

Audio Transcript, Stop 6: Across Time

Welcome. My name is Sydney, and I'm a double purple student. To me, Northwestern means opportunity. Opportunity to learn, to impact, to serve.

Female leaders have served the Northwestern community since the school began.

You're looking at a portrait of NLaw alumnae Mary Bartelme, the first elected female judge in Chicago.

Adorned in black judicial robes, she sits with her hands gathered in her lap and stares directly at us.

Bartelme was known for her dedication to reforming juvenile laws and protecting impoverished children.

This was the first portrait of a woman to hang in the law school. Female students and alumni commissioned the portrait and hung it in 1931 to decorate the Women's Room, a dedicated gathering space for their community. They wanted to celebrate women in law and represent their community within the permanent record of the law school art collection.

Many have commented on Bartelme's serious expression. Walter Vose, a classmate of Bartelme's, wrote, "I never was more disappointed in a portrait in my life than that of Mary Bartelme... Who among the younger generation, knowing not our Mary as she had been known to us since the days of '94, could gather any part of the color and the flavor of the mind and the spirit and the soul of the woman from that canvass."

Together, let's pause to think about how we expect portraits, such as Mary Bartelme's, to capture their subject's essence and legacy. How might these expectations differ based on individual perspectives and historical context?

As you turn around, you'll notice an image of another woman cast in silhouette against the stained glass of an NLaw classroom. The subject raises her hands as she looks out into the room. The woman is Dawn Clark Netsch, whose life and legacy we learned about at the beginning of the tour.

As the first female professor at the law school, she focused on the law of state and local government. Dawn believed that all politics were local, and law can only be understood by exposure to the real world of political officials and lawyers working constructively on behalf of the common good.

Dawn used her intellect and legal acumen to serve the public, tirelessly advocating for women's rights, good government, and accessible education.

Continuing down the hallway towards the east end, you'll pass one of the newest portraits at the law school, that of Professor Joyce Hughes. Professor Hughes was the first black tenured female professor at Northwestern.

She used her influence to advocate for the desegregation of schools and the rights of women. Citing the advice of NLaw graduate Judge R Eugene Pincham, "You can't be what you can't see," Hughes sought to inspire Black students during her time at Northwestern.

While Mary, Dawn, and Joyce walked the halls of the school decades apart, each woman left a lasting impact on Northwestern and beyond, inspiring countless individuals to make a difference in their communities through service to others.

Their legacies have been preserved by individuals like you and me, or like the female alumni who funded Mary's portrait nearly 100 years ago. We can each use our individual agency to prompt collective action and shape the culture of our communities.

As you walk to the next tour stop, I encourage you to reflect on the themes of service and opportunity in your own life.

Before navigating to core tour stop number seven, consider stopping to visit the sponsored stops of the Jewish Law Students Association and the Women of Color Collective.

Please proceed to the second floor of the library. If you do not have a wildcard, wave at the librarians seated at the circulation desk. They will open the doors and assist you in locating the next tour stop, which can be reached by an elevator inside the library.

Once you reach the second floor, walk to the northeast edge of the building. There, you can enjoy a view of Lake Michigan.