

# Transformative Gift Propels Health Law at GW



Jonathan Kahan

AN IMPACTFUL GIFT BY leading health law attorney Jonathan Kahan, BA' 70, JD '73, is accelerating GW Law's rise in the fast-growing field of health care law. The trailblazing medical device lawyer, who is a partner at Hogan Lovells and former director of the firm's Medical Device and Technology Practice Group, funded the creation of an innovative Health Law Initiative directed by Sonia Suter, the Kahan Family Research Professor of Law.

Mr. Kahan has long recognized GW Law's potential

to become a leader in addressing pressing issues in health law. "D.C. is the U.S. center for health care legislation and health care law, and I am confident that the Health Law Initiative will help propel our law school forward in this important field."

An industry leader in helping medical technology and diagnostic companies obtain FDA approval and market clearance for new medical devices, Mr. Kahan is the author of the leading text in the field, *Medical Device Development: Regulation*

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and Law (Parexel 2020). He shares his expertise with GW Law students as an adjunct professor and also serves as chair emeritus and a member of the Dean's Advisory Council, as well as a member of the university's Leadership Advisory Council. "I had an amazingly good experience at GW Law and enjoy giving back," says Mr. Kahan, who attended law school on a Trustee Honors Scholarship.

Mr. Kahan's journey to health law preeminence began in 1974 when he landed a job at Hogan and Hartson (now Hogan Lovells). "One of the first cases I took on was a health-related pro bono case," he explains. "At that time, there was only one person practicing FDA law at Hogan, and I worked with him on the

case, which we won." Forty-six years later, Hogan Lovells' has a deep bench of more than 75 law practitioners in the FDA area representing more than 1,000 medical device companies and hundreds of health care-related firms around the globe.

Mr. Kahan hopes the Health Law Initiative will inspire greater interest in health law among GW Law students and ultimately build a pipeline of practice-ready health care lawyers to fuel the burgeoning field. "At Hogan, we hire a lot of associates straight out of law school, and we would love for new graduates to come to law firms like ours already well trained in FDA and health law," he says. "By offering increased engagement opportunities at GW Law, we hope to interest many more students in the field who can jump right in and take health law and regulatory law to the next level."

Professor Sonia Suter, he says, is "the perfect leader to get the Health Law Initiative off the ground and move it forward." A leading scholar of health policy, bioethics, and legal issues in medicine and genetics, she joined the GW Law faculty in 1999. Prior to earning her law degree, she earned a master's degree and achieved PhD candidacy in human genetics.

"It is a great honor to be appointed the Kahan Family Research Professor of Law and Founding Director of the Health Law Initiative," she says. "Mr. Kahan's gift to the law school will help position GW as a leader in health law and build on the law school's existing strengths, including our location in D.C., the center of health policy and regulation."

According to Professor Suter, the Health Law Initiative will support symposia,

distinguished lectures, health law research, and mentoring by health law practitioners. “We are already planning several events for the coming year, which will involve leaders in health law from across the country,” she says.

“In addition, we plan to cultivate and expand existing relationships with schools across the university, including our excellent Milken Institute School of Public Health, to address the many interdisciplinary issues that arise in health law. As this terrible pandemic has highlighted, health is influenced by various societal factors including income inequality, racial injustice, and existing laws and regulations. A goal of the Health Law Initiative is to develop collaboration among experts in various fields to address pressing and timely issues of mutual concern.”

Mr. Kahan’s generous gift, she continues, “will transform how we teach health law by supporting events and scholarship that will help students understand the richness of health and FDA law and the diverse career paths one can take in this field.” The initiative also will award Kahan Health/FDA Fellowships to select students committed to health law and will support post-pandemic student travel to health law conferences.

“The timing of Mr. Kahan’s gift could not have been more perfect in aligning with the appointment of Dean Matthew, who is a renowned leader in public health and civil rights law,” adds Professor Suter. “I believe the synergy of these two events will be transformative. It will help us realize the goals we have long had for GW to be a preeminent leader in health law and in addressing the critical issues in this field.”

– Jamie L. Freedman

## \$2 Million Bequest Targets Diversity in IP Law

KENNETH E. JACONETTY, JD '88, has made a planned gift of \$2 million to establish the Kenneth E. Jaconetty Scholarship Fund, an endowed scholarship program that will provide need-based funding for second- and third-year GW Law students who are active members of the Black Law Students Association or enrolled members of a Native American tribe with an interest in intellectual property law.

“We are deeply grateful to Mr. Jaconetty for his generous estate gift but even more grateful for the commitment he has shown to ensuring that GW Law continues to realize the educational benefits of a broadly diverse student body,” says GW Law Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew. “His gift will ensure that generations of talented students, regardless of financial resources, will have equal access to a top-quality GW Law education.”

Hoping to make meaningful use of his estate, Mr. Jaconetty says he was inspired by his own law school experience as well as the Black Lives Matter demonstrations of last year, sparked by the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Ky., to start the scholarship program.

“I had a light bulb moment that this was a way I could make maybe a small difference in addressing some of the long-standing issues in this country,” he says.

Mr. Jaconetty, who earned his Bachelor of Science in

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## GIVING BACK: Michael McKeon Endows IP Professorship



Michael J. McKeon

GW LAW'S PIONEERING Intellectual Property Law program took a giant leap forward last year, thanks to a major gift by Michael J. McKeon, JD '96. The nationally acclaimed IP trial and litigation attorney established the Michael J. McKeon Professorship of Intellectual Property Law.

Professor Robert Brauneis, co-director of GW Law's IP program, was appointed the inaugural holder of the endowed professorship.

"I am deeply honored to be appointed the McKeon Professor of IP Law," says Professor Brauneis, who joined the GW Law faculty in 1993 and is a

prominent scholar in the IP world. He is, among other things, the co-author of a leading casebook on copyright law, a member of the managing board of the Munich Intellectual Property Law Center, and an adviser on the American Law Institute's Restatement of Copyright project.

"GW Law has had a leading Intellectual Property Law program for well over a century, and I am proud and grateful to be part of that tradition," he says. "The McKeon professorship is a real ray of light for the IP Program and the Law School."

Mr. McKeon, who earned his law degree at night while working days at the U.S. Patent Office as a patent examiner and then as a law clerk at a firm, is a principal in the Washington, D.C. office of Fish & Richardson and a member of the firm's Management Committee.

**“ GW LAW HAS HAD A LEADING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW PROGRAM FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY, AND I AM PROUD AND GRATEFUL TO BE PART OF THAT TRADITION. ”**

– Michael J. McKeon

He represents some of the world's top technology companies in high-stakes patent infringement cases and is one of the country's leading authorities on litigation at the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC). Despite his demanding schedule, he has supported GW Law for years as a member (and now chair) of the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Advisory Council, as well as a popular GW IP adjunct professor.

"GW Law has been a steppingstone to many great opportunities for me over the years, and when a school is good to you, you give back," says Mr. McKeon, who graduated at the top of his law school class. The star student, who began his career

as a mechanical engineer, impressed his professors right from the start—including the scholar who now holds his endowed professorship.

“Amazingly enough, Mike was a student in the very first class I taught at GW Law—an evening property class in the fall of 1993,” Professor Brauneis says. “He was a phenomenal student, the kind that you don’t forget even after 27 years of teaching. He made me feel like I had come to the right place to teach.”

During his early years of law school, Mr. McKeon also forged a strong and enduring friendship with John Whealan, who now serves as GW Law’s associate dean for IP law. “I met John while working on my very first IP case as a law clerk while going to school at night,” he says. “John was working at the ITC as a staff lawyer at the time and was assigned that case. He actually beat us, and I’ve never forgiven him. When he moved to GW Law, the IP Law Advisory Council was set up and he encouraged me to get involved.”

Associate Dean Whealan says the IP professorship is “just one more generous example of Mike’s long-standing support” of the program. “When I joined GW in 2008 as the inaugural Associate Dean of IP Law, Mike was one of the first people who reached out and asked how he could help,” he says. “Mike’s been extremely supportive of the IP program ever since.”

Since joining the board more than a decade ago, Mr. McKeon has never looked back. “It’s a very significant circle of alumni who have succeeded in part thanks to GW Law’s reputation and the excellent education they received,” says Mr. McKeon,

who has chaired the group for the past five years. “It’s our responsibility as successful alumni to promote the school, encourage others to give back, and ensure the program maintains its status as one of the top IP programs in the country.”

Around the same time he joined the board, he launched his groundbreaking GW Law course on Enforcement of IP Rights at the ITC, which he developed from scratch. He loves teaching the course—the first in the country dedicated to section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930, which deals with unfair trade. “It’s a very powerful remedy,” he says. “When I started litigating cases before the ITC, there were less than 20 cases a year devoted to Section 337 and now there are 70 to 80 cases a year.” The course has grown steadily in popularity, attracting approximately 40 students per year.

In addition to teaching the next generation of IP lawyers, he supports his alma mater by hiring GW Law graduates at his firm. “We have developed a great pipeline of talent, which is good for the firm and good for the grads,” he says.

Professor Brauneis says he could not be prouder to call himself the Michael J. McKeon Professor of Intellectual Property Law. “While endowing a professorship is a huge deal, it’s just another day in the life of Mike’s service to the Law School,” he says. “In addition to becoming a leader in the patent bar and one of the preeminent litigators of his generation, he has given back so much to our community. It has truly been gratifying to watch him accomplish so much. We are extremely fortunate that he’s a member of the GW Law family.”

– Jamie L. Freedman

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chemical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign before completing his law degree at GW Law, was encouraged to go to law school after working as a patent examiner for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

“They were very encouraging of either making a career there or people going to law school and learning the practice of intellectual property, which is what I chose to do,” Mr. Jaconetty explains. “So, after a couple of years of being a patent examiner, I started law school and then made the full jump, left the Patent Office and went to work for a law firm.”

Attending GW Law’s evening program, Mr. Jaconetty’s school costs were covered by the law firm that he clerked for during the day. He says he appreciates in retrospect how fortunate he was to graduate debt-free from both his undergraduate and law schools and understands that not only do many minority students not have access to generous benefactors like he had, they also have been historically discriminated against in the legal profession.

Law is one of the nation’s least diverse professions, where 85 percent of all lawyers are white and 65 percent are men. However, the long-existing inequities are more pronounced in intellectual property law practice: just 1.8 percent of lawyers in the field are Black, 2.5 percent are Hispanic or Latino and less than 0.5 percent are Native American.

“THE JACONETTY SCHOLARSHIP WILL ATTRACT THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST – A PERFECT MATCH FOR OUR PHENOMENAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROGRAM.”

– Sophia Sim

Mr. Jaconetty also has established a similar scholarship at his undergraduate university for minority students studying chemical and bioengineering.

“The background you need to go into this profession can be more limiting in terms of race and ethnicity because typically to be a patent attorney, you have to have a technical degree such as some sort of engineering or science-based degree,” Mr. Jaconetty says. “That’s the reason I see these two endowments working hand-in-hand.”

Sophia Sim, GW Law’s associate dean of admissions and financial aid, says that as an endowed scholarship, the gift will be invested to permanently support a legacy of helping students gain access to GW Law’s top-rated intellectual property law program.

“Focused on improving diversity in the intellectual property field, the Jaconetty Scholarship will attract the best and the brightest—a perfect match for our phenomenal intellectual property program,” she says.

– Tatyana Hopkins