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Nebraska TRANSCRIPT University of Nebraska College of Law



Celebrating the leadership and service of Bradford, Denicola, Potuto, and Schopp



Introducing new faculty
Agosto, Jefferis, and Weitzel

Spring 2023, Vol. 56, No.1





Dear alumni and friends,

As you know, THE NEBRASKA TRANSCRIPT is published annually at the end of each calendar year. I hope you enjoyed our most recent issue, which landed in your mailbox in late December or early January. In that issue, we shared with you the wonderful work our faculty is doing, the successes of our alumni, and an update about how things are evolving at your alma mater.

That issue could not encompass all the significant ways the College is changing. There simply was not enough space to do so if we wanted to include more than just a paragraph or two. And we did! So, we made the editorial decision to create this special edition designated to honoring the faculty members who have retired in the last two years as well as introduce you to the faculty that have joined us. I know you'll enjoy the tributes to Professors Steve Bradford, Rob Denicola, Jo Potuto, and Bob Schopp written by their colleagues. Their retirements were well earned after decades of service to the College of Law and to their respective scholarly fields. Join us in celebrating their legacies and in wishing them well in their next adventures.

I also know that you will enjoy learning a bit about the new faculty that joined us last year – Genesis Agosto, Danielle Jefferis, and Paul Weitzel. Each brings with them unique experiences and perspectives and have already contributed to our community in significant ways. We expect great things from them for many years to come.

Also in this special issue, we celebrate 10 years of the Schmid Research Fellowship program. This program has contributed much to the scholarly endeavors of our faculty, in addition to providing our students with exceptional opportunities to develop key skills that will ultimately contribute to their professional success.

I hope this note finds you well and look forward to seeing you sooner than later.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Moberly".

Richard Moberly

Dean and Richard C. and Catherine S.
Schmoker Professor of Law



Serving with Integrity

- Bradford known for his creative approach to teaching, legal scholarship 2
- Depending on Denicola for care and excellence 4
- Potuto brought New Jersey toughness to Nebraska Law 6
- Schopp: from "semi-psychologist" to prolific law, psychology scholar 8

Solving Problems

- Schmid Research Fellows reflect on program's 10th anniversary 10
- Weitzel explores corporate behavior, leverages global experience 13
- Agosto makes a home at Nebraska Law 14
- Jefferis draws on extensive knowledge as former civil rights litigator and clinic professor 16

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**We develop inclusive leaders who advance justice,
solve problems, and serve with integrity.**



Bradford known for his creative approach to teaching, legal scholarship

By Adam Thimmesh,
Margaret R. Larson Professor of Law

“Send it to Bradford.” Those were the very first words of advice that I received as a new faculty member at the College of Law. I had written my first academic article as a faculty member, and I was worried about whether it was ready for submission to law journals and how the faculty would evaluate the article when it came time for my first annual review. “Send it to Bradford. If he says it is ready, you have what you need to know.” The level of respect that my colleagues had for Steve as a scholar and community member was immediately evident.

It quickly became clear to me that Steve was a generous and kind colleague as well. Steve responded to my request to review the article by being gracious with his time—giving me comments and his stamp of approval, which was probably undeserved but incredibly helpful. He was always curious about my family, and he liked to talk about his. Steve and I also share an appreciation for sarcasm, but he often stopped by my office just to make sure that I knew his real meaning to avoid any misunderstanding. That was always unnecessary, but it demonstrated to me Steve’s core commitment to being a good colleague, friend and mentor. He succeeded at each.



Bradford joined the College of Law as an assistant professor in 1987.

Steve earned his reputation and the immense respect of his peers over his more than thirty years at the law college. He joined the faculty in 1987 after practicing as a lawyer with the Dallas law firm Jenkins & Gilchrist. He received his B.S. degree from Utah State University in 1978 and went on to receive an M.P.P. from



In 2007, Bradford began summarizing his classes in the form of podcast episodes. These proved to be popular not only with his students, but with others across the country as well. "I haven't hit the Billboard charts yet," he said.

"But I'm hoping for a recording contract. And then I want to tour with Maroon 5."

Harvard University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1982. He eventually stopped collecting degrees and began writing.

Steve's scholarship largely focused on securities law, and he became a leading voice on crowdfunding. He never limited himself to that area of law or to traditional legal scholarship though. He wrote much more creative articles like "Random Questions about Law School and the Law: The World's First Socratic Law Review Article" and "The Gettysburg Address as Written by Law Students Taking an Exam." I'm not sure, but I think that he may have also been competing for the longest law review article title in history with his work "As I Lay Writing: How to Write Law Review Articles for Fun and Profit: A Law-and-Economics, Critical, Hermeneutical, Policy Approach and Lots of Other Stuff That Thousands of Readers Will Find Really Interesting and Therefore You Ought to Publish in Your Prestigious, Top-Ten, Totally Excellent Law Review."

Steve was a serious scholar who did not take the job too seriously, and he left an incredible mark in doing so. He used his scholarship to help explain and develop corporate and

In 1994, Bradford won the college-wide Distinguished Teaching Award. He had been a finalist for this award every year since joining the faculty.

securities law, to help other academics and to provide levity in a discipline that sorely needs it. He blogged for years on the Business Law Prof Blog and constantly pushed the faculty to move beyond traditional conceptions of what legal scholarship should look like. Steve was just as innovative as a teacher. He authored a wide range of CALI lessons to assist with student's learning in the areas of corporate and securities law, he created online classes before COVID made that mainstream, he used "grade insurance," and he pushed the faculty to reject easy metrics for evaluating teaching that had been shown to be biased and ineffective.



Bradford was the winner of a 2002 "Survivor" contest sponsored by the Women's Law Caucus. Students donated money to vote for which professor they most wanted to see dressed in a costume. When asked about his reaction to winning the contest, Bradford would only say, "What's up, Doc?"

Steve had a reputation for being tough, but he was always fair and his comments constructive and insightful. As I reflect on Steve after his retirement, I think of a well-respected scholar and teacher, an incredibly proud father and grandfather, an avid hiker and a colleague who is already sorely missed on the faculty. We wish him the best.





Depending on Denicola for care and excellence

**By Matthew Schaefer, Clayton Yeutter
Chair and Professor of Law**

Rob Denicola has retired after 42 years on the Law College faculty. The Law College has depended on Rob for various key roles and responsibilities over those four-plus decades, including serving as the nationally and internationally recognized scholar of copyright and unfair competition and the Margaret Larson Professor of Intellectual Property since 1989. The only criticism of Rob I ever heard since joining the faculty in 1995 related to a certain catchphrase he would use in the faculty lounge occasionally. If the discussion at lunch in the faculty lounge turned to an intellectual property issue or topic, often the participants in the discussion would turn to Rob for an answer and invariably his answer would be “it depends.”

Of course, Rob would go into the details of the various factual and legal factors that needed to be examined, but some of the participants would leave the discussion (I think jokingly) disappointed that the answer was “it depends” and not a clear-cut one. The faux criticism, of course, tells us more about the impatience of those in the discussion, who apparently like many Fall semester 1Ls crave a clear-cut answer, but later learn that “it depends” is almost always a solid start to an exam answer and a good way to approach legal answers in practice, given answers always depend on additional facts uncovered or decisions on applicable law. Or maybe the faux criticism was just the disappointment of participants in the faculty lounge lunch discussion not being able to tell a friend or family member a clear (and free) answer on their latest



Denicola in his first year as a faculty member. Although it took some adjusting, he said, “The faculty made me feel at home.”

idea or invention. Rob was heavily involved in drafting the Restatement of Unfair Competition (along with colleague Harvey Perlman) and their co-authored piece fully supports Rob's "it depends" approach to matters of unfair competition:

Restating the law of unfair competition poses special challenges. The Restatements have traditionally sought to restate the common law, but in unfair competition, federal and state statutes play a significant, sometimes dominant role. In some instances the statutes preempt the common law; in other instances they do not. The statutes frequently rely without significant elaboration on concepts developed through common law adjudication. Much of the law of unfair competition is thus shaped by a complex interplay of statutory provisions and common law rules.

Much of the Restatement's so-called "black letter" takes the form of broad standards and catalogs of relevant factors rather than crisp rules and bright line tests. Although not new to the Restatements, we think this approach is particularly appropriate in a field such as unfair competition where context is so often everything.



As team coach and number-one draft pick, Denicola led the faculty basketball team to victory in the 1987 recreational season.

Of course, Rob was using the word "depends" with the definition "be controlled or determined by." However, there is a whole different definition of depend that all of us at the Law College think of when we think of Rob's incredible 42 years at the Law College, specifically "rely on" as in the "the kind of person you could depend on." Rob was not just a faculty member you could depend on to get the job done but one you could depend on for excellence. Rob was and is a large component in the culture of excellence and care that exists at the Law College. Excellence as a scholar. Care and excellence as a teacher, one who taught out of his co-authored casebook with Ralph Brown on copyright and unfair competition (and subsequently sole authored by Rob) for the past 36 years. Excellence and care as acting dean, associate dean, chair of the admissions committee and many other roles. Rob cares deeply about the Law College. It shows. He even returned after retirement to teach contracts one final semester - five credits worth no less. While Rob will not teach anymore, nor will we see him quite as frequently in the hallways (and roast him on the Yankees only winning one World Series in the past 26 years), we will continue to rely on, to depend on Rob through the strong culture of care and excellence he helped foster.



Denicola received the Distinguished Faculty Award in 2002, presented by Professor Jo Potuto.



Potuto brought New Jersey toughness to Nebraska Law

By Harvey Perlman, Harvey and Susan Perlman Alumni Professor of Law

“Professor Potuto.” These were words most likely to spark fear in the hearts of her students. In 1974 she brought her New Jersey toughness to Nebraska nice. For almost 50 years she prodded and provoked law students to think harder and to develop the strength of mind needed to be a lawyer. Her questioning style in class was that of a zealous prosecutor cross-examining a witness. (In fact, at one point she took a leave of absence to serve as a full-time prosecutor in New Jersey.) Over those years there may be hints that some of Nebraska’s easy-going nature rubbed off on her, but only hints. For those students who persevered, they discovered her toughness was matched with a goodness of heart and a genuine concern for their personal and professional success. She became a mentor to many; a friend to many more.

I can attest that the sharpness of her mind and the vigor of her argument were not limited to the classroom. Faculty, too, experienced both her passionate advocacy and her genuine warmth. In her service as the University’s Faculty Athletic Representative for nearly 20 years, she acquired a national reputation as one of the most knowledgeable and most courageous voices for student athlete welfare and athletic department accountability. Although she was a “force to be reckoned with,” she acquired close and admiring friends throughout the national intercollegiate athletic community. When I became Chancellor, the first issue I faced was a complaint against the University’s athletic department for an NCAA rules violation. She guided us through that process to ultimately an acceptable resolution. Her ongoing monitoring of athletic policies no doubt shielded us from additional penalties. Though she was never deterred from frustrating



Potuto returned to Lincoln after taking a year's sabbatical to work as an assistant prosecutor in New Jersey in 1983.

an athletic director's plan by enforcing the rules, they nevertheless often sought her wise counsel well beyond issues of rules compliance.

Jo joined the Law College faculty in 1974. She brought with her a B.A. in Journalism from Douglass College, an M.A. in English Literature from Seton Hall, and a J.D. from Rutgers University Law School. At the College, she built a teaching portfolio that included Conflicts of Law, Constitutional Law, Criminal Procedure, Federal Jurisdiction, and Sports Law in addition to pitching in where the curriculum required. Her scholarly interests were varied. Initially she focused on criminal law and procedure. More recently she built on her experience as Faculty Athletic Representative to explore the intricacies (some would say absurdities) of the NCAA regulatory structure for intercollegiate athletics.

I count Jo as a colleague and a friend. In the 1970's, we were co-reporters on a Uniform Law Commission project and more recently shared an interest in intercollegiate athletic governance. I have borne witness to the fact that she is a determined shopper. Her favorite maxim, which she followed regularly, was "the only things you regret are the things

you didn't buy." Notwithstanding her longevity in Nebraska, she remained in love with New York—the vibe, Broadway, the Yankees, and yes, the shopping.

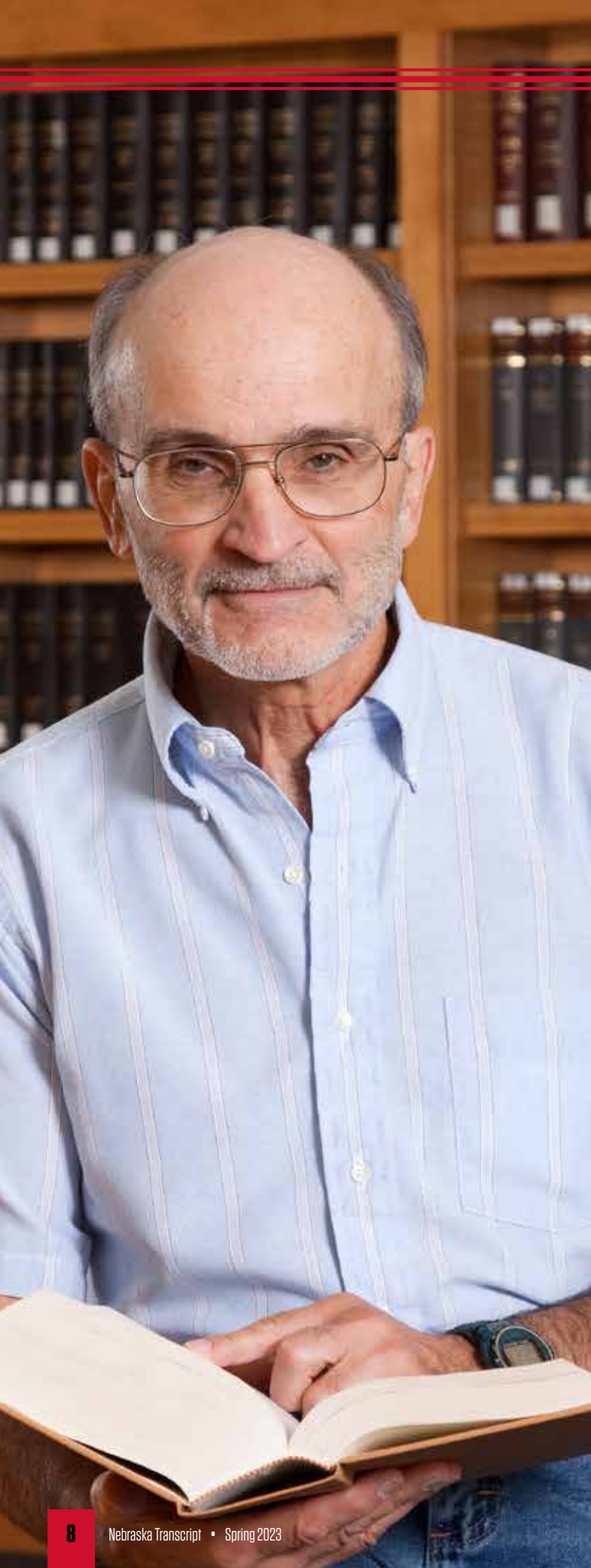
This University, the College, and particularly her students have benefited from Jo's journey to Nebraska. She embraced the State, its institutions and the students she found here and gave each her all. Alas, in the end, the siren songs of New York and New Jersey (did I mention the shopping?) have drawn her back. Her many friends in Lincoln will miss her but we all wish her well.



In 1974, Potuto joined the faculty as the first female professor in almost two decades.



Potuto taught Advanced Legal Writing and the Appellate Process in the summer of 1989. The course materials would serve as the basis of her book, *Winning Appeals*.



Schopp: from "semi-psychologist" to prolific law, psychology scholar

By John Lenich, Earl Dunlap Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus

There is an old saying that one thing leads to another. In the case of Professor Bob Schopp, it has been one degree that has led to another. Schopp – who is one of the faculty’s most prolific scholars – has earned six degrees over the years, including a J.D., a Ph.D. in Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy.

It all began with an undergraduate degree from Northland College, a small college in Wisconsin where Schopp played on the school’s football team, majored in Psychology, and minored in Philosophy. One of the lessons Schopp learned at Northland was that education can be interesting, so he decided to continue his education at the College of William & Mary where he earned a master’s degree in psychology.

He then began working as a clinical psychologist. But he soon realized that he was, as he puts it, “a semi-psychologist,” because he did not have the level of knowledge and understanding necessary to work independently with patients. He therefore went back to school for a Ph.D.

After earning his Ph.D., Schopp joined the staff of the Milwaukee County Mental Health Complex in Wisconsin and rose through the ranks to become the Assistant Chief Psychologist. Many of his patients had been committed to the hospital after having been found not guilty by reason of insanity, mentally incompetent to stand trial, or dangerous to self or others. Their cases raised both psychological and legal issues. Schopp was struck, however, by the trouble that the clinicians and lawyers had in communicating with each other.

The “psychologists and psychiatrists didn’t understand what the lawyers were saying,” Schopp recalls, “and the lawyers and judges didn’t understand what the psychologists and psychiatrists were saying.”

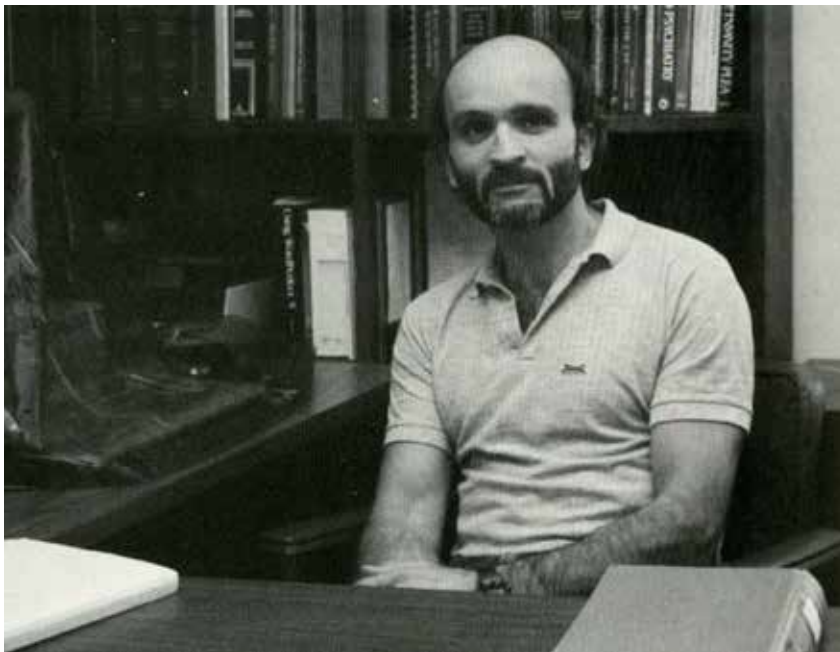
Furthermore, neither side seemed to recognize the boundaries between psychological opinions and legal determinations. To help sort things out in his own mind, Schopp went back to school by enrolling in the Law & Philosophy Joint Degree Program at the University of Arizona.

With two more degrees in hand, Schopp joined the faculty of the College of Law in 1989. Since joining the faculty, Schopp has explored the legal, psychological and ethical aspects of a variety of subjects, including professional ethics, civil commitment, criminal offenses, criminal responsibility and mental health law.

Schopp has written three books, co-edited three more and written over 60 articles. He has also spoken at over 70 conferences, including conferences in Australia, England, Ireland, France, Sweden and five other countries. Closer to home, Schopp has enjoyed teaching law students and graduate students. He has particularly enjoyed teaching Mental Health Law and Capital Punishment because those are the two courses where his trifecta of academic interests – law, psychology and philosophy – most clearly intersect.



In 2005, Schopp received the Distinguished Faculty Award from the College of Law Alumni Council.



After he retires at the end of the 2022-23 academic year, Schopp plans to focus his energies on writing a book on capital punishment and hiking in wilderness areas, an activity he very much enjoys. And who knows. He might even go back to school to get another degree or two.

Schopp joined the faculty in 1989 after completing the concurrent law/philosophy program at the University of Arizona. “It was the attempt to understand the underlying principles of the issues that I encountered in practice that led me to study law and philosophy,” he told THE NEBRASKA TRANSCRIPT in 1990.

Schmid Research Fellows reflect on program's 10th anniversary



The Schmid Research Fellowship Program provides law students the opportunity to assist faculty research under the supervision of assistant dean for diversity, equity and inclusion and professor of the law library Stefanie Pearlman. The selection of the most recent class of fellows marks 10 years since the program's inception.

The first students were hired in the spring of 2013 when the program was named the Faculty Research Assistant Fellowship. Renamed in 2018, it has grown from two fellows to 24. In total, there have been 70 student participants since the program began. The fellowship is supported in part by the generosity of the Marvin & Virginia Schmid Foundation.

Pearlman has been involved in the fellowship since the beginning, working alongside director of the Schmid Law Library and professor of law Richard Leiter. Faculty members had been searching for assistance with short-term projects to support their scholarship, and Pearlman and Leiter saw an opportunity to provide help while creating new opportunities for students.

Professor Stefanie Pearlman provides support and guidance to the Schmid Research Fellows.

“We were looking to support faculty in a way that made it convenient for them to spend more time solving real world problems,” Pearlman said.

In matching faculty projects to student fellows, Pearlman looks for similar areas of interest.

“We have exceptional faculty and exceptional students and being able to pair them up is extremely rewarding,” she said.

Professor Jack Beard, director of the Space, Cyber, and Telecommunications Law Program, and Jon Natvig, '23, are one such pair. When Natvig told Pearlman about his interest in space law, she knew exactly where to place him.

Natvig has since assisted Professor Beard with numerous projects, including revisions of the *Woomera Manual on the International Law of Military Space Operations* (forthcoming, Oxford University Press). The Manual is designed to assist military and civilian government personnel, space operators, practitioners and members of international organizations and non-governmental entities involved in military space activities and operations. An international research project, the Manual is sponsored by the College of Law and its British and Australian university partners.

In June 2022, Natvig was able to accompany Professor Beard to The Hague, Netherlands, where they presented the draft manuscript of the Manual to 24 countries for discussion and feedback. Natvig was tasked

“Without Professor Pearlman, this program would not have the success it has seen in the past 10 years.” - Jon Natvig, '23



Jon Natvig, '23, and Professor Jack Beard at The Hague in June 2022.

with recording state comments and input from representatives.

“To go in your second year and meet these diplomats and lawyers from over 20 different countries was a pretty surreal experience,” Natvig said.

Natvig’s experience as a Schmid Research Fellow and his work with Professor Beard opened his eyes to the possibility of working in the field of space law after graduation.

“I did not understand just how much work there is to be done in this field, both on the international level and domestically,” he said.

Professor Kevin Ruser has been involved with the program for years and enjoys working with fellows, as it allows him to manage projects more efficiently and look at the bigger picture.

“The main benefit is that I can assign tasks to them while I keep a 30,000-foot view of the project,” he said.

Fellows assisting Ruser have helped update *The Nebraska Criminal Law Practitioner’s Guide to Representing Non-Citizens in State Court Proceedings*, his book designed to help Nebraska criminal law practitioners meet their Sixth Amendment obligation to advise their non-citizen clients of the immigration consequences of state criminal proceedings in which they are involved. The fellows’ work, he said, has been imperative to the project’s success.

“At the end of the day, I would have spent a lot of time and come to the same conclusion that they did, and so it was extraordinarily helpful,” Ruser said.

Rachel Tomlinson Dick, '22, said the fellowship had a great impact on her law school experience. Paired with Professor Ryan Sullivan, she assisted his research on the Landlord Tenant Act for articles that would later be published in the NEBRASKA LAW REVIEW. She had previously been interested in landlord-tenant law and housing justice, but getting the opportunity to delve into the history and research the intricacies of the subject matter made her even more curious.

“The amount I learned in that substantive area of law, just through doing that research and collaborating with Professor Sullivan, was really impactful,” Tomlinson Dick said.



Rachel Tomlinson Dick, '22, received the 2022 Woods Aitken Outstanding Student Award. Tomlinson Dick continues to work alongside Professor Sullivan (left) as a Housing Justice Fellow in the Housing Justice Clinic.

The skills and knowledge she obtained as a fellow partially influenced her decision to stay at Nebraska Law as an Inaugural Housing Justice Fellow after graduation. An additional takeaway from her experience was the mentorship she received from Sullivan.

“The difference that mentorship can make for a law student, especially when you’re a first gen law student, is massive,” she said.

Sullivan credits fellows with helping him sort through massive amounts of data, support his citations, and facilitate the Tenant Assistant Project. This work includes looking at court dockets, finding every case that has been filed in eviction court in Lancaster County, and putting that information into a hearing list.

The program wouldn’t be possible without that support, he said. Additionally, Sullivan said the fellows’ contributions to his research have been irreplaceable.

“It’s fair to say that the volume and the quality of research that I’ve been able to produce could not have been achieved, if not for the fellows,” he said. “They’re such excellent writers, and Stefanie does a good job of really selecting students who are interested in doing this work.”

Weitzel explores corporate behavior, leverages global experience

Professor Paul Weitzel joined the Nebraska Law faculty as an assistant professor of law in August 2022. Prior to coming to the College, Weitzel worked on some of the largest international transactions ever done, from Silicon Valley to the Middle East.

Weitzel has conducted transactions on six continents, with experience in mergers and acquisitions, venture

capital, corporate governance and infrastructure, and international and domestic capital markets. Most notably, he conducted the largest initial public offering to date, that of the Saudi Arabian Oil Company.

In his scholarly research, Weitzel has aimed to humanize the corporate experience by

exploring the legal and governance constraints and incentives around corporate behavior.

“Corporations are made up of people,” he said. “My research aims to help us see the humanity within each other, despite the corporate form.”

Weitzel looks to address overarching questions about the purpose and structure of corporations. In his research, he pushes back against common conceptions about corporations, particularly in the field of fiduciary duties.

“Too often the corporate form encourages people to treat profits as a moral obligation. If that moral obligation competes with our other moral duties to each other, folks may say, ‘Well, I have a duty to the shareholders. Any harm I do is on them. I’m doing my duty.’ We justify things we would never do for our own account to benefit shareholders, who may not even want those things done on their behalf,” he said.

In the classroom, Weitzel leverages his experience in large-scale transactions to pass on his practical knowledge. He is able to teach students not only the laws and best practices, but also the arguments they need to make to negotiate these transactions in practice.

“I want my students to be able to practice law at a high level from day one,” he said.

One of the best parts of the job, Weitzel said, is serving as a mentor to a curious, patient group of students. In teaching Business Associations, he hopes he can equip his students with practical skills they can use to improve their lives.

“It’s wonderful to help mentor our students during these challenging few years of their lives,” he said. “And even better when you see them use those skills to help others.”

Agosto makes a home at Nebraska Law



Genesis M. Agosto, '22, took on the role of assistant professor of the law library and reference librarian in August 2022. Eager to give back to the community she has grown to love, she has quickly become a mentor and friend to many.

Agosto received her B.A. in History and Spanish from DePaul University in 2018 and was the first to complete the Joint J.D./M.A. in History degree program through the College of Law and the Department of History within the College of Arts and Sciences at Nebraska. As a student, she excelled at planning and

organizing. In the transition to the role of professor, she knew to draw on these strengths.

“Context, Discipline, and Consistency... add that all together, and you get a really organized librarian,” she said.

Agosto is passionate about finding answers. She thinks of research as a kind of puzzle in which she can dive deep into a specific area of law for a short amount of time.

“I love reference, it’s probably my favorite thing about being a law librarian,” Agosto said. “I get to be an expert for however long someone needs me to be and then give it up and do something else.”

In her work with current students, Agosto is focused on creating a welcoming environment and taking what she learned to better their experiences. She recalls mentors such as Richard Leiter, director of the law library and professor of law, and Anna Shavers, Cline Williams professor of citizenship law and associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion, who provided her moral support during her time at Nebraska Law. She said the memory and impact of their support pushes her to pay it forward.

“I think service is one of the biggest objectives at Nebraska Law. And my service includes helping the students get the most that they can out of their education and their time here,” she said.

Agosto said her background informs her approach to teaching. As a Latina, first-generation student from Florida, she looks to share her experiences and engage with people from different perspectives. She also seizes opportunities to connect with and support students of color.

“I always have students of color coming into my office, telling me about their dreams and aspirations,” she said. “I try to work with them to make them feel heard and understood.” This fall, Agosto anticipates receiving her

M.L.I.S. from the University of South Florida, School of Library and Information Science. In the meantime, she will collaborate on a new project with a team from the Department of History and fellow Nebraska Law professors Jessica Shoemaker, Eric Berger, Danielle Jefferis and Catherine Wilson.

The group received a \$1 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to establish a new academic program that bridges the connections between history, civil rights and the law. Agosto is acting as the project's law librarian. The team will mine through archives and historical legal documents to uncover lesser-known cases where marginalized groups of people were utilizing the law.

"People were not just sitting idle," she said. "They were utilizing the law. They always have been."

This effort, Agosto said, will help to put Nebraska at the forefront of these kinds of conversations. She plans to be here when those conversations take place.

In her journey here, she noted her dog, Lincoln, whom she adopted in her mid-teens, long before she knew the city of Lincoln, Nebraska even existed.

"I think it was fate," she said.



Jefferis draws on extensive knowledge as former civil rights litigator and clinic professor



Professor Danielle Jefferis joined the College of Law faculty in fall 2022 and brings a unique combination of teaching and practical experience to the position. Prior to coming to the College of Law, Jefferis taught at California Western School of Law in San Diego and in the Civil Rights Clinic at the University of Denver College of Law.

Jefferis's experience lies at the intersection of constitutional law and prisoners' rights, immigration law and federal courts. She has

extensive civil rights litigation experience and has represented plaintiffs in a wide range of claims, from inadequate medical care, physical abuse and religious discrimination in prison to claims against law enforcement officers and employers accused of unlawful discrimination.

In 2018, she was a member of a team of clinic faculty and student attorneys that successfully challenged the constitutionality of a federal prisoner's convictions, resulting in his release from prison and reunion with his family after being separated from them for more than a decade. Jefferis and her colleagues from the University of Denver Civil Rights Clinic received the 2023 AALS Clinical Legal Education Award for Excellence in a Public Interest Case or Project for their work on the case.

"I felt like I had a big impact in those cases and felt connected to the clients, but at the same time, felt frustration with how the law wasn't giving our clients the full scope of relief they deserved and that the law purported to provide them," she said.

The barriers Jefferis frequently came across in her practice led her to question how they came about and how they could be deconstructed. Her research focuses on theories of punishment and the law and policy governing prison and detention. She takes both critical and comparative approaches to her work, looking at carceral systems, practices and theories around the world.

Jefferis' most recent work, *Carceral Deference: Courts and Their Pro-Prison Propensities*, discusses the history and evolution of judicial deference to prison officials. Looking ahead, she wants to investigate the impact of that deference.

"The most immediate harm is that prisoners are losing cases that maybe they shouldn't lose or for reasons that don't address the merits

of their claims, but I think underneath that, there's more concern for what it does to the judicial system and what it does to our broader sense of courts' role in protecting individual rights," she said.

In class, she enjoys seeing the commitment and drive of her students.

"I think there's a lot of real passion at this law school, and with the field that I have worked and researched in, I love to see students come to law school to do good work and make positive change no matter the path they pursue," she said.

In deciding to come to Nebraska Law, she saw a place where she could make a difference and find a common set of values.

"The values here align very closely with mine," she said. "The commitments to inclusive leaders, social justice and public interest are all exactly why I went to law school."





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