



Eryn Doherty

## **A Personal Reflection on the National Sports Law Institute and the Sports Law Program at Marquette**

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*Editor-in-Chief, Marquette Sports Law Journal, 1999-2000.*

When I elected to attend Marquette University Law School the National Sports Law Institute and the Sports Law program played no role in my decision, rather it was based on several other factors. Ironically, the National Sports Law Institute and the Sports Law program ended up playing an integral role in both my academic and professional careers.

I initially got involved with the Sports Law program through the Sports Law Society at the beginning of my first year as a means to meet other students that had a similar interest in sports. After learning more about the program I decided to follow that path and take sports law classes, serve on the *Marquette Sports Law Journal*, and complete an internship with the Milwaukee Rampage Soccer Team. Also, during my second year I participated in the editorial competition for the *Sports Law Journal* and was named its Editor-in-Chief for the 1999-2000 academic year. More importantly and fortuitously for my classmates and myself, the National Sports Law Institute and the Law School introduced the Sports Law Certificate during my third year and made provisions for class of 2000 eligibility.

Upon graduation in 2000, I decided to practice in the field of Labor Law. Since most of the professional sport leagues were unionized, I thought Labor Law would provide me with a background from which to build my career and eventually lead to me working for a team or a league. That goal has not yet been realized, but I am fortunate enough to practice in my area of expertise within the entertainment and broadcast industries and tangentially sports in those industries.

As I reflect on the National Sports Law Institute and the Sports Law program and my experiences with them, I have noticed that both entities and the Law School have been acutely aware of the students' and the program's needs and have been both receptive and adaptive to them. The curriculum has continued to expand, the number of professors teaching the courses has increased, the number of scholarships for editors of the *Marquette Sports Law Review* has doubled in the last ten years, a joint JD/MBA in Sports Business was introduced, the National Sports Law Student Writing Competition was established, and the internships and opportunities to work within the industry have grown immeasurably.

One example of change is evidenced through the *Journal* which was renamed the *Marquette Sports Law Review* in the fall of 2000. The *Journal*, at the time I served as Editor-in-Chief, had the smallest staff of all the Law School's publications, the most cramped office area, which was shared with the National Sports Law Institute, and unlike the other publications, its editors received no financial assistance or scholarships from the Law School; yet it was the premier publication at the Law School (I admit that I might be a bit biased). In response to this inequality among the editorial boards at the Law School and in recognition of the work and the time commitment that these editors give to the *Sports Law Review*, Professors Mitten and Anderson and the Institute saw a need to provide them with financial assistance and created the annual Sports Law Alumni Scholarship in 2001.

Another example of the malleable nature of the program and the Law School is the addition of the entertainment element. It is only natural that some students in the program would be interested in

entertainment law since the sports and entertainment practices are more often than not coupled together. Based on student interest and under Professor Anderson's leadership, the Law School has participated, and continues to participate, in the National Entertainment Law Moot Court Competition sponsored each fall by Pepperdine University in addition to the Mardi Gras National Sports Law Competition.

More importantly, I believe that the Institute's and program's continued growth and reputation over the years could not have been accomplished without the support of Deans Eisenberg and Kearney, the past and present Directors of the Institute, the Law School professors who teach the classes and continuously support the Program, and its benefactors, especially the Greenberg and Tierney families, and the O'Neill family along with the law firm of Davis and Kuelthau, S.C.

However, I believe that the program and Institute's most important asset is its alumni. As the program has grown through the years it is only natural that the Sports Law Alumni Association has grown with it. If you look at the list of the Association members you will see that there are more and more alumni working in both the professional and amateur sports industries which only enhances the prestige of the Sports Law program and the National Sports Law Institute. For example, alums are working for professional sport teams, college athletic departments, and some are teaching sports law classes at other universities. There are also those of us that have gone outside the box and forged our careers in non-traditional areas of the sports industry allowing us to keep our hands in the game. Still there are many that do not practice in the area at all but apply what they learned in their sports law classes and rely on the valuable experiences they gained through the program in their chosen career field. No matter what path we have chosen we should continue to remain committed to the Law School, the Sports Law program and the National Sports Law Institute. Our continued participation is necessary for the Sports Law program and the National Sports Law Institute to continue to expand and thrive whether we speak formally or informally to current students about our careers; speak to prospective students about the program and what it offers; attend any of the sponsored events, conferences or golf outing; or donate to the scholarship fund. One of the best things about the Sports Law program and the Institute is that once you graduate you are not forgotten. Both strive to keep us informed, involved, and infatuated with the program and the Institute. I, for one, am privileged to be associated with and represent the Law School, the Sports Law program, and the National Sports Law Institute.



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## **Marquette University & Sports Law: A Winning Combination**

By **Jenni Spies** (L'06), Assistant District Attorney, Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*Editor-in-Chief, Marquette Sports Law Review, 2005-2006, and NSLI Research Assistant 2004-2006.*

I can still vividly remember sitting in an undergraduate class and typing, "Sports Law Programs" into an internet search engine. I was studying for an undergraduate degree in Sport Management and had just discovered an area of study called, "Sports Law." I did not know exactly what sports law was, but I did know that I had enjoyed studying the law in my legal studies classes, and I loved sports. The first result that showed up on my internet search was Marquette University Law School. I was immediately impressed by the number of classes and educational opportunities available through the Marquette Sports Law program and the National Sports