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INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING THE LAWYER AS BUSINESS LEADER

Louis Ainsworth[†] & Joey Balthazor^{††}

On March 22, 2017, business people, lawyers, and law students joined the *Mitchell Hamline Law Review* for its symposium entitled “Lawyers as Business Leaders: The Unique Skills, Knowledge, and Perspective of a Legal Education” at Able Seedhouse + Brewery in Minneapolis. The symposium explored the intersection of law and business through panels and presentations, as well as the articles contained in this issue, written before the March 2017 event. The symposium specifically explored how lawyers are, or could be, well-equipped to lead successful business careers, whether in practicing business law, working as in-house counsel, or managing employees in executive-level roles within companies. A major theme recurring in these articles and discussed at the symposium event is that law schools play an important role in providing students the tools they need to thrive in the business world. With proper training in business and law, lawyers can transform a legal hurdle into a business opportunity.

The symposium tried to answer the following questions: How can business attorneys help companies accomplish their business goals? How can attorneys succeed as entrepreneurs? How can attorneys add value as in-house counsel? How can lawyers create new

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^{††} J.D., summa cum laude, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, 2017. Joey planned and hosted the 2017 *Mitchell Hamline Law Review* symposium and edited the corresponding symposium issue. Joey is a judicial law clerk to the Honorable Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks at the Minnesota Court of Appeals. In October 2018, Joey will join Briggs and Morgan, P.A., in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He would like to thank Donna Rauch, Leanne Fuith, Louis Ainsworth, the Center for Law and Business board members, the symposium authors, and the *Law Review* staff for helping to bring the symposium to life.

opportunities for businesses through legislation? And finally, how can law schools better prepare students to be business leaders? The authors of the articles in this issue dive into concrete examples of some answers to these questions. The panels at the symposium, each of which included one of the authors, presented broader discussions of the above questions.

The first panel at the symposium highlighted how lawyers can boost business for craft breweries. The panel included craft-beer attorney and symposium issue author Jeffrey O'Brien, craft-brewery owner Sarah Bonvallet, craft-beer activist Andrew Schmitt, and craft-brewery owner Nathaniel Chapman. The panel explained how craft breweries and attorneys successfully fought for Minnesota legislation authorizing taprooms and alcohol sales on Sundays. The panel also explained, however, that there are still outdated brewing laws restricting how craft breweries can distribute beer.

The second panel illustrated how lawyers can add value to companies as in-house counsel. Aaron Hall, CEO of JUX Law, moderated the panel. The panelists included symposium issue author Zachary Atherton-Ely, Associate General Counsel for Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures; Lynn Anderson, Executive Vice President and General Counsel of Holiday Companies; and Nicole James Gilchrist, Senior Counsel for Thrivent Financial. The panelists detailed ways in which young lawyers can seize opportunities within companies and help those companies grow through sound legal advice.

The third panel explored what it takes to start a company. The panel included Kathy Harrell-Latham, Bill Dolan, and Sean Dunn. Kathy Harrell-Latham wrote a symposium article and spoke about founding Cadre Scheduling, a software application company that helps companies hire contingent workers. Bill Dolan spoke about starting Interest for Others, a nonprofit generating charitable giving through converting bank account interest into donations. Sean Dunn spoke about starting Orrery Consulting to answer lawyers' e-discovery and litigation questions. The panelists shared both positive and negative experiences in starting a company and highlighted areas in which having a law degree prepared them for success.

Keith Lee, an attorney, writer, and legal blogger, served as the symposium's keynote speaker. Keith talked about a recent survey, *The Whole Lawyer*, published by the Foundations for Practice project at the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. The survey yielded unprecedented results in hiring data for

new lawyers. Lee explained the survey's results and identified ways in which law schools could implement changes in response to those results.

The fourth panel explored how attorneys can effectuate positive change for businesses through legislation, specifically equity-based crowdfunding. Members of the fourth panel included Zachary Robins, Tim Joyce, Todd Taylor, and Brian Edstrom. Zachary Robins and Tim Joyce co-wrote a symposium article looking at recent empirical data and suggesting the features of an ideal crowdfunding offering. Zachary, an associate attorney at Messerli & Kramer, PA, co-drafted the landmark MNvest bill that legalized equity-based crowdfunding in Minnesota, and Tim, an attorney at EntrePartner Law Firm, PLLC, has now written two crowdfunding articles. Todd Taylor, CEO and shareholder of a business law firm called Avisen Legal, P.A., advises business in the areas of financing, startup, and incorporation. Brian Edstrom, former Director of Securities for the Minnesota Department of Commerce, is also a shareholder of Avisen Legal, P.A. The panelists explained how equity-based crowdfunding legislation has transformed the ways businesses raise money.

The fifth and final panel discussed how legal education prepares lawyers for success in business-focused jobs and how it should evolve to support a changing market. Members of the panel included Leanne Fuith, Barbara Colombo, Tom DiPasquale, and Keith Lee. On the panel and in her symposium issue article, Leanne Fuith, Dean of Career and Professional Development at Mitchell Hamline School of Law, discussed the skills, competencies, and characteristics lawyers need to succeed in business roles. Barbara Colombo, director of Mitchell Hamline's Health Care Compliance Program, served seven years as the assistant commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Health. Tom DiPasquale served ten years as Assistant General Counsel for 3M before becoming Executive Director of the Minnesota Racing Commission, where he acts as chief regulatory officer, supervising regulatory, investigative, and licensing functions. Keith Lee founded Associate's Mind, one of the country's most popular legal blogs, and in 2013 wrote *The Marble and the Sculptor: From Law School to Law Practice*, which became an American Bar Association bestseller.

The *Mitchell Hamline Law Review* and the faculty and staff at Mitchell Hamline School of Law are deeply grateful to all of the above panelists and authors for contributing their diverse experiences and perspectives to the 2017 symposium, which was

attended by more than fifty attorneys, law students, and business people. The *Law Review* hopes that the symposium event and articles in this issue provide attendees and readers with fresh ideas about how to expand opportunities in the business world for themselves and the attorneys and law students they supervise and teach.

Mitchell Hamline Law Review

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