



New Podcast: "Beyond the Bench"

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Last week I returned from vacation to a pleasant surprise. The School's first podcast—["Beyond the Bench."](#) has just launched. The multi-talented Danielle Rivenbark had proposed piloting a podcast as an innovation fund project. I funded her proposal because I wanted to learn whether a podcast could be a good platform for communicating information to public officials, as well as what kind of internal capacity might be needed to support podcasts. It is too early to answer those questions, of course, but the first effort by Danielle and the Judicial College under Jeff's leadership



is terrific.

Beyond the Bench will be an interview-based podcast about North Carolina's court system. Jeff Welty is the host, and you can find his blog about it [here](#). The podcast series is intended for judges, lawyers, clerks, officers, and anyone else interested in learning more about the courts. Guests will include judges, lawyers, professors, and citizens who have participated in court proceedings. The podcast will be organized by seasons, with each season focusing on a particular type of case—the first season focuses on criminal law.



Jeff Welty

The first episode includes two interviews. One features John Rubin interviewing Superior Court Judge Mary Ann Tally. John comes across as a polished interviewer, and Judge Tally's discussion of her career as one of North Carolina's first public defenders is particularly interesting. She has overcome lots of obstacles to have an impressive career that has had a major impact. Some law firms didn't respond at all when she first applied for legal jobs in Fayetteville, for example, and others responded that they didn't have any vacancies for a legal secretary. Of course I love her unsolicited testimonial about the School's value at the end of the interview.

The second features Jeff Welty interviewing our own Shea Denning about the law of distracted driving in North Carolina. Jeff is a wonderful interviewer and Shea comfortably answers a rapid-fire series of hypothetical questions about the law. I knew that North Carolina prohibited texting while driving, but I didn't realize that it also make it illegal to read texts and emails while driving. Not that I would do either of those things, of course.



John Rubin



Shea Denning



Kudos to Danielle, Jeff, John, and Shea for kicking off the School's first podcast in impressive fashion. Jeff's blog post tells you how to subscribe to the series, which I've already done using the Podcasts app on my iPhone. I can't wait for the next one.