

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mary Lu Bilek Appointed New Dean of CUNY Law

Long Island City (Queens), NY (June 7, 2016)— The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York has appointed Mary Lu Bilek, Dean of the University of Massachusetts School of Law, as Dean of the CUNY School of Law. CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken recommended the appointment following a nationwide search. The selection, approved unanimously by the Board’s Executive Committee, is effective August 15, 2016.

Bilek succeeds Michelle J. Anderson, who led the law school since 2006, and recently was named to the next president of Brooklyn College.

Chancellor James B. Milliken described Dean Bilek as “an exceptional leader with three decades of exemplary experience and service, including overseeing the development of CUNY Law’s innovative curriculum and its accreditation by the appropriate national agencies. Together with her academic experience and recent role as a public law school dean in Massachusetts, she is uniquely suited to further elevate the only public law school in New York City.”

Bilek has served as dean of UMass Law since 2012. She has been credited with establishing an innovative practice-based curriculum for Massachusetts’ first and only public law school, as well as building a record of community engagement and launching the law school’s Justice Bridge law practice incubator, which offers affordable legal services to clients in need.

Bilek has deep ties with CUNY Law, where she worked for more than two decades as a professor, associate dean for academic affairs, interim dean, and associate dean for special projects, before leading UMass Law.

“I can’t overstate how personally and professionally happy I am to be back in the school that stole my heart 31 years ago,” Bilek said of her return to CUNY Law, “to be part of building on its history and to continue the work that Dean Anderson pursued to raise its profile and its stature, and increase the impact that the school, its scholarship, and its graduates have on the city the state and the world.”

Dean Bilek earned her bachelor’s degree summa cum laude from St. Mary’s College in Indiana, and her J.D. cum laude from Harvard Law School. She practiced law for five years with the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton and Garrison and, in 1985, joined the faculty of CUNY School of Law. As Academic Dean for the first three deans of CUNY Law and as Interim Dean during the 2005-06 academic year, she played leadership roles in ABA and AALS accreditation efforts, developing and implementing innovative curriculum for practice, and integrating policies and programs that support access to legal education for students from communities underrepresented in the profession.

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Page 2: Mary Lu Bilek Appointed New Dean of CUNY Law

Dean Bilek served regularly as an ABA Site Visit Team member and chair, served on the ABA Special Committee on the Professional Education Continuum, and chaired the Section on Legal Education Diversity Committee from 2010-2011. She presents regularly on issues related to the future of legal education, diversity in legal education, the bar examination, access to justice, legal incubators, and law pipeline programs.

She is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and served on the Board of Directors of Fair Test from 2012-2014. She is a member of the Board of Governors of the Society of American Law Teachers and serves on the Law School Admission Council Diversity Committee. She was appointed by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to serve on the statewide Access to Justice Commission and to the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation. In 2013, Massachusetts Law Weekly named her a Top Woman in the Law.

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About CUNY School of Law

Founded in 1983, CUNY School of Law is the premier public interest law school in the nation. The school trains lawyers to serve the underprivileged and to make a difference in their communities. A greater percentage of CUNY Law graduates choose careers in public interest and public service than any other law school in the nation. CUNY Law is ranked among the top 10 in the nation for its clinical programs and is one of the only law schools in the country to prepare students for practice through integrated instruction in theory, skills, and ethics.