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By Dean Mark C. Gordon


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**University of Detroit  
Mercy School of Law  
National Veterans Tour**

Last week at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law we made a pretty unusual announcement. At a press conference hosted by Rhonda Walker of WDIV-TV Channel 4, we announced the launch of a national tour of our Mobile Law Office and Veterans Clinic to assist veterans around the nation with accessing federal veterans benefits.

I was very moved to share the podium with representatives of veterans organizations and to be speaking to a group of veterans who have served our country and now need our help – as attorneys, law students, and as a law school – to serve them.

I think the best way to describe what we're doing is for me to share with you excerpts from my remarks at last week's press conference:

University of Detroit Mercy School of Law is very proud to announce the launch of our Project SALUTE – students and lawyers assisting US troops everywhere exclusively with federal benefits issues. Project SALUTE will build on the success that we've had in Michigan in assisting veterans and take that assistance to veterans across the country to help them exclusively with securing their federal veterans benefits.

At University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, we believe in giving our students hands-on experience in dealing with real clients. We also believe in challenging them to serve those in need.

That's why we established our

veterans with all kinds of disabilities and all kinds of stories. But what we have heard the most is the extent of the need and the level of gratitude that the veterans we help express.

Now, the truth is that it is really we who should be offering our gratitude to them. And that's why we started thinking long and hard about how to expand our efforts. Chris Johnson at General Motors stepped forward to achieve the impossible – getting GM to donate a new custom-designed, state of the art second Mobile Law Office that will enable us to supplement our efforts in Michigan with efforts beyond. So while our Michigan tour continues and indeed expands, today we announce a new phase — a national tour to assist veterans.

Why are we doing this? Because it is great training for our students. And because it is a great service for those who have already served.

What will we be doing? In city after city across this country, UDM School of Law and the faculty and students in our Veterans Clinic will be doing five things:

1. Providing educational outreach for veterans, so that they can learn about their rights to federal veterans benefits.

2. Doing intake so that individual low-income veterans can tell their own stories, and so that they can have their cases handled — either by our Veterans Clinic or by local attorneys willing to volunteer pro bono.