

LEADING VOICES



(L-R) Dean Jelani Jefferson Exum, Eric Belfi, and Associate Dean Brian J. Woods at the Fall Alumni Golf Outing.

ERIC J. BELFI '95 On Leadership As Stewardship

While battering wind and rain kept players off the green at the annual Fall Alumni Golf Outing, spirits remained high indoors as event honoree Eric Belfi, Chairman of Labaton Keller Sucharow LLP, accepted an award recognizing his exemplary work in the legal industry, his commitment to mentoring the next generation of lawyers, and his dedication to St. John's Law.

An accomplished litigator and former prosecutor, Belfi has built a successful practice focused on complex securities and shareholder rights litigation. He represents many of the largest and most influential institutional investors across the world and is a respected voice on legal and regulatory issues. Drawing on his practical experience and insight, Belfi leads Labaton Keller Sucharow as it continues to evolve and grow as a leading plaintiffs' firm.

In that leadership role, he succeeds the late Christopher J. Keller '97, a close friend and colleague who passed away last year. "Chris was a remarkable lawyer, a principled leader, and someone who cared deeply about this firm, its people, and its clients," Belfi shares. "Guiding Labaton forward in the wake of his passing is both an honor and a responsibility. It means preserving the values he instilled—integrity, hard work, and a relentless commitment to investor advocacy—while preparing the firm for the future. I'm carrying on what Chris built, not as a caretaker of the past, but as a leader of the firm's next chapter."

As Labaton Keller Sucharow continues to excel, Belfi embraces a view of leadership as stewardship, understanding that the firm is a mature institution with a clear identity, a strong culture, and an exceptional track record. "My responsibility isn't to reinvent that foundation, but to strengthen it by anticipating change, investing thoughtfully, and positioning us for long-term success," he says. "That means being deliberate about growth and welcoming innovation where it meaningfully enhances our ability to serve clients. It also means leading collaboratively, listening carefully, and making decisive choices when needed. A firm like ours succeeds when leadership is steady, values-driven, and focused on execution."

Belfi also recognizes that Labaton Keller Sucharow's past, present, and future success is anchored in the talented lawyers who work there, including St. John's Law alumni. That shared bond to their *alma mater* means a great deal to him. "St. John's strong presence at the firm isn't accidental," he notes. "It reflects the alignment between the Law School's values and the way we practice law. St. John's has long been a place that produces practice-ready lawyers with strong judgment, resilience, and a real sense of purpose. The natural camaraderie and mutual respect that come from that shared experience only reinforce our culture of collaboration."

Fostering those close ties to the Law School is a priority for Belfi, whose daughter is now a 1L. "St. John's played an important role in shaping my career, and I believe strongly in the obligation to give back—whether by mentoring students, hiring graduates, or supporting initiatives like the Christopher Keller, Esq. '97 Scholarship," he says. "My daughter pursuing her legal education there makes the connection even more personal. I hope she and her fellow students see that alumni success isn't measured solely by titles or outcomes, but by a willingness to support one another, strengthen the profession, and remain engaged with the institutions that helped shape our path. To me, that is the essence of leadership as stewardship."

If you would like to support the scholarship fund that Chris Keller established to benefit St. John's Law students, please go online to stjohns.edu/law/give, select Student Scholarships from the designation dropdown menu, and then select Christopher Keller, Esq. '97 Scholarship. Thank you!