

Off to NCDOJ

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After 12 years at the School of Government, I have accepted a position at the North Carolina Department of Justice. I'll be leading the Special Prosecutions and Law Enforcement Section within the Criminal Division. I am looking forward to a new challenge and to the opportunity to work with wonderful new colleagues. At the same time, I am profoundly grateful for my time at the School of Government. I wanted to take a moment to reflect on some parts of my work here that I have especially cherished.

The faculty and staff of the School. The mission of the School is "to improve the lives of North Carolinians by engaging in practical scholarship that helps public officials and citizens understand and improve state and local government." The people that work here are brilliant, delightful, and deeply committed to that mission. I have learned so much from them. I count many of my colleagues as close friends and have great respect for the work that each of them does. I will miss everyone sorely, and intend to call on the School's expertise frequently in my new role.

The public officials we serve. When I first came to the School, I worked mainly with prosecutors, trying to fill the large shoes of our former colleague Bob Farb. Bob had been a prosecutor, had worked with prosecutors for decades, and was a wealth of knowledge. I was brand new, had been a defense attorney, and hadn't built up anything even remotely approaching Bob's expertise. Yet many prosecutors warmly welcomed me, and most of the rest came around eventually. I loved working with prosecutors and particularly enjoyed working in partnership with the Conference of District Attorneys.

Over the last four years, I have served as the director of the North Carolina Judicial College and so have worked mostly with neutral judicial officials. That has been wonderful too. I've had the chance to interact with judges at all levels, with terrific people at the Administrative Office of the Courts, and with judicial educators across the country. I have great respect for the work of each group and am inspired by how seriously our court officials take their complex and important responsibilities.

Because the School didn't have anyone dedicated specifically to working with magistrates on criminal law issues, I ended up spending a considerable amount of time working them. I really enjoyed it. I was consistently impressed with the ability and commitment of the magistrates. They would often show up for training after pulling a night shift, armed with an enormous cup of coffee and a keen interest in the law. I also appreciated their good humor, willingness to ask hard questions, and candor. Plus, they gave me a wonderful gift – a numbered print called *The Magistrate* that shows a magistrate's desk, complete with several well-used School of Government publications sitting upon it. It's the nicest professional gift I have ever received and it is definitely coming with me.

The work itself. I have heard it said that being a law professor is like finding a loophole in life, and that is a fair description of being a faculty member at the School. The lawyers here get paid to think about the law, write about it, teach it to audiences who care deeply about it, and consult on interesting and difficult legal questions. We have enormous freedom to pursue our interests and the steadfast support of our administration. It's not easy, and the pace of the work is not what I imagined that academia would be like. But overall it is a wonderful job, and I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work here.

The blog. I'll close with a few thoughts about this blog. Launching it was one of my first big ideas as a faculty member. In the early days, readership was in the single digits. When we broke 100 page views in a day, I thought we had hit the big time. Today, thousands of users access the blog each day. It has become a valued source for new information and interesting perspectives. None of that would have been possible without the contributions of many parties. From its earliest days, writing for the blog has been a collaborative effort and I have loved working with my colleagues to keep the blog supplied with fresh content. The blog is also much better because of the readers and commenters who bring it to life. I am particularly grateful for those who take the time to post detailed and substantive comments, including critical ones. Many of your comments have influenced how I think about the law.

I have written more than 1,000 posts over the years. That is probably enough for anyone, and I hope that my departure will leave more room for others' voices. In any case, I appreciate everyone who has supported the blog – and the work of the School more generally. I hope to cross paths with many of you again.