

## An Inspiration to All - February 2011

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Whenever I encounter passionate and enthusiastic leaders, I am always curious to learn more about them and the organizations they lead. Anyone who has met Dean Jim Rosenblatt of the Mississippi College School of Law (MC Law) quickly recognizes that he is one of those kinds of leaders. His boundless energy and excitement about the institution is inspirational. I am an alumnus of MC Law; however, I graduated a number of years before Rosenblatt became Dean in 2003. I am admirer of Dean Rosenblatt's leadership skills, and I was excited to take time recently to learn more about his leadership philosophy and principles.

A native Mississippian, Rosenblatt grew up on a farm in Wilkinson County. He went on to graduate from Vanderbilt University and completed his legal studies at Cornell. Following his ROTC commissioning, he entered Army service with The Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) after his admission to the New York Bar. Rosenblatt received advanced training in the JAG and taught government contracts, fiscal law, and communications at The Judge Advocate General's School. During his military career, he had leadership assignments at the Pentagon and at military posts in Hawaii, Germany, Missouri, Maryland, and Virginia. In 2003, he retired as a Colonel after over 30 years of notable service. He also holds the Distinguished Service Medal and three awards of the Legion of Merit.

One of his mentors was General Bill Suter who is now the Clerk of the United States Supreme Court. Rosenblatt shared with me that General Suter taught him by example what it means to genuinely care about the people you are leading. He also noted that General Suter, "inspired people to do their best and always took care of them." Rosenblatt shared with me that General Suter continues to keep up with people he has worked with and "has a vast network of relationships that he has maintained over the years." Some MC Law alumni were recent beneficiaries of Rosenblatt's long relationship with General Suter when the General gave them a tour of the Supreme Court and arranged a personal visit with Justice Alito following an admission ceremony.

I share these attributes of General Suter because they are evident to me in Dean Rosenblatt's own leadership style as well. He is a great encourager, and I know he deeply cares about the people he works with. On numerous occasions, I have received genuine words of encouragement from Dean Rosenblatt that have inspired me in my own journey. I also asked Rosenblatt about how he is always so positive and upbeat. He shared that, "it is easy when you are associated with organizations of which you are proud to be a part." He makes a good point. I believe that far too many people dispassionately earn a paycheck. When you align yourself with an organization that shares your values then you are positioned for success and fulfillment.

One of my favorite quotes that Rosenblatt shared was, "It is hard to drain the swamp when the alligators are snapping all around you." We unpacked this quote and discussed how in times of difficulty great leaders have to first confront reality. As Rosenblatt said, "in the military we would often affirm that hope is not a course of action." Then leaders have to be courageous to fight the "alligators" that they are facing. Finally, leaders have to be able to compartmentalize their battles with the "alligators" and avoid being so consumed that they fail to "drain the swamp."

While there were a few old "alligators" snapping at him as he began his job at MC Law, Rosenblatt as part of the team with President Lee Royce at Mississippi College, the law faculty, and the staff at MC Law has done a great job of addressing those and leading MC Law to be an organization on the move. The school has a diverse student base representing 29 states and won national recognition for its moot court teams. The facilities, located in the hub of Mississippi's legal community in downtown Jackson, are now state of the art.

When I stop and think about leaders like Dean Rosenblatt the term "unstoppable force" comes to my mind. You want to get behind leaders like Rosenblatt because you know whatever they are involved with will be a success. I am excited about the positive trajectory of MC Law and the influence that Dean Rosenblatt is having on this important institution and tomorrow's leaders.

### **Quick Facts:**

Jim Rosenblatt, Dean of Mississippi College School of Law

*First Job:* "I was raised on a farm so there was not a first job--rather an only job. It started out with feeding chickens, weeding gardens, and picking figs and moved to loading hay wagons and driving tractors. The first money I made was by picking up pecans 'on halves' for my Grandmother."

*Favorite Books:* "I enjoy legal novels, travel guides, and nature books with lots of color photography."

*Proudest Moment as a Leader:* "I am proud to note the success of our students and graduates in moot court competitions, in the legal profession, and in their communities."

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