

Joseph D. Kearney

Investiture of Hon. Cynthia M. Davis

On September 29, 2016, the Milwaukee County Circuit Court held an investiture of Cindy Davis, L'06, as a judge of the court. Dean Joseph D. Kearney spoke at the occasion.

Some 13 years ago, Cindy Davis came to us at Marquette Law School, having proved herself in the classrooms and on the playing fields of, first, Brookfield Academy and, then, Depauw University. Yet her past accomplishments provided no guarantee of success. Cindy was no longer a teacher or captain or award-winner, but one of a large class of students.

When I greeted those students that August morning in 2003, I impressed upon them the same truth that I had spoken a few months earlier at a memorial service in this courtroom, remembering Dean Howard B. Eisenberg and other lawyers. In both instances, I recalled (for the experienced judges and lawyers here) or observed (for the new law students at Marquette) that law is, among other things, the place to which individuals in our society turn not only to do their deals “but to right their wrongs and protect their freedoms.” I reminded the class of that three years later, at their graduation in 2006.

And in the years in between—the three years of law school—Cindy had proved herself once again. She impressed her professors and won academic awards. She became a leader among her fellow students, who selected her as editor-in-chief of volume 89 of the *Marquette Law Review*. We kept her challenged. Upon her sending me a note relating that she had received the clerkship she had sought with Justice David Prosser, I responded by congratulating her—and concluding, “I presume that you know that this means you will be enrolled in my Supreme Court Seminar in the spring.” What is the value of the deanship if it does not enable you to cherry-pick a few students? Lest there be any doubt here: In the course, Cindy received an *A*.

Cindy so succeeded because she brought to the new endeavor of legal education the same qualities and habits that had carried her to law school. “Preparation, thoughtfulness, and responsibility are her hallmarks,” said one of her recommenders in 2003. “She is one of the best listeners that I have ever



Cindy Davis is pictured in the ceremonial courtroom in the Milwaukee County Courthouse with her husband, Randy Sitzberger, L'09, and mother, Sandy Davis; Chief Judge Maxine White, L'85, is in the background, seated at the bench.

encountered in a student—attentive, open-minded, and sufficiently skeptical without her skepticism dissolving into cynicism,” wrote another. Are these not the very things for which one would hope in a judge?

The answer, of course, is “Yes,” and the happy truth is that Cindy Davis is exceptionally well qualified to serve as a judge of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court. To be sure, she will have to prove herself all over again, for judging is a different art from the practice of law. Her history before, and at, Marquette Law School leaves no doubt that Judge Davis will meet this new challenge at a high level. She is ready to right wrongs and protect freedoms—or, more broadly yet, to do justice. Warm congratulations. ■