

As I've discussed about my first adventures in Innsbruck and subsequently having wonderful summers with the law students and the law faculty, I was very blessed in the time of international travel and continue to do so. Although we've had the two year break now with COVID restrictions and we are planning this summer 2022 to return to Innsbruck.

The China program, of course, is now on a hiatus and there is a sadness in my heart about that, given all that's happening in our world and our own. What we're able to do to extend--how many international programs we can extend with a student body, but also still very cautious about international travel and safety.

And that would be obvious from all the people I've read in the paper around our business and international relations. Although our legal community continues to do business and law with China, which will continue. And that was the foundation of it was to help the law students who might go into international business, especially to understand what was required in trademarks, in torts, in patent law. So but I do remember its early beginnings and Dean Charles Cantu who I have great regard for. We've had many a wonderful time together. Memorable experiences. I knew him from '97 when he was a professor well-loved by the law students.

We actually created a fund in his honor that continues today. The Class of '97 initiated a Charles Cantu fund for the future, and that fund has helped us to do service projects all these years from the class that regarded him and wanted to honor him, and in turn gave the money to Law Ministry to oversee our service projects. So I had many an occasion of interacting with Professor Cantu, and I was happy when he had appointment as dean of St. Mary's Law School. And in that regard, that gave them the opportunity to follow his dream.

He had a dream from the time he was a little boy to go to China. And when he first went there on a tour, I think. He was a world traveler himself. He realized that all the buildings, everything in China was very modernized.

It was not the image that he probably had from his childhood books, although the cultural dimension is certainly there. The ancient buildings, the history is amazing. Well, when we think in Texas of our Alamo, if you go to China and you realize the ancient buildings, the history, the Great Wall, so much that I came to regard and appreciate this, this ancient culture, it was very respectful, very hospitable to us. So Dean Cantu got to realize his dream with the first group that went to Beijing, China. We were partnered with Beijing University, a university that we were fortunate that Professor Hu who was director of the library also had many colleagues because he had gone to law school in China. And so the partnership between Professor Hu, Dean Cantu, and also Professor Vince Johnson, later interim Dean Johnson, he was also internationally traveled and had done Fulbright scholars around the world. So his courses in torts were very well regarded.

And he has since written, coauthored numerous publications in China on tort law and patent law as Professor Hu has done. And so I remember they really asked me if I could go. And I was happy to do that, not sure what I was going to get into.

We were in the—Rumen, Kristen Rumen and I still communicate with her and she had done her master's work in Beijing. And so she knew Chinese.

So I attached myself to her and it was wonderful just to get to know her and to share in the experiences and just to get comfortable traveling around and in an area you weren't all that sure of. To learn the subways, to go into subways and be like standing really very close to a lot of people. However, it was so interesting they still were very you never, ever pushed or shoved. Well, they did, kind of, I guess. But it's like nobody. I never felt threatened in any way, even though there's, you know, so many people there.

But I really had a great time, and I think little by little, we were in the dorms. It was kind of like a Motel 6. I did not realize that what I was on was not a bed, but just the bottom of the mattress, just bottom, like the very hard surface of what would be a mattress bottom. And but we started to create some gatherings. So Professor Hu would take us to restaurants at Beijing duck this famous duck that is barbecued duck and very good, by the way. And so little by little, I guess I got to know where to--where would be comfortable for our students to go. They have a lot of nice coffee shops and it's a university area. So actually it was it was very easy to navigate after you just knew which gate to get out. It was also huge. It was a huge university.

There was four gates and you just didn't know what direction you were going in. And by the next year, I was able to, as I've gotten to know people, it was a lot of older people that also were choosing to go to China because it would help their careers or they already had business interests.

Somebody had a ranch, and he was going to also explore what would be similar to our A&M over there to look at cow production because the meat business was growing in China. And yes, I'm from Philadelphia remember, not Texas, and I'll never forget. When he came back from his visit to the campus to the group he was visiting with about bringing some of his cows well to do business, ranching business with these people, and he so he said I was talking to him and I said, but how are you going to get the cows over there? Well, there. There isn't. The cows don't go. A specimen from them goes. And then they are used to enhance the meat production. So anyway, yeah, I still laugh about that one, too.

But that's a good example of the people that went to China, the law students who went to China, of either. Yeah, it just had that interest from business angle or cultural angle. And many of them I continue friendships with today.

I think there was something about surviving together because we were dependent on each other. It wasn't a city like Innsbruck where you could just go off and feel like, oh, down the street was this nice area to walk in because the campus was so huge, let alone the city, let alone the subway system.

You really did, as I think we had to rely on each other. And that in that case, I think it was the best example of a community that came together. Yes, after six weeks, I'm sure they had issues that some people might have had issues with each other.

But for the most part, I'd say we really regard it and got to know each other. And so little by little, I would find out where these spots were. I found where Mexican restaurant was. I knew where I-- where would be good places and even cultural places to go to. So when the students subsequently came, the next nine years, they just—I would do little tours. And again, I got to know the students that way.

So we had a lot of good times together. And then, of course, of getting to know some of the older students, they in turn, had such a good experience, very regarded for the professors and the professors that joined us from the Beijing University to that that they wanted to have that opportunity for other students to go.

So that's when I started some of the scholarships to China, to the Beijing program, and I was I was very happy that we could extend some financial assistance for students. It was less expensive. In some ways it was living there, but it was more expensive to fly, of course, and then over time, I saw where the faculty stayed. Not the Motel 6 I was at. And once I went to visit for a meeting and saw where they were staying, which was a couple of blocks away, I never--I felt bad that I abandoned the students, at least from the living situation. But I never went back and they-- But we still got together regularly at the local coffee shop in the in the dorm. And then so I would start a--so one time we were out walking, exploring the city and we found by accident a rooftop Italian restaurant.

And it was kind of like our Olive Garden. But while we had done a lot of the culture food, there was something about familiar food that was welcomed to have pasta and salad. And wine is very expensive in China because it's imported, so to find a very reasonable place that had good food and a rooftop restaurant in the embassy area. We just--the those of us who were there that day just really enjoyed it. So we brought some other people back and that became my annual event. Now people would have to--It was kind of like the Great Amazing Race because traffic in China, in Beijing, especially at rush hour, it can take a long time. The subways are the best avenue for travel. But you have to figure out how to get to this rooftop restaurant and the embassy area so people would come in having had their stories. I remember one of the--Tommy Lew, arriving in a rickshaw, so people came and they'd come up the stairs and then they'd find this wonderful restaurant and they'd sit down, have a glass of wine and they'd relax. But all of them had some story about what it took to get there. But I never changed it. Huh?

Interviewer: What year was this? Was it before Google Maps?

Yeah, it was before we had. Yeah, I'd say I saw the development of phones, you know, when we first went. You didn't have phones. I realize how old I am. Yeah, I would say that it was before even the beginning of phone service, international phone service that wouldn't be costly. We would later on, we would get a China phone that they would rent. But no, I think the early days we did well, even the later days, I still don't know how to use it, but the early days, I don't think we had that.

You would have to maybe look it up on the internet, but not necessarily on your phone. But anyway, it became this wonderful tradition and people would look forward to it. So I was glad to do that. I was fortunate to attend the 10th year--be there for the 10th anniversary of the program,

and we joined with other universities in Beijing that also hosted summer programs for--all year round programs for American students. So there was a conference we, the students that were attending that year, also got to sit at the table to share their experience of the studies.

And I thought it was wonderful. One of the students that was sharing his experience had never flown before. China was his first flight ever. So we joke that any two hour flight, what's going to seem easy after his 13 hour flight?

But we were sitting around the table and they had put--they used to call me the Professor of Spirituality because they were trying. It was hard to explain in a culture that doesn't have our religious traditions what a campus minister was and what a campus minister in law school was.

So they kind of named me the Professor of Spirituality. And so I had professor on my nameplate. And then they would refer to me as professor. And I leaned over to Professor Johnson, Dean Johnson then and I said, does this mean I'm going to get a raise?

No, professor. But I explained our program around the table. I was really happy to explain not only the program, but all our generous benefactors that helped us to do that, and also a real tribute to Dean Cantu for his foresight into the program.

I think we all still remember it with great fondness. A lot of laughs that we had and a real enrichment, I think, in their legal careers. When I first came here in 1994 the build---the room I'm in right now where we're taping was a closet.

And luckily it was a large closet, but there hadn't been a campus minister before, so that was that had an office. I think Father Leies would be upstairs. He'd visit with the faculty and I think he had a faculty space upstairs that he would sit at.

But in terms of doing larger gatherings of students, certainly needed a bigger office. So they set me up in what was then the former law library. So when I used to come to campus because our I worked right next door at the Center for Life Directions and when the campus ministry offices moved there, the then sister Theresa Stromboli was a law librarian, so I would come over to visit her periodically and I'd go up the stairs because the circulation desk was on the second floor of this building, Raba building, and it was the law library.

It's now our faculty building retained the name for Dean Raba, and it's now our faculty building. But let me situate that in a little of the history of the law school. The law school was founded by the San Antonio Bar Association and was downtown.

If you're ever on a river walk tour or on the boat tour, you'll go by and they'll describe the La Mansion Hotel was the original site of the Law School and that San Antonio Bar, founded in 1927 as a part time school that met at night at the courthouse.

Then San Antonio offered to make it part of the university with a stronger curriculum and a full time faculty. In 1934. So in 1934, the law school acquired its name. It was still down at the river, but it acquired its name as St. Mary's and the Catholic and Marianist Mission and Excellence in preparation.

It was known and still is known as the Lawyers Law School, especially. I think we're given a lot of recognition with our clinical program and all these tremendous accomplishments of our Board of Advocates and moot court competitions nationally and internationally.

So we are really known as the Lawyers Law School and the first class that came met at night and there were 31 men and women. And the day division opened in 1940, becoming a fixture in 1948 and it received accreditation by the American Bar Association.

We're up for accreditation again in 2022. But the big change came in 1967 when the school moved by then the 400 students to the St. Mary's main campus. So we have the three buildings the Raba, on campus here, the Raba Building with the law faculty and our Board of Advocates and our Center for Law Success and adjacent is our law administration building and the law classroom building. And oh, that was the three in the original move here, and then the Sarita Kenedy East Foundation in 1982, the grant funded the Sarita Kenedy East Library.

So that Law Library was dedicated and the new Law Center, though, was dedicated at a red mass, which I talked about earlier in 1968 with a blessing from the archbishop and a dinner speech from the then governor, John Connally.

And in 1968, the first Law Journal, which is also what we're known for outstanding publications of the Law Journal and the Scholar and the Law Journal. The first Law Journal editors was Justice Joe Greenhill and Marty Beirne. And you might hear that name Marty Beirne, because we have the now Beirne Center for Catholic Studies. So Marty Beirne graciously donated for the Catholic Center of Studies. So the Sarita Kenedy East Library was the newest addition at that time. And I think in my time, then in 2005, we began a capital campaign to update the courtroom that was in the law classroom building.

So that was an important accomplishment to. To have the facilities for hosting these trial competitions, as well as then to offer advocacy, training and other courses for students in a well-appointed courtroom, I also was here when in 1994-95.

Between 1990--, the dedication of the Center for Legal and Social Justice, I was there at its blessing. I was able to assemble the ideas for the blessing with the then dean Barbara Aldave. It was very memorable because I had helped them go over when our retreat house was up for sale.

I knew it was up for sale and they were looking for a building. The clinics had existed in 1990 under the direction of Mary Ann Crosby, the class of 1995. She had expanded the clinical programs and also then through grants that came there other than there were centers located at different buildings in San Antonio.

But the effort to bring the center for a legal and social justice together to bring all the clinics into one building. So I had taken the then Barbara Aldave over to view the building, and she thought it was going to be close enough to St. Mary's University because it's a couple of blocks down the street, but also accessible for those clients coming on busses. It wasn't as intimidating as coming to a law school, but it also had grounds and a huge opportunity to grow the clinical programs, which did happen. And so I remember still we all processed over from here at St. Mary's University, down the street, over to the clinics, over to the Center for Legal and Social Justice,

and for so many years under the direction of Professor Ana Navarro, who since retired and now under the direction of Professor Karen Kelley. I can't say enough about the wonderful work at the Center for Legal and Social Justice.

So many of their clients are homeless, do not have a voice. The efforts, the outstanding efforts in immigration day to day, defending the rights of those who don't even know their rights. So while it's in some ways, it would be more beneficial to have the center facilities and students to be able to attend to be at a building on campus, I'm not sure what the future of that is. But at the moment that our other building still is where the Center for Legal and Social Justice is housed. I think that right now there's a campaign to naming rights to enhance some of the facilities here at the law school.

Several years ago, under the direction of Dean Steve Sheppard, he had, I think it was a wonderful idea to take part of the Kenedy Library, and it's now called the Commons, similar to the bottom floor of the St. Mary's undergrad library.

It's a huge gathering room. Students can study individually or study as a group--it has whiteboards. They can outline cases, some opportunities just to have snacks. So it's an all purpose room well needed for, especially for studies and gets a whole lot of use as we were heading into exams right now.

Well, what I love about this 30 year history is all the history I have with so many law students now, law alumni, I'm kind of like that mother that really enjoys seeing the accomplishments of wouldn't say her children, but her prodigies, so to speak.

And I think it's just a gift to know people from their first day of law school all the way through as they develop their legal careers and then go into public service. So recently, as I discussed about it in Red Mass now Judge Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez, she helped me from our first days of law school and has continued to do anything I need if I call Rosie. She loves Red Mass and she'll help connect. She extends invitation so people would know about Red Mass. And I just continue to if I'm at events where she's a speaker, I enjoy those continued connections.

And at the last red mass, Rosie gave me my pair of red running shoes so that I can keep plan red mass, but to keep going in life. She would--

She would describe the way I would walk, was always my head forward and I'm always running to a destination because I try to keep up with everything I do. So I feel like the shoes will help. But it also reminds me of I was able to.

I've been at a number of people's swearing in as they've assumed public office. And I was able to be at her swearing in, she made arrangements to pick up several of her friends that we went down for New Year's Eve swearing in ceremony a couple of years ago now.

And I was thinking I was going to, I thought law office. And I image the law buildings in New Jersey. Well, it was, I didn't realize, especially in the Southtown area. There's a lot of law offices there in houses.

So it really I mean, it's kind of a I think I don't know if other cities have that, but it's kind of a tribute to having legal offices in neighborhoods. And so, so anyway. But because it was New Year's Eve, of course, there was some frivolities before the swearing in ceremony as people were coming to congratulate her. But I knew I had to pray. So I couldn't partake too much. And then all of a sudden, after the fireworks went out, went off. Then we started the ceremony. As the revelers were coming by streaming in from the tower, there I was on the street giving my prayer. I think that was one of my more challenging. But you know, I'm always glad to do that for people in the legal community. And I wish that our law students could attend some of them because it's so moving for me to see how they there's always a minister, at least in my experience. There's been a minister as part of the ceremony and just their pledge to public office. So if I can keep running or walking, at least I have better shoes to do that now.

I found that a really interesting, engaging and thoughtful question. And I think where it leads me is probably to talk about the fact that I have been here 30 years. I suspect one of the challenges is continue to adapt and change under each new administration.

I've been very fortunate that each dean I worked for Dean, Barbara Aldave, Dean Bill Piatt, interim dean Dean Cantu. As I discussed Dean, Interim Dean Vince Johnson, Dean Steve Sheppard and the current Dean Patricia Roberts have all been very supportive of Law Ministry.

I don't get involved in insider politics. And that's natural to a law school. There's decisions to be made, changes that happen under each administration, challenges in all kinds of ways to keep a law school such as ours with the reputation we have in academic excellence, and to continue the development so that we can grow and also provide the best facilities, the best faculty as we have been known for. So I see that they have many more challenges than I do, but my mission is always to support the mission of the school that we provide training for lawyers to be ethical lawyers with integrity and the St. Mary's mission of giving back--to provide giving back to the community wherever they are in their work related lives, and to have the attitude of leadership for service. I've been fortunate that we have a large tribute wall to all the students that we've provided recognition for in their three years, and that is a challenge to have students only for three years, mostly when they come in their first year. They're a captive audience, but they're also in a fearful state, not knowing what going to law school actually means, and then the first exam. I always joke that over the summer, if they get experience, they come back and they're able to wax out quickly about legal cases to start the legal writing and be published. The accomplishments in public service. I just got back from talking to students about ID recovery. They were just thrilled that they could, I think, put together their legal career with their own passion for service. So to help the homeless or those who have lost their IDs, who can't get any services until they're reinstated with the paperwork so they can get their IDs. That just brings a lot of joy to my heart. That says that's the mission as having students and whatever profession, whatever aspect of the law they go into, they can be in big firms, small firms, solo practitioners, public service, but to have that attitude of service.

So I think it's a challenge, but in a good way for me to always keep partnering with people knowing what's going on in the community. We've really, as I discussed before, Greg Zlotnick has really enhanced our pro-bono program. There's more service projects, pro-bono opportunities

than I can keep up with, but I think that's a challenge to how do I keep focused on the mission? And so far, that's really, really worked even with adapting to new administrations.

I personally, one of the challenges is also technology because you have to remember, I started in the purple ditto time, went into typewriters, learned the computer on the fly, and every time they change the system, I have to find that new.

It's like I was describing. It's like moving the grocery store shelves that I have to now find where the new buttons are. So I think but you know, again, what a benefit when I see all the papers I have and are now getting rid of because so much of this history is online now.

So I think that technology, I'd say that's a challenge for me adapting to change, keeping current, not missing opportunities to meet law students. You know, I think the challenge is clearly during COVID times. All of a sudden I took for granted that I just meet students and in my memory, leading the prayer out by the statue of St. Joseph and imaging the students that would have been walking across campus. But we're all at home. As I led the graduation prayer at the statue of St. Joseph, it was very poignant for me to say all of a sudden the students I took for granted aren't there anymore.

I think that was an incredible challenge and I don't I think we'll still see the impact for the students that went to school during--went to school remotely. In the three years here this is their first in-person exam for some of them.

And the other day, I realized there was a real need as Amanda Rivas was leading a blessing for a group, an individual blessing for the students that she was having sessions with to talk to them about external trips in the valley.

And she led individual blessings for them, and they all teared up every time she prayed. And part of it was the camaraderie of being from the valley and knowing circumstances of even first generations going to law school. But it made me realize there was a need there, and I hadn't thought of it, but that's OK because I saw the opportunity, so I just now was discussing how can we provide something in the courtyard, perhaps for an individual blessing. I used to do a group blessing in and a gathering, but that's changed.

And again, I have to keep adapting. Part of our mission is heroism are characteristics of education and legal education is adaption and change. So I think keeping keep just always being aware that I'm here for the students and I try to also support the faculty and staff at the sometimes.

I guess the challenge is. How much? I don't have a regular schedule, so there's a lot of events at night. I have a wonderful opportunity to this. This Sunday, I'm praying at the Judge Andy Morales Foundation that provides scholarships and I've been included in their fundraiser for many years.

And so making sure that I keep an open door for the law students, so I'm not so busy with activities that I'm not able to stop for a student that comes to the door. I think at the same time, extending my ministry into the community has been incredibly important networking with legal

organizations and in San Antonio. Yes, I think the challenge sometimes of balancing my schedule. Nobody ever really tells me what to do. Sometimes I do get emails requesting things, and so I have to adapt to or respond to things that weren't on my schedule.

But I guess fortunately, I kind of have that. I like going. I like going to events. I think the challenge is you get older, though, is just keeping organized. So the more events I do, I don't always finish filing, which is why we're sitting at the part of my office that looks like it's very neat.

But if we turn the camera, you'll see the pile of--I still believe in paper files, which I'm trying to wean away from. And so I think that's a challenge. And yes, to understand not to take for granted that the law students, just because they look like they know what they're doing, aren't also dealing with many personal experiences, I think, you know, during COVID time one of the most poignant stories, I guess, was Gilbert Vasquez. We've documented his story when his father and his whole family got COVID and he himself was a quadriplegic and his father ended up in the hospital.

And he called me, and he called a few faculty to ask for prayers, and I really felt like that was significant to say yes, I am going to pray for the health care workers, for his dad's recovery, for the family dealing with so much.

We were able to offer just some financial support so they could transition. His dad came with him to every class, even at graduation, walked across the stage with him. So I was thrilled when the dad called and was getting out.

I had gotten out of recuperation time and called to thank me for the prayers. You know, so you can't say that just doing. It's not just doing things, but I think as Marianist sister, as a, as a chaplain, it's realizing the importance of prayer and being with people in their immediate need.

And yeah, just never getting too busy that you can't respond to who's ever in front of you. So I think that's a challenge. Well, I think one of the benefits of being a minister and as you know, the Marianist family is Marianist Priest, Brothers, sisters and laypeople all committed to Mary's mission of bringing the values of Jesus and Jesus's message to those we serve and to our world. And I'm happy that I'm in a religious order that is male and female. I think that's been a real compliment. All my religious life, I've been on multiple committees with Marianists in many formats.

So I think the complementary in men and women has been a real gift for me of our Marianist family. I think also because it's St. Mary's University, we look to Mary as a woman of faith and we can take such guidance from her.

And I think that I suspect that led me when our St. Mary's University developed their Women's History Month and I was joining on the early days. I can't say enough about the wonderful work that several varying committees have done over the years and the leaders that have and Julie Wilson right now, and Diane Duesterhoeft, and so many of the women that led our efforts in Women's History Month. And as a result, that brought me to work with--to really think about how do I translate that into working with the women at the law school.

We have a very organized, excellent women's law student association. They have taken the lead in so many efforts, and one of them is the auction they do. They've just raised ten \$15,000 for many justice organizations through their auction that they have and as a result of working with them and their outstanding leadership and knowing the women judges on the fourth Court of Appeals. As I discussed earlier, I wanted to honor first Judge Chief Justice Alma Lopez, then retired Chief Justice Catherine Stone and then currently retired Chief Justice Sandee Bryan Marion. So I was able to create again awards in their names and have the law students nominate women in the law.

And I just really appreciate it. The fact that many of our male colleagues, male law students, would nominate women with very heartfelt commendations for their work and also that often a group of women that get nominated, they all get recognized as a woman in law leader and all of them get a certificate with that recognition.

And then a few are chosen to be named after the Chief Justice. This is for their for their exemplary work, but they've all had when they talk, they all have such regard for each other. And there isn't that what might be like, why did she get it?

It's been a lot of testimonies that the people really regard the work of each other, and often many of them get recognized in other capacities as well. So you can see that they've been leaders in the school.

I'm not sure, you know, I've asked that, I guess, of law students. I think there's a nice mix on campus, I think because there's so many women in the law that led the way for our law students. That might not have been true when our law school was predominantly men and there was only a few women at the start. I'm sure there were challenges that the older lawyers and judges could talk about that they faced. I think that there is a community sense again as part of our mission at St. Mary's.

And I think there really is a good balance of men and women working together in many programs that we have helping each other, many legal organizations. So I'm really grateful of that on campus. Not sure in the job market.

I guess I can't really speak to that, but I think we've had so many women trailblazers in San Antonio, and they've led the way for our law students, our law student women. You know, we just finished a diversity committee, you know, so much happened after all our racial unrest, along with COVID when we were facing that, and now we've always been facing it. I think again, it just came into the acknowledgment, again, that we had more to do and especially more to do in our educational atmosphere.

And so we developed what now we call the affinity groups. And then last year they had a welcome. The women's bar again led the way, but they invited the Hispanic law students, the Black law students and the LGBT legal organization too.

Everybody was welcomed at the table. I think that was the theme in a sense, and Dean Patricia Roberts led the way when she first came, she developed the diversity committee and so many of us, again, we didn't have students on campus, but through Zoom and then through inviting some

of the student representatives from those groups to be in conversation to talk about what are the racial issues on campus and especially, I think some classes were. I think what I learned, I guess some classes have historical issues in them. They're discussing racial issues and how faculty members help or not to have conversations that are respectful because they're easily can be a lot of hot tempers. It's an issue that is, you know, part of our society. It was even more so, I think as we faced elections and how to how to help the students, especially when they're hot button topics in the classroom.

And so we might have a congenial atmosphere in our social life. But it has to carry into that we don't all see and that's a good thing. We don't all come from the same backgrounds. And, you know, we have opinions and the students are preparing to be advocates and they face adversarial issues and adversaries.

So training, I think how to be professional in settings to disagree, of course, and to have your opinions, but also to do that in a way that's respectful. I think that's a real challenge for students. But I do think we've worked more at seeing each person. Each person has a story and to see that person, not just what we think about them, but as we get to know people that come from different backgrounds and walks of life.

The--I think a marvelous new program is this first generation law student. I never would have thought of it. I--remember I'm from Philadelphia. I had, and I'm not sure that I, you know, I didn't really know the Hispanic community.

I'm glad to be welcomed into it, but I wouldn't have known them. I mean, I wouldn't have known some of the issues that the Hispanic community faced. I think over time, I've certainly come to and visiting in the valley, and some of our students come from a background--.

Some students, law students will have generations of family members that were judges and lawyers. So they grew up talking about it at the dinner table and then other law students that come, they're coming from not even having seen a lawyer.

And yet something compelled them, maybe it was a government class, maybe it was debating in high school. I don't know how much TV played into it, but they come to law school without the, you know, without having seen any models, I guess.

And so the insecurities that arise. So it's been very important these new programs to help first generation law students and then the boot camp now that also helps them prepare in the early before they start law school to know how to brief a case, to know how to read what might be required.

And I think that the students that come into that program in the summer also then in turn, I think, form a community because now they've--it's an acknowledgment that not everybody walking around knows exactly what is involved in going to law school.

So I think our affinity groups have been very helpful. Yes, Asian-Americans too, where we have a smaller population in their regard. And then we had a panel of lawyers who also talked about what it was like to be a first generation lawyer.

What are the issues currently racial issues currently in the legal profession? And again, it's not. I don't always have to know the answers. I think it's about continuing myself to learn. I think that was an important time in responding.

I'm happy now that St. Mary's has a diversity officer in an office because I think that you're talking about challenges. I think that is what we need to continue to grow into people of different faiths or no faith background.

Yes. And as our cultures, the--I think we'll probably have interesting things will happen as the people are preparing to welcome the Afghan community into San Antonio. A number of religious are helping them to relocate or to provide services, and our law students have done so with Catholic charities. So I think our history in our nation challenges us. And I think that this generation will face those challenges. I hope and improve our racial justice relationships, and I hope St. Mary's continues to have the kind of dialogues in helping us to understand each other.

Teaching the law is teaching the law everywhere I've been at meetings of other religiously affiliated law schools and who have a mission similar to ours. So I think teaching the law is the focus, that's the focus of going to law school.

And I would hope that what makes us unique is, as I've discussed, some of the Marianist characteristics that translate into finding a place. I remember one law student saying when she went over to the Center for Legal and Social Justice that she found her people because she had a particular sense of a mission to help others, not just to get--. It's a good thing to get a good paying job, but she also had another--coming out of her family experience. Her parents had been immigrants, and so coming from that experience, I thought that was a great line: I found my people. And they find a passion for the kind of work they want to do. I think our faculty are very accessible. They care about the students. Some of the larger law schools, I'm not sure because you also have to publish, as does our faculty.

The other, even post COVID, I had to laugh to myself. I had an event for evening students, for our evening student program and their faculty members. They invited them to come to a social. And it was at 7:30 at night after their last class at the end of the semester, over at the pub and they showed up. And I just thought, I guess having all of us been inside for a long time, it's probably a good opportunity to get out. But I was impressed that they regarded the students to come and attend. I think so many of the faculty have connections that they provide mentorship for our students, but they also provide connections for careers. I think our support staff are also very mindful that students are under stress and try to respond in appropriate ways to help relieve that or make the needed connections for them. I do think our religious mission is important to people of faith to find reassurance, to have this opportunity, to have a prayer or a blessing to be able to talk about your faith openly. Some of our faculty, not everybody, but some of our faculty will lead a prayer, and I think the witness of faculty praying has been important. We have the class integrating Marianist values and ethics in the law.

So I think the--I guess the community makes us, again, a place where they're intellectually challenged. It's not just everybody gets along, but that the community is an academic community, and it really provides the challenge to do your best.

But the other day, when one of the law students, his mother had just had a heart attack, and I guess he didn't have the funds to necessary to go home, but his classmates put together and sent him home to St. Louis.

And I think acts like that--when I first came here, one of the students, her parents were ministers and one of the, I think, one of the parents was in the hospital, and I remember almost the first thing we did was students collected, and I took the check over to--the cash over to them and how grateful they were for that support. Students responded when one of our law students had her children from that, I guess it was a step children, but from Haiti or her children and I'm not sure the total circumstances, but the students raised money to send her in with another law student who is military background to Haiti, and they went and found her children and eventually they were able to bring them back to the United States. Yeah, post-Katrina, our law students responded with help as we have for other issues that have occurred. So I think there's there is a response--responding to people in need.

Our crisis--caring. I think we're a law school with heart and there might be other law schools out there, but I would I would say that our St .Mary's Law School has heart.

And I also recall that one of the law students said to me when they were at some other meetings of law schools, they had bragging rights that they had a sister that gave them peanut butter and jelly.

But they had a sister and that made them feel like that was something unique. And it is the Marianist have all in all our universities and in our law schools. Well, the two. But the fact that there's a commitment to having a campus minister accessible to students, whether that's in support, in the challenges they face with their own family issues or to cheer them on in their day to day work. So I am proud to be their sister in the law. You know, as we're approaching the feast of Our Lady Guadalupe, I was very fortunate that the under Dean Barbara Aldave, who had such a heart for the Hispanic community, especially, but bringing people together at the time, she was also working with anti-death penalty work out of her own legal experience, background and a real dedication to helping our law students understand the implications of the death penalty.

I would have, I think, until I sat in on these lectures, I just wouldn't have thought about it very much, or it was the reinstatement of the death penalty. So I didn't know all the implications. And I remember the first conferences I went to where she had undertaken to provide this kind of dialogue while journal articles written on it. So it was Sister Helen Prejean was our first speaker who's still a trailblazer again in in, you know, the anti-death penalty movement restorative justice now finding alternative ways. That punishment is not the answer, but bringing people together to acknowledge the harm that was done to seek reconciliation in whatever format that takes, and especially in certain circumstances, maybe with juveniles, especially to look for other ways than to just throw people into jail, but to provide avenues for people to understand the impact of their crime, not just on the individual. That's certainly true, but on the community as well.

And so she hosted Sister Helen Prejean at our first Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mass. And of course, that was well attended. Sister Helen has come several times to St. Mary's University and to San Antonio as we've worked with the Journey of Hope.

It's the group that travels together. They are people that are lawyers that work as a defense attorney. They've the people that have exonerated those falsely accused on death row that have been maybe on there for 25 years and who were exonerated their family members who lost a family member through murder.

They're the exonerated who have left, who have gotten, who have been freed from jail. They travel together, pray together, and they give testimony that the death penalty is not the answer. And there's been so many. Oh, exonerations that make it even more challenging to say is, is this.

Yes, there's heinous crimes and yes, there is life without parole. But certainly through education and understanding the impact of the death penalty on our community. But sister Helen, of course, testifies to this, and that was our first Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Certainly, looking to Our Lady of Guadalupe is our mother of justice and giving a voice to the voiceless. So subsequently, all these years, we've continued that practice of having Our Lady of Guadalupe gathering. It later became an opportunity to give a Santa Maria Justice Award to those in our community that work closely with the Center for Legal and Social Justice--and mariachis. The same mariachi group had come all these years. And so it was very hard when that was one of the events in the last two years that we couldn't have in-person. We were just talking about how we might reinstate it, but still with the limits we have of how we can still gather safely. And a reminder, I guess, that, you know, yes, we're still in it and we're still working to keep each other safe, but to bring back some type of gathering. I don't think there--I wouldn't say there's another law school that probably has Our Lady of Guadalupe, a live event opportunity to celebrate the hard work of the center in. Yeah, they are the. They are the faculty that when you hear the students, I was just at a Thanksgiving party at the center and the students that became fellows or work with the ID recovery at Haven for Hope, the impact that their experience has on them.

And you can hear in their voices just the appreciation for our faculty at the Center for Legal and Social Justice and their dialogues with each other that really help them feel like, as one of the students said, I can do something.

And again, I think that it's not so much that other law schools don't have to do that, but the Our Lady of Guadalupe celebration. Then in turn, I would get instead of the priest giving the homily, I started having different members of the community to share who Our lady of Guadalupe is for them and how that--how she inspires or influences them. It's been a wonderful way to listen to the members in our own community, give reflections that we take for granted. Sometimes we don't really know until somebody has to put to words their experience, I think we take for granted that the priest is giving the homily. But in addition to have the voice of our laypeople and those who are in the front lines of doing the work of justice and rededicating are centered legal and social justice to Our Lady of Guadalupe each year so she can continue to oversee their mission. And such an important one it is.