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This issue of *Washington University Law Magazine* focuses on a topic that has taken on increasing significance in the current economy—financial assistance for our students. Contrary to some reports in the

media and elsewhere, I continue to believe that a great legal education is a valuable investment for students. But to keep it a great investment at Washington University School of Law, we must make scholarship support a funding priority. In the current climate, more than 80 percent of law students require financial assistance, and the average debt load those students now bear at graduation exceeds \$100,000. That is a huge burden requiring dedication and sacrifice. In light of changes in the legal profession and employment market, we must continue to do everything we can to reduce debt and enhance scholarship opportunities.

To that end, Washington University has launched a five-year effort to raise \$150 million for student scholarships through **Opening Doors to the Future: The Scholarship Initiative for Washington University**. The law school has joined this effort and is seeking to raise \$7.5 million by 2014. We are grateful for the assistance of our Scholarship Initiative Committee and for the generosity of our alumni and friends who provide vital resources for scholarship support. Thanks to that leadership, we have already raised \$2 million toward our \$7.5 million goal.

As this issue of the law magazine demonstrates, we are attracting some of the most talented and diverse students. Our ability to bring in exceptional students is based, to a large extent, on the funds available for financial assistance. Once enrolled, our students soon learn that the top-tier education they receive is worth their investment in us and our investment in them.

This issue of the magazine also highlights several of our faculty. It includes excerpts from the recent scholarly work of Emily Hughes and Carl Minzner, as well as a personal account from Susan Appleton in the now regular “Why I Teach” column. Our programs that support experiential learning and cutting-edge research are also vital to our mission, and this issue focuses on two of these. It spotlights exciting developments in both our Clinical Education Program, headed by Annette Appell, and our Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Work and Social Capital, headed by Marion Crain.

Additionally, this issue includes a special feature on seven of our alumni who are involved in sports and law. The diversity of our alumni’s professional endeavors is also evident in the features on EEOC Judge Tatjana Schwendinger, hospitality and development expert Michael Shindler, and novelist Julie Compton.

As you read about our financial assistance initiative, as well as some of our outstanding students, faculty, and alumni, I hope you will learn more about why we continue working so hard to make Washington University School of Law an affordable, worthwhile investment for our students. We are proud that such a gifted, diverse group will soon be joining the ranks of our talented alumni.