



St. Mary's University names School of Law dean

Patricia Roberts will join St. Mary's from William & Mary Law School

St. Mary's University today named Patricia Roberts, J.D., Dean of the St. Mary's University School of Law. Roberts comes to St. Mary's from William & Mary Law School in Williamsburg, Virginia, where she earned her Juris Doctor and currently serves as Vice Dean.

"I was drawn to St. Mary's because of its Catholic and Marianist mission, and I look forward to enhancing the efforts of the St. Mary's faculty and staff in their commitment to faith and social justice," said Roberts, who was also named the Charles Cantú Distinguished Professor of Law.

She begins her tenure as Dean on June 1, 2020, and will arrive on campus later that month.

"Roberts' leadership and teaching experiences, as well as her focus on professional responsibility, involve training ethical, competent and compassionate lawyers and align with St. Mary's mission in the Catholic and Marianist tradition," President Thomas Mengler, J.D., said. "I look forward to working with Roberts to advance academic excellence at the School of Law and the University."

More about Roberts

Roberts earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia, with a double major in Biology and Psychology. She practiced law for eight years as a solo practitioner and, later, as a managing partner of a civil practice law firm after earning her law degree from William & Mary.

She began adjunct teaching at William & Mary Law in 1997 and joined the administration in 2000. Roberts became a member of the clinical faculty and Director of Clinical Programs in 2008 and was named Clinical Professor of Law in 2014. In 2017, after holding numerous administrative and academic positions, she was named Vice Dean.

As Vice Dean, Roberts has been William & Mary Law's chief academic officer, responsible for academic programs and policies that are essential to an excellent legal education. She also has served as the Director of Clinical Programs, overseeing a center and nine legal clinics that provide pro bono representation to underserved clients in Virginia's Hampton Roads area. The school's first in-house clinics, including those specializing in veterans' benefits, elder law, special education, appellate and Supreme Court litigation, and coastal policy, were created during her tenure as director.

"I understand the values of integrating legal education with other academic programs, and I am committed to interdisciplinary teaching and learning," Roberts said. "Working together across

boundaries is not just beneficial, but also essential in the training of ethical and creative problem solvers.”

Her collaborative approach is important to advancing faculty teaching, research and scholarship. She is prepared to work with the faculty to improve mentoring, bar prep, career services and overall student success.

Roberts has been a nationwide leader in legal efforts to aid veterans. She was the inaugural President of the Board of Directors of the National Law School Veterans Clinic Consortium. She also was the creator of Military Mondays, a program that began at the William & Mary Law School that now provides advice and counsel to veterans in Williamsburg and at some locations across the country. She speaks on veterans’ law and access to justice topics nationwide.

Roberts was a commissioner on the American Bar Association’s inaugural Veterans Legal Services Initiative and served on the National Coordinating Committee of the American Bar Association’s Military and Veteran Legal Services Network. She currently serves on the Virginia State Bar’s Access to Justice Pro Bono Coordinating Committee and their Section on Legal Education Board of Governors. She is also on the Advisory Board for Troops to Teachers Virginia Center.

Roberts has been recognized at both the state and national levels for her service. She was inducted into the American Bar Foundation in 2017 and the Virginia Law Foundation’s 2016 Class of Fellows.

St. Mary’s University, founded in 1852, is the first institution of higher learning in San Antonio and the oldest Catholic university in the Southwest. It offers 75 programs, including doctoral and law programs. Its vision, as a Catholic and Marianist liberal arts institution, is to become one of the finest private universities in the region, a gateway for graduates to professional lives as ethical leaders in Texas, the nation and the world.