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Dowden Receives Supreme Court Clerkship

2/23/04—Boston College Law School is pleased to announce that James P. Dowden, class of 2000 and current BC Law visiting assistant professor, has been selected to serve as a law clerk to the Honorable Stephen Breyer, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Dowden’s clerkship will mark the third time in the Law School’s history that a graduate has been selected for a Supreme Court Clerkship. Dowden will assume his duties in July of 2004.

“We are so proud of Jim and what he has accomplished,” said BC Law Dean John H. Garvey. “This is a very important honor that is given only to the very best young lawyers in the world, and it speaks to Jim’s remarkable talent and potential. We have been lucky to have him teaching here during the past year, and I hope he will remain closely involved with the Law School in the years to come.”

A magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the Boston College College of Arts and Sciences in 1997, Dowden has also worked as a Litigation Associate in the Boston law firm of Ropes & Gray, LLP where his practice focused primarily on white-collar criminal defense. Before joining Ropes & Gray, Dowden was Law Clerk to the Honorable Anthony J. Scirica, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

“This is an historic moment for Boston College Law School,” said Monan Professor of Law and former Dean, Daniel Coquillette. “It is the equivalent of Boston College undergraduates winning Rhodes Scholarships because it means that we are recognized as a top-flight institution. And of course it is a tremendous tribute to Jim and a testament to his talents. It shows the respect that Justice Breyer has for Jim, and for BC Law.”

Dowden graduated first in his class from BC Law receiving the James W. Smith Award for the student with the highest academic rank. He was also the sole BC Law recipient of the National Law School Dean’s List Award in 2000. While a student at BC Law, Dowden worked in the Criminal Justice Clinic, where he represented indigent criminal defendants in state district court proceedings. As Associate Editor of the Boston College Law Review, he wrote an article analyzing the practice of criminal plea bargaining entitled, United States v. Singleton: A Warning Shot Heard ‘Round the Circuits? He currently teaches courses on white-collar crime and constitutional law.

“I am extraordinarily grateful to the faculty and staff of Boston College Law School who have been so supportive of me,” Dowden said.

Dowden describes the offer to clerk for Justice Breyer as a “tremendous honor” and an "incredible opportunity to examine the most cutting edge legal issues affecting the nation and to see how the judicial process works firsthand.”

“Jim Dowden is one of the most outstanding Boston College Law School graduates we’ve produced in many years,” said Darald and Juliet Libby Professor of Law Sanford Katz. “His appointment is an enormous honor for him and for the Law School. As a Supreme Court law clerk, he joins the ranks of an elite corps of lawyers who have greatly influenced American law and society.”