



COURTESY OF PEPPERDINE LAW SCHOOL

Sharing Wisdom: Dean of the Pepperdine School of Law, Deanell Reece Tacha, joined Pepperdine on June 1.

Dean Tacha shares vision

By **RACHEL MILLER**
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What makes a good leader? According to School of Law Dean Deanell Reece Tacha, a good leader is one who values collaboration.

"[I admire] someone who is dedicated to the people and the institution that they are serving," Tacha explained. "I think a good leader has to be someone who is fairly selfless. It's certainly not about names and lights. It's about people who can inspire others, motivate others and provide opportunities for others — those who pave ways both for institutions and for people."

During her time as a United States federal judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals, Tacha was able to implement and shape her own leadership qualities. Since she has begun her time as dean at the School of Law, she is making strides toward a more associated establishment.

"One overarching goal of mine is to make sure that the education that we are providing to our new attorneys is the kind of education that provides them with excellent legal skills, a sense of mission and an understanding of their role as leaders in the community and in the world — people who can articulate the importance of the rule of law," Tacha said, "and be, as I've called it in my writings, 'lawyer patriots for the future,' to carry their sense of their calling as lawyers and to be leaders in the outside world."

In addition to serving as a federal judge, Tacha served as chief judge from 2001 to 2007, and was an associate dean and professor at the University of Kansas School of Law.

Though her new role as dean will provide her with new opportunities and challenges,

Tacha explained that the environment at Pepperdine is one that has welcomed and embraced her.

"Everyone has been so warm and welcoming and generous with their time. It feels like I'm a part of the family already."

She has since begun numerous projects from curriculum review to building renovations.

"We have three curricular task forces that will be looking at different components of the curriculum," Tacha said. "They will be appointed next week and then start their work: One is on legal research and writing, one is on the clinics, and one will be looking at the curriculum so that it better serves the needs of the students and the faculty."

Building updates include replacing the carpet and furniture, scheduled to occur midyear, and long term, Tacha plans to update classrooms and build a large staircase between the structure levels.

In addition, Tacha will be attending a 22-city tour over the next few months coined the "Tacha Tour," where she will be meeting with alumni, friends of the law school, judges and hiring partners. This will acquaint Tacha with the Pepperdine Law community.

But when it comes to her personal passions, Tacha is a family woman.

"[I value] my family and my faith, my family activities, and my activities with my church and personal faith," Tacha said.

In regard to the simple pleasures in her life, she values books, music and cooking, noting that she loves to create new dishes that are a bit out of the ordinary.

Though her role as dean leaves little time for simple pleasures in life, Tacha described one joy that would begin her ideal day.

"It would start with a beautiful sunrise.

I've come to love Malibu in the mornings. My window looks out on the ocean and the colors of the sunrise are just spectacular."

To gain a new perspective on life in the legal profession as a woman, students, faculty members and administrators attended "Hearing Her Story: Reflections of Women Judges" Friday, where Tacha, along with three female judges, spoke about their career paths.

The judges included U.S. Court of Appeals justices: Carolyn Dineen King, Dorothy W. Nelson and Rosemary Barkett.

"[We've] gone from not being able to get a job because we are women to being chosen because you are a woman," King said.

The event included many comical insights into life in the justice system as a female, and other helpful tips for students about getting a job after graduation.

"I look for clerks who want to make a difference in the world," Nelson said. "I always ask: What do you want to do with your life? Have you written a book? Have you been abroad? I advise [students] to get active in the community."

"Ask yourself, 'What have I done today that has had any social redeeming value?'" Nelson continued.

Collectively, during her time as dean, Tacha hopes to maintain and expand upon the Law School's already flourishing legal environment.

"I hope to continue the path of the law school toward enhanced excellence, good opportunities for our students and [create] a law school that makes a difference for the legal profession."