

Of Administrative Powers and Patents—and New Positions on the Marquette Law Faculty

For Christine Chabot, the roots of her academic and research interests go back to Alexander Hamilton and the founders of the American political system.

For Jason Reinecke, the roots of his interests in the law go back to his undergraduate years when he had the idea for creating a phone app that would help people stay safe while walking alone.

For both of them, their roots have grown into thriving careers that have led them to appointments to the Marquette Law School faculty.

Chabot, a native of Iowa, received her undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and her law degree from the University of Notre Dame. Her career has included working for a large law firm in Chicago, clerking for Judge Jane R. Roth of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Wilmington, Delaware, and 11 years as a distinguished professor in residence at Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

She developed an interest in administrative law and, in recent years, focused specifically on the history of how much power the U.S. Constitution permits Congress to grant to federal agencies to make spending decisions. It is now an issue in a case pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. While some argue for stronger limits on what agencies can do, Chabot maintains that the historical record, going back to the first Congress of the United States, supports the legislative authority to give agencies latitude. Her new law journal article on the subject, titled “The Founders’ Purse,” will appear in the *Virginia Law Review* in 2024.

“Research is important to me,” Chabot said, and the opportunity both to develop in that sphere and to expand her teaching portfolio was a sufficient draw to attract her and her family to move from the Chicago suburbs to Milwaukee so that she might join Marquette as associate professor of law. She is teaching

Administrative Law in the fall 2023 semester, and her future courses will include Constitutional Law.

Reinecke grew up in Verona, Wisconsin. While he was an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, he had the idea for creating a phone app. That led to wanting to launch a start-up business, which led to beginning to learn about patent law. In short, the startup never got going (“the main reason was that we didn’t have any money”), but his interest in patent law grew.

He pursued his interest in patent law as a student at Stanford Law School and in two years with a law firm in Washington, D.C. He also clerked for Judge Sharon Prost, then the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and returned to Stanford for a fellowship.

In addition to the appeal of the Marquette Law School position as assistant professor of law, the move to Milwaukee brings Reinecke and his wife, also a lawyer, closer to his family in Wisconsin. He is teaching Torts in the fall semester and looking forward also to teaching in the patent law area, joining Professors Bruce E. Boyden and Kali N. Murray in the Law School’s intellectual property program. He said that he has been impressed with the engagement of Marquette law students. “It’s a privilege to help with someone else’s progress and growth,” Reinecke said. ■

Jason Reinecke and Christine Chabot have joined the Marquette Law School faculty.



International Nonprofit Leader Tells Law Students to “Always Gut Check”

Maha Jweied has had opportunities, she acknowledges, including George Washington University for her undergraduate degree, Columbia University for law school, and subsequent positions in federal agencies and in nonprofit work.

She hopes that she has used the opportunities to serve others. Speaking at Marquette Law School on April 28, 2023, Jweied urged students to stay committed to performing pro bono work and to doing the determined (and sometimes lucky) work of finding jobs that match their long-term goals. Her own path has been shaped by those commitments, and along the way she has kept an eye out for opportunities, made financial sacrifices at times, dealt with career twists such as an agency’s closing, and taken opportunities as she has seen them.

Jweied was the featured speaker at the Law School’s Posner Pro Bono Exchange. The annual event, presented as part of the school’s Pro Bono Society Induction Ceremony, recognized 106 Marquette law students who had done at least 50 hours of pro bono work while in school. That included 17 first-year students, 40 second-year students, and 49 third-year students. About a quarter of the entire group did at least 120 hours of pro bono work, and a number of other second- and third-year students had been inducted into the Pro Bono Society in their earlier years in law school.

Jweied, based in Washington, D.C., is now CEO of a nonprofit organization: the Responsible Business Initiative for Justice. The international organization characterizes its efforts as designed to champion fairness, equality, and effectiveness across systems of punishment and incarceration.

In a conversation with Derek Mosley, director of Marquette Law School’s Lubar Center for Public Policy Research and



Maha Jweied, with Marquette Law School’s Derek Mosley (background), speaks at the Law School’s Posner Pro Bono Exchange.

Civic Education, Jweied described her career path from law school graduation in 2003 to her current position. Her jobs included work for the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and for an international tribunal located in The Hague, Netherlands. This helped her underscore one of her pieces of advice for Marquette law students: Understand that a career is long and likely to have multiple steps, even as you pursue long-term goals.

For Jweied, her first job after law school was with a large law firm in Washington, D.C., where she had grown up. Beyond the conventional duties of a young lawyer at such a firm, she got involved in the firm’s pro bono work. For Jweied, that meant involvement in a case involving a juvenile who had been sentenced to death for his role in a murder. (The U.S. Supreme Court subsequently held the death penalty for juveniles to be unconstitutional.)

Jweied said, “The firm was wonderful, in that it trained me immensely.” And the lawyers with whom she worked had integrity. Among the things that she

learned: “It didn’t matter what kind of lawyer you are: you can be proud of who you are and what you’re doing on a day-to-day basis.”

Today, younger people and many businesses are standing up for creating a more just world, in Jweied’s estimation. The Responsible Business Initiative for Justice, which she leads, focuses on issues such as death-penalty practices and giving opportunities to people with criminal records to get jobs. The initiative often partners with locally led campaigns and offers advice also on the business aspects of a campaign.

Jweied summed up her advice by urging the students to “guard your integrity, guard your name.” She added, “Always gut check” whether what you’re doing is right.

The event included recognition of the Gene and Ruth Posner Foundation’s longtime generous support of Marquette Law School’s pro bono efforts. Two of the Posners’ grandchildren—Todd Gimbel, L’87, and Josh Gimbel—helped introduce the event. ■

“We’re Here Now”

A decade after its creation, the Summer Youth Institute is leading “alums” to Eckstein Hall classrooms.

In 2014, Leonardo Espinoza Jimenez was a seventh-grade student in the Milwaukee Public Schools, at Wedgewood Park International School, when he heard about the Summer Youth Institute, an initiative of Marquette University Law School and the Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association.

The program offered young people an introduction to the world of the law, including attending sessions with judges and lawyers, working with mentors, and participating in mock trials, oral presentations, and field trips to courtrooms and law firms.

“I want to join the youth summer program because I desire a better future and here I would gain early information on how to go to college and how it would be to be a lawyer,” Espinoza Jimenez wrote almost a decade ago in the essay that was part of his Summer Youth Institute application. “I know the law is one of the longest and most expensive careers, but I wouldn’t care because no matter how hard it is, I will try my best and I will never give up,” he wrote. “I am ready for the challenge ahead.”

How did things work out for him? “We’re here now,” he said with a smile as he sat at a table in Marquette Law School’s Eckstein Hall. He is a first-year student at the Law School.

Espinoza Jimenez is one of four current Marquette Law School students who got an early boost toward careers in the law by taking part in the Summer Youth Institute. One of the institute’s goals has been to encourage low-income

and minority students, years before they graduate high school, to start on paths toward succeeding in college and beyond; the journeys may or may not eventually take them to careers in the law. The four students are evidence that for some participants the program, which began in 2013, does lead to the law.

For Kate Rodriguez, it is “a full-circle moment” to be a first-year law student at Marquette. She said, “I can’t believe it’s been eight years” since she took part in the institute while she was a student at Carmen High School of Science and Technology on Milwaukee’s south side.

She went on to graduate from Marquette University and, after working for a year counseling students at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, also on Milwaukee’s south side, she is now facing the challenges of being a first-year law student. “I got cold-called on my first day,” she said, referring to the practice of calling on students without prior notice to answer questions in class. She was satisfied with her response, she said, and she said she is staying on top of the rigors of law school.

Rodriguez said she has stayed in touch over the years with some of the mentors and students she met in the Summer Youth Institute. She has also been a youth leader in Mexican ethnic cultural activities, especially dance, and was named Ms. Mexican Fiesta Ambassador at the festival on Milwaukee’s Summerfest grounds in August 2023.

In 2013, Lisa Xiong was a student at the Hmong American Peace Academy, a charter school on Milwaukee’s northwest side, when she joined the inaugural cohort of Summer Youth Institute participants. In her application essay, she said that she liked to watch crime shows on television and was interested in being either a detective or a lawyer. She said the high level of crime in the neighborhood where she lived and the way she had

seen low-income people treated motivated her. “I want to help innocent people,” she wrote then.

In the years since, she has graduated from high school and from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She worked for two years, including a position in child protective services in Racine County, just south of Milwaukee. She dropped the idea of being a detective, but she is now a second-year law student.

Like several of the other students, Xiong’s strongest memory of her summer institute experience was from making an oral presentation in front of others, including judges. She remembers “just being so scared to be there.” But the judges were very supportive, and the experience boosted her confidence.

This summer, Xiong was back participating in the Summer Youth Institute, this time as a law student volunteer, working with the new students as they navigated the program.

What led Jonathan Contreras to want to be a lawyer? “The Summer Youth Institute,” he answered. A career as an attorney was already on his mind. “I was thinking about law school for that long,” he said, recalling his interests nine years ago. At that time, he had completed eighth grade at Jesuit Nativity School on Milwaukee’s south side and was enrolling as a freshman at Marquette University High School.

In his application essay, Contreras wrote, “I want to challenge myself. I want to become an exceptional leader that helps out those who are in need, and I want to strengthen my relationship with God. . . . I want to lead a successful life and become a man of fortitude, skills, and perseverance.”

He went on to graduate from Marquette High and from St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin. He took a year away from schooling, working as a paralegal at the Legal Aid Society of



Kate Rodriguez, Lisa Xiong, Leonardo Espinoza Jimenez, and Jonathan Contreras in Eckstein Hall in September 2023.

Milwaukee and in a legal clinic at the United Community Center in Milwaukee. Now, Contreras is a first-year student at Marquette Law School. He said he still stands by the ideals he set out in his Summer Youth Institute application. He has stayed involved with the institute and was a speaker at the program's concluding ceremony this past August.

The institute enrolls about 15 to 25 students each summer, not counting an enrollment dip during the COVID pandemic, which also saw one year of the program being provided online. Participation is free. Students spend seven days, over two weeks, following an energetic schedule of programs and events at the Law School and in the community.

The institute is the realization of a dream for Nancy Joseph, a federal magistrate judge in Milwaukee since 2010. She went to legal community leaders, including Marquette Law School Dean Joseph D. Kearney, with the idea for what she initially called a law camp for students in middle or high school.

Judge Joseph, a Rutgers Law School graduate, said that she had heard of similar programs in other cities, and she thought that Milwaukee would benefit

from such an effort. She wanted it based at Eckstein Hall. "I thought it was really important to have ours at the Law School, to really open the door to physically have the students at the Law School, so they could envision themselves one day being law students at Marquette or any other institution," she said.

And so it came to pass, sponsored by the Law School and the Eastern District of Wisconsin Bar Association but with active support from judges, lawyers, law firms, and even in-house counsel offices in Milwaukee.

Joseph said, "I think it has been a great success for a couple of reasons. Exhibit A would be the four students that you are profiling. Many, if not all, are first-generation college students, who are now first-generation law students."

The judge has stayed in touch with many summer institute alums. She said that overall, they are doing well, even if they are not pursuing law careers, and they say that the Summer Youth Institute encouraged them to envision themselves in professional positions.

But the students who are now at Marquette Law School are particularly of interest to her. "I love them," Joseph

said. "They're just four awesome young people."

She named each one and described the paths they had taken to reach law school. For example, Lisa Xiong, Joseph said, did an internship in the federal clerk of court's office. Joseph said Xiong was shy when she started in that position and she set a goal for herself of learning to speak up among adults. Now Joseph sees Xiong blossoming as a second-year law student, including Xiong's role this past summer as a Summer Youth Institute coach. "That was really, really awesome," Joseph said.

Joseph has been a mentor to several of the four students, going back to their time in the summer program. Leonardo Espinoza Jimenez was an intern in the federal probation office, Joseph said, and he has grown in confidence while achieving academic success.

The institute remains small, by design, but the signs of success have grown over a decade. And in Judge Joseph's eyes, nothing says that better than the students who are at Marquette Law School. "I'm just so excited that we have these four students and we're seeing this pipeline come to life," Joseph said. ■