

Notre Dame Law School

NDLScholarship

2019–Present: G. Marcus Cole

Law School Deans

12-16-2019

Stanford Law - A Conversation with Marcus Cole

Marcus Cole

Notre Dame Law School, gcole2@nd.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/gmcole>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cole, Marcus, "Stanford Law - A Conversation with Marcus Cole" (2019). *2019–Present: G. Marcus Cole*. 31.

<https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/gmcole/31>

This Discussion is brought to you for free and open access by the Law School Deans at NDLScholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2019–Present: G. Marcus Cole by an authorized administrator of NDLScholarship. For more information, please contact lawdr@nd.edu.

Stanford Law - A Conversation with Marcus Cole

Dec 16, 2019

G. Marcus Cole is the Joseph A. Matson Dean and Professor of Law at Notre Dame Law School.

He was appointed by University President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., and began his term on July 1, 2019. He is the 11th dean in the history of Notre Dame Law School.

Transcript – English (auto-generated)

Errors have not been corrected.

Introduction

0:03

one of the most interesting parts of my

0:07

story is how I went from practicing law

0:10

and a large law firm in Chicago to the

0:13

faculty at Stanford Law School it's

0:15

interesting because I knew it was again

0:20

an act of Providence it was not

0:22

something I planned what was happening

0:25

was I was working really hard as a

0:27

junior associate at Mayer Brown and

0:29

Platt and in fact I was I was like every

0:32

other junior associate every junior

0:34

associate in a large law firm works

0:36

really hard but unlike a lot of other

How did you start writing Law Review articles

0:39

junior associates I was really

0:41

frustrated with a lot of the cases and

0:44

how they were being handled and decided

0:46

by the judges that I was going before

0:50

and that frustration caused me to start

0:54

writing in the evenings and on weekends

0:56

so I started writing Law Review articles

0:59

on my own time things for which I wasn't

1:04

get any credit for at work but I was

1:07

spending my days from 8 o'clock in the

1:10

morning until 7 8 9 10 o'clock at night

1:13

working as a junior associate and then I

1:16

would spend the next two or three hours

1:18

till midnight working on a law review

1:21

article and taking a cab home at

1:24

midnight to get the bed to get up in the

1:27

next morning and go do it all over again

1:29

and I was doing this day after day week

1:32

after week and year after year and my

1:36

wife finally said to me you know you

1:39

want to think about having somebody pay

1:41

you for doing what you're doing on

1:43

evenings and weekends

1:45

and wait and when she said that I didn't

1:50

understand exactly what she meant by

1:53

that but one of my articles got the

1:57

attention of a faculty member at

2:00

Marquette University up in Milwaukee

2:02

Wisconsin and so he invited me to come

2:05

speak to the faculty up there

2:07

on the subject matter of my article and

2:11

present my article up there so I went up

2:13

there presented my article to the

2:15

faculty up there and I had lunch with

2:17

the faculty and then I went back to work

2:19

at Mayor Brown the next day and then a

2:23

week later I got a call from the Dean at

2:27

Marquette University saying that the

2:29

faculty had voted an offer to me to join

2:31

the faculty at Marquette University and

2:34

I so I didn't even apply so I didn't

2:39

know what to do I told my wife you know

2:40

you remember when you said that I ought

2:42

to find somebody who paid me to write

2:44

these Law Review articles I think I have

How did you become a law professor

2:47

so I told her about I said what should I

2:50

do she said well talk to the people who

2:52

told you long ago that you should become

2:55

a law professor you're your own law

2:57

professors at Northwestern so I called

3:00

them up I called up Randy Barnett I

3:02

called up Steve caliber AC and I called

3:05

up Dave Van Zandt and I never forget

3:09

Randy Barnett said to me don't take that

3:12

offer and I said well shouldn't I even

3:15

think about he said don't think about it

3:16

he said what you need to think about is

3:19

that that offer is a market signal and

3:22

if they're making you an offer now

3:23

without you even applying for a job just

3:25

imagine what's going to happen when you

3:27

do apply for a job so he said just stay

3:31

in law practice you've still got a lot

3:34

to learn the more you learn the better

3:37

you'll be the better you get the more

3:40

attention you'll get from law schools so

3:43

that when you are ready to make that

3:45

jump into academia you'll be better for

3:49

it and you'll get a better offer so I

3:54

took his advice

3:54

and I worked for a couple more years at

3:58

Mayor Brown and then finally I I took

4:03

one of these papers that I wrote out of

4:05

frustration

4:07

and submitted it to the American

4:10

Association of law schools for their

4:12

faculty recruitment conference and from

4:17

that I received a lot of attention and I

4:20

was invited to interview at 26 different

4:23

schools and out of those 26 different

4:28

schools I received eleven job offers and

4:31

the very last one was from from Stanford

4:36

and I I told my wife what do I do about

4:42

this we were in Chicago her family was

4:46

in Chicago I received an offer from

4:49

Northwestern where I went to law school

4:51

and I thought you know I was going to

4:55

take the job at Northwestern and my wife

5:00

again and her wisdom said you you just

5:03

need to ask God where he wants you and

5:06

that may not be the place that you feel

5:09

most comfortable and so after a lot of

5:12

Prayer we felt that God was telling us

5:15

to go to California and so that's what

5:19

we did

5:19

so I love Stanford Stanford was amazing

Why did you choose Stanford Law

5:24

I immediately was thrown into teaching

5:28

first year contracts at Stanford which

5:33

was an incredible experience for me it

5:38

allowed me to expose students to my

5:42

unique approach to law and to contract

5:47

law and what I thought was important

5:49

about being a lawyer the way in which

5:54

lawyers could actually influence the

5:58

world it allowed me to

6:02

get the students to think creatively

6:05

about the law and the kinds of problems

6:09

laws designed to solve but probably more

6:12

importantly to recognize problems where

6:16

law isn't a good fit for solving it

6:19

forget them to recognize that there are

6:21

limits to how far law can go in solving

6:26

human problems that's something that is

6:30

not easy for for students to grasp or

6:34

for anyone to grasp so a lot of people

6:36

think that if there's something wrong

6:38

there ought to be a law to fix it and

6:41

the fact of the matter is that God

6:43

didn't set up the world that way that

6:45

sometimes we've got to fix things

6:47

without resorting to law to do it so the

6:54

other great thing about Stanford was

6:56

that it was the perfect place to do the

6:59

kind of research I wanted to do which

7:00

was on venture capital startup companies

7:04

finance and the intersection between

7:07

finance and creativity and Stanford

7:14

afforded me access close access intimate

7:17

access to the kinds of venture capital

7:20

firms on on Sand Hill Road in Silicon

7:23

Valley and the kinds of startup

7:25

companies that we're doing cutting-edge

7:27

things and so for 22 years I focused my

7:30

work on that kind of law the

7:33

intersection between law creativity and

7:37

technology and imagination