

DOUGLAS G. BAIRD

TENTH DEAN OF THE LAW SCHOOL

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On March 31, Douglas G. Baird, Harry A. Bigelow Professor of Law and director of the Law and Economics Program, accepted University President Hugo F. Sonnenschein's appointment as tenth dean of the Law School effective July 1, 1994. “I am delighted that Douglas Baird has accepted appointment as dean,” said President Sonnenschein. “His intelligence, good judgment, collegiality, and commitment to excellence superbly equip him to guide the Law School. He is an outstanding scholar, a wonderful teacher, and one of our most devoted University citizens.”

Baird first saw Chicago when he was five years old. It was 1958 and the young Philadelphian joined his parents on a trip to Chicago, where they were both attending a medical convention. He fondly remembers that trip, and his childhood thrill at being in a new city, gazing about the plush lobby of the Blackstone Hotel where they stayed, and the trip's highlight—seeing *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at the State-Lake Theater. On his next visit to Chicago, some years later, Baird was appointed to the Law School faculty.

During his fourteen years at the Law School Baird has taught Civil Procedure, Commercial Paper, Secured Transactions, Contracts, Bankruptcy, and Corporate Reorganizations. As a young teacher Baird recalls that senior faculty were very supportive of him. He cites Walter Blum as an invaluable mentor. Baird audited Blum's Corporate Reorganization class. Blum reciprocated by sitting in on Baird's classes and evaluating his teaching. This spring, in Walter Blum's absence, Baird is teaching corporate reorganization. “After fourteen years, this is the second time I will be ‘in’ that class. It's really quite wonderful to go full-circle.”

Baird, one of the nation's leading experts on bankruptcy and corporate reorganization, served as associate dean



Douglas G. Baird

After majoring in English literature and graduating *summa cum laude* from Yale College in 1975, Baird entered Stanford Law School. His interests eventually turned to secured transactions and bankruptcy.

"I was interested in private law in areas such as copyright and intellectual property. I saw secured transaction law being conceptually like that, because you are dealing with 'Who Owns What?'; which, after 'Is There A God?' is one of the big questions you can ask. If you are interested in secured transactions, you are naturally lead to worrying about bankruptcy."

A member of the Order of the Coif and managing editor of the *Stanford*

from 1984 to 1987 during the period of Gerhard Casper's deanship when the addition to the D'Angelo Law Library was constructed. Geoffrey R. Stone, Provost and former Dean, describes Baird as, "the most central member of the Law School faculty over the past decade. He has served as associate dean, chair of the Appointments Committee, director of the Law and Economics Program and advisor extraordinaire. He has a profound sense of the values and culture of our Law School. He has enormous energy and enthusiasm, and he has wonderful judgment. He will be a truly splendid dean."

Baird is a prolific scholar. In addition to his latest book *The Elements of Bankruptcy* (1992), he is the co-author of two casebooks, *Cases, Problems, and Materials on Security Interests in Personal Property* (1984) and *Cases, Problems, and Materials on Bankruptcy* (1985), both with his former Stanford professor Thomas Jackson, and numerous articles. His next book, *Game Theory and the Law*, is co-authored with Robert Gertner, an associate professor at the Graduate School of Business, and Randal Picker '85, now a Law School colleague. It will be released by Harvard University Press this fall.

Law Review, Baird graduated in 1979. He clerked first for Judge Shirley M. Hufstедler and then for Judge Dorothy W. Nelson.

While clerking at the Ninth Circuit, Baird was recruited for the Law School faculty. Before leaving for his interview at Chicago Baird recalls receiving this shrewd advice: "If you really don't know the answer to a question," one of his teachers said, "answer in a way that gets Epstein and Posner into an argument."

Baird describes his professional identity as "very much that of a lawyer who trains lawyers. Teaching law and practicing law are great ways to spend your life. The great charm of practice is that you are working with real problems and events turn on whether you make a right or wrong decision. On the other side, as a teacher you form the big picture to understand how principles connect with each other."

Baird is a longtime resident of Hyde Park. He serves as a member of the Board of the Renaissance Society and the South East Chicago Commission. Last year he received the South East Chicago Commission's President's Award for Outstanding Service to the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community. ♦