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## Comments on The John Marshall Law School's Employee Benefits Program, 47 J. Marshall L. Rev. 853 (2014)

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# THE JOHN MARSHALL LAW SCHOOL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS LL.M AND M.S. PROGRAMS

## THE CENTER FOR TAX LAW & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

*Comments of Professor and Associate Dean Kathryn J. Kennedy<sup>1</sup> on the  
John Marshall Law School's Employee Benefits Programs*

The John Marshall Law School continues to be the only law school in the nation that offers advanced graduate degrees – an LL.M. degree and an M.S. degree – in Employee Benefits Law. The program initially began as a concentration in employee benefits under the Graduate Tax Program, but became its own LL.M. degree in 1998 after receiving ABA official acquiescence. As an understanding of employee benefits law is critical to many actuaries, human resource officers, investment advisors, and other benefits professional, an M.S. degree in Employee Benefits was created in 2005. The curriculum offers 21 different courses in employee benefits law – ranging from international employee benefits to ERISA litigation – as well as 13 different externships with government agencies and not-for-profit entities and 2 different practica with law firms and consulting firms.

The advanced degree programs in Employee Benefits law is designed to provide a comprehensive foundation for those students who are interested in an employee benefits practice. With consultation with members of our faculty and advisory board, the curriculum remains timely, focused and relevant to the ever-changing field of employee benefits law. As a result of our comprehensive and thorough overview of the law, the LL.M. graduates acquire the skills necessary to successfully practice in this area. Our M.S. graduates return to their area of practice with a clearer understanding of the legal rules governing employee benefits law, making them more valuable to their clients.

The faculty consists of full-time faculty, knowledgeable employee benefits practitioners, and current and former members

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Kathryn J. Kennedy is a Professor and Associate Dean for Advanced Studies and Research, as well as the Director for the Center for Tax Law & Employee Benefits. She joined the faculty in 1996 and developed the extensive employee benefits curriculum for the LL.M. and M.S. degrees in Employee Benefits Law, which remain the only degrees of their type in the nation.

of the IRS Office of Chief Counsel. As such, our professors are able to provide insights and perspectives on the real-world practice of employee benefits law. Without exception, they all bring extraordinary commitment to teaching.

This year, the school hosted its 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee Benefits Symposium, which brings in practitioners and scholars to present papers on timely and relevant employee benefits issues. The symposium affords our students the opportunity of discussing these issues with academics, practitioners and the community at large.

Working with our students to attain the skill sets they will need to compete in a challenging and complex field of law has always been a tradition for us, as well as the school as a whole. We are proud and grateful for The John Marshall Law Review for co-hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee Benefits Symposium and for publishing this special symposium edition.