

Different Paths Deliver Three New Professors to the Law School

There are things that the three newest members of Marquette Law School's full-time faculty have in common. Love of teaching law. Eagerness to be part of the Marquette Law School community. Strong commitments to helping people beyond the walls of Eckstein Hall.

Then there are things that the three don't have in common—for example, where they grew up. For Rebecca Donaldson, it was Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, just a few miles from Marquette. For Sarah Fox, it was Kansas. And for Zoe Robinson, it was Australia.

Zoe Robinson

Zoe Robinson grew up in a small, low-income community on Australia's southern coast. Her first college degree, from Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, was in music performance. She focused on voice and classical flute. But, she said, performance made her nervous, and it wasn't a good fit.

She tried other career paths. For one thing, she worked in the call center of a bank. That wasn't promising either. Then she had a consumer dispute with a phone company. That made her want to learn the rules for dealings between such a company and a customer. "So I went to law school," Robinson said. That put her on a very good path.

Robinson got her first law degree from the Australian National University in Canberra. Several years later, she and her husband, Michael, whose own primary interest is in economics with a specialty in water issues, came to the United States. They ended up in Chicago, where "a lot of kind of fortuitous things" followed for Zoe Robinson. She got a law degree in 2008 from the University of Chicago Law School. She clerked for Judge Diane P. Wood of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. She became a tenured professor at DePaul University College of Law in Chicago, building an impressive list of accomplishments—fellowships, awards, published research, and other recognitions.

In early 2020, while Robinson was on a research leave from DePaul, the family was in Australia for Robinson to work at the Australian National University (ANU). When COVID-19 shut down ways to travel, they stayed. Robinson would then take a position as a professor teaching political science at the ANU, even as she kept up her engagement with American legal scholarship.

In 2023, they decided to return to the United States, leading to Robinson's appointment as a professor of law at Marquette, beginning this fall.

Robinson is enthusiastic about teaching. "I love it. I love

teaching 1L classes," she said. Robinson said students sometimes struggle with what they are asked to do, but she is confident that they can succeed and that she can help them. "They need to walk out feeling they can do it," she said. This spring semester, she will teach Constitutional Law—reflecting her main academic interest and finding her once again with first-year students.

Sarah Fox

During college at the University of Oklahoma, Sarah Fox took a law-related course and found that she liked the law's "concreteness." That interest was firmed up when she took Torts as a first-year law student at Georgetown University from a professor who had a strong interest in environmental law. "That really hooked me," Fox said. Environmental law has remained a major focus for her. She also realized, "I really did like the whole academic thing," including legal research and writing.

Fox, who grew up in Kansas, wanted experience in legal practice after completing law school. She worked as a litigation associate at two large New York law firms and clerked for Judge Claire V. Eagan of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma. She returned in 2015 to Georgetown to be a teaching fellow in the Environmental Law and Justice Clinic and received an LL.M. in advocacy in 2017. From 2017 until 2024, she was a faculty member at Northern Illinois University College of Law.

Fox said she had a wonderful experience at Northern Illinois but that the opportunities at Marquette Law School attracted her. She also likes the way Marquette University is embedded in the city of Milwaukee. "As someone deeply interested in local government, that seemed really cool to me," she said.

An associate professor of law, Fox is teaching courses in land use and in local government law, both upper-level courses, in the fall semester. Her spring-semester teaching schedule will include Property, a required course for first-year students.



From left, Rebecca Donaldson, Zoe Robinson, and Sarah Fox.

Mike Gryniewicz

The interaction of law and the land, property law, urban sprawl issues, and water use—Fox wants to teach and write about all of them and more.

Becca Donaldson

Returning to Milwaukee, returning to Marquette Law School—Rebecca (Becca) Donaldson is excited about both and is eager to get involved with both. Her position at the Law School has two parts: she is an assistant clinical professor of law and the assistant director of the Andrew Center for Restorative Justice.

That means that she will be teaching students about counseling, interviewing, and alternative dispute resolution, all subjects she cares about deeply. And it means she will be working with Professor Mary E. Triggiano, director of the Andrew Center, on restorative justice programs—another undertaking that Donaldson embraces—in a range of settings extending beyond the walls of the Law School.

Donaldson's path has taken her from Wauwatosa to Northwestern University as an undergraduate to Harvard Law

School. Returning to the Milwaukee area, she worked for four years at Legal Action of Wisconsin, in its crime victims' rights project, and taught several courses on a part-time basis at Marquette Law School in the 2022–2023 school year. She also has clerked for Judge Virginia M. Kendall of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and, this past year, for Judge Ronald M. Gould of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Donaldson said that her work with survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, in particular, led her to be concerned about systemic issues in helping her clients. A lot of them were successful in getting justice in some ways but were still unsatisfied. "They didn't feel there was healing or a conclusion to the issues they faced," she said. She wanted to help people walk away with a sense of insight into what had happened to them, which is something to which restorative justice can contribute. People often need more than the formal legal system offers, things such as conversations outside the courtroom. "People want to talk; they need someone to listen to them," she said. "Those private conversations outside of the court can be very valuable." ■

Professional Achievement + Public Service = Careers of Accomplishment

Julianna “Julie” Ebert, L’81, earned commendation and praise for her legal career specializing in public finance law with the Quarles & Brady firm in Milwaukee. And she has had great impact through her substantial and ongoing volunteer efforts to help the broader Milwaukee community. Put the two together, and you have a compelling case for Ebert’s receiving Marquette Law School’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dean Joseph D. Kearney described and praised Ebert’s work in the law and in the community during the Law School’s annual alumni awards ceremony, on April 18, 2024, in Eckstein Hall. He noted that Ebert’s professional work, including serving as bond counsel or in similar roles for numerous Wisconsin municipalities, counties, schools districts, and the state itself, had earned her, during her practice, both the Frederick O. Kiel Distinguished Service Award and the Bernard F. Friel Medal from the National Association of Bond Lawyers.

Kearney described two examples of Ebert’s public service beyond her work at Quarles & Brady. He cited “her leadership and help in the imagining and designing and (now omitting the word *help*) in the financing of an innovative project of Marquette Law School and the Milwaukee Bar Association.” This was an effort to help close the gap in civil legal services in the region through pro bono work: specifically, the launch of the Milwaukee Justice Center’s Mobile Legal Clinic, in 2013, an initiative based in a specially equipped van. Ebert and her husband, Frank J. Daily, L’69, spearheaded the project, in part in order to honor their Quarles & Brady partner, Michael J. Gonring, L’82, a long-time leader in pro bono work.

Kearney also described Ebert’s grandmother, Mildred Benson, who worked at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, teaching adults, mostly women, so they could get high school equivalency degrees and then jobs as nurse’s aides. Ebert has provided financial support in recent years to efforts such as that at MATC and has served on the board of MATC’s foundation, including as its president.

Ebert, in accepting the award, especially recalled the inspiration and opportunities provided her and her family by her grandfather, Arthur L. Ebert, a 1918 graduate of Marquette Law School.

The alumni awards ceremony included recognition of three additional Marquette lawyers:

Marvin C. Bynum, L’10, was presented with the Howard B. Eisenberg Service Award. During his student days at Marquette Law School, Bynum was part of a fellowship program of the Godfrey & Kahn (G&K) firm in Milwaukee. Kearney said Bynum’s work ethic was clear to him as dean even then: “My impression always was that Marvin correctly



Alumni awards winners (from left) Kerri L. Cebula, Greg Heller, Julianna Ebert, and Marvin Bynum.

Mike Grynewicz

regarded the G&K fellowship less as an accomplishment and more as an opportunity.”

And Bynum has pursued that opportunity with vigor since graduating and joining the firm, where he is now a partner. He also has served on the boards of numerous schools and community organizations. Kearney quoted a G&K colleague of Bynum: “Marvin is the epitome of the service leadership that we as Marquette lawyers aspire to achieve. . . . Marvin is a natural leader, by words and actions. When he talks, we listen. When he takes action, we follow his example.”

Kerri L. Cebula, L’06, received the Charles W. Mentkowski Sports Law Award. Kearney praised Cebula’s dedication, deep interest, and accomplishments in sports law. After working for college sports departments for six years following graduation from Marquette Law School, Cebula took a full-time teaching position in sports management at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, where she continues to serve on the faculty.

“She leaves no doubt that watching students grow and develop is the best part of her job, modestly omitting her own role in engendering that growth and development,” Kearney said. Cebula is also a leader in sports law academic circles nationally and continues to help Marquette students pursue their own careers in the field.

Finally, **Gregory J. Heller, L’96**, was honored as alumnus of the year. He is executive vice president and chief legal officer of Braves Holdings, parent company of the Atlanta Braves baseball team and its real estate undertakings. Heller is the subject of a profile beginning on page 8. ■

Judge Diaz Tells Graduates Never To Compromise on Their Values

There's more to becoming part of the legal profession than graduating from law school. "We have standards for entry," Albert Diaz, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, told the Marquette Law School graduating class at the hooding and commencement ceremony on May 18, 2024, at the Miller High Life Theatre in Milwaukee. "We commit ourselves to a certain moral code, and we punish those who stray from it. We also require lifelong study, in no small part because we're entrusted with resolving some of the most significant problems of our society. We have obligations to that society at large that go beyond earning a paycheck."

Diaz pointed to one area that lawyers need to address: A recent survey found that 74 percent of Americans believe democracy in the United States is weaker now than five years ago. "Turning that around will require lawyers," Diaz said. He said judges and lawyers "have a special role to play in ensuring the legitimacy of our electoral process and democratic institutions."

More broadly, Diaz called on the graduates to set high standards for themselves. "If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't," he said. "Know what your values are and resolve that



Hon. Albert Diaz, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, tells graduates to have confidence in the values Marquette Law School taught them.

you'll never compromise them for anyone, anything, or any cause. You may not always be the smartest or most talented person in any room that you walk into, but there is absolutely no reason why you can't be the most honest."

Diaz, with chambers in Charlotte, North Carolina, was appointed to the federal appeals court, headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, in 2010 and became chief judge in 2023. A graduate of New York University School of Law, he has developed a connection with Marquette Law School, initially through his Fourth

Circuit colleague, Judge James A. Wynn, Jr., L'79. Diaz presided on the panel of judges for the final round of Marquette's Jenkins Honors Moot Court Competition in 2015 and delivered the Law School's annual Hallows Lecture in 2016. That connection supported his message, drawing on the university's mission statement and encouraging the graduates to take on big challenges: "You should leave here today with confidence that Marquette University Law School has inculcated in you the values of excellence, faith, leadership, and service to meet those challenges." ■



Smiles and Applause

Second-year law students Abigail Nilsson (left) and Mackenzie Retzlaff break into smiles upon hearing they won the final round of the Jenkins Honors Moot Court Competition on April 10, 2024. At the front of the courtroom (the Law School's Lubar Center), leading the applause, are the judges in the competition's final round (from left): Judge Maria S. Lazar of the Wisconsin Court of Appeals; Judge John K. Bush of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit; and Judge J. P. Stadtmueller, L'67, of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.