

## **THE MAN FOR THIS SEASON (1999–2010)**

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With the start of the new academic year, the leadership that has guided the development of the Saint Louis University School of Law since 1999 has changed, ushering in a new set of opportunities and challenges for the School and its constituencies.

Having attended Saint Louis University School of Law as a student from 1964 to 1967, served as a faculty member from 1971 to 1991, and served as Dean from 1979 to 1991, I have a unique perspective from which to view what Jeff Lewis has accomplished during his deanship. Each dean of the Law School has faced unique challenges as the School continued on an upward trajectory. The issues that faced Deans McDonough, Immel, Childress, and Murray were all related to establishing visibility and credibility for a law school whose reputation made it difficult to secure placements for graduates in major law firms in St. Louis and elsewhere. They used their talents and energies to increase the respectability of the Law School in the eyes of the local bench and bar, and to establish an increased presence in the national pool of prospective applicants. They solidified the Jesuit, Catholic tradition of Saint Louis University by emphasizing, often through personal example, the personal approach to legal education. Vincent Immel, a masterful teacher who combined academic rigor with a personal interest in each student, particularly exemplified this tradition. Those early deans established the tradition that helped to increase the quality of the educational program and made the Law School more attractive to prospective students.

I look back on my years as a time for starting the process of addressing the physical plant needs of the School, while at the same time expanding the participation of faculty members in scholarship activities. It was also a time for creating additional opportunities for the School to be visible nationally and internationally, within the legal education and regulatory communities, as well as within the practice community. We were able to capitalize on John Shepherd's service as President of the American Bar Association (ABA), my activities within the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) and the ABA, and the national and international contacts of so many of our faculty members, to establish visibility, exposure and exchange, and other academic

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programs with foreign institutions. Subsequently, John Attanasio's deanship continued and augmented many of these outreach and visibility efforts.

When John stepped down to accept the deanship at Southern Methodist University, the School was ready for a leader who could increase the academic strength, visibility, and productivity of the faculty; improve the selectivity of the student body; and continue to enhance the local, national, and international reputation of the School.

Jeff Lewis was the right person to take Saint Louis University School of Law to the next level. His previous experience as a faculty member and dean at the University of Florida earned him a very positive reputation as an academic leader, but with a personal style that fit the culture of Saint Louis University. His work with the AALS and the ABA also gave him a national stature and a reputation as a knowledgeable, effective legal educator.

I had the opportunity to talk with Jeff on a number of occasions as he was considering the possibility of seeking the position and then as he was making the decision to accept the position. It was so clear that his skills and personality could build on the work done by his predecessors to advance the School's academics and reputation. Since starting in 1999, Dean Lewis was able to accomplish many of the objectives he had established to advance the School. He substantially increased the size and the quality of the faculty, adding to the visibility of the Law School in the world of legal education. He augmented scholarship support for students, enabling the School to attract quality applicants and students. He advanced the School's integration of professional skills education through its clinics, externships, and professional skills offerings. And, he has expanded the physical facilities of the Law School to accommodate the increased number of faculty, students, and staff. Jeff can look back proudly at what he has accomplished to strengthen the academic programs, the visibility, and the reputation of the Law School. It will be up to the new leadership to build upon what he and his predecessors have accomplished and continue the upward movement of the School.

I would be remiss if I focused only on Jeff's accomplishments at Saint Louis University School of Law. Throughout his years as a legal academic, he has contributed substantially to the betterment of the legal profession and the world of legal education. He served as a member of the AALS Accreditation Committee and then as a member and Chair of the ABA Accreditation Committee. These assignments are made only to very well-qualified individuals who are ready to commit countless hours to reviewing the accreditation status of AALS and ABA schools. After completing this service, Jeff was a member of the ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, another time-consuming and important service opportunity. In addition to his service on the Council, he has continued to be involved in the work of the Section, by chairing the ABA/AALS Joint Commission on Financing Legal Education and by being a long-standing

member of the ABA Development Conference Coordinating Committee. As someone who has ploughed the same fields over many years, I know from personal experience the amount of time and effort that these activities take. Yet, he is known as someone who can be trusted to do the work required for such a position and who will do it well.

On the occasion of honoring Jeff Lewis for what he has done for Saint Louis University School of Law, I am pleased to be able to share some personal perspectives. He has enriched the School through his efforts and, since he will be returning to the classroom, his students will be the real beneficiaries of his transition.

