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A Message from the Dean

University of Michigan Law School

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The Worst of Times, The Best of Times

I wish that, as we commemorate our sesquicentennial year at this great law school, the times would be all smiles and smooth sailing. But alas, just as we were in the throes of the Great Depression at our halfway point 75 years ago, so too today times are difficult and uncertain.

A few weeks ago I invited New York- and Chicago-area alumni to join me both in person and on conference calls so I could pick their brains about how best to position our current students for success in these uncertain times. Their advice was sobering, but right on target considering current market conditions. As summer associate programs narrow and new hires are deferred, students must adjust expectations, and be as strategic and proactive as possible. Alumni advised that we continue to educate students in the Michigan way; make sure students write well and communicate well for work with discerning clients working under stressful conditions; and encourage students to be flexible in their job searches as well as the practice areas they hope to develop.

As I write this, economic indicators are showing some positive signs. And yet, though the worst of the recession is hopefully behind us, many law firm partners tell me they expect to implement continued shifts in legal recruiting and practice over the next few years. [This issue's story about the job market (beginning on page 16) is a frank assessment of the situation. The story is in some ways a departure from previous editorial content, and the first of many topical legal issues we plan to cover.]

I believe the Law School has a special responsibility now. Our attorney-counselors are meeting one-on-one with students to explore and target their job search options. We are increasing our personal outreach to alumni and friends in both the private and public sectors. And this fall we welcomed former ABA president and alumnus Robert Hirshon as a professor from practice, who in addition to his teaching portfolio will be working with the Law School to develop new opportunities for our students in public interest and private practice (see p. 22).



SAM HOLLENSHEAD



SCOTT SODERBERG, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

It is at times like this that we understand the true power of the international Michigan Law alumni network. At more than 20,000 strong, we have substantial alumni populations in the world's best firms, as well as highly placed in NGOs and in the government (see page 29 for just *how* highly placed). Personal connections to Michigan alumni in legal and legal-related fields can be an important asset for our students, especially now as students face such extraordinary circumstances. If you know of employment opportunities or would be interested in mentoring current students as they prepare for a career in the law, I hope you will visit www.law.umich.edu/alumniandfriends/pages/alumnet.aspx to indicate your interest and area of expertise.

And yet, even as we face what alumna and assistant dean of public service MaryAnn Sarosi calls "seismic changes" in legal employment, the work of the Law School is continuing with great momentum. As the economy recovers, Michigan Law will be well-positioned to expand upon its leadership in legal education and scholarship.

This year's incoming class is stellar, I'm pleased to report, with students from 38 states and 14 countries. We will also welcome 10 new faculty members in one of our most successful recruiting "seasons." These faculty members are impressive in their scholarship and their breadth of academic interests—everything from antitrust to international arbitration to civil rights—and will add richness to the Law School's distinguished faculty.

Chief Justice Roberts and Dean Caminker mark the end of the Conversation with Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., at Hill Auditorium with a handshake.

The Law School has weathered the recent financial storms with stability, in part due to the University of Michigan's sound financial policies and management and in part due to our generous donors. Private gifts are especially important for Michigan Law; although we are a public law school, only about 2 percent of our budget is now state-supported. Gifts from you and your fellow alumni provide faculty and student support, have enabled us to keep tuition increases low, and have provided the seed funding necessary for the Law School's new building and renovation projects.

So, we are celebrating our sesquicentennial with joy, reflection, aspiration, and with gratitude for 150 years of this remarkable Michigan Law family (see pages 8–15). The festivities included a ceremonial groundbreaking for our first academic building in 75 years, as well as a gorgeous, new glass-enclosed Commons area. Those additions will house Michigan Law's next generation of energy and aspirations, even as we stay indelibly connected with our historic tradition.

Sincerely,

Evan Caminker

Evan Caminker
Dean and Branch Rickey Collegiate Professor of Law

Glorious weather accompanied the September groundbreaking ceremony for a new academic building at State and Monroe streets.