

Baylor Law Dean Is Second Longest-Serving Dean in the Country

Correction: A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that Baylor Law's dean was stepping down from his position.



Summary: Baylor University School of Law dean has been with the law school for 26 years, leading the school to success.

Baylor University School of Law hasn't had to worry about finding a dean in 26 years. In a time when law school deans last an average of four years, Dean Brad Toben 26-year reign and counting has brought perhaps even greater success for the Texan law school. Toben took over as dean of the law school in 1991. Toben said, "I love my work. It's not a matter of length of years, it's a matter of can you make a contribution that moves the institution forward. I hope to have a blessing of doing that a lot more years."

According to [Law.com](#), Toben is the second longest-serving law dean in the country. The longest-serving dean is John O'Brien who was dean of [New England Law Boston](#) for 30 years. Compared to Texas law school deans, Toben is well above the others in terms of time served. [South Texas College of Law Houston](#) dean Donald Guter is the closest at nine years, and he plans to retire this year. The average term length among law school deans is just four years.

Baylor Law Professor David Guinn of 51 years said Toben has done a lot of work improving the school. He noted the increase in the school's endowment income, upgrades to their physical buildings, and doubling the faculty numbers. Guinn says that the school's employees have great respect for Toben. He said, "Dean Toben in my 51 years has done a superb job of administering this law school and has brought it up tremendously. We have indeed made a lot of improvements in that period of time, not the least of which is the high quality of young men and women we are bringing in the program."

Mississippi College School of Law professor and dean emeritus Jim Rosenblatt runs a deans database. He explains that deans typically stay in the position for only four years because they want to return to teaching, take another position, or retire. Being a law school dean is a tough, demanding job so most deans are not able to keep up the time commitment and energy for longer than four years. He said, "Dean Toben has been remarkable in his leadership over the years and is one of the primary reasons his school continues to be so widely respected and regarded. He has an amazing ability to do all parts of his job so well and continues to bring freshness and energy to his work each day."

Toben is no stranger to Baylor. He was drawn to the law school after finishing his undergraduate degree in just over two years in St. Louis. He was intrigued by their quarter system, which would allow him to start law school sooner. He explained, "If you asked me then were Baylor was located, I would not have been able to tell you. I showed up in February and started law school here sight unseen."

He was able to graduate from Baylor early too. By the time he was 22, he had his J.D. He continued his academic career by earning a master in law degree from [Harvard University](#). He went on to teach at [Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis](#) for a couple of years before an opportunity to return to Baylor as a professor came up. He spent eight years teaching commercial law, bankruptcy, and reorganization before he was selected as the dean.

One of Toben's biggest accomplishments during his time as dean has been to raise their endowment. When Toben became the dean, the school's endowment was around \$875,000. Now the endowment sits around \$120 million. Toben credits this success by building relationships with alumni. He said around the five-year mark, when other deans are leaving, he was just starting to build strong connections with the alumni.

Do you think that law school deans would be more successful if they stuck with the job longer? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about Baylor Law School, read these articles:

- [First B2B Group Graduates in May, Some Preparing for Baylor Law this Summer](#)
- [Baylor Law Launches Executive LL.M. in Litigation Management](#)
- [Baylor Law School Appoints Judge Leonard Davis as 2012's Lawyer of the Year](#)

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