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## Notre Dame Law School Religious Liberty Initiative

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# Notre Dame Law School Religious Liberty Initiative

Sep 16, 2022

"I want Notre Dame to be a light for the people who are suffering darkness. I want this to be a place that people all around the world can see as a source of hope, where they can find people who are willing to fight for them, for their religious freedom and for their human flourishing." — Dean G. Marcus Cole, Notre Dame Law School

Learn more about Notre Dame Law School's Religious Liberty Initiative at <https://law.nd.edu/RLI>.

## Transcript – English (auto-generated)

*Errors have not been corrected.*

Introduction

0:03

the founder of the university of notre

0:06

dame father edward soren famously wrote

0:09

a letter saying that he would expect

0:11

that this university would someday

0:14

be an important force for good in the

0:16

world

0:17

and to me

0:18

the religious liberty initiative at

0:20

notre dame

0:22

is a continuation of that legacy notre

0:25

dame has to be in the discussion about

0:27

the protection of religious freedom

0:31

notre dame's religious liberty

0:32

initiative is focused on promoting and

0:35

developing religious liberty scholarship

0:37

and then leveraging those ideas to make

0:40

a difference in the lives of real people

Oak Flat Case

0:43

one of the cases our students had the

0:44

chance to work on was defending an

0:46

indigenous sacred site in arizona called

0:49

oak flat a mining giant is finishing up

0:52

plans to dig under part of the area

0:54

named oak flat a sacred place for native

0:57

americans

0:59

we must protect it

1:01

our ancestors protected it now we have

1:04

to protect it for our future generations

1:07

that are yet still coming

1:10

the apache religion is very different

1:12

than my own catholic faith but i was

1:14

able to

1:15

dive into understanding why this land

1:17

was so important and so sacred to them

1:19

it really brought to mind

1:21

when

1:22

i cried watching videos of notre dame in

1:25

paris burning and thinking about how

1:28

important that sacred site is to my

1:30

faith and to my own pilgrimage to that

1:32

cathedral and that really motivated me

1:35

to spend late nights working on this

1:37

brief it was just a really

1:38

transformative experience to work on

1:40

that case

Global Scope

1:41

one of the things that i'm most excited

1:43

about for the religious liberty

1:44

initiative is the fact that right from

1:46

the start it's conceived as a project

1:49

that has a global scope to it so much of

1:52

the need in the area of religious

1:54

liberty is global and so many of the

1:56

problems are really severe in other

1:58

parts of the world we offer a huge

2:00

variety of experiences for the students

2:01

both in the types of cases we work on

2:03

and in the types of projects we do i've

2:06

worked on maybe five or six projects

2:08

all mostly directly affecting the muslim

2:10

community having access to those kind of

2:12

clients those kind of resources being

2:14

able to see these issues play out in

2:16

real life in my third year of law school

2:17

before i'm even a practicing attorney

2:19

has been an incredible experience we'll

2:21

file this year five briefs in the

2:22

supreme court of the united states we'll

2:24

file briefs

2:25

in other courts around the country being

2:27

able to hold a brief that i've written

2:29

that has been filed the supreme court in

2:31

my hands it was something i never

2:33

expected to happen we worked to shape

2:35

public opinion too we've had students

2:36

who have worked to draft op-eds to raise

2:39

important issues in religious freedom

2:41

and we've had success publishing those

2:43

in national publications

2:45

we have a really deep bench of experts

2:47

on different religious liberty issues

2:49



and being able to sort of work hand in

2:51

hand with them and receive that close

2:53

mentorship as we work on projects is

2:56

just an incredible opportunity

Conclusion

3:03

i regard the initiative as a really

3:06

important moment in the law school's

3:07

history i can't think of an institution

3:09

that's

3:10

better equipped

3:12

to lead the charge both in terms of

3:15

academic study but also in terms of

3:17

helping prepare students to go out in

3:19

the real world than notre dame we

3:21

protect religious freedom for everyone

3:23

for people of all faiths or no faith at

3:25

all

3:26

this is key to the catholic mission and

3:29

key to what it really means to have

3:31

religious freedom i want notre dame to

3:34

be a light to the people who are

3:36

suffering darkness i want this to be a

3:38

place

3:39

that people all around the world can see

3:41

as a source of hope where they can find

3:44

people who are willing to fight for them

3:46

for their religious freedom and for

3:48

their human flourishing

3:50

[Music]

4:00

you