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Introduction: Essays by Dean David F. Levi and Chancellor Jack M. Weiss

The following two essays address the recent trend in law schools throughout the country in selecting deans with “non-academic” backgrounds. Law school deans traditionally are long-time members of the legal academy, often making the transition from tenured law school professor to law school administrator. But some law schools have departed from this custom by hiring individuals either from practice, government, or the bench to head their institutions.

During the summer of 2007, Thomas J. Romig, a retired Major General of the United States Army, was appointed dean of Washburn University School of Law.¹ Before his appointment “[Dean] Romig . . . served since 2005 as deputy chief counsel for operations for the Federal Aviation Administration” (FAA), and, before joining the FAA, Dean Romig served as the 36th Judge Advocate General of the United States Army for four years.²

Further, “Lloyd A. Semple, former Chairman and CEO of Dykema Gossett, PLLC, and Distinguished Visiting Law Professor, [was] named Dean of the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) School of Law effective April 18, 2009.”³ Dean Semple “joined the UDM School of Law faculty in 2004 after more than [forty] years practicing law with Dykema, one of Michigan’s largest and most prestigious law firms.”⁴

Then in the summer of 2009, R. Alexander Acosta joined the Florida International University College of Law as its second dean after serving as the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida for four years.⁵ “Prior to his appointment as U.S. Attorney, [Dean] Acosta served as the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice” and also clerked for then-Judge Samuel Alito while he sat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.⁶

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1. Meet Thomas J. Romig: New Washburn Law Dean, <http://washburnlaw.edu/alumni/meetthedean/> (last visited Mar. 28, 2010).

2. *Id.*

3. Lloyd A. Semple, Named University of Detroit Mercy School of Law Dean, http://www.udmercy.edu/news_events/news/by-year/2009/05-05-law-dean.htm (last visited Mar. 28, 2010).

4. *Id.*

5. R. Alexander Acosta named as Dean of the FIU College of Law, http://law.lawnet.fiu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=364&Itemid=542 (last visited Mar. 28, 2010).

6. *Id.*

The two essays that follow are both authored by law school deans with similarly “non-traditional” backgrounds. The first essay is by Dean David F. Levi, who became the fourteenth dean of Duke Law School on July 1, 2007.⁷ “Prior to his appointment, he was the Chief United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.”⁸ Dean Levi was also “appointed United States Attorney by President Ronald Reagan in 1986 and a United States district judge by President George H. W. Bush in 1990.”⁹ The second essay is by LSU Law’s own Chancellor Jack M. Weiss, who was named chancellor¹⁰ of the Paul M. Hebert Law Center in May of 2007.¹¹ “[Chancellor Weiss] practiced in New Orleans for [twenty-three] years before moving to New York in 1998 to become a partner of Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher,” where he worked for nine years before joining the Paul M. Hebert Law Center as its tenth dean or chancellor.¹² He also “served as law clerk for U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge John Minor Wisdom and then for Chief Justice Warren E. Burger.”¹³

Through their essays, Dean Levi and Chancellor Weiss address the challenges facing law school deans today and how their “non-traditional” backgrounds have provided them with both challenges and advantages during their current tenures. The *Louisiana Law Review* solicited these contributions to shed light on what can be characterized as an emerging trend in legal education. The *Louisiana Law Review*’s editorial staff hopes that these essays will foster more scholarship and discussion on the many aspects of the “non-traditional” dean.

Board of Editors

7. David F. Levi: Dean and Professor of Law, <http://www.law.duke.edu/fac/levi/> (last visited Mar. 28, 2010).

8. *Id.*

9. *Id.*

10. The Paul M. Hebert Law Center is a stand-alone, independent campus within the LSU System that reports directly to the System President and the LSU Board of Supervisors. As such, the head of the law center holds the title of chancellor rather than dean.

11. Jack M. Weiss: Professor of Law, <http://www.law.lsu.edu/index.cfm?geaux=profiles.facbio&personnel=CF6FAAC4-1372-69E5-F7F06B39B1BB7672> (last visited Mar. 28, 2010).

12. *Id.*

13. *Id.*