



Remarks of Dean Ken Gormley

at
President's Reception for the Dean
The Duquesne Club – September 2, 2010

I would like to begin by thanking President Dougherty and the entire Dean Search Committee. All of them worked extremely hard last spring to conduct a professional and positive Dean Search process. I am honored that I've been selected to lead this law school at such an extremely important moment in its history. And I am committed to working as hard as it takes, with everyone in this room, to make an indelible imprint.

Many faculty colleagues and fellow deans are here this evening; and I thank them for their ongoing support.

As well, I am pleased to have so many members of the Dean's Advisory Board and the Law Alumni Board, including the officers seated up front here.

I won't be able to introduce all of those who deserve thanks by name. But I do want to take a moment to specially recognize my associate dean, Nancy Perkins, who has done a phenomenal job helping me to make the law school gears run smoothly and professionally. I would also like to recognize someone who has given me his time, assistance and wise counsel over the past 20 months, without asking for a single thing in return—except the betterment of this institution. Ladies and gentlemen, the co-chair of the Dean's Advisory Board and a wonderful mentor for any new dean—Chancellor John E. Murray Jr.

This really is an important moment in the history of the law school. At many levels, we're initiating major changes to enhance the reputation and stature of Duquesne University School of Law so that your degrees carry the weight they deserve in Western Pennsylvania and across the United States. That requires stepping forward to accept the mantle of leadership and not shrinking from tough challenges. I know you've heard about lawsuits in the paper. Every time there is change, some people resist it. I've told our students that their job is to focus on their legal studies, training to become excellent lawyers and not to allow themselves to be diverted by such distractions. They've done a wonderful job at that. My job, similarly, is to move us forward as an institution, rather than allowing us to be thrown off stride and diverted from our all-important mission.

Let me identify a few key areas where we've made significant strides forward; but where we must push ourselves even further to achieve a true level of excellence.

First, let me address a few student priorities. We sometimes forget that the principal reason we're here, earning our paychecks, is to serve our students. We have a remarkable and conscientious group of student leaders—the best I have ever seen. Working together, we have accomplished some major, long overdue changes in the past year. We just overhauled our grading policy so that our students' performance is not under-valued and they can compete fairly with other law students in the region. As well, with the help of our top-notch registrar, Val Harper, we have just updated our registration process so that students can register online for the first time ever this semester; students can cross-register between day and evening classes to maximize their selections. The SBA president,

Matt Lambach, and the executive board are here with us this evening—these students have been instrumental in helping to implement these positive changes.

I have also appointed, for the first time in the history of the law school, a vice dean of the Evening Division to make sure that there is someone who serves as a point-person, conveying information from the evening students directly to the Dean's Office. Our evening program has always been one of the gems of this law school—we should never treat our evening students as an afterthought. Vice Dean Ella Kwisnek, starting this semester, will hold office hours in the evening, several nights a week before class as well as on Saturdays by appointment. I am pleased to introduce our vice dean of the Evening Division, who also serves as Assistant Dean of Students, Ella Kwisnek.

Another priority for our students is to support and strengthen our award-winning Trial Moot Court program, headed by Professors Mike Streib, Bruce Antkowiak and Amelia Joiner. Next month, we will host the NITA Tournament of Champions—the most prestigious trial moot court competition in the United States. Reed Smith has graciously agreed to open its glittering offices to host the welcoming reception. If your firm would like to sponsor some piece of this high-profile event, please let me know directly. This is a big feather in the cap of Duquesne and we will continue to build on our successes.

Our Legal Research & Writing Program, headed by Professor Jan Levine, has also achieved national acclaim—as evidenced by our ranking as the 22nd best program in the nation. We hosted a major legal writing conference last winter and another is in the works. We are very proud of the work of Professor Levine and Professors Julia Glencer, Erin Karsman and Tara Willkie. Assisted by Professor Frank Liu and our world-class law library faculty, they have created a program that has really put us on the map. Equally important, it's a rigorous program that directly prepares our students to compete and excel the moment they graduate.

I'm also trying to construct a world-class Appellate Advocacy program. In recent years, our appellate moot courts and related endeavors have fallen by the wayside. Our distinguished alum, Judge Maureen Lally-Green, along with a top-notch Advisory Board, has spearheaded a project to help develop a blueprint to begin making strides in this arena. As well, Judge Lally-Green is teaching a not-for-credit course for students interested in appellate court clerkships—a fabulous new addition. I'm convinced that if we can offer our students the best in trial moot court and appellate brief-writing and advocacy, we can dominate the market when it comes to increasingly-competitive judicial clerkships and give our students invaluable training for legal practice.

Finally, in the category of “student priorities,” let me say a word about our minority recruitment and retention efforts. I have benefited greatly from having Eric Springer, Esq., former president of the Bar Association and a figure familiar to most of you, serve as my special assistant in shoring up our efforts in this important area. As well, Professor Amelia Joiner has done a wonderful job as advisor to BLSA. Many of you attended the program last winter at which Justice Thurgood Marshall's son, John, and Charles Hamilton Houston Jr., and our former Dean Ron Davenport joined me on stage to announce the creation of the first Charles Houston Scholarship to attract the best minority candidates in an increasingly competitive national pool. This evening, for the first time, I am pleased to introduce to you the very first Charles Houston Scholar, Ms. Simone Delerme.

Simone grew up in Mechanicsburg; she attended The Ohio State University, majoring in international business finance and achieving an impressive GPA. She was a standout in a field of

top applicants. But there was another thing that made her special. Simone's first choice of any law school in America to attend, and she had a lot of options, was Duquesne University School of Law. This was because her grandfather, Augusto Nicolas Delerme—one of her heroes in life—had earned his medical degree in Puerto Rico at age 21; moved to the United States and settled in Altoona; but always remembered the wishes of his adoptive father, who took him aside before he died and said he wanted his son to become a lawyer, to help others. So, Simone's grandfather enrolled in Duquesne law school's Evening Division, while he was practicing medicine full time in Altoona, and commuted two hours a night, each way, for four years to earn his law degree so that he could practice both law and medicine, to help others. Simone's ambition in life was to be like her grandfather and attend Duquesne Law school, so we helped make that possible—through the generosity of Bob Peirce and other donors—by awarding her the first Charles Hamilton Houston Stipend, which is renewable for three full years while she is in law school.

And tonight, I not only have the privilege of introducing Simone, but we have invited her grandfather, Augusto Nicolas Delerme, and her grandmother, Carmen, and her parents Suzanne and Edsel Delerme, to be our special guests: So ladies and gentleman, let's have a round of applause for Augusto Delerme of the Evening Division Class of 1989, and his beautiful family, as they celebrate Simone's accomplishment and continue a very special tradition at Duquesne University School of Law.

Next, let me talk about programmatic changes that I believe are essential at the law school.

Last month, I appointed a special committee, chaired by Professor Jan Levine, to begin evaluating our curriculum from top to bottom. Much needs to be done here. For instance, we do not have a required course in criminal procedure in our first year. Instead, this subject has drifted into a secondary status within the criminal law course. Yet, criminal procedure is probably the most heavily tested subject on the bar exam. Don't get me wrong—our upper-level courses in criminal procedure are excellent, with impressive offerings by Professor Bruce Antkowiak. But we should be providing a core foundation to all students in their first year. We have other gaps in the curriculum that have gone unattended. After 10 years of having a vacancy in this area, we have finally hired a full-time labor law professor who is fabulous—Professor Rona Kitchen. Professor Kitchen just earned her LLM at Temple. Also, despite the huge growth of oil, gas and related areas of practice with the Marcellus Shale boom in this region, we have had nobody teaching energy law until this year when we hired a visitor, Professor Gina Warren, who has a packed class in energy law and will also be teaching Civil Procedure.

I am pleased to report that the president and provost have just granted my request for three new hires so that we can inject new energy and expertise into the faculty. John Murray always told me, as a young professor, that a faculty's duty, if they are truly committed to the future of an institution, is to hire people even better than themselves, and that's what we must do. We need to reexamine the entire curriculum and develop strong niches in areas that connect to jobs in this region and elsewhere—health care law; intellectual property; ADR; and other growth areas. We plan to ask you, our alums, for input as we go through this process. Finally, as the ABA emphasizes the importance of more sophisticated skills training, I believe it is time to assume leadership in this area. I have asked Chip Nelson, one of the founding partners of Cohen and Grigsby, to assist me in constructing a proposal for a capstone course, to be offered during the final year of law school, that would employ a large number of volunteer practitioners/experts to cover topics including how to decide whether to take a case; developing and maintaining clients; billing and the economics of law practice;

ethical issues confronted in representing clients; setting up one's own firm; and issues relating to specific niches of practice. It is an ambitious concept. The entire faculty will need to approve such a measure. But I believe we need to be a leader in moving legal education into the next frontier because, believe me folks, this is where legal education is heading. Our strength at Duquesne has always been in producing quality, hands-on practitioners and professionals, and we are in a position to set the national standard here.

In a related vein, our clinics are doing a fabulous job under the direction of our Acting Director Tracey McCants Lewis. This past year, our students argued prisoner civil rights cases in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and in the U.S. District Court—a wonderful experience made possible through the help of our federal magistrate-judges and Chief Judge Anthony Sirica of the Third Circuit. Our Unemployment Compensation Clinic, headed by Michael Simon, won the prestigious Pro Bono Award from the PBA for its work in the community. This year, we will begin a national search for a permanent clinical director. My goal—and I'm thinking big, but I have spoken to President Dougherty about this—is to have our own free-standing clinic building on Fifth Avenue as the University continues to expand in that corridor, so that we can bring legal services directly to the community and give our students a world-class experience in delivering legal services to worthy clients.

A second programmatic priority, of course, is success on the bar exam. Our director of bar services, Richard Gaffney, has done a great job here; but we need to push even harder. Four years ago, our Evening Division jumped from 20 to 90 over night. That presents certain statistical risks. Unchecked growth like that often occurs through lowering admissions thresholds. We need to work with the University administration to keep the sizes of our classes smaller, not larger. President Dougherty has a track record of achieving such a balancing act at Creighton Law School, when he was Academic VP; he understands the issue and has pledged his support.

In the meantime, we have taken proactive steps by creating an Academic Excellence Program. Through the help of our distinguished alum, Senator Jay Costa Jr., the law school received a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to provide one-on-one assistance to students who do not perform as well as expected after their first year in order to erase that deficit and boost their chances of doing well when it comes to bar preparation. Duquesne has always prided itself in being a law school that gives students a chance. We want to remain flexible enough to do that. At the same time, the cost of legal education is staggering these days. We owe a fiduciary duty to each student, after he or she is admitted, to help them succeed and, indeed, to excel. We are committed to doing that and this new program, that will be launched immediately, is a step in that direction.

Our international programs have blossomed, and I would like to make them become even more successful and cohesive. This month, we will be hosting a lunch-and-learn for students to expose them to each of our first-rate programs: in China, headed by Professors Frank Liu and Al Palaez; in the Vatican, headed by Professor Sam Astorino; in Ireland, headed by Professor Tara Willke; and a new program in Cologne, Germany—with side-trips to Paris and Brussels—headed by Professor Kirk Junker. As you know, the practice of law is changing, moving into global arenas at a rapid pace. I am convinced that our international programs should be expanded and enriched, rather than treated as stand-alone summer trips. My message to our students will be that at some point in their law school career, each of them should plan to take advantage of one of these world-class programs to enrich their experience. I hope that you, as alumni, will also take advantage of our CLE offerings

abroad as well—they are incredible experiences—and we hope to have some exciting news on that front soon.

Third, let me address priorities related to the faculty, who form the keystone of our academic enterprise.

If we are truly going to move to the next level of excellence, we must nurture and mentor our younger faculty members, so that they—as Chancellor Murray counseled me—can be better teachers and scholars than we are. We must support and assist faculty members who produce scholarship and get their names out there, by sending them out to speak at conferences, giving them resources to produce new books and articles, etc. Why? Because it is good for us. It enhances our visibility and makes our Duquesne degrees more valuable. We are even better teachers when we can bring our scholarship into the classroom and energize our students. We need to strive for the richest possible environment, where students and faculty push each other, and the work ethic is contagious. To that end, I intend to bring in guest speakers for both students and faculty, to set bar as high as possible—last year, I brought in our alum, Dean Phoebe Haddon from the University of Maryland, to speak about cutting-edge issues in legal education. We should not be afraid to measure ourselves against the very best in our fields. We are a first-rate law school. We do not deserve a fourth-rate ranking.

Finally, let me end with the most exciting topic of all—our Centennial that we will observe throughout the year in 2011.

This is a huge moment for the law school. We cannot celebrate it half-heartedly. We cannot be afraid, ladies and gentlemen, to think big.

We already have major events planned for our Alumni Dinner, on April 16, as well as a gala black-tie dinner on September 24 of 2011, to celebrate the actual hundredth anniversary of this law school. We are also working on a Centennial booklet to chronicle the history of the law school, spearheaded by Dr. Joel Fishman. If you have any good photos or stories, send them in! But I am also determined to roll out a steady stream of big events throughout the year, to celebrate this milestone. I was speaking at Chautauqua last week and spent my spare time trying to recruit big-name speakers who were there for the week on the Supreme Court. My goal is to institute a Centennial Speakers Series, with nationally prominent speakers coming to the law school but also with programs that shed light on our unique history and the contributions of our distinguished alumni to the profession.

We will need law firms and alums to host and sponsor these high-profile events. Pick up the phone and let me know if you can help. Also, we will begin an unprecedented fund raising effort, with ambassadors from each law school class helping to organize their class' efforts to contribute gifts that are special and meaningful for particular class' and particular graduates. We can never forget that others built this school and allowed us to benefit from its first century's work. Many of us would not have had a chance to succeed without the opportunities provided by Duquesne law school. And God looks favorably on those who take care of those who took care of them. Now is the moment of truth. There are a host of major initiatives that require our attention, if we are going to transform this law school into a place that shines with the first-class reputation it deserves: whether it's a new clinic building on Fifth Avenue, our Trial Moot Court program, *Law Review*, international programs, library, student scholarships, our Loan Repayment Assistance Program for graduates going into public service or public interest, our nationally ranked Legal Research &

Writing Program, our Faculty Scholarship initiatives...there is no reason that every Duquesne Law School alum should not find something worthy of support at a level higher than we have ever dared to ask for, or expected in the past...

...because this is our law school Centennial celebration. It will only happen once. It presents us with a golden opportunity to make this law school something that will enhance the value of our own degrees, but, more importantly, give the next generations of Duquesne law school graduates the greatest gift possible—the opportunity to become highly trained, ethical, dedicated, successful attorneys, because they have attended the very best law school they could have ever chosen.

I know that we can do that.

Let me end by thanking you for your past support and for the support I know that you will give me for the ensuing years as dean. Serving in this position, as you know, is a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week job. It requires the help of lots of folks—faculty, students, administrators, a dedicated alumni base, trusted advisors. It also requires the love and support of one's family because otherwise, it's a lonely occupation not worth pursuing. I haven't had the chance to formally introduce my family to you, so I'd like to do that now: my wife Laura, who is the mainstay of all of my professional work, and the reason I have been able to get a few things done because she does everything else. Our oldest daughter, Carolyn, a senior at Pitt, just left tonight to visit her boyfriend's family in New Jersey. Those boyfriends always mess things up! But the rest of our children are here: Luke, who is a sophomore in pre-pharmacy at Duquesne; Rebecca, who is a junior at Woodland Hills High School; and Maddy, who is just starting 5th grade at Sacred Heart. We are very proud of them, and thankful that they have agreed to let their dad spend most of his waking hours being dean, without complaining too much about it.

Thank you all for joining in this enterprise; and may God shine down His light on Duquesne University School of Law, as we enter our hundredth year, showing us the path to even greater accomplishments by using our talents, our wisdom and our common commitment to serving God by serving our students.