

Former U. S. Attorney Jim Letten to lead skills training push at Tulane Law School

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Jim Letten, the former U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, will join [Tulane University Law School](#) in a newly created leadership role as assistant dean for experiential learning.

Letten will lead a major effort at Tulane to expand practical skills training for law students. In addition to coordinating the law school's existing skills programs, Letten will spearhead new efforts to enlist legal employers and alumni in creating additional opportunities for students to learn through simulation courses and supervised practical experience.

Law School Dean David Meyer described Letten's appointment as a bold statement of Tulane's intentions to lead a national movement to remake legal education.

"Tulane is already at the forefront of innovative efforts to give students a stronger grounding in law practice while in law school," Meyer said. "With his deep experience and national leadership, Jim Letten is uniquely qualified to spearhead that effort and ensure that Tulane continues to be recognized nationally for its innovation in skills training."

"Over the past two years, Tulane Law School has dramatically expanded its externship program, sending hundreds of students into field placements around the world, and launched a first-of-its-kind immersion boot camp that simulates life as a young lawyer," Meyer said. The lawyering-skills boot camp, launched in January 2011, won Tulane Law School recognition last fall as one of the nation's "20 Most Innovative Law Schools" by *National Jurist* magazine. The program allows students to experience life as a young lawyer working on a simulated business transaction or case in the civil or criminal courts, and is taught by more than 100 lawyers from across the country.

“In the coming months, we will be launching additional initiatives to expand students' opportunities to gain practical lawyering skills, and Jim Letten is ideally qualified to guide those efforts,” Meyer said. “We are ensuring that Tulane lawyers are recognized everywhere as both globally sophisticated and able to deliver value to clients from the very start of their careers.”

Speaking to his appointment at Tulane Law School, Letten stated:

“The opportunity to serve in a new and innovative leadership role at my alma mater is especially in forging and advancing innovative strategies to enhance the practical skills of young lawyers facing the ever-changing challenges of the profession is an honor for which I am extremely grateful. Moreover, working with Law School Dean David Meyer and his tremendous team of professionals is a privilege for me both personally and professionally. My thanks go to university President Scott Cowen, Dean Meyer and those educators at Tulane who have extended this trust and opportunity to me.”

Letten is expected to start in his new position this month. Prior to stepping down in December 2012, Letten had been the longest-serving U.S. attorney in the nation and was one of only three U.S. attorneys in the country appointed to the position by successive presidents from different parties. After serving as interim U.S. attorney, Letten was first nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the full U.S. Senate, and later reappointed by President Barack Obama. In all, Letten spent more than 11 ½ continuous years as U.S. attorney.

As U.S. attorney, Letten served on the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, chaired the Attorney General's Subcommittee on Violent and Organized Crime and co-chaired the attorney general's policy review panel on capital punishment. He served on the Attorney General's Subcommittees on Terrorism and National Security and Environmental Issues, and also served as the Director of the National Center for Disaster Fraud.

Before being appointed U.S. attorney, Letten had been the first assistant U.S. attorney in the office and served as lead counsel in the investigation and four-month trial and conviction of former Louisiana Gov. Edwin Edwards. Additionally, Letten had previously served on and later led the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Racketeering Strike Force in New Orleans. During his nearly 34-year legal career, he

has litigated literally hundreds of both jury and bench trials in both federal and state courts.

Before becoming a federal prosecutor, Letten spent a total of six years as an assistant district attorney and in private law practice in New Orleans. He graduated from Tulane Law School in 1979 and over his career has lectured and presented extensively on a variety of legal topics at the Tulane Law School, as well as at other institutions including the U.S. Department of Justice National Advocacy Center in Columbia, S. C. In the years following Hurricane Katrina, he has presented numerous lectures on crisis management and continuity of operations across the United States.

Letten has received scores of awards, including the Attorney General's Medallion for Distinguished Service for his leadership following Hurricane Katrina, the Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Litigation following the trial and conviction of the former Louisiana governor, and recently the Anti-Defamation League's 2010 Torch of Liberty Award for advancing civil rights, among many others.

In addition to his lengthy and distinguished legal career, Letten served in the United States Naval Reserve for 20 years, having retired as a commander. During his service, Letten was an intelligence officer, serving in foreign counter intelligence; as an intelligence analyst; squadron intelligence officer; and over 12 years as an NCIS agent. During an assignment in Germany at U.S. European Command, Letten worked on researching and drafting early protocol studies for what eventually became the International War Crimes Tribunal.

Founded in 1847, Tulane is the 12th oldest law school in the United States and is recognized for its leading strength in international and comparative law, maritime law, environmental law, and sports law. It also offers six in-house legal clinics, where students are able to represent clients in actual legal matters involving domestic violence, criminal law, civil litigation, juvenile justice, environmental law and legislative advocacy.