

10-1-2009

## Message from the Dean: Building the Law School of the Future

Makau Mutua

*University at Buffalo School of Law*, [mutua@buffalo.edu](mailto:mutua@buffalo.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub\\_law\\_forum](https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum)

---

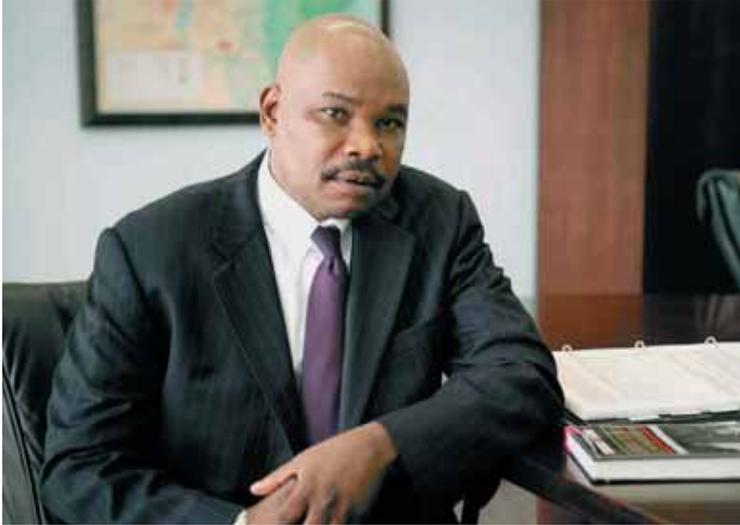
### Recommended Citation

Mutua, Makau (2009) "Message from the Dean: Building the Law School of the Future," *UB Law Forum*: Vol. 22 : No. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: [https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub\\_law\\_forum/vol22/iss1/4](https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/ub_law_forum/vol22/iss1/4)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in UB Law Forum by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law. For more information, please contact [lawscholar@buffalo.edu](mailto:lawscholar@buffalo.edu).

# Building the law school of the future



*“ We are a school that is experiencing a remarkable renaissance in spite of the most challenging economy since the Great Depression. ”*

For UB Law School, the fall is a season of hope and renewal to the ideals of academic excellence which undergird our core mission. For new and returning students — and for all the members of the larger UB Law community — I want to extend my heartfelt welcome to all of you for a most successful 2009-10 academic year. Let me state the bottom line upfront: there has never been a better time to be associated with UB Law. We are a school that is experiencing a remarkable renaissance in spite of the most challenging economy since the Great Depression.

The last year was for us a flagship year in terms of building the law school of the future. A few highlights tell the story. We admitted the most qualified class in our history. Our alumni rallied to our side with generous contributions in response to our pleas for help. We hired faculty with exceptional academic credentials. We attracted star scholars to the Law School, including Professor Angela Harris of Berkeley Law School, who will be Visiting Professor and Baldy Distinguished Scholar this year. We are a school on the rise and are on our way to being counted among the finest law schools in the country.

We capped the year with a tremendous commencement that was headlined by the Hon. Raila Odinga, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, who gave the Commencement Address. We conferred honorary doctorate degrees on two distinguished champions of civil and human rights. President John B. Simpson conferred the honorary doctorates on Irene Khan, the incomparable Secretary-General of Amnesty International, and J. Mason

Davis, a UB Law alumnus and one of the most respected civil rights lawyers in the country. It was a commencement like no other, and underlined our ambitions of building a global law school.

But we have set the bar even higher this year. In this regard, I am proud to say that our entering class builds on the excellence of last year's. Its stellar credentials speak to the competitiveness of the Law School and the high academic standards that we expect of our students. But that is not all. We strive to build a law school that looks like America and the entering class attempts to address that ambition. We know that we still have a lot of work to do in this regard, but our commitment is not in doubt. This is a goal that we can accomplish with more recruitment outreach and the help of our dedicated alumni.

This year, I intend to lead the Law School in hiring more faculty with star potential, recruiting a diverse class of students with great academic credentials while maintaining access, getting our alumni even more involved in supporting us and giving us advice, reaching out to Albany for more support, and telling the world the great things that are happening at UB Law. These are the central elements on which a great law school can be built. As I have said before, my ambition is not to build a good local law school — it is to create a great national law school. I believe that a top 50 ranking, which I have set as the goal for my deanship, is one index of that measure.

Above all, I firmly believe that what happens in the Law School will determine our success and the accomplishment of these goals. That is why the Law School must be administered accountably and with transparency. Merit must be our watchword. For our wonderful faculty, this means producing scholarship that catches the eye of peers and members of the bar and the bench. It means that faculty should teach to produce practice-ready attorneys. For our excellent staff, it means putting student service at the center of the law school experience. That is why our career advisement, technology, registrar and student affairs departments strive to be the very best. We know that today's students are tomorrow's alumni.

Finally, I want to reiterate my belief that no law school can aspire to greatness without dedicated and committed alumni. I know that we could not have taken these important strides since I became dean without your loyal support. Please continue to do all that you can to help us. Together, we are going to take UB Law School to a new level.