

# News Release

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UNIVERSITY of  
DENVER

## **Gifts Lift Denver Law's Commitment to Developing Client-Ready Graduates** *Sturm College of Law Reinventing Legal Education, Driving Toward Experiential Learning*

DENVER – The University of Denver Sturm College of Law is announcing a gift that will help Denver Law transform the very way law is taught, developing graduates who are ready to provide value to employers and clients, straight out of law school.

A \$2.25 million gift from Denver Law alumni James “Jim” Mulligan (JD ’74) and Joan Burluson (JD ’85) will endow the Mulligan Burluson Chair in Modern Learning, which will lead the school’s drive toward integrating experiential learning across the curriculum. Augmenting the donation is an additional gift from alumnus and trustee Doug Scrivner (JD ’77) and his wife, Mary.

Professor Roberto Corrada has been a national leader in experiential learning for years, incorporating real problem solving into his classes. Named to the new Chair, the gift will allow Corrada to work with the Modern Learning Committee, comprised of leaders in the school’s clinical, externship and legal writing programs, along with full-time and adjunct faculty. The support that comes with the new Chair allows the University of Denver to expand experiential learning opportunities and incorporate new ways of teaching across the curriculum.

University of Denver Chancellor Robert Coombe says the gifts will be put to excellent use.

“We are very grateful to Jim and Joan and to Doug and Mary,” Coombe says. “They are all very close members of the University Community, all truly dedicated to the continued growth of quality at the Sturm College. This is a wonderful gift.”

Dean Martin Katz says Denver Law is already leading the nation in this drive, developing more effective ways to teach law and allow students to integrate hands-on learning into virtually every facet of their legal education. Students are challenged, and challenge each other, as they apply what they are learning to real legal puzzles and issues. At every step, students learn to practice law from the moment they graduate.

“We all benefit from these cross-curriculum discussions that cross boundaries, break down silos and change the face of legal pedagogy,” Katz says. “We are committed to developing client-ready graduates who will provide value to their clients and to their employers. The establishment of this Chair recognizes Denver Law’s national expertise and leadership in experiential law. This gift is tremendously important. It closes the circle for us. At the end of the day, if we’re doing this correctly, people who are as sophisticated as Jim and Joan and Doug and Mary need to recognize the value of what we’re doing here. Their gift tells us that they do, that we *are* making a difference.”

Denver Law’s commitment to experiential learning will include an expansion of opportunities in the school’s legal clinics, where students practice as lawyers in real cases, in real courtrooms, under the guidance of professors. Students will also engage in more simulations and externships, honing them for the practice of law outside the classroom.

Mulligan is a recognized real estate attorney and community leader currently practicing as a partner in the Denver office of Snell & Wilmer, LLP, a regional full-service law firm. Burleson's legal career has included a focus in commercial and bankruptcy law as a partner with select law firms in Denver as well as in-house positions with national companies.

Mulligan says he is confident that this program will distinguish DU and its students.

“In this very competitive environment, law schools need to connect their students with the real world in a meaningful manner” Mulligan says. “We are both excited and hopeful that this Chair can support a program of real-world learning that will set our students apart. It will also provide creative opportunities for our companies and law firms in the community to work with the program and provide feedback that will allow this experiential learning to be timely and relevant.”

Scrivner came to the law school at the University of Denver in 1973 to study under Professor Ved Nanda and went on to a successful career in law, including 14 years as general counsel for the global firm Accenture. He serves on the University of Denver Board of Trustees, where he is chairman of the Advancement Committee. He also serves as an adjunct faculty member at the law school. Scrivner is active with the University of Denver Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System's Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers initiative, and earlier this year, Scrivner accepted the University's John Evans Award, the University of Denver's highest alumni honor.

“As part of our contributions to DU's ASCEND campaign, Mary and I are delighted to provide support that allows this important initiative to have immediate impact for our students,” Scrivner says. “The Modern Learning Initiative is a lynchpin of Denver Law's strategic plan and its efforts to transform the training of tomorrow's lawyers.”

Corrada – who has been a leader in experiential law for years as he teaches labor, employment, administrative and legislative law – says once they've learned the basics of law, students can best benefit from putting what they are learning to work in ways that mimic what they will face outside of the University.

“We ask a lot of our students,” Corrada says. “But students ‘doing’ is the key to this initiative. We're breaking down barriers, putting what they learn to work. We have a bold vision of building those opportunities into every class.”

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