

tim casey's remarks to the advisory board

Several years ago Dean Howard B. Eisenberg created an Advisory Board consisting of a number of alumni and other friends of Marquette Law School. Its basic purpose is to assist the dean in fundraising on behalf of the school. At a meeting this past year, Louis J. Andrew, Jr., L'66, the chair of the Advisory Board, invited Timothy J. Casey, then a third-year law student (now an alumnus), to share with the group some of his perspectives on Marquette Law School. The following are Mr. Casey's remarks.

It was opportunities that brought me back to Marquette. I first came here in the fall of 1998 to pursue my master's degree in history. I was a guy from the northern suburbs of Chicago, with no ties to Milwaukee. I had made up my mind that I was just passing through Milwaukee on my way back home. Three years later, after returning to Chicago for a time, I came back to Marquette, much less intent on just passing through, because of the opportunities I saw.

After finishing my master's degree and taking a year off to work, I decided that my talents would best serve me in law. I wanted to become not just a lawyer, but a good lawyer—and I did not want to lose sight of what was important to me. My goal then, and still today, was to be a good human being, a good husband, and a good attorney, in that order. I saw the opportunity to keep those priorities in order here.

But opportunity often comes with a price tag, and the opportunity to attend law school is no exception. I had applied to several of the Chicago schools, Madison, Marquette, and Berkeley. Most people who gave me advice told me to go to the best school, in terms of name recognition, that I could get into. Because law school tuition is around \$90,000 for three years, it makes a lot of sense to go to the school with the most name recognition. Everyone told me that if I went to a big-name school, I could go wherever I wanted from there. That may be true in theory. But going to a big-name school where I was not going to get scholarship money meant that I would have over \$90,000 in tuition debt, plus debt from three years of living expenses. Realistically, I felt, graduating from a big-name

school with that kind of debt meant I would have to go to a high-paying job, whether I liked the job or not.

What made Marquette a better opportunity than schools with perhaps more nationwide name recognition was the scholarship money I was offered. The scholarship money that Marquette offered me meant that, if I did well here, I could go anywhere I wanted. It gave me the opportunity to take my law degree and do something I loved, not just something I felt compelled to do because it was all I could afford to do. I could take a job because I enjoyed it and found it fulfilling—not because I had to make a lot of money to pay off my enormous debts.

While the scholarship money made the decision an easier one, I believe in my heart that I went to the best of the law schools to which I was admitted. I came back, too, because I believe Marquette measures its success by the quality of the people it turns out. I came to Marquette Law School because I saw the opportunity to become a good attorney and to keep focused on being a good human being and being a good husband.

With the caveat that like anyone else I have days when I am ready to throw the books and the computer through the window, I have really enjoyed my experience here. The classes have a nice mix of practicality and theory. I do not have the sense that we overemphasize the theoretical aspect of the law at the expense of the everyday application. The clinical programs offer outstanding hands-on opportunities; the legal writing program is intensely practical. I have worked in one small firm and one large firm in my two summers, and I did not feel any less equipped—and sometimes better equipped—than my colleagues from schools such as Michigan, Northwestern, Yale, and Harvard. I never once felt that I had not been given the tools to succeed.

I have had the opportunity to build relationships here—both personal and professional.

I've also been given a wonderful opportunity to give back a bit through the legal clinic here. I became involved in the clinic because I felt strongly about two things. The first is that

Marquette is an institution focused on more than simply training professionals. It is focused on helping people. I came back here because I believed that lawyers help people and that Marquette would be just the place to go to learn about that. The clinic to me seemed to be the natural outgrowth of that commitment to helping others. Second, I felt strongly that as I embarked on my legal career it was important for me to avoid the habit of saying, "I'll have to get involved in that sort of thing some day." I believed that it was important for me to make a time commitment now, even a small one, to give something. It's easy to say that we don't have the time for a lot of things—we are all busy. But that, to me, did not embody the kind of attitude that Marquette University was trying to foster. Apathy was not why I came back.

It was opportunities that brought me back to Marquette. Those opportunities were made possible for me because someone else gave back. Someone else believed that Marquette is about more than just graduating attorneys, that it is about going outside yourself. I believe that, too. And I have experienced that while I've been here. I've experienced that through the scholarship money I've received. I've experienced that through my relationships with faculty and administrators, such as Dean Kearney, who have taken an interest in my growth as an attorney and been an enormous help to me in some of my pursuits as I look to my first years out of law school. These people have made it possible for me to learn to be an attorney at a school where I have been able to keep priorities straight.

I've been very fortunate with the opportunities I have been



Timothy J. Casey, L'04

given. I plan to do litigation work because that's what I enjoy; perhaps someday I would like to be a judge. Though I can't say with certainty what the future holds for me, there are two things I hope for no matter what. First, I hope that many years from now I will have made it possible for people to say of me that I was a good person, a good husband and father, and a good attorney—in that order. I think that if I make it possible for people to say that, success will follow. Second, with that success I hope to give back to a place that has given me so much. I hope I can help create for some student opportunities like the ones that have been created for me. Because it was those opportunities—created for me by others giving back—that brought me back. Thank you for letting me speak to you this evening. •