

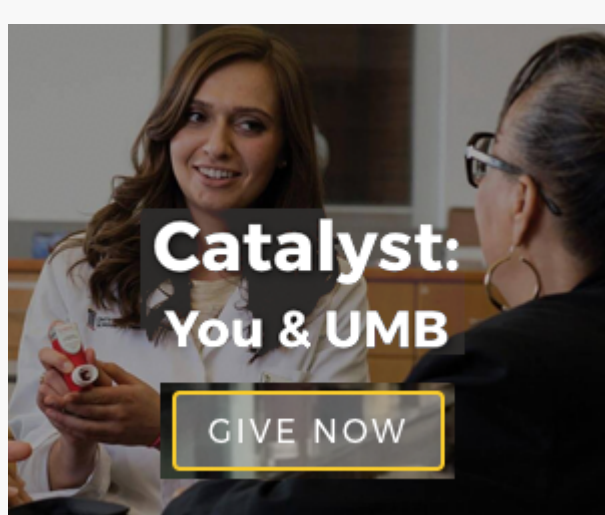


## Founders Week

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Founders Week Award Winners
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### Educator of the Year



#### RICHARD BOLDT, JD

Francis King Carey School of Law  
T. Carroll Brown Professor of Law

It was 1989, and Richard Boldt, JD, was teaching at City University of New York School of Law when he was asked to visit the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) to help its law school design its Legal Theory and Practice curriculum. He was supposed to remain for one year; 33 years later, he is still imparting his knowledge to students at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.

His students remark upon his brilliance, kindness, accessibility, and dedication as he teaches subjects that comprise the core of the law school curriculum: Torts; Constitutional Law I: Governance; Constitutional Law II: Individual Rights; Criminal Law; Advanced Torts; and a Mental Disability Law seminar.

"Professor Boldt helps students understand complex areas of the law. He challenges students to think critically and deeply, engaging the class in analytical dialogue to help them understand the connections between doctrine, rhetoric, and broader social context," said Donald Tobin, JD, professor of law who stepped down as Maryland Carey Law dean this year. "In this way, Professor Boldt helps students develop their own passion for the law and understanding of their role as legal professionals."

Boldt, the T. Carroll Brown Professor of Law who has been selected the Student Bar Association Teacher of the Year multiple times, can add another title to his accomplishments: UMB's 2022 Educator of the Year.

Boldt, who was humbled and surprised to learn of the award, credits his parents — his mother was a nutritionist, and his father an internist who taught at the University of Louisville School of Medicine — with being his most influential educators.

"Both were terrific teachers who instilled in me an appreciation for helping others to learn," he said. "And both showed me that good teaching takes lots of hard work."

Boldt's classes are some of the most popular and in demand at the law school. He uses an approach that teaches students to think about every case at three intellectual levels: the straightforward doctrinal analysis, or what the court held in the case; a deeper rhetorical level to understand the court's strategic use and manipulation of facts and argument; and an examination of the social, economic, and political interests at contest.

"Professor Boldt's teaching instills in students an understanding of their immense power and responsibility as legal professionals to improve the law and serve poor and marginalized communities," Tobin said.

Boldt also is an innovator and was instrumental in designing the Legal Theory and Practice program that brought him to Maryland Carey Law. This nationally known program built experiences into the early stages of a law student's education that moved fluidly between clinical practice and other applied work, traditional doctrinal education, and serious theory work.

"This combination of practice, doctrine, and theory was centered on legal problems that impact communities of clients who are systematically disadvantaged economically, socially, and in the legal system," Boldt said. "This is an important way to teach because it leverages the insights provided by theory to deepen our understanding of the practical problems faced by disadvantaged and often underrepresented clients and simultaneously draws insight from the data derived from practice to refine and sharpen the theoretical models that organize our thinking."

He added that while the law school was unable to sustain the model in its original form, "the effort left an imprint on the law school that is reflected in our Clinical Law Program, a number of other offerings in our curriculum, and much of our scholarship."

Boldt's students say his teaching method is effective and engaging.

"His passion for teaching is apparent, and the 'three levels of analysis' methodology has the added benefit of also making lectures interesting," one student wrote in his evaluation. "Taking Torts from Professor Boldt feels like learning from the master. For every question or comment presented, he unveils a new wealth of knowledge."

Boldt derives great satisfaction from all of the courses he teaches, but the Mental Disability Law seminar, which draws students with behavioral health and related backgrounds, is a favorite.

"The mix of background and experience has helped to generate productive conversations about the most difficult questions of law and policy that arise in this area," he said.

Boldt said the most important knowledge he can pass to his students is to learn how to read and think critically. "To appreciate, as the philosophical pragmatists pointed out, that the search for truth is experiential, practical, contextual, and driven importantly by perspective," he said.

Michael Millemann, JD, professor of law, says his longtime teaching partner "is in a league by himself."

"In the classroom, he is a master of whatever subject matter that he is teaching. The depth and breadth of his knowledge are quickly apparent," Millemann said. "He is extremely clear when he lectures, describing complicated concepts in plain language that is accessible to all. He has enormous respect for his students, and they pick up on this quickly."

Boldt maintains relationships with his students — who include successful practitioners, judges, academics, Maryland legislative leaders, and community activists — beyond graduation.

"They keep me honest," he said. "It is highly rewarding to experience the evolution of a student-teacher relationship into a relationship between professional colleagues."

Maryland Court of Special Appeals Judge Dan Friedman, JD '94, met Boldt as a student and became his teaching assistant in a class that represented one of the last prisoners on Maryland's death row, an experience that Friedman called "life-changing."

"Richard Boldt is the best teacher that I have ever known, and his teaching changed my life's trajectory. In my book, Richard Boldt is UMB's teacher of this — and every — year," Friedman said.

His colleagues have similar praise, as Boldt serves as a mentor to all.

"Whether as a supervisor, mentor, co-author, friend, or colleague, Professor Boldt is first and foremost a teacher. It is not just a job or role for him that he assumes in the classroom, but rather something that underlies and pervades everything he undertakes. And he is the best teacher most of us have ever seen — whether in the classroom, seminar room, or conference room," said Peter G. Danchin, JD, Jacob A. France Professor of Law, associate dean for research and faculty development, and director, International and Comparative Law Program.

"There is no colleague from whom I have learned more about legal thought and pedagogy, a sentiment shared broadly by junior and more senior faculty alike. It is impossible to overstate the depth of his influence and value of his contribution to the intellectual life and richness of the teaching culture of the law school."

Millemann agreed, saying Boldt spends many hours meeting with colleagues.

"He is as, or more responsible, than any other faculty member for the wonderful array of terrific teachers Maryland Carey Law has today," Millemann said. "We are a group of committed and excellent teachers, in significant part because of Richard's good judgment and educational leadership."

And Boldt credits his colleagues for being named Educator of the Year.

"The law school is full of gifted and dedicated teachers, many of whom have helped me to develop my teaching," he said. "I am honored to be singled out, but I also regard this award as a recognition of our faculty as a whole."

— Jen Badie

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