

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff
From: C. L. Max Nikias *C. L. Nikias*
Date: May 1, 2007
RE: New Dean of the USC Gould School of Law

Office of the Provost

C. L. Max Nikias
Provost and
Senior Vice
President for
Academic Affairs

On behalf of President Sample, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Robert K. Rasmussen, J.D., as dean of the USC Gould School of Law, effective August 1, 2007. The appointment is for a five-year term. He will also hold the Carl Mason Franklin Dean's Chair in Law.

Professor Rasmussen is currently the Milton Underwood Chair in Law at the Vanderbilt University Law School and director of its Law & Human Behavior Program. He has developed a reputation as one of the nation's outstanding legal scholars in the fields of bankruptcy and corporate reorganizations and a strong administrator during nearly two decades at Vanderbilt, earning acclaim for his teaching, mentoring, university-wide service, and interdisciplinary approaches to legal scholarship.

Professor Rasmussen will take the helm of the Gould School at an important moment in its history—a moment in which it is refining an approach for legal education that can serve as a model for other legal and professional schools. Cross-disciplinary approaches, global partnerships, public service and lifelong education are among the keys to achieving this goal.

USC will now have as Dean of the Gould School one of the most celebrated teachers in the 125-year history of the Vanderbilt Law School, demonstrating USC's steadfast commitment to providing the finest legal education in the world. Professor Rasmussen is a six-time winner of the school's prestigious Hartman-Hall for outstanding teaching.

His scholarly expertise is focused on the interaction of market forces and corporate reorganization law, and his most recent work addresses fundamental changes in corporate reorganization practice. He is the author or co-author of dozens of articles published in some of the country's leading law journals, including the *Supreme Court Review*, the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, the *Stanford Law Review*, and the *Michigan Law Review*.

During his time as Vanderbilt Law School's associate dean for academic affairs, Professor Rasmussen provided leadership for much of the school's day-to-day operations. He most notably mentored outstanding junior faculty talent, developing systems and approaches that would allow junior faculty members to achieve their fullest potential as teachers and scholars. He also led the school's appointments committee for several years.

Since arriving at Vanderbilt in 1989, Professor Rasmussen has been active in dozens of committees at the law school and university. During his terms as chair-elect and chair of Vanderbilt's faculty senate, he led a successful campaign to extend university benefits to domestic partnerships. Professor Rasmussen has also served on committees dedicated to undergraduate research, recruitment and retention of women and minority faculty, institutional repository policy, patents, and numerous other areas of academic and administrative life.

From 1998 to 2006, he served as director of Vanderbilt Law School's Law & Economics Program. He held Vanderbilt's Fed Ex Research Professorship from 2004 to 2005, and also has been a visiting professor at the University of Chicago and University of Michigan Law Schools. He is an active member of the American Law and Economics Association, and he participated in the American Bankruptcy Institute's Bankruptcy Reform Study Project.

He has played a role in shaping the jurisprudence in his field as the principal author of Amicus Curiae Brief on behalf of nine law professors in the 1999 Supreme Court case *Bank of America v. 203 North LaSalle Street Partnership*; the principal author of Amicus Curiae Brief on behalf of three law professors in *In re Integrated Telecom Express, Inc.*, a 2004 case decided by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals; and the principal author of Amicus Curiae Brief on behalf of seven law professors in *In re Owens Corning*, a 2005 case also decided by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

Before joining the Vanderbilt law faculty, he worked in the Civil Division Appellate Staff at the United States Department of Justice, handling litigation in the United States Courts of Appeals and the Supreme Court. He also clerked for the Honorable John C. Godbold, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Professor Rasmussen earned his J.D. *cum laude* in 1985 from the University of Chicago Law School, where he was comment editor of the University of Chicago Law Review. He earned his B.A. *magna cum laude* from Loyola University of Chicago in 1982, majoring in political science and minoring in mathematics.

His wife, Rebecca Brown, Vanderbilt's Allen Professor of Law and one of the country's leading constitutional law theorists, will also be joining our faculty in the summer of 2008. At USC, she will hold the Richard B. Newton Professorship of Constitutional Law. She has served on the Vanderbilt faculty since 1988, having previously worked in the Office of Legal Counsel in the Department of Justice.

Professor Brown also served as an associate in the law firm of Onek, Klein & Farr and clerked for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Chief Judge Spottswood Robinson III, of the D.C. Circuit. Her work, which sets forth a vision of the Constitution premised on individual

liberty, is widely published in leading law reviews and edited volumes. In recognition of this work, she received the inaugural Chancellor's Award for Research at Vanderbilt University in 2003. Professor Brown also is a co-chair of the issue group for the American Constitution Society and a co-convenor of an annual constitutional theory conference. She received her B.A. from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and her J.D. *magna cum laude* from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. It is thus with great enthusiasm and gratitude that we conclude this nationwide search.

I would like to thank Dean Jack Knott for chairing our search advisory committee, as well as Vice President Elizabeth Garrett and the members of the search advisory committee for their hard work. Thanks are due as well to Bruce Karatz, Bruce Ramer and Glenn Sonnenberg for their counsel during this search process.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to Professor Edward McCaffery for his outstanding work as dean on an interim basis over the past year. During his service as interim dean, the law school has continued to recruit leading scholars to the faculty, maintained its tradition of excellence in clinical education and public service, recruited an outstanding class of entering law students, cultivated its connections with alumni and members of the bar, and instituted a number of programs such as "Conversations with the Dean" to bring students and legal practitioners together in an informal setting. As professor of law, economics and political science, and as the holder of USC's Robert C. Packard Trustee Chair in Law, Professor McCaffery will continue his work as one of the country's leading scholars in tax law.

I hope the entire USC academic community will join President Sample and me in thanking Ed McCaffery for his service and in welcoming Bob Rasmussen and Rebecca Brown to our Trojan Family. We eagerly look forward to the next chapter in the Gould School's ongoing rise.

cc: Steven B. Sample
Todd R. Dickey
Dennis F. Dougherty
Alan Kreditor
Martha Harris
Elizabeth Garrett
Michael Jackson
Barry Glassner
Randolph Hall
Marty Levine
Jerry Lucido
Michael Preston
Ilee Rhimes

Bruce Karatz
Bruce Ramer
Glenn Sonnenberg