



# Professor Steve Ramirez

## Faculty

While still a teenager, Professor Steve Ramirez concluded that money makes the world go round—for better or for worse. For the past nine years, Ramirez, who serves as Director of the Business and Transactional Law Center, has been teaching Washburn Law students how to use their business law acumen for the better. “As a professor, I want to see my students involved in creating a more just and freer society, where human dignity is valued,” said Ramirez.

Ramirez joined the faculty in 1995. Prior to coming to Washburn Law, he was a partner in the Chicago law firm of Robinson Curley & Clayton. “I practiced exclusively in corporate, securities and banking litigation,” said Ramirez. “Most cases involved very high-dollar amounts in controversy.” Although he admits to missing private practice, he knows he would miss teaching, scholarship and interacting with students even more. For Ramirez, watching students succeed is the most satisfying aspect of teaching.

It is his dedication to helping students learn and understand the legal complexities of business law that has endeared Ramirez to his students. The Class of 1998 voted him Professor of the Year, an honor Ramirez includes among his proudest accomplishments. Ramirez himself recalls an influential law professor, Vincent Immel, who still teaches at St. Louis University School of Law. “[He] taught me to think like a lawyer. I owe Professor Immel and the entire law school at St. Louis University too much to ever repay,” said Ramirez.

Ramirez’s passion for the material he teaches is palpable—sometimes literally. He describes an incident in which he got so excited and animated while teaching a class that he accidentally sent his coffee mug crashing into the classroom wall. It really got the students’ attention. “I was younger then,” admits

Ramirez. “Now I sip the coffee and return the mug to the lectern.”

When Ramirez is not teaching law, he is often writing about it. His articles have appeared in numerous law journals, and he is recognized for his scholarship in business and transactional law and on the issue of race, particularly the economic impact of racism. “The [racial] disparities are still gaping, even fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education* and forty years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” said Ramirez. “From an economic perspective, race is nothing less than the wanton and reckless destruction of human capital, on a society-wide basis.”

Ramirez believes that the racial inequalities in this country are “economically crippling” and cost our society \$1 trillion annually. To illustrate the impact of racism to his students, Ramirez asks them to consider the economic potential of former NBA superstar Michael Jordan today as opposed to South Carolina in the 1920s. “In 1920, our society would not allow that human capital that is the gift of Michael Jordan to actualize itself,” said Ramirez. While acknowledging society’s improvements regarding race, Ramirez believes our racial views continue to impede individual and economic growth. “Certainly, we permit excellence in certain areas, [but] we do not permit all of our people to excel all of the time, and race still gets in the way of unleashing the potential of the American people.”

Ramirez believes law has an important role to play in resolving the race issue, and he continues to use his background in economics and business law to find solutions. “My goal is to leave behind more than I take. If we all adhere to that ideal, our children inherit a better place.”