



DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Because my “Law and Perspective” address leads this issue of the *Clark Memorandum*, I feel a bit as though I am taking more than my share of this issue, but I hope you will indulge me, because this will be my last opportunity to pen a Dean’s Message before I step down as dean this summer.

Serving as dean of this great law school has been the highlight of my professional life. It has been a great blessing to work alongside faculty colleagues, administrators, staff, students, alumni, and friends who share a sense of ownership and commitment to the ennobling project of building a great LDS law school. On a personal level, I am grateful for your friendship and support.

I finish my time as dean recognizing that there is still much to do. It seems to be part of the nature of all climbing that reaching the top of one crest simply reveals that there are mountains still to scale. I have every confidence that our best days are ahead of us and that the leadership change will be invigorating for the Law School as we seek to climb the mountains ahead.

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In those areas where I have fallen short, I will simply have to be comforted by my family’s motto, which actually comes from my grandfather’s funeral. My grandfather grew up logging the forests of northern Sweden until he met Mormon missionaries as a teenager, joined the Church, and immigrated to the United States. He spoke English with a heavy accent throughout his life and, despite being a good and generous soul, was not always fully orthodox in his Church membership. A ward member invited to speak at his funeral didn’t turn out to be a big fan, because he began by saying, “We are here to honor John Johnson, who did, though not well, the best he could.” You can be sure that my mother and her siblings did not initially find this humorous, but it has become a wonderful family motto: “We do, though not well, the best we can.” Resolving that this would be on our family crest took some real discussion as we weighed it against several contenders that gleaned strong support:

- “Hard work has a future payoff, but laziness pays off right now.”
- “If at first you don’t succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.”
- “Eagles may soar, but weasels don’t get sucked into jet engines.”

Okay, the family crest discussion part isn’t true, but the rest is.

I am excited about what lies ahead for the Law School and for me personally. Being a member of the faculty of J. Reuben Clark Law School was my greatest professional aspiration, and after a leave to reinvigorate a scholarly agenda that I have let lapse during my time in administration, I look forward to returning to the faculty and resuming a full teaching load. Although I have learned much during my service about the importance of administration, I continue to believe that a great law school is primarily a function of the quality of its students and the quality of its faculty. And we are lucky to have extraordinary students and an accomplished and devoted faculty.

In 1973 Elder Dallin H. Oaks (then president of the university) commented on the very first day of classes that “the special mission of this law school and its graduates will unfold in time.” During my travels as dean, I have seen that mission unfolding in the lives of our alumni all over the country, indeed, all over the world. I am excited to continue to watch that process unfold as our graduates use their legal training to serve as leaders and healers and as the faculty faithfully labor to have an enduring influence through their teaching and scholarship.

As I close my final Dean’s Message, I share one of my favorite passages in the Old Testament, from the Book of Numbers, as my hope for all of our graduates and for our colleagues and friends within the Law Society: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).



Warm regards,

JAMES R. RASBAND