

Laying the Foundation

It is not unusual for me to invite you to read the latest issue of *Marquette Lawyer*. I am more self-conscious of it now because reading is much on my mind.

First, we have dedicated Ray and Kay Eckstein Hall—a building for whose exterior we set the goal of being noble, bold, harmonious, dramatic, confident, slightly willful, and, in a word, great; whose interior we wanted to be open to the community and conducive to a sense of community; and that we intended would be, in the aggregate, the best law school building in the country. One of the reasons that we succeeded in the last of these matters, no less than the first two, is the amount of reading among law students that the building will occasion. Whether it is the magnificent Aitken Reading Room, the comfortable Huiras Lounge, the sweeping Gallery overlooking the Marquette Interchange, or any number of other places, even this very social building will provide students places that attract them to sit and read the law.



Second, in the Aitken Reading Room, you will find Don Pollack's outstanding painting, commissioned for this building, *Laying the Foundation*. It draws on Abraham Lincoln's 1859 speech in Milwaukee, on the present-day

Marquette University campus, where Lincoln stressed the importance of reading: "*A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so. It gives a relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the yet unsolved ones.*" This speech helped inspire our Legacies of Lincoln Conference, held last October to commemorate the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's Milwaukee speech and the bicentennial of his birth; papers from the conference, written by leading historians and lawyers, appear in the latest issue of the *Marquette Law Review*. You should read it (send me an e-mail, and I will send you a copy).

Finally, Marquette University enters the final year of the presidency of Rev. Robert A. Wild, S.J. Father Wild stands out among the 22 presidents of the University in terms of his commitment to the Law School. Eckstein Hall is only the most visible testimony. But I am reminded of Father Wild here because he is a great reader. I knew in 2005, in writing the memorandum "The Physical Future of the Law School," and a year later, in writing with Tom Ganey, the university architect, a critical memorandum concerning site selection for a possible new building (and associated parking), that Father Wild would read even reasonably lengthy memoranda that I might put before him. Such a willingness to read cannot be presumed in this modern world, which has more distractions even than when I entered the practice two decades ago. Our students would benefit from the example of Abraham Lincoln, Father Wild, and, as you even now demonstrate with this magazine, you.

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Dean and Professor of Law