

CELEBRATING THE CAREERS—AND UNVEILING THE PORTRAITS—OF **PROFESSORS CAROLYN EDWARDS** and **PHOEBE WILLIAMS**

On April 14, 2021, Marquette University Law School unveiled the portraits of two retired faculty: Professor Carolyn M. Edwards and Professor Phoebe Weaver Williams, L'81. While the event was online, the portraits are on permanent display in Eckstein Hall. Their significance—reflecting the importance of the individuals portrayed—was suggested in the remarks at the event, which appear here lightly edited.



Professor Carolyn M. Edwards



Professor Phoebe Weaver Williams

Dean Joseph D. Kearney

Good afternoon, and welcome, everyone, to Eckstein Hall, if you will. We are expecting more than 200 people today, and I appreciate that many of you are joining us from elsewhere. Our gathering embraces faculty, alumni (Marquette lawyers, as we tend to say), retired administrative assistants, current students, and even a prospective student or two, scarcely to encompass all the examples. You include three trustees of Marquette University—Justice and Professor Janine Geske, Ray Manista, and Judge Jim Wynn. Some of you are as far away as Michigan, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, and California, just to go rather quickly around the country.

Yet our *geographic* focus today is on Milwaukee—here in Eckstein Hall. We all know it to be an important and magnificent building—not just an elegant venue, but a dynamic educational home, in part because of the social interaction that it engenders. In fact, much better than many public buildings, Eckstein Hall has supported such interaction even during the pandemic of this past year.

Inside this newish building, barely a decade old, one sees our century-plus history as well. In our first-floor Lubar Center, one is greeted by portraits of Marquette lawyers or faculty who served on a state supreme court or a federal court of appeals, going as far back as Justice Franz C. Eschweiler, more than a century ago. In perhaps the Law School's longest tradition of this sort, each of the former deans can be met in a portrait in one place or another in the building. Several past presidents of the university welcome you, in a sense, to the third floor of Eckstein Hall.

Aspects of our portrayals reflect considerable diversity, beyond ranging from Ray and Kay Eckstein on the first floor, to Abraham Lincoln in the Aitken Reading Room on the third floor, to St. Edmund Campion in the chapel on the fourth. The striking *Marquette Lawyer* covers, going back almost 20 years, line the hallways on the second floor along the Zilber Forum and elsewhere,

showing people who have graced our community, in any number of different ways, whether during a lifetime or through an important lecture appearing in the *Marquette Lawyer* magazine. In addition to the late Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson and Justice Antonin Scalia at the dedication of Eckstein Hall in 2010, and Rabbi Aaron D. Twerski, of our Class of 1965 and a great scholar of the law, one will pass Ralph Jackson, the architect of this building; Judge Albert Diaz of the Fourth Circuit; our five African American alumni who helped diversify the Wisconsin state trial courts in the 1990s and the next decade; and a number of others, such as (most recently) Professor Paul Butler, my fellow South Side Chicagoan and a professor at Georgetown University.

To leave aside those who served as a judge or as dean, one will meet a handful of past faculty of Marquette Law School, including the late Professors Francis A. Darnieder and James D. Ghiardi. Behind each portrait is a story: For example, while we were still in Sensenbrenner Hall, my colleague, now-emeritus Professor Jack Kircher, and his wife, Marcia, donated the portrait of Professor Ghiardi, who was both Jack's mentor and the most renowned professor among generations of Marquette lawyers. In the case of Professor Darnieder, the portrait was a gift of the Class of 1963, after his death the year before—it was from his students, that is to say.

It is within *all* this context that another of my colleagues—Professor Michael K. McChrystal—urged upon me that the Law School commission portraits of two of our emeritae faculty: Professors Carolyn Edwards and Phoebe Williams. Mike, himself a member of our Class of 1975, urges many ideas upon me. I once introduced him to Ray and Kay Eckstein, as we stood on the future site of this building, as the person who had gotten me into “all this trouble” (whereupon, to Mike, I introduced Ray and Kay as the people who had gotten me out of the trouble). As often, Mike's urging was

“One student particularly liked Professor Edwards’s humor in demonstrating the wide variety of ways to accept a contract offer—by having a student signify acceptance by singing a song.”

JOHN A. ROTHSTEIN

somewhat contrary to his own interests, in the sense that he made clear from the outset that he would fully underwrite this project.

With his permission, I will read you some of what Professor McChrystal said to me. He captured it well:

Carolyn and Phoebe were trailblazers, creating paths for so many other talented teachers and students. It wasn’t easy for either of them; like most trailblazers, the resistance they faced was formidable. But their knowledge, perseverance, and incomparable dignity won over some, then many, then pretty much everyone. I saw this firsthand as a colleague, and secondhand through my own children as Marquette law students, and now as Marquette lawyers, who single out these outstanding teachers from their law school days. Marquette, named for another trailblazer, exhorts us to *be the difference*. Phoebe and Carolyn have made a lasting difference during their long and distinguished careers on the law faculty. *They are Marquette* for thousands of alums and members of the community. Their portraits gracing Eckstein Hall will proudly proclaim that fact for decades to come.

We discussed this project as long ago as 2018 and set out upon it in 2019, but events intervened (not least the pandemic and the existential imperative that it posed). Now we are ready to proceed, and we see not enough reason to wait until we can all assemble in person. Many of us are in Eckstein Hall every day, and it is right that, being now available, the portraits of Professor Edwards and Professor Williams—and both of these colleagues are at this event today—should be placed alongside that of Professor Ghiardi, whom I have already mentioned, and one of Professor Ken Luce,

which has been part of the Law School since 1977. For that to happen, the new portraits must be unveiled.

Toward that end, while we embrace that a picture is worth a thousand words, we have asked two colleagues to speak briefly concerning each of the honorees and of her significance to them. The speakers are, in each case, a current faculty member and a former student (a Marquette lawyer). I refer to them all as colleagues, of course, because we are all members of a common profession.

Both alphabetical order and date of hire support our unveiling the portrait of Professor Edwards first and then that of Professor Williams. And in the first regard, we have asked Professor Judith McMullen and John Rothstein to speak concerning Professor Edwards. Professor McMullen is herself a longtime member of our faculty, having started teaching here, at her hometown law school, in 1987. Mr. Rothstein is a member of our Class of 1979 and a longtime partner at Quarles & Brady in Milwaukee. After their remarks, I will come back on screen, not for my own sake but in order that we may show the portrait of Professor Edwards.

Without more, Professor McMullen.

Professor Judith G. McMullen

Thank you, Dean, and good afternoon, everyone. It is my privilege today to say a few words about my colleague and friend, Professor Carolyn Edwards.

Carolyn Edwards was born and raised in Ohio. She graduated from Wells College in Aurora, New York, where she majored in philosophy and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. After graduation, she was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in philosophy at the University of California-Berkeley.

Following Berkeley, Professor Edwards returned to Ohio and taught fifth and sixth grade for four years while she attended the University of Toledo College of Law in the school’s part-time evening program. One

measure of the extreme difficulty of doing this is that of the 68 students who began the night program, only 12 graduated in four years: 10 men and 2 women. After her graduation in 1970, Professor Edwards spent nine months looking for a legal job, challenged by the fact that employers were open about not wanting to hire women. One male lawyer told her, “We’re a very clubby group here, and you wouldn’t fit in.” Undeterred, Professor Edwards accepted a position with the Ohio Insurance Commission and moved to Columbus, Ohio, to work as an attorney examiner.

Carolyn Edwards always aspired to teach law, so after a couple of years with the Insurance Commission she accepted a full-time job at The Ohio State University teaching business law to undergraduates. During her second year at Ohio State, she received a letter from one of her professors at Toledo, encouraging her to apply for teaching positions at law schools. So she did.

Marquette interviewed her and quickly had the good sense to hire her. Carolyn Edwards began teaching at Marquette in 1974, when Robert Boden was dean, thereby becoming the first woman to be hired at Marquette as a full-time, tenure-track law professor.

During her time at Marquette Law School, Professor Edwards has focused her teaching and scholarship on the law of contracts, sales, secured transactions, and negotiable instruments. She shared her love (yes, she uses that word) of contracts and Articles 2 and 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code with more than a generation of law students. The steady stream of students coming to her office for individual conferences over the years is testimony to the care and attention she paid to her students throughout her career. Professor Edwards also published scholarship on commercial law. For example, her article, “The Statute of Frauds of the Uniform Commercial Code and the Doctrine of Estoppel,” was cited in the *Restatement (Second) of Contracts*, a leading authority. Other articles, such as “Article 2 of the Uniform Commercial Code and Consumer Protection: The Refusal to Experiment,” were cited frequently by leading commercial law scholars.

Over the years, Professor Edwards engaged in significant service work at the law school, university, legal profession, and larger-community levels. She has served multiple years on virtually every significant law school committee, often as chair. In addition to her service at Marquette, some examples of service activities undertaken by Professor Edwards both within the legal profession and within the larger community include service on the Wisconsin court system’s Judicial

Education Committee, as well as more than 20 years of dedicated service on the board of directors of the Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee.

Of course, Professor Edwards has always been smart, dedicated, and hardworking. Equally important, she has served as a role model for a generation of female law students and colleagues (like me). Carolyn Edwards has shown us how to be intelligent and strong without being condescending, defensive, or abrasive. She has consistently shown us that we can all belong and make an impact in the legal profession if we work hard and are respectful of others. The qualities that make Professor Edwards an excellent teacher also make her a wonderful colleague and friend: she is interested in and attentive to people, patient with others, clear and unpretentious in her speech, and appreciative of the good in the world.

Carolyn Edwards recently said to me that, as she looks back on her career as a woman in the legal profession, she sees that there were hurdles, but she appreciates that there was also a lot of support, from both men and women, along the way. Thank you, Carolyn, for providing that same support and encouragement to those of us who are trying to follow in your footsteps. We are so grateful to have you as our teacher, our colleague, and our friend.

And with that, I will turn to John Rothstein, who has some remarks.

John A. Rothstein

Thank you, Dean Kearney and Professor McMullen. I started Marquette Law School in 1976 and graduated in 1979. Despite the many years that have passed since my time in school, I still remember the professors who touched my life. I suspect we all do. We remember how they challenged us, pushed us, encouraged us, and taught us the way we needed to think to become lawyers.

For me, Carolyn Edwards was one of those formative professors. She was my professor for Contracts and for a course in the Uniform Commercial Code. To explain why she was so formative, let me set the stage.

In 1976, a very popular movie (and then TV show) was titled *The Paper Chase*. The movie centered on an imposing faculty professor, named Charles Kingsfield (played by actor John Houseman), who taught Contracts to first-year students. One of the main dramatic tensions in the movie was how many students would survive the workload and learn the essential analytical skills needed to flourish as a lawyer. Of course, in “reality,” the fictional Professor

Kingsfield—despite his intimidating persona—had a heart of gold. With this Hollywood image in my mind, I came to my first days at Marquette Law School.

With one exception, for at least the start of that first semester, I experienced some of the same worries that the movie so ably portrayed. The main exception was Professor Edwards. With her measured manner, Professor Edwards quickly made evident that she had all the same precision and expertise as the fictional Professor Kingsfield, but without the distance or mystery. To me, she was a professor who not only imparted the needed information but did this in such a fashion that I knew innately she was out to help every student. It was simply her character.

In preparing these comments, I visited with various of my classmates, to recall their own experiences with Professor Edwards. Their memories were the same. The words they used to describe Professor Edwards were “helpful”; “nuts and bolts”; “plainspoken”; and “kind.” One classmate summed it up this way: “The first two years of law school were frenetic. But Professor Edwards was always a calming influence.”

Because character is often said to be destiny, I was equally unsurprised when I received virtually identical reviews of Professor Edwards from much more recent Marquette law students. The comments I got from them were along these lines: “I was super nervous, but she put me at ease.” “She is all business.” “She got me engaged.” One student particularly liked Professor Edwards’s humor in demonstrating the wide variety of ways to accept a contract offer—by having a student signify acceptance by singing a song.

John Houseman, the fictional professor in *The Paper Chase*, received an Academy Award Oscar for his portrayal of that foreboding but caring Contracts professor. That award, though well deserved, was for work in one movie depicting the passage of but one school year.

Professor Edwards, in contrast, has been conducting the real-life version of that work for more than 45 years. While the memory of *The Paper Chase* is now fading, I know that generations of Marquette lawyers will remember forever the service that Professor Edwards rendered to them. In whatever may be their field of endeavor, they are all better lawyers and better people for the care and effort she gave them. I certainly am.

So, thank you, Professor Edwards, for your years of service, and I offer you the warmest congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. Whether you wish to signify your acceptance by singing, I leave to you.

Dean Kearney

Thank you, John (and Judi). I appreciated your remarks very much. Let us now display the portrait of our colleague and friend, Professor Carolyn Edwards.

We will see it again briefly at the end of the program—for a particular reason—and we and future generations will see it, each day, in Eckstein Hall.

Let us now turn our attention to Professor Phoebe Williams. Professor Vada Waters Lindsey and Kate McChrystal have agreed to speak. Professor Lindsey, a professor of law who has been serving more recently also as our associate dean for enrollment and inclusion, has taught at the Law School for 25 years. Ms. McChrystal is a member of our Class of 2010 and a partner at Gagne McChrystal De Lorenzo & Burghardt, here in Milwaukee. After their remarks, we will unveil the portrait of Professor Williams. Then we will have brief, almost-closing remarks by our provost, Kimo Ah Yun.

Professor Vada Waters Lindsey

Thank you, Dean Kearney. It is my pleasure—indeed, my honor—to share a few remarks about Professor Phoebe Weaver Williams. Professor Williams, who grew up in Memphis, received her undergraduate degree from Marquette University. After her graduation in 1968, Professor Williams held various leadership positions during a 10-year career at the Social Security Administration.

While Professor Williams had thought about becoming an attorney when she was a child, her work at the Social Security Administration solidified her interest. As a result, she enrolled in law school at Marquette and earned her J.D. in 1981. She went on to practice labor law at a local law firm before joining the Marquette Law School faculty as an assistant professor of law in 1985. She was promoted to associate professor of law with tenure in 1992. Not only was Professor Williams the first tenured African American professor at the Law School, but she was also the first tenured African American professor at Marquette University as a whole. She was a true trailblazer.

Before taking emerita status in 2014, Professor Williams taught many classes at the Law School, including Labor Law, Business Associations, Employment Discrimination, and History of Women Lawyers.

Professor Williams was always willing to devote her time in service to the Law School, university, legal profession, and community. For example, she was the Black Law Students Association’s faculty advisor for 15 years. She chaired the Marquette University Task

Force on Gender Equity. She was a member of the State of Wisconsin Governor's Task Force on Racial Profiling. She was a member of the City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission, including serving as the vice chair and then chair. Professor Williams was also a court commissioner of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court, and she served as a member of committees to review four nominations to the U.S. Supreme Court. Significantly, the individuals who turned to Professor Williams for these appointments included a mayor, judge, governor, and U.S. senator.

Professor Williams's impact continues as an emerita professor. For example, her 2009 article entitled "Age Discrimination in the Delivery of Health Care Services to Our Elders" was recently listed on SSRN's Top Ten download list in aging and long-term care, access to health care, and social determinants of public health.

On a more personal note, I would not be the professor that I am today without Professor Williams's guidance, support, and friendship. As a junior faculty member, when I sought her counsel, she was always available. I learned a great deal from her about professionalism and collegiality. She always greeted me with a warm smile. And, as I often saw, she had that same smile as she interacted with the students. She embraced *cura personalis* in these interactions. I recall several years ago when a student from a southern state did not have a winter coat. She drove that student to Mayfair Mall so that the student could get a suitable winter jacket.

In conclusion, on behalf of our faculty colleagues at the Law School, past and present, I feel confident in conveying how proud we are of Professor Williams on this well-deserved honor.

Let me now pass the virtual microphone to Kate McChrystal.

Kate McChrystal

Thank you, Professor Lindsey, and thank you, Dean Kearney. I was incredibly fortunate to have Phoebe Williams as my professor, right at the point in law school where I was wondering if I had made a terrible life decision.

Professor Williams's class that semester—History of Women Lawyers—was unlike any other in my law school experience. It was a place where we were encouraged to consider our own vision of our careers and to discuss our fears and our hopes and how we would conquer or pursue them. Professor Williams created a safe, supportive, and open space for discussion about the law but also about our lives.

Her class was the first place in law school where I heard about various career paths in real terms, with real experiences—not just war stories, but life stories, about how women lawyers had paved their own way since the inception of modern lawyering and about how we are each empowered and able to do that for ourselves.

It is no surprise that it is Professor Williams who created that space and opened that discussion. Professor Williams herself has set such a lovely example in her real life—balancing a successful career, really important community activism, and a satisfying family and social life. She has shown us, and shows us, that we can have it all, if we are willing to pave our own path and—maybe even more importantly—create our own boundaries.

Professor Williams, please know that *your* class and the discussion that you led there gave me both the permission and the road map to create a law practice that fits my own needs. I'm eternally grateful to you for seeing the need for that type of course and for making it such a critical piece of my law school experience. I think back on our discussions regularly—in my professional life and in my personal

“Professor Williams’s class that semester—History of Women Lawyers—was unlike any other in my law school experience. It was a place where we were encouraged to consider our own vision of our careers”

KATE McCHRISTAL

life—when I say “Yes” to opportunities, and when I confidently decline. Thank you, Professor Williams, for giving me and so many students the permission to make our own way.

We are all so happy to honor you formally today and to honor your spirit in our daily lives, our community work, and our law practices. Congratulations on this well-deserved honor.

Dean Kearney

Thank you, Kate (and Vada). I am very grateful for your very fine comments. It is now time to unveil the portrait of our colleague and friend, Professor Phoebe Williams. This, too, will welcome students and visitors to Eckstein Hall, for years to come.

We have some almost-closing comments from the university’s chief academic officer, Provost Kimo Ah Yun.

Provost Kimo Ah Yun

Thank you, Dean Kearney, and congratulations to Professors Edwards and Williams. I get a lot of opportunities to walk around campus, and I get to see various portraits that are hung at Marquette. There is not an extraordinary number, but I think about the impact that those portrayed—and others also—have left on this university. A portrait becomes a permanent trace of those who have made Marquette a very special place.

I am so happy that your portraits will be in Eckstein Hall. Our mission statement declares that “Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit university dedicated to serving God by serving our students and contributing to the advancement of knowledge.” When we think about who we want to be as Marquette University, we talk about building men and women for and with others. We’ve been doing that for more than 140 years, and that can’t be done unless we have dedicated faculty—which is exactly what we have here.

When I was listening to all the presenters talk about Professor Edwards and Professor Williams, certain words popped out: *care, attention, impact, patient, expertise, kind, helpful*—those are all great, and that’s always what we’re trying to do. But of all the words that I heard, the one that made me most grateful to be part of Marquette is *love*. When we love our students, we make a difference, and I hear that weave through all of the stories.

So on behalf of Marquette University, Academic Affairs, the Law School, and all the students that you have touched in your many years at Marquette University, thank you for making our university better.

I feel honored that you chose Marquette to be the place that you could be a difference-maker for everyone. Again, thank you and congratulations.

Dean Kearney

Thank you, Provost Ah Yun. Let us to do two more brief things. First, I mentioned that Professor Edwards and Professor Williams are both with us today. I understand that they want to say something—not a rebuttal, I imagine, but it is not for me to say. Let’s go first to Professor Edwards.

Professor Carolyn M. Edwards

Thank you, Dean Kearney, and good afternoon to everyone. First of all, I’m a bit—well, more than a bit—overwhelmed by this honor. So I’m going to read my comments, if you don’t mind.

I’m very grateful to everyone who made today possible and, in particular, to Professor Mike McChrystal, a *longtime* colleague of mine, and of course to Dean Kearney, who provided wonderful support. I do want to give thanks as well to John Rothstein and Professor Judith McMullen.

John entered law school shortly after I began teaching. He was a joy to have as a student. He was dedicated to learning but fun loving at the same time. And from what I understand, he’s continued those qualities long into his career at Quarles & Brady.

Judi has been a colleague and a friend for many years. To put it in a nutshell, I treasure her friendship. We spent many hours together, in our offices, which were usually just a few feet apart, discussing everything from how to write a syllabus to how best to give exams. But mostly we concentrated on the world’s problems, and we were sure that we came up with solutions. Of course, no one listened to us, you will permit me wryly to say, but we continued our examination, in the hopes that someday someone might follow through. Again, I very much treasure her friendship.

Teaching at Marquette has been a dream come true, believe me. I will always be grateful to all the students for keeping this dream alive. I think I received more from the students than I ever returned to them. It’s wonderful to see so many of my former students attending today’s event. Thank you, everyone—I am deeply honored by this event, and I can’t ever find the words to say that as clearly as I would like. Thank you so much, and back to Dean Kearney.

Dean Kearney

Thank you. And Professor Williams.

Professor Phoebe Weaver Williams

Thank you, Dean Kearney. I really appreciate this honor, and sharing it with my colleague, Professor Edwards, is very special. Through her excellent teaching, she opened the door for women faculty, including one of my mentors, Professor Christine Wiseman.

Professor Lindsey and Kate McChrystal, thank you for your remarks. They remind me that I've really been blessed to have some wonderful and amazing students and talented colleagues. I want to thank as well Professors Jay Grenig and Ralph Anzivino, who also served as mentors and supported me in my efforts.

And thanks to Professor Mike McChrystal, for the very special way that he contributed to this project and for the way he supported *each* phase of my professional career, from law student to emerita professor. Associate Dean Christine Wilczynski-Vogel, thank you for your excellent organization and support during the planning of this event.

Whatever I did to deserve this honor, I have had resources of perseverance. Those resources to persevere have included my family and my friends.

My parents, Alonzo and Claribelle Weaver, are no longer with us, but they were exemplars of perseverance. For most of their careers as educators, they had no legal protections against racial discrimination. Our racially segregated community denied them access to the local university. Yet Mom and Dad pursued graduate degrees during summers by attending a historically black university located three hours from our home. For many years, they earned less than the white teachers in our community, yet they were generous in sharing their

time, talent, and resources. My sister, Phyllis Weaver, and brother, Alonzo Weaver, have also continued my parents' tradition in their careers while serving their communities.

My husband, Willie L. Williams, of 32 years, is with me today: a decorated Vietnam veteran, he's encouraged me to persevere, with courage. Our children have joined us today, along with our son-in-law and granddaughter, and I'm happy they are here.

There are friends and family—and friends who are like family—who have supported my journey. I'm so grateful for your presence. You have literally fed my soul. You lifted me up when I was down. You shared your energy with me when I was tired. You know who you are, and I thank God for you.

And thanks again to my Marquette family—my law school classmates, who I know are here; Dean Kearney, former students, faculty colleagues, and staff: Each of you in some way helped me to become a better teacher and a better person. Thank you very much.

Dean Kearney

And thank you to all who have been here today. As we leave one another, it seemed to us that everyone might like to see the portraits in context. You can do that any day, starting tomorrow, on the third floor, just to the left of the portraits of Professor Ghiardi and Professor Luce. With the sneak preview of a sort on your screen right now, you can see that, in fact, the portraits of Professor Edwards and Professor Williams will be visible from a number of places in the building, to passersby in this prominent hallway and, more generally, through the glass of the forum. Come and visit them—and us. Thank you. ■

