



## Ave Maria School of Law Fact Sheet

Founded in 1999 by Catholic philanthropist **Thomas S. Monaghan**, Ave Maria School of Law is the nation's only Catholic law school recognized by the Cardinal Newman Guide. **Mr. Monaghan**, founder of Domino's Pizza, envisioned a premier Catholic law school, observing:

*"Next to priests and consecrated religious, lawyers are the most influential leaders in our country."*

From its founding, Ave Maria School of Law was shaped with the involvement of some of the most respected figures in American law and public life. Among them were U.S. Supreme Court Justices **Antonin Scalia** and **Clarence Thomas**, former U.S. Attorney General **Edwin Meese III**, and independent counsel **Kenneth Starr**. The **original faculty** included **Judge Robert H. Bork**, and the law school's first president and founding dean, **Bernard Dobranski**, whose leadership and scholarship helped set the standard for intellectual rigor and fidelity to the Catholic tradition.

The school's **Founding Board of Governors** reflected its deep Catholic identity and national mission, including religious and political leaders such as **Henry Hyde**, **Edward Cardinal Egan**, **Robert P. George**, **Kate O'Beirne**, **Adam Cardinal Maida**, **Bowie Kuhn**, **Bishop Frank Joseph Dewane**, and **John Cardinal O'Connor**. Their leadership helped anchor Ave Maria Law as a unique community of faith, scholarship, and service.

Inspired by St. John Paul II's *Fides et Ratio*, Ave Maria Law offers a distinctive legal education characterized by the harmony of faith and reason. Students receive rigorous professional training within the Catholic intellectual tradition, emphasizing the dignity of the human person, the natural law as the foundation of justice and freedom, and the call to serve the common good.

Ave Maria School of Law was founded as a Catholic law school that would provide a premier legal education enhanced by the Catholic intellectual tradition that recognizes the existence of objective moral truths and the inherent dignity of every human being. Our graduates view the practice of law not as a separate compartment of their lives, but as a vocation—an extension of lives lived in conformity with objective moral truths. We seek to accomplish this by developing in our students the knowledge and skills critical to the intelligent practice of the profession. We work to build in our students a mature judgment informed by exposure to Catholic moral and

social teachings through which those students can analyze and approach problems and issues they will face in practice.

Originally located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the school relocated in 2009 to Naples, Florida, where it continues to thrive as a nationally recognized institution. Fully accredited by the American Bar Association and designated a Military Friendly® Yellow Ribbon School, Ave Maria Law has been ranked by *The Princeton Review* as #1 for Most Conservative Students and by *The National Jurist PreLaw Magazine* as the Best Catholic Law School for the Devout.

Guided by its mission to educate lawyers of professional distinction who see the practice of law as a vocation, Ave Maria School of Law forms graduates equipped not only with exceptional legal skills but also with the wisdom to serve society with integrity, justice, and faith.