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# A Dedication to Dean Joseph P. Tomain: Educator, Scholar, and Leader

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## A DEDICATION TO DEAN JOSEPH P. TOMAIN: EDUCATOR, SCHOLAR, AND LEADER

*Donna M. Nagy\**  
*Barbara G. Watts\*\**

Few U.S. law schools, particularly in recent memory, have shared the University of Cincinnati College of Law's extraordinarily good fortune to have had one dedicated leader for fifteen years. Indeed, the College's national reputation for academic excellence is due in large part to Joseph P. Tomain's ambition, energy, and skill. His legacy as the Dean of the College includes a faculty of gifted teachers and distinguished scholars; a talented and hard-working administrative staff; a bright, enthusiastic, and diverse student body; and thousands of alumni and friends whose involvement and commitment to the College ensure its bright future. In recognition of his loyal service and outstanding accomplishments, he recently was honored with the title of Dean Emeritus and Wilfred and Helen Ziegler Professor of Law.

Dean Tomain was recruited to the College in 1983 from Drake University, joining the faculty as a Professor of Law. He was a Visiting Professor at the University of Texas School of Law in 1986–1987. He became the 27th Dean of the College of Law in 1990, having served as Interim Dean the previous year.

During his deanship, the College flourished. Recognizing that great law schools require a great faculty, Dean Tomain devoted substantial attention to faculty recruitment, taking the time to get to know many prospective faculty members. This familiarity enabled him to emphasize to candidates how their interests and priorities coincided with the strengths of the College. Dean Tomain was exceptionally good at identifying teaching talent and scholarly potential. And today's faculty bears the fruit of his efforts: eighteen of the College's twenty-five professors were appointed during his tenure.

Dean Tomain also recognized that great law schools demand growing resources. Faced with many aspirations and reduced state funding, he strengthened significantly the College's development efforts. He was very successful at increasing annual alumni giving and securing major

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\* Charles Hartsock Professor of Law, University of Cincinnati College of Law. Professor Nagy served as the College of Law's Interim Dean for the 2004–2005 academic year. She served as Associate Dean for Faculty Development 2002–2004.

\*\* Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, University of Cincinnati College of Law. Dean Watts joined the College of Law in 1981 and served as Associate Dean throughout Dean Tomain's deanship.

gifts, including endowed funds that established seven new professorships and thirty-one of the College's fifty-eight scholarships for students.

Greater integration of theory with practice constituted another one of his principal goals for the College of Law. Dean Tomain's leadership efforts helped establish the Center for Corporate Law, the Glenn M. Weaver Institute for Law and Psychiatry, the Center for Practice in Negotiation and Problem Solving, and the Lois and Richard Rosenthal Institute for Justice/Ohio Innocence Project. He also worked with Professor Bert Lockwood to expand the prominence of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights. The expansion of interdisciplinary programs was also a high priority. One example is the joint JD/MA degree in law and Women's Studies, created in 1995 as the first such program in the country. Dean Tomain's support for the joint degree program was steadfast, enabling the program to grow to include a ten-week externship and a newly created Domestic Relations/Domestic Violence Clinic.

Dean Tomain also sought to strengthen the College's mission of preparing law students for careers as professionals. He was instrumental in designing and instituting the Lawyers and the Legal Profession curriculum, a three-year program highlighting professionalism, ethics, and the multifaceted role of lawyers in society. Expanding beyond the law school, he created the Justice Institute for the Legal Profession, a seminar program for experienced lawyers and judges. His efforts to promote a better understanding of professionalism at every level of legal education and at every stage of a lawyer's career have had both local and national impact. As he explains it, professionalism "is a habit. It is the development of a character for our working lives, a way we fulfill ourselves as lawyers, and a way for us to attain our aspirations."

As one of the country's most renowned scholars in the fields of energy law and government regulation, Dean Tomain truly led the College's faculty by his own example. He stood in a select group of U.S. law school deans who continued to publish significant scholarly work notwithstanding an enormous commitment of time and energy to administration. Indeed, during his deanship, he authored four books, thirteen articles, and numerous chapters, book reviews and essays.

A committed and inspiring teacher, Dean Tomain continued to teach throughout his deanship, offering such courses as Government Regulation of Energy Policy and, most recently, Law, Literature and Philosophy. When the College adopted the first-year course, Introduction to Law, Dean Tomain taught a section of the course for several years, relishing the opportunity to interact with incoming

students.

In addition to these accomplishments as administrator, scholar, and teacher, Dean Tomain has served in civic and professional leadership positions, including Chair of the Professionalism Committee of the American Bar Association Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar. Since 1998, he has been Chair of the Board of Directors of KnowledgeWorks Foundation, which focuses on creating and improving educational opportunity. In 2004, he received the Forward Together Award in Education from the Black Lawyers Association/Cincinnati Bar Association Roundtable for his contributions to the advancement of minority lawyers in the legal profession.

A further catalog of Dean Tomain's accomplishments would be more lengthy than space permits, and even if stated in full would not capture completely his many contributions to the College of Law. No Dean since Merton Ferson (1926–1946) has held the position longer. The longevity of his service and the many achievements of the College under his guidance speak volumes for his dedication to the faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and for his commitment to scholarly excellence. We congratulate him on his richly deserved honors and celebrate his continued presence and participation at the College of Law.