

Clason Speaker Series Fall 2023



**Judge
Michael A.
Ponsor**

Small-Town Judicial Ethics Writ Large

Recent revelations about the conduct of some of our Supreme Court Justices have caused widespread concern about what appear to be significant ethical breaches. The strength of the judiciary inevitably relies upon the public's trust in the integrity of this third branch of our government. Nearly forty years as a federal trial judge in western Massachusetts have provided Judge Ponsor experience in facing the ethical challenges of a life in the judicial trenches. With this background, his lecture will offer a local, trial-level perspective on some of the controversies surrounding the Court today.

Prior to becoming a federal judge, Michael A. Ponsor practiced criminal law and civil and criminal litigation in Massachusetts. From 1984 to 1994, he served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court's Western Division in Springfield. In 1993 he was nominated by President Bill Clinton as a U.S. District Judge and, after confirmation by the Senate, was sworn in on March 14, 1994. In 2011, he took senior status and began handling a reduced docket. His caseload has included many high-profile trials, including *U.S. v. Gilbert*, which lasted five months and was the first death penalty case in Massachusetts in more than fifty years, and *U.S. v. Jacques*, in which three young white men were convicted of torching an African-American church in 2008 in retaliation for the election of Barack Obama. Judge Ponsor has published two novels and has a third forthcoming. He received his B.A. degree from Harvard College and his law degree from Yale Law School.

Wednesday, November 1, 2023
12:00 p.m.
Law School Common

Presented by the Clason Speaker Series.

Pizza will be served. All lectures open to students, alumni, the University community, and the general public.

For more information, call **413-782-1432** or email Professor Barbara Reich at **barbara.noah@law.wne.edu**.

The Clason Speaker Series presents expert lectures to the School of Law. The series is named after Charles R. Clason, a prominent local attorney and member of the U.S. House of Representatives, who held the position of Dean of the School of Law from 1954 to 1970. Today, the purpose of the Charles and Emma Clason Endowment Fund is to host speakers who will enhance the academic environment of the School of Law and the University.