

Bringing the World to Milwaukee

“Do you really have the Archbishop of Dublin here?” A Milwaukee lawyer asked me this one recent morning in Eckstein Hall. The answer was, “Yes.” Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was in our Appellate Courtroom, speaking to an international conference organized by Marquette Law School’s Restorative Justice Initiative (RJI). The lawyer was right to be impressed: Archbishop Martin has been a powerful, insistent voice for true reform in response to the clergy sex-abuse scandal and shame in Ireland. His interest in speaking at the conference demonstrates the Law School’s growing reach.

The RJI conference is one of many examples. Even in its first year, Eckstein Hall has delivered on my bold claim that it would be the best law school building in the country—partly because it has advanced our effort to help bring the world to Milwaukee.

Another example is this past year’s annual Hallows Lecture, delivered by Aharon Barak, former president of the Israel Supreme Court. While there was much to Justice Barak’s visit, my lasting specific memory is the final question from the floor after the Hallows Lecture: Othman Atta, L’94, a local attorney and leader

in the Milwaukee Muslim community, had a polite if pointed exchange with Justice Barak concerning the Israel Supreme Court’s treatment of Palestinians during Barak’s tenure. There was much else to the visit as well. For example, it became clearer to me (and no doubt others) how large the Holocaust looms in the backdrop of Israeli jurisprudence: one

must take account of it no less than one seeking to understand our federal law must appreciate America’s tragic history with slavery and race.

Tom Merrill’s Boden Lecture—which forms the cover story for this magazine—demonstrates how outside perspectives can illuminate. Merrill, who is the Charles Evans Hughes Professor at Columbia Law

School, uses original historical research to unpack the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s 1899 decision in *Melms v. Pabst Brewing Co.*, a staple of American property law and textbooks. His essay will be of interest both to those interested in Wisconsin history and to national legal academics. It also is the occasion for Judge Richard Posner’s return, of sorts, to the Law School. Posner, who was here a few years ago to deliver our Nies Lecture in Intellectual Property Law, is back virtually: specifically, in these pages (and those of the *Marquette Law Review*) to respond to Merrill’s critique of his work.

There are many other ways that Marquette Law School brings the world to Milwaukee. Surely this is so with our students. Some 40 percent of them are not from Wisconsin. This infusion of talent is to the benefit of our region. A similar thing could be said of our faculty, many of whom engage deeply in civic life upon their arrival here.

To be sure, we can scarcely claim a unique responsibility for bringing the world to Milwaukee. After all, news organizations, such as the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, have been performing some of this function for decades. It is thus not happenstance that within the past half decade we have appointed to positions at the Law School two of the most respected broadcast and print journalists in the region. Their collaboration with their peers enabled us to be the center for political debate in Wisconsin during last fall’s election season.

We have a correlative interest in bringing Marquette Law School to the world. Our means include our extraordinary faculty blog, recently noted at volokh.com as the only law faculty blog with regularly updated content; our website more generally, where one can find our lectures and conference proceedings uploaded almost immediately upon occurrence; and, not least, this *Marquette Lawyer* magazine. I encourage you to read it—and to tell me whether you agree with Professor Merrill or Judge Posner.

Joseph D. Kearney
Dean and Professor of Law



Columbia’s Prof. Thomas W. Merrill and Marquette’s Dean Joseph D. Kearney in Eckstein Hall before the Boden Lecture this past fall.