

2016

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Recommended Citation

Tunheim, John R. (2016) "Merging Two Excellent Schools to Create a Great Law School," *Mitchell Hamline Law Review*: Vol. 42: Iss. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <http://open.mitchellhamline.edu/mhlr/vol42/iss1/1>

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MERGING TWO EXCELLENT SCHOOLS TO CREATE A GREAT LAW SCHOOL

Hon. John R. Tunheim[†]

The merger of William Mitchell College of Law and Hamline University School of Law is exceptional news for the legal community in Minnesota, for current and prospective students, and for our country's legal system. Our federal judges, a number of whom are graduates of the two law schools, look forward to the merger and the opportunities it will provide to future lawyers and leaders in our state.

Frankly, with applications down everywhere, it is a perfect time for innovation in legal education and the new Mitchell Hamline School of Law provides a great opportunity to redefine the law school experience. Minnesota's very fine legal community is looking forward to a new law school with a terrific combined faculty, expanded curriculum, new opportunities for specialized degrees, and flexible scheduling to meet the needs of today's students. Both schools have strong reputations for clinical and experiential programming that is essential today for success as a lawyer. For the many of us who look forward to the schools' law reviews, we relish the excellent scholarship, especially the articles focused on improving our understanding of difficult issues facing our profession.

What I like best about the new Mitchell Hamline School of Law is the opportunity to take the best of William Mitchell and the best of Hamline University and really create a special school of law: strong, highly rated, innovative, rigorous, and practical. The combined school has an extraordinary alumni base in Minnesota with lawyers who are among the Twin Cities' best attorneys, leaders in business and law firms. I know because I see them in federal court each day skillfully representing the interests of their clients.

I look forward to Mitchell Hamline School of Law and a great future for the institution. Congratulations, your leaders have

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demonstrated great foresight. The challenge now is to take the excellent traditions of the predecessors and to create a new law school that meets the continually evolving demands of the legal profession. We have great expectations of our state's three law schools, and we look forward to the exceptional lawyers the schools will educate.