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Croak Endowment Fund Supports Legal Services for Students

For more than a decade, an innovative clinic at DePaul has offered advice to students through the Croak Student Legal Services (CSLS) program. Now, an endowment campaign in honor of the clinic's founding director, the **Rev. Thomas Croak, C.M. (JD '91)**, has raised more than \$130,000 from Chicago law firms and attorneys to ensure that the program can serve students for years to come.

"The mission of CSLS is to help students resolve their legal problems with as little disruption as possible to their educational endeavors," says **Sarah Baum (JD '08)**, the current CSLS director. Since its founding in 2006, CSLS has served more than 2,250 DePaul students.

"The majority of our students don't come from wealthy families where parents can have an attorney review a lease or resolve a conflict," says Jose Padilla, vice president and general counsel at DePaul, whose office works closely with the CSLS. CSLS focuses on helping students to make educated choices to prevent legal difficulties. While CSLS cannot represent students in court, it can help them understand their rights and obligations, provide general recommendations and help them find useful resources, including referrals to licensed, practicing attorneys with experience related to their case.

"Fr. Tom Croak is a friend, and I admire very much what he's done with his life and career," says DePaul Trustee **Mary Dempsey (JD '82)**. "He's a lawyer who has put his Vincentian principles into practice in his work." Dempsey is president of the Philip H. Corboy Foundation, which made a generous gift to the Croak endowment.

Fr. Croak, who says he is "flattered and a little overwhelmed" by the generous gifts made in his honor, stays in close touch with CSLS and continues to volunteer at DePaul's Asylum & Immigration Law Clinic. "I enjoy working with students," he says. "It keeps me young."



Rev. Thomas Croak, C.M., and Mary Dempsey

The Chicago law firms listed here supported the Croak endowment campaign with leadership gifts that together far exceeded the original \$75,000 target:

Chapman & Cutler LLP

DLA Piper

Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLC

Jones Day

Husch Blackwell

Perkins Coie