

and Hamilton] offered me my job back.

What made you interested in Employee Benefits Law?

Actually, a partner at the firm needed help in that area and so that is how I got started in it. Then I began teaching employee benefits law [at St. John’s University School of Law in New York] and writing about corporate law and employee benefits matters. So it is quite by accident that I am now the co-author of an employee benefits casebook and an ERISA litigation book.

When did you start becoming more interested in faith and law?

When I first started legal academia I was still a Buddhist. Most of my writing was in the area of corporate law and employee benefits and employment law. At some point I converted back to Catholicism and it was after that conversion that my scholarship started moving in the area of the intersection of faith and law.

How did you get started teaching the law?

When I got out of law school I wanted to teach law but I wanted to practice before I started teaching. I would have liked to start teaching law when I returned from Asia but I was just walking in the door after having sat and meditated for two years. So I practiced law for several more years after returning to the U.S. before starting to teach at St. John’s. There, I taught Employee Benefits, Business Associations, Employment Law and a seminar in Catholic Social Thought and the law. I was there for 14 years, from 1993-2007. Then I joined the faculty here.

What is it you most like about teaching law students?

I like teaching law students because I view the three years of law school as a long discernment process as to what the students are going to be in the world.

It is exciting to contribute to students developing a sense of who

they are and who they want to be in the world.

What prompted you to come to St. Thomas?

For the last several years I was living in New York I was basically leading two full-time lives. I was a full-time law professor at St. John’s and I was also a member of the adjunct ministerial staff at a Jesuit retreat house, giving way more retreats than someone with a full-time academic job should have been giving, and also seeing people for individual spiritual direction. (I am trained as both a retreat director and a spiritual director). Dean Mengler offered me the opportunity to come here to do both. Part of my job at St. Thomas is the job of a “regular” law professor and part of my job is to give retreats and other programs of spiritual formation for the law school community. That was too good an offer to pass up.

Had you ever been to Minnesota before?

I was at St. Thomas for a conference in the spring before I began teaching here. I knew a lot of the professors here though, through our common involvement in the project of fostering scholarship and dialogue about Catholic thought and the law. In addition, of course, I already had a friendship with Professor Vischer from his years at St. John’s.

How do you like Minnesota?

Obviously I miss the people from New York – my family, the people I ministered to at the retreat house, my Vincentian brothers at St. John’s. But the mission of the law school was appealing enough to me to come here. I do have to admit that, being a New Yorker, I find the Midwest a strange place. Did I mention that I hate the cold?

If you were not a law professor what would you be doing?

I would be doing full time ministry and more spiritual writing.

What is your greatest accomplishment?

Isn’t that a question you ask someone at the end of their career? I think Thurgood Marshall gave the best answer to that question. When he was asked that question upon retiring from the Supreme Court, he said: “I did the best I could with what I had.”

But I would say that my daughter is my greatest accomplishment. She is 15 years old and is an absolutely incredible young woman. She is a singer and was a cantor in our church back in New York. I remember the first time she got up and led the congregation in song – I looked up in wonder at what I participated with God in the creation of.

Do you have any regrets?

No. I think the older I get the more I realize that all the decisions I made are important parts of the development of the person I have become. As more time passes you realize it is all part of the path.

What are your hobbies or interests outside of the law?

I don’t have much time but I like hiking, reading, listening to my daughter sing and playing some accordion.

What are your retreats like?

I give different kinds of retreats although most come out of the paradigm of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Retreats usually involve some input (a talk on whatever the theme is), some guided retreat or individual prayer and some small group sharing of the prayer experience.

What I learned last year is that it is hard for law students to commit a full day to a retreat so I am trying to do things that fit into the rhythm of the academic schedule. This semester, for example, I have given a couple of single lunchtime reflections and right now we are in the middle of an Advent retreat in daily living where participants agree to pray every day with material I provide them and we come together for weekly gathering.