

GET THE FACTS ON McADAMS VS. MARQUETTE at Marquette, the Facts Matter

1

MYTH:

John McAdams' employment contract has no limits on what he can say on the internet.

FACT:

John McAdams' employment contract requires him to act professionally as a Marquette employee.

The case before the court raises questions about a private employer's right to set work rules and conditions of employment. This case has implications for private employers and is being watched closely by the business community in Wisconsin and nationally. Marquette is not the only employer dealing with an employee who crossed the line. It is extremely important that private employers continue to have the right to set work rules.

Marquette expects its employees to live and work by our [Guiding Values](#), which include [cura personalis](#), or care for the whole person. We cannot and will not stand by when a professor needlessly and recklessly harms a student teacher.

John McAdams was previously warned about naming students, and in a prior blog post, he once wrote, "We believe, as much as anybody, that professors should have the freedom to make controversial statements, but directly insulting students goes too far."

This case is about John McAdams' reckless and harmful behavior toward a student teacher at Marquette University, which caused her irreparable harm.

This type of conduct, publishing a student teacher's name and contact information on the internet before a hostile audience, commonly referred to as doxing, violates a professor's contract and duties to Marquette students and colleagues.

John McAdams crossed the line when he put a student teacher's name and contact information on the internet subjecting her to ruthless, hateful attacks.

Academic freedom and freedom of speech are essential tenets of our campus community. John McAdams has enjoyed these essential freedoms for 40 years at Marquette, including publishing more than 3,000 blogs and internet postings on a variety of topics. A circuit court judge ruled that academic freedom does not mean that a professor can harass, threaten or intimidate a student.

2

MYTH:

This court case is about academic freedom and freedom of speech.

FACT:

Putting a student teacher's name and contact information on the internet before a hostile audience, commonly referred to as doxing, is not an exercise of academic freedom or protected speech. Had he written the exact same post without that information, he would not have been disciplined.

3

MYTH:

Marquette fired John McAdams for his actions.

FACT:

John McAdams remains suspended. Marquette followed its established internal review process. This included holding a hearing before seven tenured peers before suspending John McAdams.

John McAdams was not fired. Seven tenured faculty members from across the university, chosen by the University Academic Senate, [ruled unanimously](#) that John McAdams' "seriously irresponsible conduct clearly and substantially fails to meet the standard of professional excellence" and is in violation of his contract. They recommended a suspension for up to one year, which President Lovell agreed to implement while adding several reasonable, *confidential* conditions to ensure the misconduct did not reoccur.

After refusing to comply, and stating he would only do so "when hell freezes over," John McAdams remains on suspension.

Despite a unanimous ruling by his peers and a [Wisconsin Circuit Court summary judgment for Marquette](#), John McAdams continues to name the student teacher and expose her contact information to this day. These troubling actions show that he cares nothing about exposing her to harassment and is actively trying to expose her to additional harassment, more than three years after she left Marquette.

While the target of John McAdams' blog was a student teacher, she remains a student first. Marquette exists in order to help students develop their skills. John McAdams instead used the student teacher as a tool to advance his own interests.

There are established channels for faculty to use when expressing concerns about students. Publishing blog posts that publicly criticize students and put their contact information before a hostile audience is not one of these channels.

4

MYTH:

The student teacher that John McAdams targeted was a fellow teacher, not a student.

FACT:

Graduate students at Marquette are student teachers, learning the skills of teaching and dealing with sometimes difficult situations.

Secretly recording student teachers in an after-class conversation is certainly not a normal practice.

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5

MYTH:

McAdams was disciplined for expressing conservative views, which he and his lawyers have suggested are not welcome at Marquette.

FACT:

Disciplinary action was taken against John McAdams because he jeopardized the safety of a student teacher, putting her directly in harm's way by publishing her name and contact information on his blog.

John McAdams was not penalized because of his political viewpoints. Marquette University prides itself on presenting diverse viewpoints from across the political spectrum, regularly hosting events discussing the topics of the day and embracing differing viewpoints via university sponsored events and student organizational speakers. Marquette has hosted or featured the following prominent conservative leaders in recent years:

[Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker](#) (featured in Marquette Magazine and has made multiple appearances at Marquette)

[Ann Romney](#)

[Wisconsin Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and State Representative John Nygren](#) (this was Kleefisch's second OTI appearance in recent years)

[Senator Ron Johnson](#)

[Speaker Paul Ryan](#)

[Sheriff David Clarke](#)

Ben Shapiro, political commentator

[John Pudner, Executive Director, Take Back Our Republic](#) (former Breitbart editor)

[Tom Nichols, contributor to the Federalist and author of The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters](#)

John McAdams explored no other options, instead racing to post his story on the internet. He also immediately and repeatedly sought opportunities to amplify his blog stories on cable news, talk radio, and multiple media outlets. There were several internal avenues of review available to John McAdams if he believed a situation had occurred that called for a corrective response.

John McAdams instead chose to blog about the secretly recorded after-class conversation to intimidate a student teacher. This type of personal internet attack is a direct violation of his employment contract.

6

MYTH:

John McAdams exhausted all other options, and his only choice was to post the incident to his blog.

FACT:

John McAdams explored no option other than using his blog to dox a student teacher causing her unavoidable and irreparable harm.

7

MYTH:

John McAdams was working as a journalist when he blogged about Marquette's student teacher and linked to her name and contact information.

FACT:

John McAdams is an associate professor of political science and teaches political science courses. He has not been trained as a journalist, and does not teach any journalism courses.

To our knowledge, no one has ever hired John McAdams to work as a journalist.