

Scholar, Teacher, Servant: On the Installation of Marc O. DeGirolami As the Cary Fields Professor of Law

Michael A. Simons

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/lawreview>

This Congratulating Professor Marc O. DeGirolami is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in St. John's Law Review by an authorized editor of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact selbyc@stjohns.edu.

**SCHOLAR, TEACHER, SERVANT:
ON THE INSTALLATION OF
MARC O. DEGIROLAMI
AS THE CARY FIELDS PROFESSOR OF LAW**

MICHAEL A. SIMONS[†]

On October 19, 2019, the St. John's Law community came together to celebrate an important occasion: Marc DeGirolami, after ten years on the St. John's Law faculty, was being installed as the Cary Fields Professor of Law. The installation ceremony we held that night gave me the opportunity to thank Cary Fields '86HON for his generous philanthropy. It also gave me the chance to thank Marc DeGirolami for his many contributions to St. John's Law. Here is an excerpt of what I said about Marc that night:

Just over ten years ago, in early 2009, I went out to dinner with a faculty candidate whom we were trying to recruit to St. John's. He was earnest and serious and, I could tell, really wanted to know what the future held for St. John's. So, at one point in the dinner, I looked him in the eye and said, "Marc, good things are going to be happening at St. John's." What I didn't know then was how much Marc DeGirolami would be a part of the good things that have happened at St. John's in the ensuing decade.

In a moment, I'm going to call upon Marc's friend and colleague Mark Movsesian, who will talk about Marc's scholarship. And then, Jordan Hummel '13 will give her perspective of Marc as a teacher and mentor. From the dean's perspective, I will say this: Marc is the complete package—scholar, teacher, servant.

As a scholar, his work is noteworthy—with a book published by Harvard University Press and law review articles with a string of top journals. He's also prolific. In just the past five years, he's written twelve articles and book chapters. And, academic though he is, his work also reaches beyond the academy—whether it's in the New York Times, the New Republic, many other popular

[†] Dean and John V. Brennan Professor of Law, St. John's University School of Law.

press outlets, or in his podcast “Legal Spirits,” the impressive new offering from the Center for Law and Religion—available on iTunes!

As a teacher, he is among the most beloved at St. John's. Although his scholarship comes from a distinct perspective, his classroom teaching is decidedly non-ideological. I watched Marc teach Criminal Law years ago, and I saw him do things in class that I still try to emulate today. It was also apparent to me why his students love him so much. His class is demanding and pitched at a high level, but it's also clear. And Marc's enthusiasm for the material, for learning, and for the students is obvious and infectious.

And, finally, Marc is a true servant of the law school and his students. We often think about “service” as committee work or administrative assignments. And Marc has certainly done that—serving as both Associate Dean for Faculty Scholarship and Associate Academic Dean. But Marc's service is demonstrated most clearly by his love for his students, whether it's organizing “afternoon tea” with groups of students or being the driving force behind the annual 1L soccer game. Both of those traditions reflect Marc's genuine desire to get to know his students better, to see them as persons, to guide them and mentor them, and to help them succeed. Put simply, he has been an active part of building the community that is the St. John's Law family.

As a scholar, a teacher, and a community builder, Marc has been so much a part of the good things happening here at St. John's. And so, it is an honor to install him as the Cary Fields Professor of Law.