

## from the dean's mailbag

February 21, 2005

Dear Dean Kearney:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your January 24, 2005 letter to the Marquette Law School student body. As a 1974 alumnus of the Law School, I enjoy getting your periodic status reports.

Your letter brought three points to mind: one whimsical and two serious.

First, the physical plant of the Marquette University Law School is likely always to be a challenge. When I matriculated to the Law School in August of 1971, we were in the "old, old building." The main classroom was on the second floor at the top of the stairs to the left. The classroom ran the entire length of the easterly side of the law school. The ceilings seemed 50 feet tall. A bank of nearly ceiling-to-floor windows ran along the entire easterly side of the classroom. There was no air conditioning. The entire class was in old wooden desks from the 1930s. Professor Aiken taught civil procedure and Professor Ghiardi taught torts in this classroom. The entire class of 1974 was jammed into this room for civil procedure and torts. There was no sound system. Professor Aiken and Professor Ghiardi were propped up on a large wooden box behind a flimsy podium. When the windows were closed, you could hear the professor, but it was unbearably hot. Remember, men were required to wear a jacket and tie in those days. When the windows were open, it was a little cooler, but the professor's voice was drowned out by the sound coming from the Marquette interchange. This was especially true with civil procedure since it was an 8:00 a.m. class. Nevertheless, we all learned civil procedure!

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Second, the graduate from the Class of 2000 is right when she observed that "law is practiced everywhere." As a practicing attorney, I took discovery depositions in some very unusual places. One time I remember taking a discovery deposition in the milking parlor of a Class A dairy farm. It turned out to be an important case—a stray voltage claim worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Third and finally, I too regret to learn of the decline in study groups at Marquette Law School. Frankly, I am not sure I would have survived law school without my study group. Last summer, during our 30th reunion, my entire study group reconvened. We immediately felt the bond of camaraderie even after all these years.

As a first- and second-year student, study groups enabled you to verify you were "on the right track." It helps immensely when you can share your beliefs, ideas, impressions, understandings, and opinions with others. You learn a lot under those circumstances.

I think most successful lawyers would agree that a de facto "study group" is important in the practice of law. I know I valued my intellectual associations with my partners and adversaries. I learned more from other lawyers than I ever learned from myself.

Even as a judge, I value our "study groups." The judicial education programs we judges attend bring together members of the judiciary from all over the State. Listening to other judges and hearing about the way they do things, both on a formal and informal basis, continues to be one of my main sources of learning. You are absolutely correct when you observe that a lack of interaction between law school classmates deprives a student of the full educational experience and fails to acknowledge the necessity of collaboration in the practice of law.

Thank you for letting me share my observations with you.

Good luck during the remainder of the semester.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM M. GABLER  
Circuit Court Judge Branch 3  
Eau Claire County