, and You

The phrasing varies, but the essence of the question is the same: “How is the economic downturn affecting the Law School?” To this, the most frequent question posed to me of late, the answer, of course, cannot be comprehensive, either in the brief conversation at the basketball game or in this column.

For we are affected in virtually all spheres—whether admissions, programs, community outreach, fundraising, employment of graduating students, or a score of other matters—but in markedly different ways. In some instances, the economy is a threat to us; in others, such as in our public-service programs, it is an opportunity to lead and serve.

But for all these challenges and opportunities presenting themselves in these times, a perpetual need remains unchanged: substantial stewardship of the Law School. At some level, this stewardship must come from the dean and the faculty of the school, for it is to us that Marquette University has primarily entrusted the responsibility for the care and development of its Law School.

To be sure, the University’s senior leaders outside the Law School have responsibilities as well. And a large reason for our accomplishments in recent years is how seriously these individuals have taken these responsibilities and how substantially they have committed the University to the future of the Law School.

I have written of this last matter before, but the point should be underscored, for it is demonstrated over and over again. Most recently, the successful issuance of some \$60 million of bonds to constitute bridge financing for the construction of Eckstein Hall—at a time when the credit markets seemed closed to so many colleges and others—was an extraordinary accomplishment. My gratitude, on behalf of all of us at the Law School, to Father Wild as president, John Pauly as provost, Greg Kliebhan as senior vice president, and Chuck Lamb, who as vice president for finance led this effort, as well as to the board of trustees, is immense.

Yet all these—dean, faculty, university leaders, or even to name another group, students—are scarcely the only stewards of Marquette Law School.

You are as well. Whether you are an alumnus, a lawyer licensed in Wisconsin without a Marquette degree, or someone

with “merely” an interest in law and public policy in this region, you should rightly view yourselves as stewards of this institution. For we are an institution both directly educational and otherwise civic, and we depend upon you in important respects.

These are innumerable, but not all inexpressible. Each time you employ or mentor or merely provide an example for one of our students, or attend one of our programs or distinguished lectures, or comment on our faculty blog (<http://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog>), or make a financial contribution to support student scholarships or the new building, or coach a moot-court team, this is a form of stewardship.

To advance, we require such collaboration no less than in economically robust times. So for those of you who provide, each according to his or her specific opportunities or interests, such stewardship, thank you. For those who have thus far elected to remain mostly on the sidelines, I, as coach, invite you to put yourselves in the game. It is great fun, and we are winning.

I hope that the ensuing pages of this magazine give you a sense of this.

J.D.K.

