

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin®

Volume 161, No. 149

LAW SCHOOL NOTES

'You have to ask people for money'

Bergholz knows the key to fundraising is no secret, takes the lead at John Marshall

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In his early days as a college student, John Bergholz faced a financial crossroads.

The Chicago native spent a year prior to college driving a truck for a now-defunct printing company to pay for his higher education.

But after a year, he was unsure if he would be able to stay at Reed College in Portland, Ore.

That's when a letter from the financial-aid office arrived, telling him he was receiving scholarship money.

"I was kind of floored that a stranger would give money to the school and that the school would then give it to me to finish that particular year," said Bergholz, who graduated from Reed in 1983.

"It really made a big impression on me that that kind of philanthropy could impact my life. It kind of led me down the path and the career that I've enjoyed so far."

That career path — leading universities in fundraising — brings Bergholz to The John Marshall Law School.

Announced Thursday, Bergholz has joined the law school as its executive director of alumni relations and development, where he will lead the school's fundraising efforts.

"Most of my work has been concentrated in higher education and fundraising," said Bergholz, who has worked in that arena at Northwestern University School of Law,

DePaul University, National Louis University and University of Windsor in Ontario.

"That's what this place is about — access and opportunity. I don't think I'm dissimilar from some of the alumni that viewed this as the law school that gave them the access and the opportunity."

Bergholz, 55, has worked in fundraising for close to 25 years. He started that portion of his career in 1991, when he joined Northwestern's law school as director of annual giving and associate director of development.

After four and a half years, he moved to DePaul University where he held a number of titles during his 13 years there, ending as the university's vice president.

He spent a year and a half in Windsor as that school's vice president of university advancement

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and joined the teacher-training school National Louis in October 2011 as vice president of institutional advancement.

Fundraising, Bergholz said, is mostly a matter of being proactive, meeting people face-to-face whenever possible and asking for a gift.

He recalled interviewing at Northwestern with then-dean



John Bergholz

Robert W. Bennett and an associate dean at the time, J. William Elwin Jr.

The deans asked Bergholz for the secret to fundraising.

Bergholz's response was simple: "You have to ask people for money."

He laughed recalling that story. "They looked at each other," Bergholz said, "and they looked at me and said, 'Yeah, that's right.'"

At John Marshall, Bergholz will lead a team of eight people in alumni relations and "development" — another word for fundraising.

Two of those eight positions are currently open: an alumni coordinator and a major-gift officer.

Prior to Bergholz, the position was open for about a year while the law school evaluated its needs.

"He's a real dynamic person," John E. Corkery said. "We have some goals we want to reach to increase our fundraising and I think John is the guy to help us do this."

Along with his experience as a

fundraiser, Bergholz impressed Corkery and the search committee as a person who could "work well and play well with others."

"The ability to work as part of a team, to pick up social cues, to respond appropriately — all of those things are indications to me of someone who is good at interpersonal relations," Corkery said.

"And obviously if you are hiring an alumni director, you need that."

The school's major fundraising goals are in scholarships and programs.

The department also wants to increase the school's annual unrestricted funds, Bergholz said — money that can be used at the school's discretion.

The law school raises about \$2 million to \$3 million annually, Bergholz said. Corkery added that donations account for about 1 to 2 percent of the school's annual operating budget.

Bergholz is one of several fundraising heads hired at Illinois law schools in the past year. Nora Kantwill joined Loyola University Chicago School of Law last fall from Georgetown University Law Center as its assistant dean for advancement.

In January, the Southern Illinois University Foundation added Thomas C. Britton as director of development for the school of law.

And this fall, Daren Batke will start at Northwestern as the school's associate dean of development and alumni relations after three years at University of Chicago Law School as its senior director of development.

"I think in any kind of fundraising situation, you're making a case to people or to entities that what you're doing is important and why it needs financial support," Bergholz said.

"I hope that any of the readers who are John Marshall Law School alumni or are fans of any of their programs will make a contribution. I'm happy to sit down with anybody who wants to be supportive."

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