

A Week in the Life of the Dean

Photographs by Harold Shapiro unless otherwise credited

This October, Dean Robert Post opened his calendar to the *Law Report*, giving us a glimpse of a week in his life. There is no “typical” day or week in the life of a dean. As Dean Post has said, “One has to deal with many different constituencies—including staff, faculty, alumni, and students. An average day requires a lot of flexibility—one has to be different things to different people.” From one-on-one meetings with students to speeches before the 1,000 alumni and guests assembled at Alumni Weekend, the week was a busy one. Here Dean Post’s schedule offers a window into what it’s like to be at the helm of Yale Law School as we enter the year 2010.

SUNDAY October 11

AAAS induction →

Tentative breakfast with Harvard Law School Dean Martha Minow '79

Review Alumni Weekend Script for content and clarity



This particular weekend the induction events for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (for which Dean Post is Librarian) took place in Cambridge. Here Dean Post is pictured with Academy President Emilio Bizzi.

MONDAY October 12

8:40–9:15 a.m.

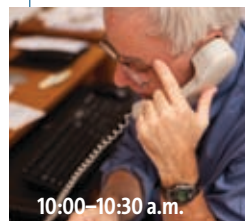
Meeting with lecturer Greg Fleming '88

9:30–10:00 a.m.

Professor Judith Resnik, Public Interest update

10:00–10:30 a.m.

↓ Development call



10:00–10:30 a.m.

Given the financial times we are in, being as efficient as possible is important. Of course, it's also essential that we maintain the Law School's world-class scholarship. Gifts to Yale Law School are more important than ever, and Dean Post spends a substantial amount of time working with the development office cultivating gifts.



10:30–11:00 a.m.

Meeting with student reps

11:00–11:30 a.m.

First Term Committee

11:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Weekly meetings with Associate Deans Barnett and Dickman and Deputy Dean Meares

12:30–2:00 p.m.

Deans' Lunch with President Levin

Meetings with President Levin and the Deans of the University's Professional Schools and College are a reminder of the collective mission to provide the highest caliber education.

2:00–3:00 p.m.

YLS Associate Deans Meeting

3:00–3:30 p.m.

Associate Dean Sharon Brooks, Student Affairs update

4:00–5:00 p.m.

JSD Tea Reception

5:00–6:00 p.m.

↓ Hold for writing

6:00–8:00 p.m.

Drinks with 2008 small group



Writing
5:00–6:00 p.m.

The daily life of a dean is packed from morning until night with meetings and obligations. Dean Post has said, “I’ve been a working scholar for many years—it’s hard to find the time to write, to think about new ideas with such a full schedule. This has been a personal challenge for me.”

American Academy photograph by Martha Stewart/American Academy of Arts and Sciences



Robert C. Post '77 became Dean and Sol and Lillian Goldman Professor of Law at Yale Law School on July 1. He is the sixteenth dean of Yale Law School, succeeding Harold Hongju Koh, who became Legal Adviser to the U.S. State Department this past summer. ♦ Dean Post joined the Yale Law School faculty in 2003 as David Boies Professor of Law, specializing in the area of constitutional law, including the First Amendment, equal protection, and legal history. Prior to joining the Yale faculty, he taught law for twenty years at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (Boalt Hall). For more on Dean Post's scholarship, visit www.law.yale.edu/post.

TUESDAY October 13

9:30–10:00 a.m.
Student meeting about faculty appointments

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Student Rep Meeting

12:00–12:30 p.m.
Development phone calls

12:30–1:00 p.m.
Fund Board Powerpoint meeting

1:00–2:00 p.m.

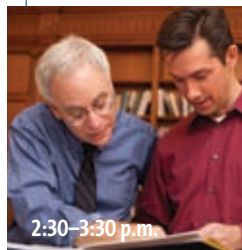
Lunch with 1Ls →

2:00–2:30 p.m.

Associate Dean Toni Davis, Graduate Program update

2:30–3:30 p.m.

↓ Associate Dean Brent Dickman weekly meeting



2:30–3:30 p.m.

The Law School's associate deans act as deputies in areas such as admissions, career development, student life, alumni affairs, development, building services, the library, and finance and administration. Among the people Dean Post works closely with is Associate Dean for Finance and Administration Brent Dickman (pictured here).



Lunch with 1Ls 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Dean Post has been meeting regularly with groups of first-year students for lunch. On this day, he met with seventeen students for an hour-long lunch during which they talked about their first-term experiences. Several of the students spoke eloquently about how the law is more fluid than they had anticipated.

4:00–6:00 p.m.

Car to NYC

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Call to Professor John Simon from car

7:00–9:00 p.m.

↓ Corporate Law Dinner, NYC

7:30–8:00 p.m.

Speech



Corporate Law Dinner, NYC 7:00–9:00 p.m.

The Law School's Center for the Study of Corporate Law—which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary—hosts roundtables, lectures, symposia, and alumni breakfasts throughout the year. Dean Post was invited to speak at the Center's 2009 Simeon Baldwin Award Dinner, which took place in Manhattan. Arthur Fleischer, Jr. '58, Senior Partner, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson (second from left), was honored with this year's award. Also pictured are Professor Roberta Romano '80 (left) and Todd Lang '47 (far right), who was the award's inaugural recipient in 2007.

WEDNESDAY October 14

9:00–9:40 a.m.

Interview with *Yale Daily News* reporter



10:00–10:30 a.m.

↓ Curriculum Teaching Load Committee



Curriculum Teaching Load Committee 10:00–10:30 a.m.

"I've been a member of various faculty committees for years, but now that I'm Dean, I have a new perspective on how truly important the work of these committees is," Dean Post says. Professors Susan Rose-Ackerman and Scott Shapiro '90 are two of the members of the Curriculum Teaching Load Committee.

10:30–11:30 a.m.

Meet with fellow Professional School Deans

11:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Weekly Meeting with Deputy Dean Tracey Meares

12:00–1:15 p.m.

Faculty Tea

2:00–2:45 p.m.

Student Credit Subcommittee



3:00–4:00 p.m.

Meeting with President Levin

4:00–5:30 p.m.

Appointments Committee

6:00–7:30 p.m.

"The Judge" Film Showing (Sam Berger '10, student organizer)

THURSDAY October 15



Dean Post with Georganne Rogers, his executive assistant.

Alumni Weekend Preparation

10:30–11:00 a.m.

Phone call to former student re law teaching market

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Faculty candidate interview (via Skype)

A large part of Dean Post's focus will be devoted to the scholarship and educational environment of the law school. "I plan to be aggressive in hiring—I'd like for my tenure to be a time when truly great thinkers and teachers join our community," he has said.

12:00–1:30 p.m.

Lunch with Bruce Alexander, Yale's Vice President of New Haven and State Affairs and Campus Development

2:00–4:00 p.m.

Alumni Weekend preparation

4:00–4:30 p.m.

Meet with student



A Doonesbury cartoon sits on the corner of Dean Post's desk.

4:30–5:00 p.m.

Meet with student

During convocation, Dean Post told students that he welcomes their thoughts and suggestions—and that he hopes they'll seek him out with special concerns.

5:00–6:00 p.m.

Remaining Alumni Weekend preparation

FRIDAY October 16

Alumni Weekend

10:00–11:00 a.m.

Fund Board Meeting

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Planning Committee of Executive Committee

12:00–2:30 p.m.

Executive Committee Luncheon (Presidents' Room, Woolsey Hall)

2:30–6:00 p.m.

Alumni Weekend panels

6:00–9:00 p.m.

↓ Reception & Dinner (Commons)



"I was honored to be surrounded during Alumni Weekend by so many loyal alumni, celebrating the history and the future of this precious school," Dean Post said. "Yale Law School is a tapestry of remarkable people. It is a testament to the school that so many of our graduates return year after year to participate in discussions that are both social and substantive. It is also a testament to the school's staff that they are able—year after year—to so successfully organize this complex and wonderful weekend. The planning and execution of this event is no small feat!"



SATURDAY October 17

Alumni Weekend

8:30–9:30 a.m.

Development breakfast meeting (Dean's Office)

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Alumni Weekend Panels

12:00–12:30 p.m.

Justice Sotomayor and Harold Koh arrive (Dean's Office)

12:30–2:30 p.m.

Alumni Weekend Luncheon—Presentation of the Award of Merit to Harold Koh



2:30–3:30 p.m.

Justice Sotomayor (Woolsey Hall)

3:30–4:30 p.m.

↓ Tea for Justice Sotomayor (Dean's Office)

4:30–5:30 p.m.

→ Dean's Q&A (auditorium)

6:30–11:00 p.m.

Reunion Class Dinner Visits



Dean's Q&A 4:30–5:30 p.m.



Tea for Justice Sotomayor 3:30–4:30 p.m.



Reunion Class Dinner Visits 6:30–11:00 p.m.

This year's reunion was graced by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor '79 whose conversation with Professor Kate Stith at Woolsey Hall was a highlight of the weekend. Following that event, the Dean's Office hosted a small reception for Justice Sotomayor and presented her with a robe lined with fabric depicting the Law School shield.

In his convocation address for the 2009–2010 academic year, Dean Robert C. Post '77 welcomed the 198th class of new students to Yale Law School, a place, he said, that is special because it is designed to bring out the unique and generative vision of each of its students. He urged the students to consider what success means to each of them. "The reason that we at the Yale Law School struggle so hard to create such a diverse, polyphonic, polymorphous environment is because we hope to maximize the chance that you will be able to locate and embrace and become great in the thing that you find in the end matters most to you."

The following is excerpted from Dean Post's address to the first-year students. The full address is available at www.law.yale.edu/convocation2009.

"To Live in the Law..."

Dean Post In His Own Words

"... here at the Yale Law School we will teach you to live in the law. To live in the law is not merely to exercise cognitive mastery. It is also a matter of exemplifying certain values and certain commitments. To live in the law is to internalize the value of the rule of law, which is the value of living in a society governed by law rather than subject to military force or to chaotic disorder or to tyrannical whim. To live in the law is to internalize the obligations that come from legal expertise.

"Most of you while you are here will take a clinic; in fact in a typical class, between 75 to 80 percent of you will take a clinical course. It is very likely if you take such a course that you will represent a client, and you will then be required to comply with the obligations of professional ethics.

"These obligations are not merely about staying out of jail or avoiding a malpractice suit. They instead express the responsibilities that the legal profession assumes in virtue of its monopoly on a certain kind of legal expertise. In 1776 Tom Paine proclaimed that 'in America the law is king.' If that is true, you will acquire, in the next three years, the keys to the kingdom. The price of those keys, apart from tuition, are the ethical responsibilities of being a lawyer, which express society's judgment that those who dispense law ought to act in ways that serve the purposes of the law.

"I hope you will come to inhabit these obligations proudly, as I hope you will work to improve them in ways that will make the legal system more responsive to the many pressing needs of our society. Socialization into any great profession, including the legal profession, entails both cognitive mastery and professional morality. It is a matter of *both* knowledge and character. Here at Yale we shall seek to orient and jumpstart your internal ethical gyroscope. You'll have to help us in this effort. My predecessor as Dean, Harold Koh, used to stress to our students that their skill should never exceed their virtue, and he couldn't have been more correct.

"You are about to enter one of the truly great and unique pedagogical institutions on this planet. There is really nothing

quite like the Yale Law School. This is a large claim, and I thought I would spend a few moments explaining why I think it is true.

"If I said that we have the best faculty in the country, which I happen to believe is true, you might well, and not unreasonably, think me simply biased by my love of the place.

"If I said that we have the best students in the country, you might be more inclined to believe me, because each of you knows that despite many choices, you have decided to come to Yale.

"But in fact I do not want to talk to you now about either the faculty or the students, separately considered. I want to talk with you about the intense and vibrant community that surges within the walls of this intimate but capacious building—a community that faculty and students create *together*.

"Our educational philosophy is simple: We educate you so that you can make the law your own. Yale is special because we have designed a curriculum and a heuristic structure that is meant to bring out the unique and generative vision of each one of you. We educate you so that you might construct an intelligent, passionate, unalienated relationship to the law.

"We want you to discover for yourselves and in yourselves what is important to *you* about the law..."

"This small building is literally bursting with opportunities for you. It is filled with faculty who *want* to work with you. It offers an endless stream of intellectual opportunities to think through and to re-imagine important areas of law. It is stuffed with student organizations and clinics and projects that wish to help persons and to change important areas of the law. And if you don't find a project that you like, you can invent a new one.

"So, my message to you is this: What makes the Yale Law School unique is that we have created an educational environment in which during the next three years you are virtually guaranteed to bump into some area of the law that will grab you, that will make you excited, and that will challenge you to master it. Whether this is possible because of our scale, or because of our energy, or because of our uniquely intellectual and activist culture, there is no other educational institution that can match us in these respects."

To read Dean Post's convocation address in its entirety, visit www.law.yale.edu/convocation2009