



Mary Triggiano Tackles New Building Projects

Mary Triggiano's father was a carpenter. She said he wondered sometimes what she did as a judge.

"I build things, Dad," she told him. They weren't made of wood, but they were important and had impact on people and institutions.

As a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge since 2004 and as chief judge since 2020, Triggiano played leading roles in building a lot of things, including problem-solving courts, programs promoting awareness of the impact of trauma on people who came to court and people who worked in the court system, and solutions to complex administrative problems facing the court system.

Triggiano became chief judge a month before the COVID-19 pandemic hit with full force in March 2020. So she quickly had to design and lead the fast-track construction of ways to conduct court proceedings virtually. Then came building ways to return, over the course of two years, to in-person court operations, with tools including substantial federal aid to recover from backlogged proceedings and other problems.

Now Triggiano is taking on a new challenge: Building on the legacy of Janine Geske, L'75, as leader of the restorative justice program at Marquette Law School. Geske, a former

justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court and a faculty member at the Law School, led the establishment in 2004 of the school's Restorative Justice Initiative, which seeks to help victims and communities heal and move forward.

In 2022, thanks to a \$5 million gift to the Law School from Louis and Suzanne Andrew, Geske returned temporarily from "retirement" to lead the launch of the school's Andrew Center for Restorative Justice and to help find her successor. Geske said she was "beyond thrilled" at the appointment of Triggiano. The latter traces her own involvement in restorative justice work to her experiences in programs Geske led at Green Bay Correctional Facility.

Triggiano wants to continue Geske's work while building on ideas of her own, including ways to expand efforts in children's courts and at the Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center (formerly the House of Correction). She also wants to get more Marquette University faculty and students involved in restorative justice. In short, she wants the Andrew Center to be one of the premier centers anywhere for work of this kind.

"We have a great foundation, and I've got all sorts of ideas," Triggiano said.

Triggiano's father died in 2015. But one imagines he would be impressed by her building accomplishments and plans. ■