

Power and Space

AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY OF THE NORTHWESTERN PRITZKER SCHOOL OF LAW ART COLLECTION

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Part One: Chronology

Institutional histories are often structured by the tenure of powerful men, each with an individual approach to the mission and goals for the institution. This approach is suitable for many subjects. The art collection of the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law (NLaw) has been shaped by several Law School Deans. However, the collection remains unified by its mission: to celebrate and support the aspirations of the NLaw community. For this reason, I have chosen to avoid crediting the entirety of the collection's direction towards its leaders. Readers can access additional information about individual impact through careful reading of the footnotes. The story of art at NLaw involves students, artists, and other stakeholders in the community who each benefit from and support the ongoing mission of diversity, community, and excellence that our campus holds dear.

1851-1940: Collection Formation

“Observation of other institutional buildings in this country or abroad shows that the most impressive feature for conveying the spirit of dignity and permanence and honorable tradition is the display of oil portraits of worthies of the past, associated in repute with the institution. Looking forward to another generation, it is certain that a representative collection of oil portraits, properly displayed... will silently but effectively be the strongest possible influence for good in the inspiration of the young men, and in the impression produced upon visitors.”¹

Physical space, and the decorations and care it requires, is one of the primary means for organizations to demonstrate their power and permanence. Legal education was formalized in the mid-to-late 1800s, when the field transitioned from an apprentice-style model to the three-year-degree model.² Legal education was not originally part of Northwestern University's offerings. The university, which was established in 1851, had contemplated the formation of a Law Department off and on for nearly a decade. The measure was approved in 1859. At the same time, Chicago University established the first law school in Chicago through the generosity of Mr. Thomas Hoyne.³ The trustees of Northwestern University thought it inadvisable to launch a new legal educational endeavor so close to the launch of that belonging to Chicago University.

Northwestern made no further progress in acquiring a Legal Department until 1873, when the two Chicago-based institutions agreed to share the existing Chicago University Law Department. They renamed it “The Union College of Law of the Chicago University and the Northwestern University.”⁴ During this time, the school was housed in various rented rooms in downtown Chicago.⁵ The student body was small, and the educational model not yet mature. These early rooms were described as, “the picture of simplicity... consisting of a plain table and a group of chairs.”⁶ The walls were bare and undecorated, reflecting the lack of history and stature of the program.

When Chicago University encountered financial difficulties in the late 1880s, Northwestern assumed sole control of the college, which continued to grow in enrollment. In 1901, the Law School was moved into the Tremont House. The Tremont house was “a fitting home for legal scholarship... embodying in the surroundings all that could inspire the student.” Trimmed with weather-stained oak throughout, the walls were richly painted in shades of

¹ Report from Sub-committee on oil portraits to board of directors, Northwestern School of Law. (January 1926) (on file with author).

² James A Rahl & Kurt Schwerin, Northwestern University School of Law—A Short History 18-19 (1960).

³*Id.* at 5

⁴*Id.* at 8

⁵*Id.* at 9

⁶ The Northwestern University School of Law: An Introduction... 1980-81. (on file with author).

yellow, red, buff, and green.⁷ The walls featured wood paneling, elaborate carvings and paintings, and rich furnishings.⁸ Portraits were chosen to celebrate the school's continuity through forty-four years of successive administrations.⁹ The School utilized the facilities of the Tremont House for 25 years, during which time several additional decorations were installed. Great care was taken to ensure the aesthetics of the space reflected the dignity and importance to which legal scholarship aspired.

By this point, over 850 students had graduated from the program.¹⁰ Enrollment continued to grow, and it wasn't long before the early leaders of the law school began to develop building plans for a new, larger law school campus. They debated whether it should be located with the main university in Evanston, but ultimately chose the present-day location on the North side of Chicago.¹¹ Being in Chicago lent professionalism to the institution, allowing faculty "to keep in constant touch with bench and bar" and clinic staff to "enlarge its service of legal aid to the poor of the community." In Chicago, students could be "weaned from the distractions of care-free college activities and begin to realize that they are apprentices bound to a professional career." Local alumni could "continue to make these quarters their secondary club-resort."¹² Many alumni donations, including that of Mrs. Rachel Mayer and Judge. Elbert H. Gary in the fall of 1923, supported the construction of the new campus.¹³

The leaders during the construction period prioritized the aesthetics of the new space. NLaw chose to mirror the aesthetics of European institutions to enhance its own budding prestige.¹⁴ Both the architecture and interior design contributed to Northwestern Law's early reputation of possessing 'the finest law school building in the country.'¹⁵ The gothic style of Levy Mayer inspired the design of several peer institutions.¹⁶ Leaders felt tasked to "make the interior equally worthy with the exterior."¹⁷ This began the formal collection of art and decorative objects at the Northwestern School of Law, and great effort was undertaken to build a collection to match the quality of the architecture and design. Early acquisitions were chosen to memorialize the great lawyers and judges of the time, as well as significant legal events and features of English Common Law. This enabled Northwestern Law to function as a private museum dedicated to legal art as well as an educational institution.¹⁸

Prior to the announcement of the two largest donations to the construction project, Dean Wigmore had already begun to work on the art collection for the new space.¹⁹ Leveraging the dominant artistic medium of the time, oil paintings, to inspire and reflect the NLaw community was a key part of the vision for the collection. As early as April of 1924, a list of potential names for oil portraits was compiled.²⁰ The portrait committee, comprised of Dean Wigmore, Professor FB Crossley, and local judge Charles Thomson, was formed on June 26, 1924.²¹ The Law School already possessed several photo enlargements embellished with colored pastels or charcoal, called crayon portraits, of distinguished members of the community.²² However, crayon portraits were not seen to possess "the dignity and decorative value suitable for the new building."²³ The artwork for the new space needed to convey the importance, permanence, and wealth of the community that backed its construction. It also needed to inspire future generations of students and compliment the vanities of alumni and faculty. Lastly, it was to play

⁷ Northwestern University School of Law: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. (on file with author)

⁸ Rahl, *supra* note 2 at 23.

⁹ Programme of the inaugural exercises 3 October 1902... and description of the new quarters of the school. (1902) (on file with author)

¹⁰ Rahl, *supra* note 2 at 29

¹¹ *Id.* at 35

¹² Northwestern Educational Assessment Part 4. (on file with author)

¹³ Rahl, *supra* note 2 at 39

¹⁴ Interview with Leigh Bienen, Senior Lecturer, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, November 16, 2023.

¹⁵ Zoom Interview with Daniel B. Rodriguez, Harold Washington Professor, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, October 25, 2023.

¹⁶ See Kevin D. Murphy and Lisa Reilly, *Skyscraper Gothic: Medieval Style and Modernist Buildings*, University of Virginia Press. (2017)

¹⁷ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Edwin L. Keedy, Algernon Sidney Biddle Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania Law School. (Feb 16, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁸ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Shirley High. (July 18, 1925) (on file with author)

¹⁹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to FR Sites, Secretary, Honorable E.H. Gary. (Jan 12, 1923) (on file with author)

²⁰ Suggestions of Names for Oil Portraits for Law School. (April 10, 1924)(on file with author)

²¹ Resolution from Law School Trustees, Northwestern University. (June 26, 1924) (on file with author)

²² Letter from FR Sites, Secretary, Honorable E.H. Gary, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (January 6, 1923) (on file with author)

²³ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Samuel M. Booth. (May 5, 1924) (on file with author)

a decorative role. Collection stewards instructed one artist chosen for the portrait project that the school could “stand all the color that you are willing to put in.”²⁴ Artists selected the background color of portraits to support this goal. “I rather like the light background in Mr. Woodward’s portrait—only one more portrait has a light background—a little variety does not hurt. There is not yet a red background among them, so that is what I will paint in Mr. Kocourek portrait.”²⁵ Mattes and frames were chosen in a variety of colors such as red and olive.²⁶ New technologies in colorized photographs were tried, with emphasis on accurately capturing the red of English juror’s historic robes.²⁷ Color enlivened the space of the NLaw campus.

The portrait committee was charged with selecting figures to decorate the halls of the new space. Their criteria limited them to men who helped establish the school, men who had been deans or faculty, and alumni of the school.²⁸ Women were not admitted to the Law School with regularity. The first female graduate, Ada Kepley, matriculated in 1870 while the school was still under the sole administration of the Chicago University. On Northwestern’s full acquisition of the joint legal department in 1886, all graduates from the original Chicago University Law Department were retroactively granted Northwestern alumni status.²⁹ Therefore, Kepley is sometimes considered the first woman to graduate from the Northwestern School of Law. Catharine Waugh McCulloch matriculated from the joint program in 1886, but Mary Bartleme (1894) and Florence Kelley (1895) were the first female graduates of the Northwestern School of Law after its disentanglement with Chicago University. These early alumni received LLB degrees, the standard of the time. Midwestern schools were the earliest adopters of the J.D. degree program, with the University of Chicago implementing the degree in 1903.³⁰ Northwestern offered J.D. degrees as early as 1907.³¹ Yet it wasn’t until 1922 that female graduates received juris doctorate degrees from Northwestern University. Maud Costigan was the first.³² Similarly, the first female faculty member, Dawn Clark Netsch, was not hired until 1965.³³ Therefore, it is unsurprising that women were not considered for a position on the original portrait committee or in the portrait subject call. The discussion below will demonstrate that many women played a large, but presently unrecognized role in the formation of the Northwestern School of Law and its art collection.

Planning the list of subjects for the oil paintings took several months. Prior to submitting the list to the Law School Trustees, Dean Wigmore and Professor Crossley chose to remove several of their initial picks, including Professors Julian W. Mack and Charles G. Little. Presumably this was due to the desire to limit the size of the list, as the two added alumni Kenesaw Landis and Professor Frederic B. Crossley at the same time.³⁴ Members of the portrait committee knew their proposed subjects personally and professionally. This certainly would have made narrowing the list difficult.

Fortunately, the appropriation for the portraits stretched far further than anticipated. Only 1/5th of the appropriation was used in acquiring the first round of portraits. An additional 16 figures were proposed to the Law School trustees.³⁵ The number of people included continued to expand until the appropriation was exhausted, though personal relationships began to impact the selections more as the number of subjects increased. One proposed subject, ‘Bryan,’ is marked with the handwritten notation “Thomson will note dissent.” Bryan’s full name is not provided, but he is classified as an ‘alumnus of national repute’ in planning documents. He is likely William Jennings Bryan, an 1883 graduate of the Union College of Law. William Jennings

²⁴ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Winifred Rieber, artist. (April 23, 1926) (on file with author)

²⁵ Letter from Arvid Nyholm, artist, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Jan 10, 1927) (on file with author)

²⁶ Framing order #5 from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Newcomb Macklin Company. (August 23, 1926) (on file with author)

²⁷ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to the Director, Royal College of Art. (April 10, 1926) (on file with author)

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Rahl, *supra* note 2 at 27-28.

³⁰ What is the Difference between the LL.B. degree and the J.D. degree? Ask a Librarian!, <https://asklib.law.harvard.edu/faq/115308> (last visited Dec 14, 2023).

³¹ History, About, <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/about/history/> (last visited Dec 14, 2023).

³² Janet Olson, “on the same terms”: Women’s professions and the Chicago Campus Hero Image LIBRARIES Blog (2020),

<https://sites.northwestern.edu/northwesternlibrary/2020/01/31/on-the-same-terms-womens-professions-and-the-chicago-campus/> (last visited Dec 14, 2023).

³³ History, *supra* note 31.

³⁴ Letter from F.B. Crossley, Librarian, Northwestern University to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Oct 16, 1925) (on file with author)

³⁵ Report, *supra* note 1.

Bryan was a three-time presidential nominee of the Democratic party and served as Secretary of State during Woodrow Wilson's administration. Portrait committee member and trustee Charles M. Thomson did in fact object to the inclusion of Bryan's portrait, citing negative professional interactions in Thomson's court. Instead, Thomson suggested the inclusion of donor Julius Rosenthal.³⁶ Some years later, Bryan's portrait was brought up again. The Illinois College in Jacksonville had commissioned a portrait, and alumnus Blewett Lee suggested a reproduction be made for Northwestern to "blow the fires of ambition in many young hearts."³⁷ Bryan appears in none of the NLaw art catalogues, and there were no portraits of Bryan on display in 2023, so it's uncertain whether Lee's suggestion was shot down or not.³⁸

Many of the portraits were donated by their subjects or members of the subjects' families. Others were funded through the appropriation of the Law School Trustees. No matter the source of funding, the portrait committee was emphatic in requesting diversity in the artists chosen to complete the commission. The committee wrote that it was "desirable that the collection should ultimately be widely representative of different talents in portraiture, while assuring the resort only to artists of first quality... with a view to exhibiting the range of personality of artists."³⁹ Chicago artists were selected after a visit to a 1926 exhibition of the Chicago Artist's Society in consultation with Miss McCauley, an accomplished art critic who wrote for the Daily News.⁴⁰ While soliciting a female artist from California, the committee wrote that, "we are gratified at the prospect of possessing the work of a representative pacific coast artist. Our collection will include, besides five well known Chicago artists of the first rank... portraits from Boston, New York, Washington, and St Louis artists."⁴¹

However, collection stewards were not interested in international representation. When a donor traveling through Europe considered soliciting the services of a Spanish artist, collection stewards gently nudged him away from that decision. They wrote, "Of course, it would be very interesting if your portrait were painted by a European artist. The Spanish certainly have some very competent men. However, if you are to be in Paris at all, why not let one of the American artists in Paris do it?"⁴² Stewards felt passionate about using NLaw resources to support domestic development. They were conscious of the power of voting with ones' dollar. One steward wrote, "I am one of those who believes in patronizing home talent. It irritates me to have these foreign artists to come sailing into the united states and take the food out of the mouths of our own artists. How can we ever expect to build up fine arts in this country unless we recognize first this genius and talent that is among us."⁴³ Likewise, racial diversity was not celebrated at this point in history. This is an unfortunate truth for our community. The portrait committee operated wholly within the norms of their time, and their search for diverse artists, while present, was not complete. Early collection stewards understood diversity in stylistic and limited geographic terms, not racial or gendered diversity as later stewards have worked to incorporate.

Over time, the portrait committee's oversight expanded to other decorative wall hangings. For example, the committee worked to commission reproduction of several historical documents, including the US Constitution, the Northwest Ordinance, and the Declaration of Independence.⁴⁴ The documents were intended to be used as educational tools, and so they were ordered to be a close to the originals as possible in size and coloration. If suitably toned parchment could not be found, the artist performing the copy was authorized to give the

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Letter from Blewett Lee, Alumnus, Northwestern School of Law, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Nov 18, 1929) (on file with author)

³⁸ Portraits are occasionally misplaced or in inaccessible storage facilities, so it's possible that the portrait was completed despite Thomson's misgivings.

³⁹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Charles M Thomson, Alumnus. (March 22, 1926) (on file with author)

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Letter, *supra* note 24.

⁴² Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to George Alexander Mckinlock, Donor. (May 24, 1928) (on file with author)

⁴³ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mrs. Clara Humphries, Curator. (April 20, 1931) (on file with author)

⁴⁴ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Levin C. Handy, artist. (Dec 30, 1925) (on file with author)

document “a wash of light coffee stain.”⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the artist misunderstood his instructions. The first documents delivered were too small, and the work needed to be redone.⁴⁶ By that time, it was late in the summer. The gelatine used in the facsimile process softened rapidly in the heat, making it impossible to complete the work.⁴⁷ The artist was also preoccupied with a personal project for the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian and thus not inclined to prioritize his commercial orders.⁴⁸ Northwestern officials grew frantic, writing “this week is positively crucial please beat Handy [the artist] into action.”⁴⁹ The new building was meant to open December 1, but with only two weeks to go, there were no facsimiles of the documents to be found. Another artist was recommended, and the facsimiles were eventually completed.⁵⁰ Instead of coffee, the facsimiles were tinted with a proprietary formula for natural parchment tint.⁵¹ They still hang across from Lincoln Hall today.

Much of the work of the original committee remains visible in the halls of the school. Yet this was not the point of their work. The committee intended for the works to be changed and updated. Several internal memos support this assessment, typed and handwritten, each describing the need to change and rotate the works displayed throughout Levy Mayer “every month.”⁵² Anne G. Millar, the first curator of the collection, suggested novel framing mechanisms with movable mats and labels to support this goal.⁵³ In all subsequent framing orders, NLaw stewards requested adjustments to the hanging mechanism to facilitate ease of interchanging the pictures as they saw fit.⁵⁴ An assistant was hired at 75 cents/hour to manage the frame orders and catalogue the collection.⁵⁵ Later, one of his duties became changing out the wall mottoes and prints on the first of each month.⁵⁶ The collection was intended to be both permanent and changing, reflecting the multiple purposes of its formation.

This flexibility is evident in display policies as well. Unlike many peer institutions, most individual rooms on the NLaw campus have never had rigid policies for what art is displayed where, such as having rooms dedicated to portraits of people who have given X lecture, or portraits of people who have taught there X number of years.⁵⁷

⁴⁵ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Levin C. Handy, artist. (May 6, 1926) (on file with author)

⁴⁶ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Levin C. Handy, artist. (July 20, 1926) (on file with author)

⁴⁷ Letter from Levin C. Handy, artist, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Sept 15, 1926) (on file with author)

⁴⁸ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Tyler Deweet, division of publications, State Department. (Nov 19, 1926) (on file with author)

⁴⁹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to FM Wigmore. (Nov 1, 1926) (on file with author)

⁵⁰ Letter, *supra* note 48.

⁵¹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to John Fitzpatrick, assistant chief, manuscript division library of congress. (Dec 9, 1926) (on file with author)

⁵² Memorandum from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Nov 5, 1929) (on file with author)

⁵³ Memorandum entitled ‘Notes on proper... with prints’ from Anne G Millar, cataloguer, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law.

⁵⁴ Framing order #3 from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Newcomb Macklin Company. (June 11, 1926) (on file with author)

⁵⁵ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to J.E. Cagle, cataloguer’s assistant, Northwestern School of Law. (Dec 10, 1925) (on file with author)

⁵⁶ Picture Report from J.E. Cagle, cataloguer’s assistant, Northwestern School of Law, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Feb 20, 1928)(on file with author)

⁵⁷ Interview with Shannon Bartlett, Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, National Geographic. (October 25, 2023.) (on file with author)

1940-1980: Collection Maintenance

As the initial leaders of the collection aged out of university service, new curators continued their work. The campus expanded with the addition of McCormick Hall, completed in 1960. The NLaw community remained very proud of the collection, highlighting it in admissions as well as alumni relations related materials.⁵⁸ A 1970s pamphlet celebrates the history of the collection, detailing that “in interior design and ornament, the buildings of the school are rich in the lore of the law. About 2,500 portraits, engravings, etching, and photographs, collected by the late Dean John H Wigmore in the United States, England, and on the Continent are hung about the school to illustrate the men and events of the law throughout history and throughout the world.”⁵⁹ The power of art was recognized and leveraged in recruiting new members to the NLaw community.

Donors continued to give intermittently, such as local grain magnate and honorary alumnus John C Shaffer. Shaffer first donated 17 paintings in 1925, then additional portraits of President Taft, Senator Beveridge, and a Lord Chancellor from 1930-31, before dispersing the remainder of his collection at his death in 1943.⁶⁰ Many pieces went to the Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis. Shaffer also established a professorship in the humanities and scholarships for needy and foreign students.⁶¹ Some of Shaffer’s gifts grew controversial after his death, particularly the large portrait of Christopher Columbus embedded in the wood paneling of an alcove in the original library entrance.⁶² For many years, the provenance of the portrait was forgotten. In 1984, efforts were made to identify the artist of the piece, which was being restored and moved to a new location within the law school. The only markings on the artwork were, “May, Paris 1861.”⁶³ Christopher Columbus is no longer a celebrated figure. However, at the time the work was painted in the 1860s, the mythology surrounding his life was increasingly positive in tone. As public opinion turned, law school officials decided to update their response to the piece to reflect the diverse community that the school serves.⁶⁴

The school also acquired a limited number of portraits during this period to celebrate the contributions of generous alumni and dedicated faculty and staff. Funded by 34 individual donors, Dean Leon A Green’s portrait was unveiled on May 13, 1966. Festivities included a luncheon, lecture, and introduction of the artist.⁶⁵ Portraits of retiring faculty became a tradition at the school. Due to lack of space, funds, and changes in dominant mediums, the practice stopped during the 1980s.⁶⁶

While little historical material is available for this period, artwork continued to inspire and encourage the NLaw community. At the 1961 unveiling of donor Owen L. Coon’s portrait, Professor Rahl remarked to over 200 guests, “portraits have different kinds of effect on different people... I wish to suggest one kind of effect which this portrait may have. For those who pass it as it hangs in the library, and who know the story of Owen Coon, it will be a reminder. For some of those whose minds churn with the great human problems of the law, it will call for a mental assent to Owen Coon’s magnificent ideal... [that education be used in service of others and that it be made broadly available to future generations of students.]”⁶⁷ The artwork of the NLaw collection has always been intended to stir the hearts and aspirations of our community towards service and inclusion within the legal profession.⁶⁸

⁵⁸ ‘1981-1982 Facts’ Brochure from Northwestern University. (on file with author)

⁵⁹ ‘The School of Law 1971-72’ Brochure from Northwestern University. (on file with author)

⁶⁰ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to John C Shaffer, donor. (Dec 9, 1930) (on file with author)

⁶¹ Letter from Development Office, Northwestern School of Law, to K foley. (May 15, 1984) (on file with author)

⁶² Letter from Harrison Becker, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (May 8, 1931) (on file with author)

⁶³ Letter from Suzanne Tanderup Wise, Curator, Block Gallery to Curator, Herron School of Art. (July 11, 1984) (on file with author)

⁶⁴ Bartlett, *supra* note 57.

⁶⁵ Program entitled ‘Dean Leon A Green Portrait Presentation,’ Northwestern School of Law. (May 13, 1966) (on file with author)

⁶⁶ Interview with George Langford II, Associate Dean Infrastructure, Planning, and Design, Northwestern University. (November 8, 2023.)

⁶⁷ Remarks from James A Rahl, unveiling of Coon portrait. (April 30, 1961) (on file with author)

⁶⁸ Professor Rahl would be celebrated in a portrait of his own, by James Jay Ingwersen, unveiled Oct 30, 1984.

1980-2000: Centralization and Loss of Knowledge

Institutional knowledge is tricky to maintain and pass down. In the case of the Northwestern Law art collection, knowledge began disappearing in the 1980s. The Law School Art Committee was disbanded, and some of its members went to work on the University Committee on Art Accessions. The University Committee advised the president for matters relating to art across all the colleges in Evanston and Chicago.⁶⁹ This expanded the relationships and unity between campuses, but it also began the process of forgetting collection management practices at the law school. Efforts to encourage diversity and community engagement halted as priorities for the collection shifted. The mission grew muddled, though leaders of the time built cross-campus relationships that stabilized the future of the NLaw art collection.

To do so, officials at the law school relied heavily on the expertise of their colleagues at the Block Museum of Art. The law school's collection was aging, and appropriate display space was limited.⁷⁰ Decisions were frequently made to loan pieces to other parts of Northwestern, including Block exhibitions such as *Alderman Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery*, on view from April 2-June 1, 1980.⁷¹ Pieces were also loaned to local museums, such as a series of Yaacov Agam prints loaned to the Spertus Museum of Judaica for their 1989 fall exhibition, *Agam in Chicago: The First 25 Years 1953-78*.⁷² Sometimes pieces were loaned to decorate office spaces, such as a series of Dali and Tobey prints that hung in a Weinberg dean's office for nearly seven years before being returned to the law school.⁷³ Though items from the collection moved fluidly across campuses, ultimate ownership remained with the law school. For example, the law school continued to arrange insurance and answer questions of authenticity no matter in which colleges their pieces were displayed.⁷⁴ Many pieces were also deaccessioned, or sold, during this period. The shifting of pieces between campus and the sale of others demonstrates the continued understanding that the Law School Art collection was not static. The display was intended to change as best suited the communities' needs.

And change it did. As oil painting lost cultural status in the latter half of the 20th century, acquisitions for the NLaw collection shifted to other mediums and subjects. Portraits were no longer the only focus of the acquisitions; the art committee rejected calls to commission a portrait of famous alumni Justice Stevens.⁷⁵ The tone of the collection was instead driven more by donor capacity. During this period several large metal sculptures were contributed to the grounds, including the Wishbone at the end of the Levy Mayer arcade. Call back to the original goals of the NLaw art collection: that it conveys importance, permanence, and wealth; that it inspires and compliments; and that it decorates the school. At the time that the Wishbone sculpture was donated in 1991, legal education had solidified its position in American society. Law schools grew increasingly standardized and prestigious, and the contents of the NLaw art collection reflected this maturity. One member of the community wrote, "The wishbone suits the environment very well and never fails to draw a smile, perhaps a wish, from passersby."⁷⁶

Other statues were moved to places of prominence, such as one depicting a hunched figure holding a book now found in the John Paul Stevens Courtyard. Originally a gargoyle on Thorne Hall, the identity of the statue is heavily debated.⁷⁷ Official university sources claim it is St. Ives, the patron saint of the legal profession.⁷⁸ Long time library employees argue that it isn't the saint, but they don't know who it could be.⁷⁹ According to one local medievalist, it is unlikely to be St. Ives due to the hunched posture. St. Ives was only 50 years old at his death, and all

⁶⁹ Undated- University committee on art accessions

⁷⁰ Letter from George Grossman, Director of Library, Northwestern School of Law, to David Mickenburg, Director, Block Gallery. (Sept 8, 1988) (on file with author)

⁷¹ Letter from William Elwin, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Kathy Kelsey Foley. (March 21, 1980) (on file with author)

⁷² Letter from David Mickenburg, Director, Block Gallery, to Jack Heinz, Professor, Northwestern School of Law. (1989) (on file with author)

⁷³ Receipt of delivery from James Riggs Bonamici to Ann Puckett, Northwestern School of Law. (May 13, 1987) (on file with author)

⁷⁴ Letter from Kathy Kelsey Foley, to Rudolph H Weingartner, Dean, Northwestern University Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences. (Dec 18, 1980) (on file with author)

⁷⁵ Letter from Leigh Bienen, Senior Lecturer, Northwestern School of Law, to James and Phyllis Ingwersen, artists. (June 8, 1995) (on file with author)

⁷⁶ Letter from J William Elwin Jr, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to David c Rutenberg, donor. (Nov 13, 1990) (on file with author)

⁷⁷ Interview with George Langford II, Associate Dean Infrastructure, Planning, and Design, Northwestern School of Law. (November 8, 2023.)

⁷⁸ <https://www.alumni.northwestern.edu/s/1479/02-naa/16/interior.aspx?sid=1479&gid=2&pgid=31250>

⁷⁹ Interview with Brittany Adams, Special Collections, Digitization, and Archival Services Librarian, Northwestern School of Law. (October 26, 2023.)

other depictions show him as a strong, upright figure.⁸⁰ No matter the figure's identity, the statue is beloved by students. Though no longer occurring, at one-point students routinely dressed the statue for "fun weeks and holidays."⁸¹ This included "a patriotic top hat" and "a green bowler and beads" for July 4th and St. Patrick's Day, respectively.⁸²

⁸⁰ Interview with Grace Louise Recsek, Archives and Digitization Assistant, Northwestern School of Law. (November 1, 2023.)

⁸¹ Self-guided tour 2022- <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/applying/documents/self-guided-tour-2022.pdf>

⁸² Alumni guide

2000-2020: The Internet Era and Return to Community Values

This section of the chronology enters that of current institutional memory. As with any recent history, there will be folks who remember events differently. Documents that may shed light on this period have not yet made it to the archives, and decision-makers for this time still hold relationships to the school that may impact their willingness to share. This section will remain incomplete until the next writer takes up the challenge, but I have tried my best to record what I could, as accurately and ethically as possible.

Increased digitization changed the NLaw community and its relationship to art. Social media and smartphones increased individuals' knowledge of social issues and their artistic depictions, democratizing knowledge. But the online world has also numbed attention spans and empathy. Engaging with the art of the NLaw collection helps our community balance between these two effects. Our art collection has never been more important for our wellbeing.

The first digital encounter of the NLaw art collection opened our community to new viewers in ways previously impossible. The NLaw art collection was shared through a 2006 project entitled *Art and Architecture in Illinois Libraries*.⁸³ Funded through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant, the project called for librarians to catalogue the works of their libraries' collection, excluding non-permanent and circulating works, children's crafts, and commercial reproductions of art.⁸⁴ The NLaw library team included many items located outside the boundaries of the library, such as the Wishbone sculpture in the Levy Mayer arcade, in their response.⁸⁵ The NLaw library team coordinated with other departments, such as the NLaw facilities team and the curators at the Block to fill in missing information.⁸⁶ It is unclear why more items were not included in Northwestern's entry to the project, which called for "paintings, murals, sculpture, textiles, stained glass, and objects, windows, carvings, formal gardens. (art for art's sake), jewelry, and illustrated manuscripts."⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the 65 items included in NLaw's response were added to the *Art and Architecture in Illinois Libraries* website in 2007.⁸⁸ A traveling exhibit from the project was developed and sent to 80 different libraries across the state.⁸⁹ The internet initiative went a step beyond the intra-Northwestern and intra-Chicago loans of the 1980s and 1990s. For the first time, people did not need to be physically present on the Chicago campus to partake in the NLaw art collection. Inclusion became a new expression of our communities' values, made possible by the existing pattern of leaning on outside relationships to maximize our collection's impact.

Alumnus Todd Belcore continued to stress the importance of inclusion from 2007-2010, while he was a student at NLaw. Belcore organized a collection of alumni and students to advocate for increased diversity in the portraits of the NLaw art collection through the Portraits of Diverse Alumni Program.⁹⁰ Commissioned portraits range from a few thousand dollars to over \$50,000, with significant difference in quality between pricing tiers. NLaw leaders were reluctant to commission new portraits given the expense.⁹¹ However, students felt strongly about the acquisition of portraits over other styles of artwork. They aimed to right a historical wrong, rather than leverage the strengths of more modern styles in their efforts to impact the NLaw collection. And so, the community raised funds for a new series of portraits. The

⁸³ Letter titled *Art and Architecture in Illinois Libraries* from Allen Lanham and Marlene Slough, Professors, Eastern Illinois University. (February 8, 2006)(on file with author)

⁸⁴ Letter from Allen Lanham and Marlene Slough, Directors, *Art, and Architecture in Illinois Libraries*, to Eloise Vondruska, library staff, Northwestern School of Law. (Dec 29, 2005) (on file with author)

⁸⁵ Email from Brad Tolpannen, librarian, Eastern Illinois University to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 20, 2023)(on file with author)

⁸⁶ Email from Eloise Vondruska, library staff, Northwestern School of Law to George Grossman, Director of Library, Northwestern School of Law. (March 2006)(on file with author)

⁸⁷ Letter, *supra* note 84.

⁸⁸ <http://old.library.eiu.edu/artarch/>

⁸⁹ 12-17 "art in Illinois libraries" Allen and Marlene Illinois library association reporter, volume xxiv issue 2 April 2006

https://www.ila.org/content/documents/Reporter_0406.pdf

⁹⁰ Interview with George Langford II, Associate Dean Infrastructure, Planning, and Design, Northwestern University. (October 24, 2023.)

⁹¹ Interview with Rita Winters, Higher Education Consulting Manager, Huron. (November 1, 2023.) (on file with author)

community planned to allocate about \$2000 per portrait.⁹² Due to the financial constraint, the portraits are of different quality than others within the law school collection. In the decades since, knowledge about the commission process has been lost. As a result, some members of the community have complained about the quality difference in the Strawn portraits, assuming that the diverse alumni had been overtly treated unfairly compared to the white sitters of earlier portraits.⁹³

Students spend such a short time on campus—3 years or less. Given this short timeline, bureaucratic slowness, and the lack of institutional knowledge regarding collection governance during this period for both students and staff, their impatience is understandable.⁹⁴ They raised what they could, and they chose an artist who could accomplish their goal within their budget. The artist, Rebecca Crouch, was born and raised in Chicago.⁹⁵ She studied mathematics at renowned HBCU Howard University and transitioned to a career in education. Her painting career took off in earnest in 2008. A student involved in the fundraising efforts was familiar with her early work and made the connection to commission the portraits.⁹⁶ The program leaders chose five subjects for the project: Simeon R. Acoba, Dalveer Bhandari, Ruben Castillo, Dawn Clark Netsch, and Sophia Hall. The Law School commissioned a portrait of Harold Washington by Crouch in support of the program. Unfortunately, the program did not raise enough funds to complete all five portraits. One subject did not want the chosen artist to do the portrait, so only the Acoba and Washington portraits hang in Strawn Hall today.⁹⁷

The work of inclusion, begun in 2006, was furthered by the efforts of the Visibility Initiative (VI). Comprised of students, staff, alumni, and faculty, the VI was organized in 2013 to continue advocating for increased diversity in the NLaw collection. The members of VI wanted artwork that they could identify with. The McCormick Social Justice Hallway was VI's first major project. Partnering with leaders at the law school, students organize an email campaign soliciting image suggestions from the entire NLaw community. One student organizer remembered the email as a request for individuals share photos of social movements that led to policy change. Other organizers remember it as a call for images that invoke the reasons that submitters chose to come to the law school. From the pool of submitted images, a committee selected a series for display. This project was logistically difficult to implement because many of the submissions lacked attribution. Yet locating the licensing information is a necessary step in ethical collection management. The ADA photo series was particularly hard to find. The committee eventually located the photographer, who was in the hospital at the time, through Facebook. The photographer was excited to hear that their work impacted students and gave permission to use the image. However, the Law School had to find a suitable print shop as existing prints were unavailable. The project was supported by many stakeholders within the NLaw community.

Fundraising was difficult for additional projects, but the Visibility Initiative was chosen as the graduating class gift several times between 2014-2018. This allowed the members of VI to further their goals of inclusion and representation through various projects, including the selection of local artists for the atrium expansion and photographs depicting important legal figures in the basement lounge. The group also coordinated several events with Simple Good, an organization that prompts youth around the world to explore resilience, purpose, and empathy through artwork. One exhibit, staged in “the most trafficked area of the school” featured stories and artwork from children in Tanzania. Another event brought students from Fenger High School to the NLaw atrium to present the stories behind their work. These events were shared broadly over social media, free and open to public, with one theatrical showing of *Crime Scene*

⁹² Interview, *supra* note 91.

⁹³ Interview, *supra* note 57.

⁹⁴ Interview, *supra* note 91.

⁹⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/by-day-these-identical-twins-are-school-principals-by-night-theyre-a-traveling-live-art-duo/2016/08/30/2e80aa2c-6a28-11e6-99bf-f0cf3a6449a6_story.html

⁹⁶ Interview, *supra* note 90.

⁹⁷ Email from Brett Gould, Senior Associate Director, Donor Relations, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 6, 2023)

Chicago: Let Hope Rise garnering over 600+ reservations. The performance was followed by a community discussion about the ongoing violent crime epidemic.

Using the resources of NLaw to uplift diverse artists and artwork expanded the power of the NLaw collection. Our spaces, with all the prestige and permanence accrued over the last two centuries, are potent platforms. NLaw's ability to fund these opportunities and allow free tickets increases access to art and ideas. Inclusion of both new artists and new viewers appropriately leverages that power to support the broader mission of NLaw: "creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all... [and] taking concrete actions to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and social and racial justice in our Law School and the broader society."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ jd-viewbook-fall-2023.pdf innovating for impact <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/admissions/applying/documents/jd-viewbook-fall-2023.pdf>

2020-2024: Covid-19 and National Reckoning

The themes of diversity, loss, power, and space discussed throughout this paper accelerated during the global crises of the past four years. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the NLaw facilities team remained on site to care for the physical environment of the school. Acquisition logistics were more difficult during this time, and collection engagement among the NLaw community stagnated due to inability to access space during quarantine. Subsequent classes lost nearly all context for the NLaw collection due to the turmoil of the transition off-site, the stressors of remote learning, and the difficulty of engaging with student organizations during this time. After the widespread 2020 protests for police accountability and racial justice, the global art community began to prioritize diversity and space in new ways. New artists rose to prominence; diverse exhibition themes were planned across a multitude of museums and galleries. The collecting and viewing public increased their support in parallel. While access to a variety of artistic voices increased, so did competition for their works. The NLaw collection stewards were working to increase diversity well before the events of 2020, but the national crises made their efforts ever timelier. Collection stewards refined their vision of the NLaw Collection, from one that balanced historical preservation with modern values to a more expansive, adaptational approach.⁹⁹

The NLaw collection was meant to change and has changed in scope and focus several times throughout its history. Impermanence is not a bad thing. Impermanence gives life and growth to an institution. The recent renovation of Levy Mayer 2 is one such example. Completed in the fall of 2023, the works displayed on the walls are a mix of pieces original to the 1934 layout, contemporary photographs of notable political figures, and playful artwork. The final acquisition for the hall is “not an exclamation point, but an ellipse...”¹⁰⁰

The work continues in another areas across campus, such as the eighth floor of the Rubloff building. The eighth floor is home to the Bluhm Legal Clinic, which houses over 20 clinics within 12 centers.¹⁰¹ A DEI committee formed in 2020 to address the myriad of ways the clinic could leverage its resources to further support diversity at NLaw. Space was one of the recurring suggestions. Most of the art in the space was donated by clinic founder Tom Geraghty, though awards and other items are also on display. Geraghty’s generous donation has been impacted by the passage of time and unsystematic collection management. Much of the items on display lack contextual signage. Law seems daunting, overwhelming even, for many people who enter the clinic space. Clinic leaders aim to leverage the physical space to counteract that perception. Space can make people feel welcome and seen.¹⁰²

Space reflects the importance of the organization it hosts as well. Equity between clinic staff and research faculty, or between clinic clients and NLaw students, is a continual struggle. Additionally, there are hierarchies within the clinic space. There are so many distinct clinics within the broader Bluhm program. Equitable allocations of press, budget, or reputational acclaim is difficult. The weight of individual cases also feels pressing; to focus on space and environment necessarily distracts time and attention from the services the clinic offers. But creating spaces that achieve the goals of diverse representation and support for community engagement strengthen the long-term success of the clinic community.

Clinic leaders toured the broader law school collection with Dean Langford to learn about the process of acquiring and displaying art and artifacts that are reflective of the community.¹⁰³ Research and acquisition are the next phases of the clinic renewal efforts. Making decisions via committee is very difficult when stakeholders have different ranges of experience and interest, and some of the suggested acquisitions have not been approved.

⁹⁹ Interview, *supra* note 77.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ <https://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/>

¹⁰² Interview with Alyson Carrel, Clinical Professor, Northwestern School of Law. (November 14, 2023.)

¹⁰³ Interview with George Langford II, Associate Dean Infrastructure, Planning, and Design, Northwestern University. (December 1, 2023.)

Budget is a significant limiting factor for the renewal of the clinic space, but collection stewards are dedicated to their work.¹⁰⁴ In time, the clinic space will be transformed to better support and reflect the values and norms of the Pritzker Law School community.

¹⁰⁴ Carrel, *supra* note 102.

Part Two: Themes

The previous section provided the broad strokes of the NLaw collection history, offering necessary context for the details yet to come. Unlike the previous section, which avoided direct credit and the use of individual names, the section highlights the contributions made by various collection stewards and other community stakeholders. Recording the history of the collection is an educational endeavor to prompt reflection, remembrance, and honor towards those who have worked in service of our community.

Collection Management

There are legal, ethical, and moral guidelines to collection management. Some guides are directed toward specific types of collectors, such as public institutions or corporate entities. Other guides are directed toward different types of objects, like those from indigenous communities or of suspicious provenance. All collections follow some sort of management policy, even if only developed internally and on an ad-hoc basis. As of now, the NLaw art collection has been solely of the latter type. This section traces changes in NLaw collection management strategies across a variety of aspects from 1920 to the present. At the conclusion, best practices will be discussed.

Managing Body

“Policy implementation happens by people, and the aesthetics of their lived environment helps shape their behavior, understanding, taste, and moral connection to others.”¹⁰⁵

While the fiduciary duty of care for the NLaw collection ultimately lies with the corporation’s governing board, day-to-day management decisions are made by staff members. At the beginning of the Law School’s history, these decisions were made by a group called the portrait committee. The portrait committee was comprised of 3 men: John H. Wigmore, F.B. Crossley, and Charles Thomson.¹⁰⁶ They were appointed by the Law School Trustees, though they likely influenced their selection through their relationships with said trustees. Their term had no obvious limits, and they each served for over a decade. It is unclear what happened to the portrait committee on their retirement, as no documents were found from the late 1930s to the late 1970s. The men of this committee exercised near total control over the future direction of the collection. Their artistic tastes influenced the works they prioritized for acquisitions, and their relationships with donors facilitated the breadth of the collection. Their impact cannot be understated- without their initial efforts, the collection would not be nearly as established and broad as it is today. However, a modern committee operating under best management practices would not have the same leeway regarding conflicts of interest and personal gain.

In the latter half of the 20th century, financial difficulties and lack of knowledge impacted managing bodies’ ability to steer the collection. The managing bodies of this period were the Portraits and Art Committee, later renamed the Art and Portraits Committee (unknown dates), the NUL School Art Committee (1983-1986), and the Law School Art Committee (1984-1989). Each had three-year terms and varying amounts of members.¹⁰⁷ Members could and did serve multiple consecutive terms, and membership appeared to be a mixture of selection and volunteer. Professor Jack Heinz chaired the various NLaw art committees for much of the 1980s. Heinz’s leadership centered alumni relationships and brought new forms of media into

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-art-of-black-lives-matter-lessons-for-organizations-and-policymakers-from-the-streets/>

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum from Law School Trustees, Northwestern School of Law. (June 26, 1924)(on file with author)

¹⁰⁷ Handwritten inventory. (August 17, 2007)(on file with author)

the collection. Though slightly diverging from the original mission and purpose, the committees of this time contributed to the enduring legacy of art at NLaw.

The loss of knowledge and purpose for the NLaw art collection culminated in 1989, when the NLaw art committee was disbanded and subsumed into the new University Committee on Art Accessions. This new committee of 5 members addressed art issues across the entire Northwestern University. Their purpose was “to handle any proposed gift of any painting, sculpture, limited edition print, other work of art (but not textiles, gems, photographs intended for instructional use, or inexpensive prints)... then advise president as to whether should be accepted or declined.”¹⁰⁸ They were to meet at “regular intervals review for sale, trade, or dispersal.”¹⁰⁹ Jack Heinz (law), David Mickenburg (Block Museum), Jim Valerio (Art Department), Mike Weston, (Legal), Arnold Blum (Development, Committee Chair), and Philip Kotler (Kellogg) comprised the members of the first committee.¹¹⁰ NLaw professor Leigh Bienen served on the 1996/1997 committee. According to her recollections, the group didn’t meet very often and primarily focused on selling art to raise money.¹¹¹ The group eventually disbanded. A university-wide committee is necessarily limited in its ability to maintain any individual school’s collection purpose and mission. Diversity was likely not a priority at this point due to the turmoil of changing forms and new cross-campus relationships. Each sub-school at Northwestern likely shared some collection values, but their collections originated in different ways. Honoring the distinct history and holdings of each school would likely have been very challenging for the committee.

However, the loss of any managing body whatsoever was also not good for the NLaw collection. With no formal managing body, Dean Van Zandt saw the collection as a joint responsibility of the facilities and finance departments.¹¹² Over time, facilities gradually assumed sole responsibility of the collection. In 2013, the Visibility Initiative briefly formed a committee chaired by George Langford, attended at various points by other staff and students including Shannon Bartlett, Chime Asonye, Steven Kobby Lartey, Paul Jones, Anavictoria Avila, and Karen Villagomez. As the students driving the initiative graduated, the committee was disbanded. George Langford continues to drive acquisitions and collection management decisions, assisted by Elide Endreson. Neither were hired for their artistic expertise, and when they are inevitably promoted or retire from university service, it is unlikely their replacements will be chosen with collection stewardship in mind. The fleeting presence of passionate leaders is part of the ebb and flow of ad-hoc collection management. Like other collection stewards of years past, their efforts are vitally important for the stability and standing of the NLaw collection. Dean Langford’s leadership has reaffirmed the commitment to diversity and change of the original collection stewards, while deftly navigating modern concerns of the space.

Acquisition Policies

Adding new pieces to a collection is one of the primary ways to impact its purpose. At various points in the NLaw collection’s history, acquisition policies have been implemented to effectuate different goals. For example, the original portrait committee was directed to “give first consideration to the men whose efforts were effective in the establishment and early history of the school, second consideration to the men who have been deans of the law school, third consideration to the men who have been members of the faculty of the law school, and fourth consideration to alumni of the law school and others. Provided, however, that a portrait of Abraham Lincoln must be included in the first lot of portraits obtained.”¹¹³ The committee was allowed to deviate from that hierarchy only if they first reported their decision to the board of

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum from University Committee on Art Accessions, Northwestern University. (on file with author)

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ Memorandum, Northwestern University. (May 2, 1990)(on file with author)

¹¹¹ Leigh, *supra* note 14.

¹¹² Interview, *supra* note 91.

¹¹³ Resolution, *supra* note 21.

trustees.¹¹⁴ These classes of subjects were chosen strategically. NLaw was in its infancy and leaders chose art to influence the perceived reputation of the school. Memorializing NLaw founders, deans, and professors in an expensive, dignified medium also conferred those attributes to the school that they built. Brandishing the images of successful alumni played to the same narrative. The connection can be understood thusly: an NLaw education produced wealthy, renowned figures—NLaw must also be wealthy and renowned. Funding so many portraits was also a display of the NLaw community's financial success. Pieces in this period were acquired through donation and commission. Portrait subjects weren't chosen for their actual impact within the NLaw community, such as former Professor Roscoe Pound. Pound served on the NLaw faculty for less than two years as a specialist in Roman Law.¹¹⁵ His reputation grew significantly after his time at Northwestern, when he served as the Dean of Harvard Law School from 1916-1936. His NLaw portrait was commissioned ten years into his Harvard deanship. Similarly, the Abraham Lincoln commission was essential. Leaders of the time considered Lincoln an honorary lecturer and were proud to be the only law school with that claim to fame.¹¹⁶ Lincoln's legacy needs no explanation—the school benefits greatly from a connection to his upstanding moral character.

A strict acquisition policy also allowed collection stewards to decline undesired donations gracefully. Wigmore noted, "it will be difficult to refuse inappropriate gifts without apparent discrimination," when defending their proposed scheme to the board of directors.¹¹⁷ His instinct proved correct. In several threads of correspondence, such as one regarding a portrait of Judge Dorrance Dibell, Wigmore blamed the board's policy for his rejection of potential donations, never letting on that he formed said policy himself!¹¹⁸

The 1990 University Committee on art accessions was bound by similarly detailed instructions. They were recommended to consider the extent that pieces might be used for display, inter-museum loans, educational purposes, decorative purposes; as well as the costs of housing, insuring, maintaining, or conserving the works; and their aesthetic merits. Interestingly, the committee was reminded that "a work held or offered to one unit of the university might have greater potential use in another department or gift... in such a case, it might be appropriate for the university to accept the gift for the benefit of [X] with the understanding that the work would be held and used by [Y]." Acquisitions of this committee were intended to unify and improve the entire university's holdings. There was an increased focus on educational and decorative purposes, as well as recognition that the utility of an item must outweigh its upkeep costs. However, donations were generally accepted.

While 1990 committee oversaw acquisitions for the entire university, alumni often proposed gifts to be housed within their schools. The University committee could decline such gifts, but rarely did. The Rubloff gifts of bronze figures were acquired specifically for the NLaw collection. At one point, the Rubloff's curator, Kay Krueger, purchased 5 additional bronzes at auction, then shipped directly to the school rather than to the Rubloff.¹¹⁹ The Rubloff family gifted 36 bronzes in total. The bronzes depict a variety of figures, none with obvious connections to NLaw history or the legal profession. However, their aesthetic quality is pronounced. The Rubloff family were generous supporters and active members of the NLaw community. Donations steered acquisitions for the NLaw art collection during this time, presumably due to financial constraints limiting commissions, the existing breadth and size of the NLaw collection, and the limited ability for the university-wide committee to steer an individual school.

The purpose of the NLaw art collection is multifaceted. As echoed throughout the paper, the collection must convey, compliment, inspire, reflect, and decorate across a wide variety of stakeholder identities and tastes. The stagnation of acquisitions in the 1980s and 90s left the

¹¹⁴ Resolution, *supra* note 21.

¹¹⁵ Paul Sayre, *The Life of Roscoe Pound*, pp. 143, 155, and 213 (1948).

¹¹⁶ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Todd Lincoln. (1934) (on file with author)

¹¹⁷ Resolution, *supra* note 21.

¹¹⁸ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Homer B. Dibell, Judge. (June 8, 1928) (on file with author)

¹¹⁹ Letter from Allen J. Proudfoot, Curator, Block Gallery, to Kathleen Krueger, Curator, Rubloff Family. (July 31, 1985) (on file with author)

collection less able to fulfill its purpose at the dawn of the 21st century. The collection no longer aligned with community preferences, such as the inclusion of modern elements and brighter colors. Yet potential updates needed to be balanced with honoring history.¹²⁰ Contemporary collection stewards have worked to ameliorate these affects by selecting pieces from a variety of decades. Stewards describe their efforts as creating parallel histories, noting that certain perspectives were not elevated in the latter half of the 20th century.¹²¹ Including those perspectives through vintage works today negotiates those past decisions and subtly alters the appearance of the institutional record.

Stewards often leverage renovation budgets to accelerate acquisitions via new purchases. They prioritize acquiring pieces from early- to mid-career artists.¹²² This allows acquisitions to support NLaw's mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion by uplifting artists when they are most in need of patronage. Additionally, works at this stage in an artists' career are more affordable. For example, several pieces from diverse and local artists were purchased to decorate the 2014 Rubloff 2nd floor expansion above Harry's café.¹²³ Stewards maintain a running list of potential artists, considering the work that's being produced and the available institutional budget. There is a level of serendipity to the process—artists and other figures naturally congregate towards those doing similar social work. Stewards find artists through shows at the MFA, Columbia College, and the School of the Art Institute. They attend gallery openings, art expositions, and occasionally meet artists directly. When working with a gallery, stewards generally approach with a description of what, roughly, they're looking for. They have worked with local gallerists such the Monique Meloche of Malosa Gallery as well as individuals further afield such as the team at Latchkey Gallery in New York. Stewards have attended gallery walks and studio visits organized by Alpha Arts Alliance in New York. They also track the acquisitions of the Art Institute and other museums. While a museum purchases many pieces and waits to see which develop in significance over time, the NLaw collection stewards must be more sensitive to budget concerns. At first, stewards were hesitant in their acquisition strategy, worrying that they would find pieces later that fit collection goals more fully. Yet on doubling back, the original piece would no longer be available. Due to the way pieces move within the art world, stewards now aim to purchase quarterly or in even shorter segments.¹²⁴

Numerous pieces were purchased during the 2023 redevelopment of the second floor of Levy Mayer. These pieces were funded through a generous donation from a donor to the Innovation for Impact fund. This fund is used at the discretion of the NLaw Dean to achieve community priorities, such as advancing DEI at the Law School through the NLaw art collection.¹²⁵ Potential acquisitions are evaluated across at least four categories: representation through the artist's identity; representation through the subject's identity; representation through the medium chosen as it relates to various periods of NLaw history; and representation of pride of place through connection to Chicago. Pieces are not expected to satisfy every category, but each aspect of a piece is carefully considered before being approved for acquisition. Two pieces per artist is an informal rule of thumb to facilitate a variety of voices.¹²⁶

Commissions are rare, but they are part of this modern phase of acquisition strategy. The large Amanda Williams piece in the RB 150 corridor was commissioned by the NLaw board in honor of Dean Rodriguez. Collection stewards met with Williams during a MCA showcase to recruit her for the project.¹²⁷ While completing the project, she exploded in fame, receiving a MacArthur genius award.¹²⁸ Williams' creative process impacted the commission, bringing forward the ways in which aesthetics represent what NLaw is and what kind of institution it

¹²⁰ Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹²¹ Interview, *supra* note 103.

¹²² Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ Interview, *supra* note 103.

¹²⁵ Email from Sarah Zimmerman, Northwestern School of Law, to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (October 25, 2023)

¹²⁶ Interview, *supra* note 103.

¹²⁷ Interview with Kobby Lartey, Alumnus, Northwestern School of Law. (November 3, 2023.)

¹²⁸ Email from Daniel B. Rodriguez, Harold Washington Professor, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 29, 2023)

wants to be.¹²⁹ Rodriguez was thrilled by the piece and even had a poster version of it hung in his office.¹³⁰ The piece's placement near RB140 catalyzed the work of that corridor. The subsequent success evidenced by positive community feedback allowed philanthropy and internal funding to support the redevelopment of other locations within the NLaw campus.¹³¹

Donations continue to play a role in the NLaw acquisition strategy. NLaw accepts a large amount of artwork and other gifts in kind compared to peer institutions.¹³² When approached by a donor, collection stewards in both facilities and development consider the proposed donation's connection to the law school and legal history, as well as its value, space and maintenance needs, and its potential to enhance the mission of NLaw. The team considers whether the proposed donation would better serve other parts of the university. After the team decides whether they want a proposed donation, they must then evaluate the feasibility of acceptance. There is a myriad of considerations for gifts-in-kind, such as legal impact, financial concerns, and perpetual maintenance costs. Reception, display, lighting, UV exposure limitation, and subsequent care for objects must be budgeted for.¹³³ Generally, the collection stewards choose to avoid fragile or fabric-based pieces, as well as items that cause concern for ADA compliance.¹³⁴ If the value of the object in service to the mission of the Law School is sufficient to justify costs of acquiring and maintaining, the process will proceed.¹³⁵ Proposed donations fail to proceed about half of the time. Collection stewards prioritize intentional, thoughtful acquisitions by understanding of history and value of item. Items are rarely accepted without a ready place to display, and they are often installed immediately after receipt. Occasionally items are accepted through negotiations of an endowed fund. For example, portraits of family members who aren't NLaw alumni may be accepted when a family with one NLaw alumni chooses to establish a new fund. Collection stewards prefer gifts with no restrictions, but there is no active policy against such restrictions. For example, some donors may wish for their gift to be displayed permanently. It is in the best interest of the school to welcome items without restriction, as this allows flexibility for item interpretation and display as the law school evolves over time.

Deaccession Policies

Deaccession, or official removal of an object from a collection, is controversial in the modern art community. Deaccessioned works may be sold or otherwise disposed of. Opponents consider deaccessioning to be tantamount to censorship, but proponents note the difficulty of navigating offensive or provocative items. Deaccessions allow institutions to remove items that no longer serve their mission. Ethical deaccession policies feature objective criteria such as quality, physical condition, institutional finances, lack of authenticity or attribution, and illegal provenance such as theft. After criteria are met, discrete steps are recommended, including governing board approval, donor notification, and verification of legal status. The NLaw art collection has frequently engaged in deaccession attempts to regulate its collection size and purpose.

The first attempt to deaccession works was prompted by lack of available display space and need for funds for other parts of the NLaw mission. Unfortunately, the pieces chosen for potential sale struggled to find a ready market. They were rejected from both Sotheby's and Christies 1986 auctions due to their low collectors' value.¹³⁶ Other items were subsequently rejected due to authenticity issues. Alumni John Schaffer identified one donation as a Gilbert

¹²⁹ Interview, *supra* note 91.

¹³⁰ Email, *supra* note 128.

¹³¹ Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹³² Interview with Sarah Zimmerman, Director, Major and Annual Giving, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. (October 25, 2023)

¹³³ *Id.*

¹³⁴ Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹³⁵ Zimmerman, *supra* note 132.

¹³⁶ Letter from Jennifer Dodge Josselson, Vice President, Sotheby's print department, to Elizabeth Shepherd, Curator, Block Gallery. (April 1, 1986) (on file with author)

Stuart portrait, complete with a certificate of authenticity.¹³⁷ However, this proved false when Milo Naeve, curator of American painting at the Art Institute evaluated the piece. Due to its brushwork and color palette, Naeve did not think the painting a Stuart. On reporting this to Dean Bennett, the portrait committee chair apologized, writing “sorry that this does not solve your budget problems.”¹³⁸ NLaw leaders hoped the deaccessioning of valuable pieces would alleviate funding issues at the school. They even considered selling recently donated items, such as the Rubloff bronzes. NLaw leaders invited Michael Shapiro of the St. Louis City Art Museum to evaluate several bronzes for sale in December of 1989. He deemed one bronze, titled *Coming Through the Rye*, a “cheap copy.”¹³⁹ A genuine version of *Coming Through the Rye* sold for 4.4 million a few months later.¹⁴⁰ If only it had been ours!

Subsequent attempts at sale were more successful. After the Shapiro evaluation, the law school opted to sell 26 of the 39 original Rubloff bronzes. The limited connection between the Rubloff bronzes and NLaw’s mission likely played a role in subsequent sale decisions. Displaying the pieces at the law school was impractical, because the pieces could not be seen under the best conditions. NLaw leaders cited a lack of funding to maintain the pieces as well as issues with their security. One piece was stolen from its display case, and adequate policing of the display cases was impossible due to staffing constraints. The school opted to “keep a smaller number of less valuable pieces principally for decorative purposes and to maintain the spirit of the Rubloff gift.”¹⁴¹ Despite the pressing nature of a few years’ budget problems, collection stewards tried to mitigate the impact of short-term thinking on the long-term perspective of the law school’s heritage by keeping a few of the pieces.

During this period, the NU Block Museum of art had a right of first refusal, after which they frequently assisted in the logistics of sale.¹⁴² In the case of the Rubloff bronzes, the Block declined to acquire any of the pieces because small sculptures were not part of their collection focus.¹⁴³ Unlike the Block, in which proceeds from deaccession sales were required to fund subsequent acquisitions, the proceeds of the sale of the NLaw collection were “available to the law school for purposes to be determined.” The NLaw collection would provide funds at last.

Sotheby’s was particularly interested in the most valuable of the Rubloff bronzes. The representative speculated that the *Mountain Man*, by Frederic Remington, had passed through their auctions on the way to Mr. Rubloff in 1983.¹⁴⁴ However, 10 of the offered bronzes were refused based on authenticity related questions.¹⁴⁵ Pieces were later sold through Christies’ auctions, which offered a high profit margin. After their sale, the eleven empty display cases were given to the DuSable Museum of Chicago.¹⁴⁶

The Block Museum of Art no longer facilitates the deaccessions of individual schools.¹⁴⁷ The NLaw collection has considered sales as recently as 2014.¹⁴⁸ The sales did not ultimately proceed due to lack of institutional support and external interest in the items considered for deaccession.¹⁴⁹ Presently, NLaw collection stewards aim to return items to their original donors, or family members of the donor, when they are removed from display.¹⁵⁰

Routine Management Logistics

For the NLaw collection to be effective, it must be displayed and maintained. This includes framing, labelling, insuring, and storing items in an organized way. Lighting was also

¹³⁷ Letter from John C Shaffer, donor, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (1934) (on file with author)

¹³⁸ Letter from Jack Heinz, Professor, Northwestern Law School, to Robert Bennett, dean Northwestern Law School. (May 4, 1989) (on file with author)

¹³⁹ Letter from Jack Heinz, Professor, Northwestern Law School, to File, Northwestern School of Law. (Dec 26, 1989) (on file with author)

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum from Jack Heinz, Professor, Northwestern Law School, to J William Elwin, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Dec 26, 1989) (on file with author)

¹⁴¹ Letter from Alfred A Blum, to Arnold R Webert, Northwestern School of Law. (May 2, 1990) (on file with author)

¹⁴² Interview with Dan Silverstein, Curator, Block Gallery. (October 25, 2023)

¹⁴³ Letter, *supra* note 141.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Leslie Weckstein, Sotheby’s, to David Mickenburg, Director, Block Gallery. (May 4, 1990) (on file with author)

¹⁴⁵ Letter Re Sotheby’s Sale quotes from David Mickenburg, Director, Block Gallery, to Robert Bennet, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (May 9, 1990) (on file with author)

¹⁴⁶ Letter from Jeremy R Wilson, Northwestern Law School, to Raymond Price, Curator, Dusable Museum. (Oct 4, 1990) (on file with author)

¹⁴⁷ Email from Kristina Bottomley, Curator, Block Gallery, to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 27, 2023)

¹⁴⁸ Interview, *supra* note 91.

¹⁴⁹ Interview, *supra* note 57.

¹⁵⁰ Zimmerman, *supra* note 132.

carefully considered. Dean Wigmore solicited advice from Charles F Kelley, assistant director of the art institute, regarding strategies to reduce glare in portrait glass. Kelley sent superintendent James F. McCabe to the NLaw campus to consult “as a matter of institutional courtesy.”¹⁵¹

Over time, collection stewards have performed these steps with varying degrees of detail. For example, the initial stewards of the collection composed a detailed frame style guide and regularly revised it. All frames were purchased from a single preferred vendor, Mr. Lacine of the Newcomb Macklin Company. Four styles of framing, and additional styles of decorative molding, were available to suit the variety of spaces of the NLaw campus.¹⁵² So many frames were being ordered that the stewards hired Osborne Brandso, a woodworker, to keep up with demand and cut costs. Brandso was an NLaw janitor, but he worked as a woodworker prior to immigrating to America.¹⁵³ He had previously taken a course in framing and provided a list of the tools needed to establish a picture framing shop.¹⁵⁴ The stewards bought molding from the original framing company so that the newer frames would continue to match.¹⁵⁵ Yet by the 1980s, frames were purchased in an ad-hoc manner from a variety of different companies. Frames from this period do not match the style of earlier frames. The modern collection stewards are working to rectify this mismatch by reusing old frames, rather than introducing additional, modern styles.¹⁵⁶ They hung one piece, *An Allegory of Hope* by LaNecia Rouse Tinsley, with its gallery-chosen white frame before quickly realizing harmony between frames would better direct viewer’s attention toward the artwork itself, rather than the condition of its hanging.¹⁵⁷ Repurposing vintage frames maintains a connection to the collection’s history and is a more environmentally friendly approach.

Once framed and lit, pieces are then labelled. Labels are especially important for community engagement. If a passerby does not have an easy opportunity to learn the title, artist, and main themes of the piece, they are unlikely to pursue that information on their own. The presence of a label prompts folks to slow down and consider individual works. Labels are also an important component of ethical collecting. Maintaining information in a clear and accessible way prevents the loss of attribution of a piece and honors the work of the artist.

Much thought was given to the earliest label designs. Collection stewards reached out to experts from a variety of institutions. Mr. Raltenbach, of the Art Institute of Chicago, advised against metal labels due to tarnish and expense. He included samples of the labels used by his department. Miss Belie, of the Chicago Historical Society, recommended labels of gilt board, hand-lettered and dipped in shellac.¹⁵⁸ Mr. Powell, director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, noted that sunken press is more durable, but paint and hand lettering more attractive.¹⁵⁹ Frederick Allen Witing, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, sent samples of their cardboard labels.¹⁶⁰ But ultimately, the collection stewards opted to hire a letterer from the SAIC.¹⁶¹ The work was to be done following the recipe of John Thon, letterer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁶² Thon’s recipe called for dark wood of which the grain had been filled with chalk, followed by the painting of letters, gilding, brushing, and varnishing.¹⁶³ This style of label was chosen for its durability, aesthetic, and cost effectiveness.

Wording was initially chosen by a member of the portrait committee with no further consultation. Mrs. E.H. Gary influenced a change to this policy when she visited the law school one evening after attending a funeral. On the date of her visit, the illuminated print featuring her husband’s name had been moved from its customary place on the wall to a lectern at the

¹⁵¹ Letter from Charles F Kelley, Assistant Director, Art Institute, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (July 20, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁵² Picture Frame Revised Style Guide, Law School Trustees, Northwestern School of Law. (March 15, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁵³ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to D.R. Cutter. (Oct 29, 1931) (on file with author)

¹⁵⁴ Memorandum from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law for Mr. Crossley (Nov 11, 1929) (on file with author)

¹⁵⁵ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mr. Lacine, Newcomb Macklin Company. (January 9, 1931) (on file with author)

¹⁵⁶ Interview, *supra* note 77.

¹⁵⁷ Interview, *supra* note 103.

¹⁵⁸ Undated label correspondence

¹⁵⁹ Letter from C. Powell, Director, Corcoran Gallery of Art, to Anne G. Millar, Curator, Northwestern School of Law. (February 6, 1925) (on file with author)

¹⁶⁰ Letter from Frederick Allen Witing, Director, Cleveland Museum of Art, to Anne G. Millar, Curator, Northwestern School of Law. (February 10, 1925) (on file with author)

¹⁶¹ Memorandum from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law for Mr. Detterer, School of the Art Institute. (April 21, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁶² Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to John Thon, Letterer, Metropolitan Museum of Art. (March 21, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁶³ Memorandum from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law regarding an April 7, 1926, meeting with John Thon.

entrance of the lobby. The move was intended as a special tribute to his contributions to the school.¹⁶⁴ To prevent further confusion, Mrs. Gary requested a plate be attached to the frame of his portrait with information about his life, the artist who painted the piece, and her connection to its donation.¹⁶⁵ From then on, Dean Wigmore ensured donors were recognized on permanent labels, if not overtly consulted on the wording.¹⁶⁶

This differs from the approach of the late twentieth century, where each label was individually approved by the item donor. First drafts were written by the director of development, with care taken to be “consistent with the other plaques in the building.”¹⁶⁷ Donors were encouraged to let the school know of any changes they would like made. Labels of this period are white board with neat black lettering. It is uncertain where or how they were sourced, or what thought went into the selection of that design.

Modern signage style was developed after visiting several local institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Contemporary Photography.¹⁶⁸ The newest signs are small, plasticized sheets with set lettering. The captions are standardized to communicate information about the artist, the title and date of the work, and the materials of its composition. The color varies based on the location within the school, but white is the standard. Black signs were chosen for Levy Mayer to not distract from the ambience of antiquity and history in the space. This allows the artwork to be the central visual focus.¹⁶⁹ The artwork of the NLaw collection continues to function as an educational opportunity, and the modern signage style facilitates this aim. Not every piece has received updated signage. Items intended to be artistic in nature are prioritized, so certain objects, like historic photographs, may never receive a sign.¹⁷⁰

Likewise, not every piece in the NLaw collection is insured. Originally, only the oil portraits were insured. Historical facsimiles, engravings, etchings, and photographs were not included.¹⁷¹ The policy covered all risks “excepting damage that might be cause while the pictures are being worked on by artists or while being framed. Transportation hazards and the hazards of packing for shipping are being covered.”¹⁷² The NLaw Collection originally worked with a third-party insurer, however, it was shifted to the Northwestern University policy at some point prior to 1988. By that point, valuable pieces were added to the policy with information about their accessibility. Whether a piece was hung within reach, or could be only removed by security devices, was important context for the policy.¹⁷³ Efforts were made to insure the broader collection in 2005, when a catalogue was submitted to risk management to assess insurance needs. However, risk management did not have the bandwidth at the time.¹⁷⁴

Collection growth quickly outpaced that of campus construction, necessitating the storage of some items. When Levy Mayer Hall and the Gary Library were under construction, paintings were inventoried and stored in a fireproof warehouse to avoid being “mislaid in the general confusion of moving.”¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, this policy was not followed for subsequent construction efforts. The location of many pieces is presently unknown. They are scattered across the Facilities Basement Vault, the Library Basement Vault, the Library Archives, the Rare Book Room, random storage closets, and third-party facilities. Entropy affects all things, and it is unlikely that the collection will be returned to order in the foreseeable future.

¹⁶⁴ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to EH Gary, Judge. (August 19, 1927) (on file with author)

¹⁶⁵ Letter from FR Sites, Secretary, EH Gary, to Cambell. (August 20, 1927) (on file with author)

¹⁶⁶ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Cambell. (Aug 26, 1927) (on file with author)

¹⁶⁷ Letter from Susan S Bell Director of Development, Northwestern School of Law, to David C Ruttenberg, Donor. (Dec 13, 1989) (on file with author)

¹⁶⁸ Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹⁶⁹ Interview, *supra* note 77.

¹⁷⁰ *Id.*

¹⁷¹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Charles P Whitney, Agent, Insurance Exchange Building Company. (Oct 10, 1929) (on file with author)

¹⁷² Letter from BR Horuch Insurance Exchange, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law.

¹⁷³ Letter from George Grossman, Director, Northwestern School of Law Library, to William O Park. (Sep 30, 1988) (on file with author)

¹⁷⁴ Interview, *supra* note 91.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to EH Gary, Judge. (Sept 19, 1926) (on file with author)

Cataloguers and Inventory Knowledge

Preservation is a perennial challenge and wholly American impulse. The Library of Congress, our capital's oldest cultural institution, was founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1800 to support democratic ideals. Without access to a wide variety of information and ideas, legislators could not be expected to govern effectively. The same is true for legal scholarship at Northwestern. Catalogues, inventories, and other archival records record the story of our collection such that it may be accessed and learned from by future generations of the NLaw community.

A catalogue is a comprehensive, annotated list of items in a collection that may include details regarding provenance, artist biographical information, and medium, whereas an inventory is a simplified list containing name and location information. Both are important tools for collection stewards. The best catalogues will include the following information: name of artist, birth and death, where they were born/based/trained, identity markers, title of work, date of creation, medium, dimensions, statement of how it came to be where it is (provenance statement, gift, from whom, purchase, date), and its location.¹⁷⁶ The NLaw collection has been inventoried and catalogued several times, by both volunteers, amateurs, and art professionals, to varying degrees of detail. Their labor is often unseen in their lifetime, but very appreciated by subsequent historians. This section will describe both the cataloguers and their work.

Mrs. Anne George Millar was the first cataloguer of the NLaw Collection.¹⁷⁷ Millar was born in Columbia, Missouri, and moved to Evanston, IL after her 1920 wedding to Robert Millar. She was passionate about education, having founded a school in New York in 1910, and later introducing the Montessori method to American schools by translating Dr. Maria Montessori's texts to English. Millar was also passionate about art, helping found the Evanston Art Center in 1929.¹⁷⁸ She was an active and vibrant member of the local community, and the portrait committee was unanimous in its vote to invite her to complete the task. They appropriated a sum of \$500 as "a fee or honorarium for some competent person" to clean, sort, identify, catalogue, label, and display the various pieces of the collection. Delegating the work freed the committee "the responsibility of making innumerable decisions," and allowed them to avoid the dullness of administrative labor.¹⁷⁹ For her part, she considered it "great privilege to have been selected" and was "very grateful to [Dean Wigmore] and to [his] committee for giving [her] this opportunity."¹⁸⁰ The task of the first catalogue was so monumental that a helper was soon retained, Mr. Cagle. He began at a rate of 75 cents an hour before quickly becoming retained on a monthly salary of \$125.¹⁸¹ Mrs. Millar received the honorarium for her time but was never formally employed. Together, they prepared checklists of framed pictures for hanging and devised a location system for the collection.¹⁸² Framing, hanging, and labelling the collection took nearly an entire year to complete.¹⁸³ Cagle generally worked 20-25 hour weeks during this time.¹⁸⁴ Charles Caldwell and a Miss Goodhue also assisted the organizational efforts.¹⁸⁵ Copies of their inventory are available in the Wigmore Papers in the McCormick Special Collections department on the Evanston campus.

The collection grew rapidly. By 1934, another effort was made. Workers were instructed to sort and mount unframed pictures, card uncarded pictures, and inventory the entire collection. They began with mounting, because familiarity with the collection was thought to aid the carding and inventory process.¹⁸⁶ As they mounted pictures, they were instructed to mark

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Kristina Bottomley, Curator, Block Gallery. (November 2, 2023)

¹⁷⁷ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mrs. Robert W Millar. (April 19, 1924) (on file with author)

¹⁷⁸ <https://evanstonwomen.org/woman/anne-millar/>

¹⁷⁹ Letter, *supra* note 177.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Anne G. Millar, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (May 19, 1924) (on file with author)

¹⁸¹ Memorandum, John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (June 21, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁸² Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mr. Cagle. (August 13, 1926) (on file with author)

¹⁸³ Picture Report, Mr. Cagle, Assistant Cataloguer, Northwestern School of Law. (November 15, 1927) (on file with author)

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

¹⁸⁵ Memorandum from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law to Mrs. Millar and Miss Goodhue. (March 28, 1925) (on file with author)

¹⁸⁶ Library Catalogue, EH Gary Library. (February 1934) (on file with author)

the back of each frame with the item's classification number and its accession number. A system was devised to track the number of portraits depicting a given subject.¹⁸⁷ Items were sorted into eight different classes based on their subject and medium, with care taken to note the 39 countries represented within each class. The identity of the head cataloguer and assistants are unknown. It is possible that Mrs. Millar again headed the effort, or FB Crossley, librarian, and member of the portrait committee. Nevertheless, their detailed efforts are appreciated today. Copies of this catalogue are available in the Wigmore Papers in the McCormick Special Collections department on the Evanston campus.

Another unknown cataloguer created an inventory in 1949. Its archival record is incomplete, containing only the first page. Copies of this inventory are available in the Wigmore Papers in the McCormick Special Collections department on the Evanston campus.

In the fall of 1980, a work study student created a display inventory estimated to be 90% complete, excluding library holdings. The student was likely supervised by Ed Kervos.¹⁸⁸ The inventory has not yet been located.

Kathleen Roy Cummings, Block Gallery Research Fellow, created the next inventory through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.¹⁸⁹ She inventoried art across the entire university as well as the NLaw collection. In addition to the physical inventory, she conducted research using old correspondence and historical information.¹⁹⁰ Copies of her catalogue are held by both the NLaw archives and the McCormick Special Collections department on the Evanston campus.

The Block sent another cataloguer, Kevin D. Murphy, to the school during the summer of 1987. Murphy had just completed the first year of his PhD in art history, focusing on modern architecture. He held a masters in preservation and had worked in several other museums. Murphy had no supervision beyond the director of the Block Gallery, David Mickenburg, and does not recollect speaking with anyone from the NLaw community about his work. He began with the items on the walls, working his way throughout the school. There were no receipts from orders, no contracts, no obvious means for determining the provenance of many pieces. The collection lacked handling or display protocols, as well as information about the evaluation or treatment of individual pieces. Prior catalogues had also been lost. Murphy was living closer to the Evanston campus at the time but would travel to the Chicago campus a couple days a week to work on the catalogue. He was simultaneously studying for his PhD examinations and would leave Northwestern in a year's time to conduct the fieldwork for his degree in Paris. After securing his degree in 1992, he continued his research as a professor. He currently holds the Andrew W. Mellon Chair in the Humanities at Vanderbilt University.¹⁹¹

A professional curatorial catalogue was produced sometime between 1990 and 2005.¹⁹² The cataloguer was likely Richard Raymond J Alasko of Chicago. Alasko is Principal of the Alasko Company of Chicago. He has been a member of the American Society for Appraisers for 51 years and served as its international president.¹⁹³ He is an alumnus of Bell State University.¹⁹⁴ A partial copy of this inventory is available in the McCormick Special Collections department on the Evanston campus.

Eloise Vondruska compiled a partial catalogue for the 2006 *Art and Architecture in Illinois Libraries* initiative discussed at the beginning of this paper. This catalogue is available on the Art and Architecture site.

Finally, the most recent effort: my own. I began this project as a paper for Professor DiCola's Fall 2023 course, *Law and the Creative Industries*. I initially envisioned it as an analysis of collection management guidelines across public and private institutions, using the

¹⁸⁷ Library Catalogue, EH Gary Library. (February 1934) (on file with author)

¹⁸⁸ Memorandum from Kathleen Roy Cummings, Block Gallery Research Fellow. (June 3, 1981) (on file with author)

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Raymond Mack to Northwestern University. (Oct 28, 1980) (on file with author)

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Kathleen Roy Cummings, Block Gallery Research Fellow, to Elwin, Dean, Northwestern School of Law. (Nov 20, 1980) (on file with author)

¹⁹¹ Interview with Kevin D. Murphy, Professor, Vanderbilt University. (December 13, 2023)

¹⁹² Interview, *supra* note 91., corroborated by Interview, *supra* note 90.

¹⁹³ <https://www.appraisersnewsroom.org/?p=7136>

¹⁹⁴ <https://blogs.bsu.edu/doma/tag/richard-raymond-alasko/>

NU Block Museum of Art and the NLaw collection as my case studies. Once I confirmed the lack of existing catalogue with the NLaw facilities team, I set to work. Over roughly three weeks from Oct-Nov 2023, I spent nearly every hour of free time walking the halls of the school, staying as late as 10pm some nights. I utilized a top-down approach, crossing rooms and hallways off a map as I worked to keep track of my progress. Even during this short time frame, the collection changed. One artwork lacking a plaque at the start of my effort had received one at some point during the process- I had to backtrack to update my log! For items missing plaques and obvious signatures, I reached out to various archives and community members to sort out provenance and identity of subjects depicted. As I delved deeper into the archive and interview process, the focus of my paper evolved. Instead of a strictly academic effort, it became a passion project to restore the dignity of our collection through a thorough recounting of its history and scope. This paper is the result. My hope is that a future cataloguer (perhaps you, dear reader!) find it as exhilarating as I found those of Ms. Cummings, Mrs. Millar, and all those unknown laborers in between.

Best practices

“A person needs a beautiful body as well as a beautiful soul, to work out the best results; and this is just as true of institutional life as of the life of a human being.”¹⁹⁵

Best practices and care look different for each collection. There are different types of collecting institutions, including libraries, art museums, natural history museums, private collections, corporate collections, and foundation collections.¹⁹⁶ The NLaw art collection operates in a liminal space between private, corporate, and museum practices.

Private collections are historically unregulated and unstandardized. However, recognition is growing that collectors have an ethical responsibility to both artists and works within their collection. A code for contemporary art collectors was recently developed by a group of concerned collectors. It addresses interactions with artists; collection acquisition, maintenance, and display; commissions, institutions, board positions, dealer relationships, and other professional interactions.¹⁹⁷ Adherence to the code is optional and unenforced, but it has been endorsed by several art industry and ethics professionals.

Likewise, corporate collections are generally unregulated by external codes. Each organization adopts its own management program. However, most corporate collections adhere to basic rules, such as no nudity, prejudicial, or violent subject matters. The industry “hesitates to call this censorship... most collections simply do not collect works with any of those themes.”¹⁹⁸ Others avoid subjects and artists whose politics might be seen as subversive or anticapitalistic. Corporations commonly employ curation consultants or staff positions to manage their collections in a professional manner.

American Alliance of Museums (AAM) accreditation is the gold standard of professional art collections. It is an arduous process, but benefits museums in arranging loans for exhibitions as a marker of trust and authenticity, particularly for museums that have not completed prior loan agreements. AAM accreditation is not necessary for many museums and certainly not necessary for private collections, but AAM standards are useful for collectors of any size. Core documents include the following: a collection management policy detailing accession and deaccession criteria; a conflict-of-interest policy; a code of ethics detailing how the collection will be governed; a facility report regarding space, storage, security, temperature, humidity control, and building history; a disaster/emergency plan; a mission vision statement; and strategic plan for future development.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ 1902 annual banquet of law alumni association, President James

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Kathleen Berzock, Director, Block Gallery. (October 17, 2023)

¹⁹⁷ <https://ethicscollecting.org/>

¹⁹⁸ Charlotte Appleyard & James. Salzman, *Corporate Art Collections a Handbook to Corporate Buying*. Burlington, Vt: Lund Humphries. (2012)

¹⁹⁹ Silverstein Interview, *supra* note 124.

Northwestern Law School is not a museum. Museums have the freedom, and perhaps even an obligation, to challenge folks through the works they choose to elevate. Museums and galleries also benefit from financial prioritization and expertise in collection care, such as lighting and environmental conservation measures. They have the luxury of buying an excess of works and determining later which ones support their mission. NLaw stewards are limited by space, budget, support, and purpose in a way that distinguishing their work from that which takes place in museum contexts. Northwestern Law School is also not a private collection. The international repute and publicly accessible nature of the campus generate excitement and buzz not found in pieces placed in private collections. Artists have faceted their families in excitement, made social media posts, and expressed feelings of joy and honor that their works will reach extensive audiences by virtue of being displayed on the NLaw campus.²⁰⁰ As an educational institution, Northwestern Law has a unique role among other collecting bodies. Stewards of the NLaw collection must determine which aspects of 'best practices' will serve their mission to educate and inspire the broader community.

²⁰⁰ Interview, *supra* note 103.

Student Involvement

Students are the most important drivers for diversity and change within the NLaw collection. At the earliest years of collection history, female students advocated for the creation of a dedicated space for their community. The women's room was established as a result. Afterwards, it was furnished with items depicting women's history at NLaw, including a portrait of alumna Judge Mary Bartelme, funded by the female alumni of the school. Its creation was celebrated with an unveiling ceremony to which all the female NLaw alumni residing in Chicago were invited.²⁰¹ The Bartelme was also featured on the cover of Townsfolk Magazine, a publication of Chicago Society news founded by Elizabeth McGowan in 1928. However, it was not well received by members of the community. Walter S. Vose, a classmate of Bartelme's, wrote, "I never was more disappointed in a portrait in my life than that of Mary Bartelme unveiled Thursday. There is something so eternally womanly and fine about Mary that I hoped to see some of it reflected on the canvass [sic]. It wasn't there. That quiet-self-contained reserve of Mary was lacking. The right eye is a blurred thing as you approach it. Who, among the younger generation, knowing not our Mary as she has 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?"²⁰²

In subsequent years, the portrait was damaged and removed from view. It was eventually recovered from the library vault.²⁰³ Staff recognized the painting due to its resemblance to another small work by the same artist.²⁰⁴ The portrait was described thusly: "she is in judicial robes, has her hands folded in her lap, and looks Very Serious"²⁰⁵ It was sent for conservation and reframing, then hung in a new position of honor within the school.²⁰⁶

The next phase of student advocacy began in 2013, with the formation of the Visibility Initiative (VI). Early efforts were led by Nick Carson and Brenna Helppie-Schmieder. While originally student organization, advised by Ernest Perez, the Visibility Initiative eventually became a committee within the Student Body Association. Becoming an SBA committee made more sense for the organization, because the founding leaders did not plan to host events and panels like a traditional student group.²⁰⁷ VI's mission was to ensure that the law school space reflected the many forms of diversity of the NLaw community, through documentation and celebration.²⁰⁸ One co-founder noted that "elite portraits and paintings featuring white men were a constant, reinforcing the idea of law as only serving a narrow community, dominated by judges and lawyers, and entrenched in power and privilege."²⁰⁹ The founders saw their work as an "aesthetic disruption... to engender new realities and possibilities."²¹⁰ By advocating for diverse forms of expression such as sculpture, graffiti, photography, and fiber-based works, VI aimed to disrupt the monotony of the NLaw collection and expand its diversity and inclusion for all. Chime Asonye notes the humanizing power of art and cultural expression which can, "humanize the political, humanize the legal space, make it habitable for him."²¹¹ Leveraging space in these ways is powerful.

The Visibility Initiative was unique among student led organizations because many stakeholders within the law school community were involved. Alumni, administrative staff, and faculty members joined students in advocating for increased diversity within the Law School art collection. The formation of VI coincided with increased diversity in class composition at the law school. The newer classes were able to point out gaps in NLaw's programming and collection

²⁰¹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mrs. Alfred C Stepan, Donor. (April 19, 1928) (on file with author)

²⁰² Letter from Walter S Vose, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Mrs. Alfred C Stepan, Donor. (Feb 2, 1929) (on file with author)

²⁰³ Letter from L William Elwin jr, Dean, Northwestern School of Law, to Files, Northwestern School of Law, cc Jack Heinz, Professor. (Aug 6, 1990) (on file with author)

²⁰⁴ Letter from Ellen Bentsen, to Jack Heinz, Professor, Northwestern School of Law. (Aug 6, 1990) (on file with author)

²⁰⁵ *Id.*

²⁰⁶ Conservation order from John Heinz, Professor, Northwestern School of Law to Faye Wrubel, conservator. (August 11, 1990) (on file with author)

²⁰⁷ Interview with Ernest Perez, Director, Student Services, Northwestern School of Law. (November 1, 2023)

²⁰⁸ Kobby, YouTube

²⁰⁹ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-art-of-black-lives-matter-lessons-for-organizations-and-policy-makers-from-the-streets/>

²¹⁰ Interview with Chime Asonye, Alumnus, Northwestern School of Law. (December 11, 2023)

²¹¹ *Id.*

that prior groups may not have seen.²¹² Dean Rodriguez and other senior administrators were very supportive of VI's efforts. Leaders worked to streamline a fundraising program for the initiative. Donors broadly chose to support DEI at the law school through the establishment of scholarship funds instead of facilities-directed donations.²¹³ Scholarships are a very important component of the NLaw mission. However, this development left the group with a shoestring budget. Together with Dean Langford, the members of VI worked to plan and complete a display for the Social Justice Hallway on the first floor of McCormick. At the same time, the Harry's Atrium extension and study room renovation project was ongoing. These projects are discussed in greater detail in Part I.

In conjunction with the advocacy of VI, a concerted effort was made to acquire artwork created by diverse artists.²¹⁴ The committee met frequently to talk about what space would look like on a conceptual level. Dean Langford would locate pictures and share them for group discussion. Inequality was a major theme of these early conversations. Kobby Lartey recounted a 2017 trip to the National Museum of African American History to learn from its example. While there, members of the committee focused on the way the museum represented art. The trip had lasting impact on the way participants saw and understood the power of space. They considered the paint colors, the language of the wall descriptions, the sizes of different pieces in relation to one another, and even the order of display. Every decision was carefully considered for tangible impact. In the lead up to the hallway being unveiled, the group was thoughtful about the different movements they wanted to represent within the space. Yet Lartey encouraged students to "change the art, make it fresh/you/relevant to times."²¹⁵

In addition to advocating for specific changes to the collection, VI also hosted several events. They partnered with Simple Good to host short term exhibits in the atrium of the law school. They also invited performance artists and other folks into the NLaw space. These events had a massive impact in the NLaw community. Folks "expressed feeling more invested in the school since it began to reflect their reality... [they felt] closer to their peers because they felt comfortable being vulnerable in these settings." Even today, participants who attend the campus art tours hosted by Dean Langford and Elide Endreson leave the experience changed. One attendee shared that they were in tears after the tour with George. They hadn't felt good about being in the building before, but after the tour they expressed "feeling a sense of pride, curiosity, affection for the space" every time they walk through the halls.²¹⁶

VI was inactive during the 2020-2021 school year, and most of the institutional knowledge within the student body was lost during this time. Meegan Mayer took charge of the committee in 2022 to "advocate for and uplift some of the underrepresented voices at NU." Under Mayer's leadership, the mission of the group shifted from art towards other concerns of the student body. Mayer saw the organization as the "SBA version of DivCo... a force for internal advocacy rather than social connection." The Diversity Coalition (DivCo) is a Northwestern student organization that fosters relationship building between different affinity groups. It plays an important role among the student body but has limited access to administrators.²¹⁷ The Student Body Association (SBA), in contrast, has regular advocacy meetings with several deans. Mayer found it difficult to navigate relationships with administration and SBA leadership without prior knowledge of VI's history. Students were also broadly unfamiliar with VI, which limited the number of folks who reached out for assistance. Wren Martyn and Jasmeene Burton were also involved in this phase of the initiative. One major accomplishment was coordinating student organizations to send image descriptions in their event emails. This made student activities more accessible to folks who use a screen reader to engage with technology for various

²¹² Interview, *supra* note 91.

²¹³ *Id.*

²¹⁴ Interview, *supra* note 90.

²¹⁵ Interview with Kobby Lartey, Alumnus, Northwestern School of Law. (November 3, 2023)

²¹⁶ Carrel, *supra* note 102.

²¹⁷ <https://sites.google.com/nlaw.northwestern.edu/nlawdivco/home>

reasons.²¹⁸ The committee was formally disbanded by the SBA at the end of the 2022/2023 academic year. Representative positions were created on the Admissions and Governance and Oversight Committees “to identify issues and improve policy related to matters of inclusion.”²¹⁹ VI shifted from being an informal, albeit independent, student organization focused on diversifying the art on campus toward formal institutionalization as an art-focused SBA committee. It then became an SBA committee for general DEI concerns, before being disbanded and replaced with designated positions in other SBA committees. By this point, the original connection to campus art was forgotten. The positions were not filled during the fall of 2023. Mayer protested the decision to disband the VI committee, but never received a response. She shared, “I really hoped someone would just continue the work.”²²⁰

Efforts are now in progress to revive the group. Former Chair Kobby Lartey advises future student leaders not to give up. There are no rules when you’re the first, and lots of energy and support. The first VI committee accomplished so many things and created a foundation for future efforts. Rely on the community for help; don’t try to do things alone. And remember the work of those that came before. Sankofa, meaning to go back and retrieve, refers to a Adinkra symbol in Ghanaian tradition of a duck scratching its back or looking back. Reflect on the past; learn from it; and go forth.²²¹

²¹⁸ Text Interview with Meegan Mayer, Alumna, Northwestern School of Law. (October 30, 2023)

²¹⁹ 2022-2023 Committee Descriptions <https://perma.cc/SH48-5EUD>

²²⁰ Mayer, *supra* note 218.

²²¹ Lartey, *supra* note 215.

Artists' Perspective: Ongoing and Latent

A constant theme for this research has been the loss of knowledge of our collection. Of the subjects' identity, of the donors' identity, of the date of creation. But none more difficult to decipher than that of lost artist identities. Remembrance is one way to honor the hands and minds that created these objects. Reflection and presence are another. This section aims to aid in the remembrance of collection creators.

Earliest Portrait Painters

At the dawn of the NLaw collection, leaders considered having one artist complete all the portraits to harmonize the artistic effect. Art Institute director Chas. F. Kelley cautioned leaders that portrait painting required different skillsets based on the means the subject sat for the representation, such as through photograph or live in the studio.²²² An artist skilled in working from life might not adapt well to working from photographs or prior paintings, which were the only means for creating a post-humous depiction. Additionally, so many portraits were being commissioned at once that they could not possibly be given to a single artist and completed on time. Nevertheless, the many artists chosen for this endeavor are each important contributors. Many of those artists emigrated from Sweden, which experienced a national population crises and threat of famine throughout the latter half of the 19th century. As emigration regulations eased, hundreds of thousands of Swedes quickly moved to the Midwest, drawn by the prospect of open land and the promises of recruiters.²²³ Chicago hosted the largest Swedish population outside of Stockholm at the turn of the 20th century.²²⁴ Swedish aesthetics were little known outside of the country, and its expat community sought to change that. Through the reputation of internationally renowned artist Anders Zorn, Swedish artists of the 1890s felt their contributions were "at last assuming what they viewed to be its rightful place as a major force in virtually all aspects of the arts." Artists who trained under Zorn, such as Arvid Nyholm, were active members of the Chicago art community throughout the early 1900s and leverage their relationships to secure commissions for their Swedish American compatriots.²²⁵

Christian Abrahamsen was the most prolific painter in the school's early commissions, completing 9 out of the original 27 portraits. Abrahamsen was born in Bergen, Norway in 1887 and emigrated to Chicago, Illinois as a teenager. He studied at the Art Institute in Chicago.²²⁶ He was very accomplished during his lifetime, even presenting works at the World Fair.²²⁷ He enjoyed a warm relationship with NLaw collection stewards. After Dean Wigmore's death, Abrahamsen maintained his tie to the school. Yet even talented professionals fall short at times. Upon receipt of the portrait of Mr. Crossley, collection stewards were certain the wrong portrait had been delivered.²²⁸ It looked nothing like Mr. Crossley! "Owing to one of those mysterious circumstances which happens even in the case of the greatest painters, it is plain that your portrait of Mr. Crossley is fundamentally unsatisfactory to his friends. It will be useless to try again. I therefore propose that we cancel the commission."²²⁹ While that commission was cancelled, the school continued to work with Abrahamsen and recommend his work to others. To the University of Chicago, Dean Wigmore wrote, "I have had a number of interviews with Mr. Abrahamsen and I find him to be a man of high ideals in the philosophy of art, which adds to

²²² Memorandum of an interview with Mr. Chas F. Kelley, from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (Oct 17, 1924)(on file with author)

²²³ Anita Olson Gustafson, "SWEDISH IMMIGRATION TO CHICAGO." In *Swedish Chicago: The Shaping of an Immigrant Community, 1880–1920*, 9–32. Cornell University Press. (2018) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv177tchz.5>.

²²⁴ Philip J. Anderson & Dag Blanck (eds.). *Swedish-American Life in Chicago: Cultural and Urban Aspects of an Immigrant People, 1850-1930*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. (1992)

²²⁵ <https://www.illinoisart.org/arvid-f-nyholm>

²²⁶ https://collections.vesterheim.org/virtual_galleries/self-portrait-1983-106-023/

²²⁷ https://art.state.gov/personnel/christian_abrahamsen/

²²⁸ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Christian Abrahamsen, Artist. (April 22, 1927)(on file with author)

²²⁹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Christian Abrahamsen, Artist. (June 18, 1927)(on file with author)

one's esteem of his technical accomplishments."²³⁰ Abrahamsen reciprocated the feeling. Years after the death of Dean Wigmore, Abrahamsen remember their relationship fondly. He followed the 1978 publication of Dean Wigmore's biography and wrote to the school to commend their efforts to share Wigmore's legacy more broadly.²³¹ Dean Elwin then sent a copy of the biography as thanks for Abrahamsen's lasting contribution to the aesthetics of the law school grounds.²³²

Returning to the story of Mr. Crossley's portrait, which was withdrawn from Abrahamsen's studio in 1927. Collection stewards then reached out to Mr. Arvid Nyholm, the second most prolific painter of the collection. Nyholm was born in Stockholm in 1886. He trained as an architect before entering private artistic study under Andreas Brolin. He emigrated to New York in the fall of 1891 before moving to Chicago in 1903. He co-founded the Swedish American Art Foundation and participated in many local exhibitions, including those hosted by the Art Institute of Chicago. He was known as a quick-witted and jovial man. Despite his initial struggles to establish himself as a portrait painter, his portraiture received acclaim during his lifetime.²³³ Members of the NLaw community were excited to sit for his portraits, with one writing, "Nothing in connection with my service to northwestern university has given me more satisfaction than the act of Law Alumni Trustees in directing Arvid Nyholm to paint my portrait."²³⁴ Mr. Nyholm felt similarly fond of the school, regularly sending Christmas cards and notes of appreciation for each commission. After receiving one commission, Nyholm wrote "I assure you that I take a great deal of pride in this commission and shall exert my best efforts in order to give you a fine characterization of Professor Woodward. Thanking you cordially for this commission which I feel is due mostly to your friendly patronage."²³⁵ Nyholm's intuitions were correct. Dean Wigmore drove the portrait process, and he thought Nyholm "was the most successful artist in our series."²³⁶ Wigmore later selected Nyholm to paint his own portrait. The pieces he produced for the NLaw collection gave "complete satisfaction as masterpieces" and were cherished by the community.²³⁷ Unfortunately, Nyholm was unable to complete the portrait of Professor Crossley. The second version of the portrait needed to be completed swiftly, because its unveiling ceremony was planned based on the timeline given for the first version.²³⁸ Unfortunately, Nyholm was recovering from a 1927 stomach operation that left him very weak. He was hemorrhaging internally and unable to hold a paintbrush^{239,240} Nyholm's prior contributions to the NLaw campus were among the last he would ever produce, as he passed away few months later from continued complications.

At this point, the Crossley commission was offered to Axel Linus Eriksson. Linus was born in Sweden in 1885 and emigrated to Chicago in 1920. He worked as a muralist, portraitist, and commercial artist.²⁴¹ Fortunately, the trial of the Crossley portrait ends here.²⁴² Linus completed a competent rendition in enough time to be unveiled at the planned ceremony. The Crossley family was especially proud of the piece, inviting 19 couples to the ceremony—more guests than any other subject of this period!²⁴³ Linus was invited to the unveiling as well.²⁴⁴

Antonin Sterba and Paul Trebilcock were also chosen for commissions during this time. Sterba was born in 1875 and emigrated from Czechoslovakia as a toddler. He spent many years teaching at the Art Institute of Chicago. His humor, wit, and enduring cheer are remembered to this day.²⁴⁵ He helped found the Portrait Society of Chicago. Trebilcock was born in 1902 and

²³⁰ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to JS Dicker. (Feb 7, 1925)(on file with author)

²³¹ Letter from Christian Abrahamsen, Artist, to Librarian, Northwestern Law School, to Christian Abrahamsen, Artist. (Feb 6, 1978)(on file with author)

²³² Letter from J William Elwin, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Christian Abrahamsen, Artist. (Feb 22, 1978)(on file with author)

²³³ <https://www.illinoisart.org/arvid-f-nyholm>

²³⁴ Letter from Dyche to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (Oct 15, 1926)(on file with author)

²³⁵ Letter from Arvid Nyholm, Arvid, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (April 5, 1926)(on file with author)

²³⁶ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Kocourek, Professor, Northwestern School of Law. (Dec 23, 1926)(on file with author)

²³⁷ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Frederick p Vose. (Feb 5, 1929)(on file with author)

²³⁸ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Arvid Nyholm, Artist. (Sept 14, 1927)(on file with author)

²⁴⁰ Letter from Arvid Nyholm, Artist, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (Sep 17, 1927)(on file with author)

²⁴¹ <https://www.ocalastyle.com/identifiable-origins/>

²⁴² Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to FB Crossley, Librarian. (Jan 23, 1928)(on file with author)

²⁴³ Letter from Mrs. Crossley, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (April 13, 1928)(on file with author)

²⁴⁴ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Linus, Artist. (April 10, 1928)(on file with author)

²⁴⁵ <https://www.illinoisart.org/no-32-antonin-sterba>

spent most of his life in Chicago.²⁴⁶ He studied chemistry downstate before returning to study painting at the Art Institute under the guidance of Leopold Seyffert, another artist represented in the early NLaw collection. Seyffert, sometimes misspelled Seyffarth, grew up in Colorado before moving to Chicago. His portraits were known for their vigorous color palette.²⁴⁷ He was prolific, producing over 500 portraits during his lifetime, but enjoyed gardening in his spare time.²⁴⁸ Seyffert's pieces were among the most expensive, at upwards of \$2000 each. He painted "all over the map of the world" but was "to elusive to think of" for future commissions.²⁴⁹

Artists were empowered to set their rates, so the acquisition costs for the original portraits vary widely.²⁵⁰ Linus' works were set at \$500, whereas artists like Clarkson were set at \$2000. Leaders found that "it is not the highest priced artists who are naturally the most successful to the ordinary observer."²⁵¹ Many of the artists were flattered to be chosen by the institution and offered a special rate in recognition of NLaw's mission. One such artist was Mrs. Winifred Rieber, a member of the UCLA community. Her standard price for portraiture was \$2000, but she offered rates of \$750 to educational institutions and figures.²⁵² The lower rate did not diminish the quality of her work. She remained diligent, asking many detailed questions such as the lighting conditions, the surrounding of the piece, and the preferred garb for the subject. She chose a gown for one figure, as many of the other subjects were depicted in plainclothes.²⁵³ Leaders felt her work to be a genuine artistic success and thanked Mrs. Rieber extensively.²⁵⁴

Middle Years

As the collection grew, artists from other regions were included even more frequently. Westwood Winfree, of Richmond, Virginia, is one such artist. He specialized in wooden sculpture and later helped found the Richmond Artist Association, where he served twice as president.²⁵⁵ He studied art at the Richmond Professional Institute Evening School under Jewett Campbell and exhibited works at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Valentine Museum, and Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences.²⁵⁶ Winfree was also a practicing attorney, who served on the plaintiff's bar.²⁵⁷ He graduated from the University of Richmond Law School in 1936.²⁵⁸ NLaw alumni John Bodner, Jr. of the class of 1953 visited Winfree's studio to pick up a sculpture of St. Ives.²⁵⁹ He flew back to Chicago with the portrait at his side on the plane.²⁶⁰

Other artists from this period were local, such as Joseph Allworthy, the painter of the Dean Havighurst portrait.²⁶¹ Allworthy was a third-generation painter from Pittsburgh. He moved to Chicago at the age of 10 before traveling Europe to study the Old Masters, of which Velasquez was his unabashed favorite.²⁶² James J. Ingwersen was another favorite for commissions. He began his career in Chicago's Tree Building Studio, America's oldest artist colony.

Another artist featured in the NLaw, James J. Ingwersen, found his home in the Tree Studios environment. was born in Evanston, IL in 1929.²⁶³ He studied figure painting under the

²⁴⁶ <https://nationalacademy.emuseum.com/people/1420/paul-trebilcock#:~:text=Trebilcock%20was%20a%20successful%20portrait,attractive%20young%20women%2C%20elegantly%20attired.>

²⁴⁷ <https://collections.lacma.org/node/164669>

²⁴⁸ Chambers, Bruce: Leopold Seyffert, Retrospective Exhibit Catalog Essay, Berry-Hill Galleries, 1985

²⁴⁹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Frederick p Vose. (Feb 5, 1929)(on file with author)

²⁵⁰ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Mrs. Blewett Lee. (February 17, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁵¹ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Mrs. Blewett Lee. (March 28, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁵² Letter from Costigan, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (April 6, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁵³ Letter from Winifred Rieber, Artist, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (April 8, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁵⁴ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Winifred Rieber, Artist. (June 10, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁵⁵ The birth of the Richmond artists association and its first year—published Nov 5, 1990, copy shared by Janet and Susan of the modern group

²⁵⁶ Resume book, 1963 binder shared by Susan Fisher.

²⁵⁷ <https://casetext.com/case/sutton-v-bland>

²⁵⁸ University of Richmond Magazine Summer 1970 <https://issuu.com/urscholarship/docs/urm-1970v33i4>

²⁵⁹ Email, *supra* note 97.

²⁶⁰ Adams interview, *supra* note 79.

²⁶¹ Dean Harold C Havighurst portrait presentation April 16, 1968

²⁶² <https://www.illinoisart.org/no-52-joseph-allworthy>

²⁶³ Karen Davidson, James J. Ingwersen: Captured Moments in a Painter's Life. (2018)

guidance of Bill Mosby at the American Academy of Art in Chicago.²⁶⁴ Like many other artists in the NLaw collection, Ingwersen especially admired Swedish painter Anders Zorn.²⁶⁵ Ingwersen joined Tree Studios in 1957.²⁶⁶ He was later hired as the official circuit court portrait artist, painting judges, mayors, lawyers, and other prominent businessmen throughout the Chicagoland area.²⁶⁷ This brought him to the attention of Northwestern collection stewards in the mid-1960s. His practice was devastated by a 1980s studio fire. Five commissions were burned, and the building turned to ashes.²⁶⁸ Despite this loss, Ingwersen remained passionate about teaching young artists and advocating for environmental causes.²⁶⁹ He rebuilt his studio in a new location. Unveiling the Stevens portrait in 2011 was a highpoint for his career. At the ceremony, Justice Stevens explained the history of the portrait's display at the Northwestern School of Law and expressed gladness to see it hanging in the court now. It is on view in the Lower Great Hall of the Supreme Court Building.²⁷⁰

Present Day:

Relationships between members of the NLaw community and the artists of our collection are important. These relationships add depth to our collection's history: our collection acquisitions can be more than a one-and-done point of sale interaction. Rebecca Shore describes the experience of working with galleries and collectors as “having a boyfriend and feeling powerless, is he going to propose?”²⁷¹ Collectors rarely contact artists after purchasing the art. Artists don't know where their work goes, how it is display—if it is even on display. This feels disheartening. Maya Varadaraj shared that the “most anxiety induces parts of her work is sending it out into the world.”²⁷² To protect themselves, artists rarely consider where their work will end up during the creating process. Entering that headspace prevents them from “working in a more natural, intuitive way.”²⁷³ Camille Seaman describes the importance of feeling fully present in the field to record what she sees. She is “proud and baffled” when people find her work in the world.²⁷⁴ Different spaces are appropriate for different works of art. Varadaraj described the way that more personal, intimate pieces might better belong in a private collection, whereas some pieces should be seen by larger groups of people.

The NLaw campus is open to thousands of people each year. It functions as a semi-public space where people encounter new ways of thinking and being within the world. Emanuel Torres sees art as an alternative to the advertisements that generally flood our consciousness. He noted that “most people don't go to museums outside of tourism,” which makes the work done by the display of the NLaw portrait more poignant. Artwork in public spaces, like that in the halls and gathering spaces of NLaw, offer spots for reflection and breathe. “Advertising in public spaces pushes an opinion, in a vigorous and violent way. Interferes visually and with sound, always selling something, putting you in a position of needing the thing they are selling. Art is a coexistent thing that you can learn something out of. We need more art, less advertisement.” For some artists, the legal context adds even more meaning. Varadaraj described wanting “her work to be seen by diverse women to prompt questions, reflection, reconciliation of their identities... she couldn't have asked for a better home for her works” than NLaw. Women's access to basic and professional education is limited around the world; by reflecting on Varadaraj's pieces,

²⁶⁴ *Id.* at 33

²⁶⁵ *Id.* at 13

²⁶⁶ *Id.* at 35

²⁶⁷ *Id.* at 44

²⁶⁸ *Id.* at 128

²⁶⁹ *Id.* at 191

²⁷⁰ *Id.* at 195

²⁷¹ Zoom Interview with Rebecca Shore, Artist. (November 30, 2023)

²⁷² Zoom Interview with Maya Varadaraj, Artist. (December 2, 2023)

²⁷³ *Id.*

²⁷⁴ Email and Voice Memo Interview with Camille Seaman, Artist. (December 1, 2023)

women of the NLaw community are called to recognize the power of their legal education and channel their reflection into action.

Northwestern is a powerful platform. Torres describes that “what gives artists power is when their work belongs to important collection; it benefits the artist since it is the way other collectors find you and your value.”²⁷⁵ Yet Northwestern has more to offer than its international reputation and potentially wealthy alumni. Artists repeatedly shared the power of interacting with others through their work. But genuine engagement is even more powerful than compliments. Seaman notes that “Labels or text accompanying the image is really important to help give context.”²⁷⁶ Without context, viewers cannot fully engage. Yet it is a difficult balance. Many artists shared the beauty in a viewer’s lived experience impacting their understanding of works. Shore perceives that general public has “lost confidence about looking at things because of the way they’ve been educated.”²⁷⁷ Yet their life experiences bring richness to their interpretation of her works. Torres describes art as “not just an object but a door and window to something else.” By spending more than thirty seconds gazing at and reading about a piece, viewers validate the work, give importance to what it there.²⁷⁸ But even that experience is limited. Seaman describes her work as “the equivalent of peeking through a very narrow keyhole at an incredibly vast and beautiful place.” Whenever possible, artists should be welcomed campus to share their work more deeply.²⁷⁹ Whitney Bradshaw visited campus twice, touring the collection prior to the beginning of discussions about the inclusion of her work in the collection, and again later for the installation of pieces from her OUTCRY! series in the RB140/150 corridor. She was struck by the intention shown in the collection, from the inclusion of local artists to the contrasts in display. Seeing her work in conversation with other artists, such as Amanda Williams, Maya Varadaraj, and Sam Gilliam was an amazing experience.²⁸⁰ Engagement should extend in multiple directions: not just between artist and students, or artist and alumni, but also between artists in the collection. NLaw can facilitate multitudes.

Every artist should have knowledge of where their pieces are going and to whom. Additional information should be freely provided, and lines of communication between artist and collecting institution should remain open. While institutions may have specific educational directions or curatorial statements they are trying to fit, they have a duty to leverage their resources in a way that respects the individual dignity of all members of the community—artists, too.

²⁷⁵ Zoom Interview with Emanuel Torres, Artist. (December 4, 2023)

²⁷⁶ Seaman Interview, *supra* note 274.

²⁷⁷ Shore Interview, *supra* note 271.

²⁷⁸ Torres Interview, *supra* note 275.

²⁷⁹ Compensated, too!

²⁸⁰ Zoom Interview with Whitney Bradshaw, Artist. (November 30, 2023)

Portrait Power from the Subject's Perspective

*"I have a real hope. It is that my portrait may always bear witness to the fact that so long as I live I have the sincere and most affectionate hope that northwestern law school may exercise a stimulating and cheering and refreshing influence to stir American citizens to study with patience and vigor the law of nations."*²⁸¹

Portraits were once the dominant mode of artistic expressions of power. That is why early NLaw leaders prioritized the acquisition of nearly thirty original portraits in the first two years of the opening of the school's permanent Chicago campus. However, perceptions of portraiture changed over time. By the 1960s, it was still an honor for ones' portrait to be painted, but by the 1980s it had become a standard event. At present, people are ever more reluctant to step before the canvas and brush, partially due to expense, but also due to the old-fashioned connotations of portraiture. New mediums have risen to prominence, such as photography, and the NLaw collection tracks that change.

At first, portrait subjects were empowered to select the artist "entirely on [their] own judgement. I trust entirely to the discretion of the donors."²⁸² Even when the school commissioned the portrait, officials still offered a choice between 3-4 artists to the sitter. The importance of the opportunity was clear to sitters. One wrote, "The invitation of the law alumni committee to sit for my portrait... pleases me immensely. I hope I have not an inordinate desire to see my likeness perpetuated in oil, but I must confess that the idea is not repellant to me. The honor is a very great one, and I wish I could feel sure that I deserve it."²⁸³ Sitters were touched to be selected and understood the invitation to be one of importance and honor, even when the medium was not oil painting. One reluctant portrait subject wrote, "It isn't the expense that keeps me from it. One thing is that I have no business among the [portraits] of so many distinguished men as are hanging upon your walls."²⁸⁴ He felt inadequate and humbled to join the list of subjects in the NLaw Halls. However, that wasn't his only reservation! He continued, writing, "the great trouble I have is in the honesty of the photographer who makes the picture look like the fellow sitting before the lens. He is too honest."²⁸⁵ Subjects negotiated choices of medium and artist through individual body-comfort concerns as well as through perceived power.

Professor Leigh Bienen agreed, joking that people choose portraits because a portrait "makes you look thinner and younger, and your hair nicer!" Though her portrait hangs in Deering Library in Evanston, rather than on the NLaw campus, she generously shared her recollections of the process. Bienen was frustrated by the calls for a portrait, because she disliked the work of the artist who received the bulk of NU commissions at the time. She wanted her portrait to reflect her professional life. She was the first NU president's wife to have a job beyond supporting her husband, so she didn't want to be depicted in "black sweater and pearls with flowers by the side."²⁸⁶ Her portrait would celebrate her independence and intellectual acumen. She found an artist independently after attending a conference in which Portraits, Inc. had a table. Portraits, Inc. was founded in 1942 by socialite Lois Shaw. It sees its mission as "bridging the gap from the fine portraiture of the past to that of the contemporary field."²⁸⁷ Bienen recalls taking the postcards of five or six artists before choosing the one who would complete her portrait. She shared the decision with a member of her household staff with a

²⁸¹ Hyde, p 11

²⁸² Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Mrs. J Dorr Bradley. (October 23, 1925)(on file with author)

²⁸³ Letter from Professor Woodward, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Winifred Rieber, Artist. (Feb 18, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁸⁴ Letter from Homer B Dibell, Judge, to John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School. (July 1, 1931)(on file with author)

²⁸⁵ JHW to honorable homer b Dibell July 11, 1931 "I shall, therefore, have to resort to evasion as counter propoganda. What I am going to do is this: if you do not promise to send me a photograph in the next ten days, I am going to write to the St Paul newspaper and suggest that they start an article on the Judge who will never be photographed, and then they will put a reporter on it who will lie in wait for you and snap you as you come in or out of the Club, so I shall get the photograph and you will get the notoriety

²⁸⁶ Bienen Interview, *supra* note 14.

²⁸⁷ <https://portraitsinc.com/history.php>

sensitive, sophisticated understanding of art. The staff member suggested the artist Bienen originally chose due to the quality of the painting's background. After selecting the artist, he travelled to Chicago for the sitting. They went to lunch at the arts club, and Bienen shared her hopes for the portrait. The artist took lots of pictures of her and the law school campus, which was chosen for the background of the portrait.²⁸⁸ The artist produced a fabulous representation by all accounts.

NLaw continues to use Portraits, Inc. today.²⁸⁹ It is a full-service company with a portfolio of many global artists. Portrait of Dean Van Zandt, Dean Rodriguez, and Dean Yuracko were the most recent commissions. The law school's HR team sends subjects a list of possible artists to choose among. The list contains information about the artists' biography and samples of their work²⁹⁰ Dean Yuracko recalls choosing the person whose prior work she liked, whereas Dean Rodriguez does not remember having a choice. The artist behind Dean Rodriguez's portrait flew from his North Carolina studio to take hundreds of photos in different seating and stand positions. The portrait was completed using the photographs as reference. Like Bienen, Rodriguez felt strongly about the way he would be depicted. He described agreeing, "very reluctantly, to the portrait, only ... if Rico would appear." Rico Suave, the Rodriguez family's beloved pet for 14 years, was "such a source of comfort to [Dean Rodriguez] during the busy months and years of [his] deanship and such a constant presence around the law school, that [he] thought it only fitting that he should be prominently displayed." Rodriguez negotiated the portrait's depiction to highlight aspects of his NLaw experience that might not otherwise have been captured. Though no longer the dominant medium, the NLaw community continues to leverage portraits to convey and communicate key details of the NLaw story.

Neither Rodriguez nor Yuracko saw their paintings until completion. Yuracko remarked that she "thought it was fine and somewhat large" upon seeing it for the first time. Rodriguez cited discomfort seeing depictions of himself, but pride in being "part of the public face of the law school, at least as an element of its history... knowing that someone of [his] background (First Gen Latinx law teacher/scholar; one of the very first diverse deans at a T14 law school) has been dean and hopefully this can be at least a small inspiration to our students in knowing that they can achieve high goals in the profession." He still tries to "avoid Lowden whenever possible 😊" but is touched by the outpouring of community support and remembrance for his deanship.²⁹¹ This is the power of portraiture: it prompts and reminds communities to celebrate their experiences together.

²⁸⁸ Bienen Interview, *supra* note 14.

²⁸⁹ Interview, *supra* note 103.

²⁹⁰ Email from Kimberly Yuracko, Judd and Mary Morris Leighton Professor of Law, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 3, 2023)

²⁹¹ Email from Daniel B. Rodriguez, Harold Washington Professor, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, to Sydney Matrisciano, author. (November 29, 2023)

Space and Community Values

*“A space’s construction signals what it values; facilitates specific encounters; produces certain knowledge amongst its inhabitants; reinforces culture; and can serve to welcome or exclude Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized communities...”*²⁹²

Space and place are essential to our understanding of our purpose. People have strong emotional responses to the spaces that they interact with most frequently. In the case of the law school, there are so many different groups of stakeholders within the same space. This leads to conflicted emotions at times. Balancing tradition and modernity is a perennial challenge. Our environment has historical value. So much of what the school is, and what kind of place it can be in the future, have been shaped by the events of the past. When George Ryan commuted over 100 death sentences in Lincoln Hall, he made history.²⁹³ The NLaw campus holds many more stories of that regard; stories made possible in part by the presence of the space itself. Events unfold here in a way that they otherwise wouldn’t in other environments. The physical environment of the law school is an inseparable expression of its mission.

Leaders of the school have always recognized the power of its environment. They designed the space to be “a splendid repository of the learned scholars of the past...like what you see in the English, French, and German universities...”²⁹⁴ The environment and its artwork would be seen “every year by several hundred students and visitors... a more public honor to [ones] memory and fame than any other possible place, except the US Court Room itself.”²⁹⁵ The leaders recognized that hundreds of diverse individuals would be impacted by the NLaw campus. They made strategic decisions in recognition of this truth. Even today, space is used to communicate with the community. Display locations for new acquisitions are chosen to maximize their impact. Higher traffic areas, such as the RB 140/150 corridor and the Atrium, feature the most important pieces of the collection. However, space utilization is an ongoing dialogue between building stewards and building users. Feedback leads to change in appearance and display of the NLaw Collection.²⁹⁶

During a modern renovation project, a portrait was removed from its original place. The function of the space was changing from alumni relations to career development, and it was unclear what should happen to the artwork of the original space. It was not displayed after the completion of the renovation. Unfortunately, this decision harmed members of the NLaw community. Relatives of the portrait’s subject happened to walk through the space and notice its absence. They were understandably upset and confused. Conversations were had to discern the best course of action. The parties agreed that the portrait should be rehung in the new space allocated for the alumni relations center, while a plaque would be added to the original room detailing its history.²⁹⁷ Sometimes, the desires of alumni and donor stakeholders are at odds with what is best for the institution. Other times, a compromises are possible. In this instance, community feedback and dialogue were essential to reach a resolution. Space holds meaning and memory.

Space is also a medium to negotiate differences in values. Within the art collecting community, there is a division between collectors who see the importance of art as its physical condition and those that see its importance as rooted in its emotional impact and accessibility to the community it serves. The Lichtenstein in the Atrium is a good example within our collection for this point, as it elucidates strong emotions from both sides. As a condition of its donation, it cannot be removed from display or displayed with a barrier, such as glass. It is a paper-based piece, and it is delicate. It is in the most trafficked area of the school, near a small café. This exposes it to additional environmental elements. One community member noticed the risks of

²⁹² <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-art-of-black-lives-matter-lessons-for-organizations-and-policymakers-from-the-streets/>

²⁹³ Bienen Interview, *supra* note 14.

²⁹⁴ March 11, 1941.

²⁹⁵ Letter from John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern Law School, to Drummond. (January 28, 1926)(on file with author)

²⁹⁶ Interview, *supra* note 90.

²⁹⁷ Interview, *supra* note 91.

unprotected display and sought to learn more about the reasons behind that decision.²⁹⁸ Collection management strategies vary widely to support different aims, as discussed in a previous section. Several members of the Northwestern Block Museum of Art were concerned as well, because best practices for perpetual upkeep and conservation are in contradiction with the donor restrictions.²⁹⁹ A Block Curator visited the NLaw campus in 2015 to advise the collection stewards on its care and safety as an open air work.³⁰⁰ Conservators from the Art Institute of Chicago were retained to clean the work, but it remains openly displayed today.³⁰¹ The tensions between ensuring the wellbeing of the art and making it as open as possible to the NLaw community are difficult to resolve.

Another values-based debate is occurring in collections around the world. This debate is between tradition and cultural sensitivity. Works from earlier time periods that have hung for decades sometimes depict subjects that are hurtful. The historically dominant community has not recognized the issues inherent with those figures, even though people from diverse backgrounds have advocated and communicated their distinct values and traditions throughout the collections' history. As diversity increases across all levels of the university, advocacy against these pieces is finally being respected, and the institutional response is changing as a result. This is evidenced in several pieces of the NLaw collection, such as a portrait of Justice Taney removed in 2018. Stakeholders involved in the removal process recall not knowing who was depicted in the portrait for many years but feeling tremendous disgust once learning of the subject's role in upholding slavery in the United States.³⁰² This highlights the importance of labels within the collection; knowledge unlocks deeper emotions and reactions to artistic depictions, allowing response in alignment with community values.

In 1934, alumni John Schaffer donated several pieces of artwork to the school's collection.³⁰³ One of those pieces depicts Christopher Columbus, imprisoned, signing his last will and testament.³⁰⁴ The portrait is roughly 12 feet in measure, and it hung most recently in Aspen Hall.³⁰⁵ Members of the community previously questioned, then protested, its presence.³⁰⁶ In the 2015-2016 school year, Thomas King's book *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* was selected for the One Book One Northwestern initiative.³⁰⁷ Mr. King was invited to speak at the Law School, and the program was scheduled to be held in Aspen Hall. The portrait was removed for his talk, because a portrait of the man credited with catalyzing mass devastation for native communities is incongruous with a program on Indigenous sovereignty and presence. Unfortunately, the portrait was replaced after the program.³⁰⁸ After resumed protest, the portrait was then covered before being removed to a third-party temperature-controlled storage facility. Its removal was complicated by the necessary logistics conversations. Agreements needed to be reached between multiple stakeholders.³⁰⁹ Potential sale was pursued, however, it did not occur.³¹⁰ This is potentially due to lack of market interest, though many people remember the portrait as being highly valued from a financial perspective.³¹¹

These debates are combined in the NLaw collection through a depiction of Chairman Mao. Andy Warhol created the piece in 1973. It was given by the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation in honor of David C. Ruttenberg, LAW 1932, and Sarajeon Ruttenberg, CAS 1936. It currently hangs in a staff corridor behind the circulation desk of the library, where it was moved out of

²⁹⁸ Interview, *supra* note 57.

²⁹⁹ Interview with Kathleen Berzock, Director, Block Gallery. (October 17, 2023)

³⁰⁰ Silverstein Interview, *supra* note 124.

³⁰¹ Interview, *supra* note 90.

³⁰² These interview subjects have requested anonymity to protect their professional reputation. Further information may be available upon contacting the author of this paper.

³⁰³ Letter, John Henry Wigmore, Dean, Northwestern University.

³⁰⁴ 2005 catalogue

³⁰⁵ Interview, *supra* note 57.

³⁰⁶ Interview, *supra* note 91.

³⁰⁷ <https://www.northwestern.edu/onebook/inconvenient-indian/archives/>

³⁰⁸ Interview, *supra* note 57.

³⁰⁹ *Id.*

³¹⁰ Interview, *supra* note 91.

³¹¹ Interview with Cliff Zimmerman, Professor, Northwestern School of Law. (October 17, 2023)

sensitivity to a group of Asian LLM students who raised concerns about Mao's legacy.³¹² Some community members are aware of its existence due to their work-study positions or meetings with library staff members in offices lining the corridor. Images of the piece have been circulated in campus group chats as recently as 2022. Community members are divided as to whether it should be displayed more prominently due to the prestige the artist or removed from the collection entirely. For now, it remains on display in a less accessible portion of the school.

Within the NLaw collection, artwork functions as a deeper educational opportunity. Contextual materials and labels enable community members to reflect deeper on their future roles in the world. Some of the lessons in the collection are cautionary, such as those housed in MC371. MC371 was formerly known as MacChesney Hall, in honor of alumnus Nathan William MacChesney. MacChesney did many things in his lifetime, such as found the Northwestern Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology and serve in both the Spanish-American war and World War I. He also drafted the "Standard Form, Chicago Restrictive Covenant," a legal document that was instrumental in redlining throughout the city of Chicago. Redlining, or the practice of restricting investment on racially discriminatory grounds, is an abhorrent practice. MacChesney used the legal knowledge gained during his time on the NLaw campus in a manner detrimental to the world. Reflecting on his legacy warns current students of the power their degree affords; power that must be wielded responsibly and ethically. Cadastral Shaking by Amanda Williams hangs in MC371 today, depicting redlining in the city. The piece serves as a visual reminder of what happens when NLaw community members fail to use their legal experience with integrity.

Other reminders in the halls are more exemplary in tone, such as a piece hanging near Strawn hall. It depicts members of the NLaw community gathered in the Stevens Courtyard during February 2017. They hold signs that read, 'We Are All Immigrants.' This photograph was undertaken in direct response to travel bans targeting Muslim countries from entering the United States. Community members felt strongly that the singling out of a racial group was reprehensible discrimination. They noted a lack of solidarity in the throughout the nation and organized the performance to remind the NLaw community of its strength. Our community values direct us away from bigotry, toward using our collective voice and legal acumen to protect the dignity of all.

Thus far the project has only considered art as items hanging on the walls or otherwise obviously on display, such as in cases or freestanding sculpture accompanied by descriptive signage. The debate about what constitutes as art, or how to discern artistic intention, is ongoing. Within the collection, art is not measured by obvious skill or by medium. Community stewards consider the intended purpose of the work when evaluating the spread of resources, such as bandwidth and budget to support signage as discussed above. However, the power of space is also expressed through sundry items. Sundries include chairs, rugs, lighting—the seemingly mundane objects, too numerous to name and consider individually. Nevertheless, even the sundry items within the NLaw space are leveraged to support experiences of wonder and increased representation for the community. The fiber optic installation just outside of Harry's Café is one such example. Lights twinkle in the ceiling above, inset into warm wood-toned paneling. The project was completed during the 2014 renovation by architectural firm Holabird and Root, which designed the Rubloff building in the 1980s. The installation was very complicated and largely unnecessary, but it functions to add whimsy and joy to our shared space. Nearby, a series of chairs designed by David Adge surround a white communal table in the Atrium space. Adge is a Ghanian-British architect born in Tanzania in 1966. Representative stories can be conveyed by furniture as well as 'art.'

The NLaw art collection reflects the rich history and mission of the school. In contrast to peer institutions, such as the University of Chicago, the NLaw collection does not feature as

³¹² Interview, *supra* note 57.

many community photographs.³¹³ NLaw is unique in its breadth of fine and contemporary art. Adding art is much easier than negotiating what should come down or how to contextualize what is present. But the work of collection stewardship is invaluable. Our community can acknowledge its history yet also control its present and future. Unlike corporate collections, or private collections, or professional museum collections, higher education has a tradition of academic freedom, competing ideas, and measured expression of beliefs. Our collection embodies and honors those tenets through its ever changing and diverse display.

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Items from the collection may be seen in the 2023 catalogue project, accessible [here](#).

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³¹³ Zoom Interview with Daniel B. Rodriguez, Harold Washington Professor, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, October 25, 2023.