



To the Yale Community,

I am very pleased to announce that Heather Gerken, the J. Skelly Wright Professor of Law, will be the next dean of Yale Law School, effective July 1. Professor Gerken succeeds Robert Post, the Sol and Lillian Goldman Professor of Law, who is stepping down after eight outstanding years at the school's helm.

A member of the Yale faculty since 2006, Professor Gerken is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in constitutional and election law. She earned her A.B. (in history) from Princeton and her J.D. from the University of Michigan; clerked in the U.S. Court of Appeals and then for Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter; and was an associate of the firm Jenner & Block in Washington, D.C., before beginning her academic career at Harvard Law School. She is a founder of the “nationalist school” of federalism, focusing her work on federalism, diversity,

and dissent. She also proposed the creation of a “democracy index” (a national ranking of election systems) that was adopted by the Pew Charitable Trusts in 2013, establishing the United States’ first election performance index. Her work has been the subject of four symposia and featured in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Boston Globe*.

Professor Gerken brings a diverse practice experience to the deanship, having worked as an appellate lawyer in Washington, D.C., and served as a senior advisor to Barack Obama’s presidential campaigns in 2008 and 2012. At Yale she co-founded and is the faculty advisor to the San Francisco Affirmative Litigation Project, an innovative clinic partnering with the San Francisco City Attorney’s Office to address local issues with a national impact. She will be one of the only deans to oversee a clinic while leading the school and the first woman to hold the Yale Law School deanship.

Professor Gerken is an acclaimed educator who was featured as one of the country’s twenty-six top law teachers in Harvard University Press’s *What the Best Law Teachers Do*. She received the Yale Law Women Faculty Teaching Award in 2009 and the Sachs-Freund Award for Teaching Excellence at Harvard in 2003. Her courses at Yale focus on constitutional law and election law. She is the author of *The Democracy Index: Why Our Election System is Failing and How to Fix It*; edited *Race, Reform, and Regulation of the Electoral Process: Recurring Puzzles in American Democracy*; and has published extensively in law journals, reviews, and the popular media. She is a member of the American Law Institute and the Princeton University board of trustees. She lives with her husband, Dave Simon – a lecturer in Yale’s Department of Political Science and co-director of the Genocide Studies Program – and their two children, Anna and Ben, ages 14 and 11.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the search committee – Paul Kahn (*chair*), Stephen Carter, Amy Chua, Jonathan Macey, Claire Priest, James Silk, and Kate Stith – for their thoughtful work in helping us to identify such an exemplary new dean. And I reiterate my profound gratitude to Dean Robert Post for all he has contributed to the success of the school – and the wider university – during his time as dean. We will have many opportunities to celebrate his achievements during the months ahead.

Please join me in extending Heather Gerken heartfelt congratulations on her appointment as the next dean of Yale Law School.

Sincerely,

Peter Salovey
President and Chris Argyris Professor of Psychology