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### Departing Dean Morgan Reflects

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#### Recommended Citation

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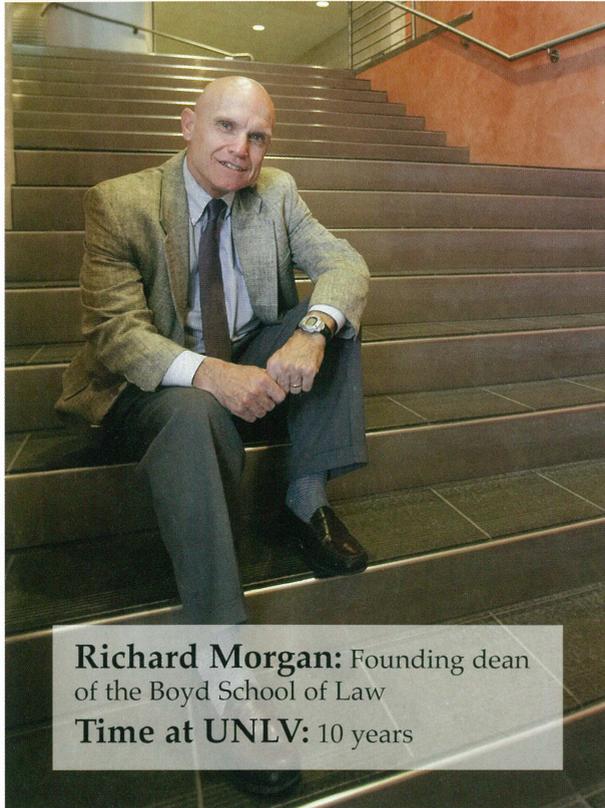
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# Departing Deans Reflect

Inside UNLV recently sat down with three deans who are stepping down from their posts June 30.

Stories by **Grace Russell** | Marketing & PR



**Richard Morgan:** Founding dean of the Boyd School of Law  
**Time at UNLV:** 10 years

## Visit of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Special Moment for Law School Dean

### Why are you leaving?

I have three grandkids who are growing up fast. One is already 9 years old, another is 6, and we have a brand new 9-month-old grandson who lives nearby. When he was born last May, it occurred to me that the childhoods of these people go by so quickly.

Keep in mind, too, that I have been a dean for 20 years — which is a really long run for deans this day and age. I take the responsibility very seriously, and I know what I was like at my best and what I am like now.

I also worry a lot. I have been a dean at UNLV for 10 years, and frankly, I am tired of the responsibility — tired of the worrying. I don't see myself as having the energy and the freshness of ideas to be the optimal leader for this place for the next five years. Maybe after I have been away from it a year or two, I'll miss it. But right now, I would like to be free of the responsibility.

### What is next for you?

I will still be in Las Vegas working on several private-sector, part-time engagements.

My wife and I have a place in Brianhead (Utah)

that I always regret leaving. I'll be 62 years old on June 30 when I step down. At that age, you don't know how long you have left for skiing and mountain biking. I would like to hit some trails and slopes while my legs can still take it.

### What was your greatest achievement?

A proud moment for me was when U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy was here to dedicate the law school in August 2002. He spent three days here as a visitor, teaching classes and interacting with community benefactors. At our dedication dinner, without being asked, he made a wonderful statement about the law school. He was impressed with the quality, excellence, and spirit that he saw in this place. It was a really heartfelt sentiment expressed by one of the most prominent people in the legal and judiciary profession. He seemed to have a genuine appreciation for what we had accomplished in four short years.

### What is the biggest change that you have seen over the years?

Ten years ago, there was nothing here. Now there is a high quality, nationally regarded law school. We received our American Bar Association accreditations and our membership in the Association of American Law Schools in record time. I think we are widely regarded as the model for how to start a law school. But most important, I think we are regarded around the state as a very good law school and community resource. So, it is satisfying to see the law school go from nothing to something quite good and substantial in a short period of time. We have built a really fine foundation for the long-term wellbeing of the law school. But there is more to do.

### What has been your biggest challenge in getting the law school where it is today?

One of the biggest challenges we faced was solidifying the community's support for the law school. There was a mixed reaction as to whether the law school would be a good idea. I went out into the community and assured people that this law school would be a community resource and an excellent law school.

We also had to convince skeptical faculty members at other law schools to give up their good jobs and come to an unknown law school. Also, for our charter students, there was no assurance that they would graduate from an accredited law school. We convinced them to take the leap by

saying that we had really good community support and that the law school was not going to be a fly-by-night operation.

### What do you want people to remember about your tenure?

I would hope people will remember me as a leader and facilitator. I don't want people to think that I built this law school. But, I do want them to think that I had something to do with assembling the people and assets that became the law school.

The fact that we have a law school at all is a tribute to Carol Harter. There had been 30 years of conversation about the possibility of a law school at UNLV, which had gone nowhere until she arrived in 1995. She immediately embraced the opportunity to plan for a law school. She went out in the community and got the initial support for the law school. She deserves a lot of credit.

### What will be your involvement with the school after leaving?

I will certainly be available to help the law school if I can. But I am also willing to stay out of the way. I know it is hard when transition takes place when the old leader is hovering around. So, I will not be offended if my role is to just watch the law school continue to flourish from afar.

### What is the number one thing you want people to know about your school?

I want people to know that the law school is and will always be a community resource. We are acutely aware that this school is supported by the state of Nevada through taxpayer dollars and donors from this community. We have tried very hard in everything we do to serve the community and make it better. I hope people will see it as an asset.

### What are you going to miss the most?

I'll miss the people. I have formed great relationships with many people on the campus and in the community.

I'll also miss the entrepreneurial spirit of the law school. This place is brimming with people who are truly questing for excellence.

### The day after you retire, after you have cleaned out your office and the lights are off, what will you be doing?

I am terrified of cleaning out this office. But, I hope I sleep late the next day and sleep like a baby the night before — and not worry about anything.