New Faculty Profiles

Richard McAdams:
Richard McAdams began planning a career as a law professor even before he started law school. "I debated in college, my coach was a professor, and I thought he had a great job," he explains.

Of course, McAdams did not begin teaching right out of the University of Virginia Law School. Instead he took a clerkship with Chief Judge Harrison L. Winter of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, a position he loved. Then, after working at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius in Philadelphia for three years, he took a job teaching at Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1990. "I knew I had to make the transition pretty early in my career, or it was just going to keep getting harder," he notes.

McAdams spent seven years at Kent teaching criminal law (which he will also teach this fall at the Law School) and doing research on race discrimination and social norms. He followed that up with two years at Boston University Law School and then accepted a position at the University of Illinois College of Law in Urbana-Champaign while his wife accepted a position at the university teaching sociology.

"I had a really enjoyable time with the faculty and the students," he says. "All the ideas and the discussion, it was really, really fun. So when I had the chance to join the faculty this year, I was happy."

Professor McAdams and his wife now have two homes, a condominium in the South Loop and a house in Champaign and are currently between dogs. "My wife is still teaching at Illinois, so we are living in both places, which is a little challenging." Nonetheless, he is very excited about his job at Chicago and wants it noted that he is a rabid Carolina basketball fan, dating back to his days there as an undergraduate.

"This way, all the students from Duke can start making fun of me on day one."

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wife accepted a position at the university teaching sociology. "That was a big adjustment," McAdams muses. "We had been living in big cities for years, and then we moved to this town of 100,000. I liked the faculty and the university and the students right from the start, but I came to really love Urbana-Champaign."

McAdams has been a visiting professor at Yale Law School and the University of Virginia Law School, as well as a Visiting Fellow at the Research School of Social Sciences of Australian National University. During his years at Illinois he continued his research on criminal law and procedure, social norms, and inequality. Then, in 2005 he visited the Law School.