

On August 27, 1973, BYU Law School held its first class in the Pardoe Drama Theatre of the Harris Fine Arts Center. On that occasion, BYU president Dallin Oaks charged the founding faculty and staff and the charter class of the Law School to “make it great.” He set the bar for “greatness” high, requiring eminence “in the eyes of legal educators, scholars, the judiciary, the legal profession, the business world, officials of local, state, and federal government, and citizens at large.”

Greatness on this scale facilitates influence, and I believe President Oaks was challenging our founders to create a law school of global influence. Over the past 50 years, the Law School has made tremendous progress toward this lofty goal. Our recent no. 23 ranking in *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Law Schools reflects our increasing stature among US law schools, and we have even higher aspirations.

When President Oaks laid out his charge, law schools in the United States typically referred to themselves as either “national” or “regional.” Under this binary classification scheme, BYU Law School fit the mold of a national law school from the beginning. We offer a curriculum that is national or global in scope, more than half of our students each year find employment outside of Utah, and faculty scholarship addresses issues of national or global interest.

Although we have been viewed as a national law school, our reach is increasingly global. BYU Law's International Center for Law and Religion Studies is a global academic leader in the field of international religious freedom. The Center has organized over 350 international events in more than 50 countries where government officials, community and religious leaders, judges, scholars, and other experts can learn from one another and share research and experience. Because of its global and interdisciplinary reach, the Center accomplishes work that is truly unique.

Our vibrant LLM program, designed specifically for foreign lawyers, is creating relationships that will expand and accentuate the global reach of the Law School. We offer externship and employment opportunities for our students and provide strategic research relationships throughout the world for our faculty. The Law School's Career Development Office has recruiting pipelines to major multinational law firms in business centers all over the world. This fall we launched the Global Business Law Program, which will both amplify the Law School's ability to influence corporate and public policy and also raise our global profile further.

Using networks of both BYU and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we span the globe with an ease and efficiency that our peer law schools simply cannot approach. Global work is also just part of the DNA of our students, many of whom speak a second language and are well positioned to connect their language skills to their legal expertise. We are currently exploring additions to our semester-long global offerings, which now include programs focused on cross-border business transactions in London, England, and on international human rights and international trade in Geneva, Switzerland, to harness untapped global opportunities for our students.

BYU Law School is becoming a law school of global influence, furthering BYU's objective to produce graduates “for the benefit of the world.” In pursuing this ambitious vision, we aim to bless our students and, through them, our Heavenly Father's children worldwide.



D. GORDON SMITH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. G. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dean, BYU Law School