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Election Law Whiz Keeps Eye on Politics

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20 Under 40

Richard Hasen

It seems like everybody wants a piece of Loyola Law School professor Richard Hasen. The election law and campaign finance specialist went from consulting for the Gore campaign during the 2000 Florida recount scandal to doing the same for the city of Compton during its own bizarre scandal, which eventually resulted in the Los Angeles Superior Court overturning the city's mayoral election in February.

In between, he co-wrote a 1,000-page textbook, "Election Law: Cases and Materials," and helped launch a quarterly peer-reviewed publication, Election Law Journal, which he co-edits. Other recent writings include an amicus brief for a current U.S. Supreme Court case involving campaign finance disclosure issues and, thanks to the continuing national focus on his area of expertise, an expanding list of articles for both academic and nonacademic publications. And, of course, he's continued to teach his regular course load of three classes each year in the areas of torts and contracts, remedies, and election law and legislation. In fact, Hasen has made sure his students get the biggest piece of his time. "I love to teach," Hasen, 37, says. "Being in the classroom is the best part of my job." Loyola Law School dean David Burcham is happy to have a professor so well-schooled in one of the biggest issues of the day.

"He's one of our young superstars," Burcham says. "He has become a nationally known expert in election law in addition to being a prolific scholar and gifted teacher." Hasen almost focused his scholarly efforts on another contentious subject occupying the headlines. He started his Ph.D. program in political science at the University of California, Los Angeles, with an emphasis on Middle Eastern politics.

"But I just found it to be too depressing," Hasen says. He reshaped his program to encompass the broad areas where law, economics and political science intersect, earning a law degree in 1991 and a political science doctorate shortly after, then worked as an attorney at the venerable Encino appellate boutique of Horvitz & Levy. His pursuit of a more scholarly career led him to the Kent College of Law in Chicago, where he taught from 1994 to 1997 before joining

Loyola.

Not surprisingly, now that the academic year is wrapping up, Hasen is working on a new book. This one will examine 40 years of U.S. Supreme Court cases involving election law and political equality. Hasen cherishes his professional mix of consulting in the campaign and election field while continuing his academic pursuits.

"I'm able to combine real-world work with scholarly interests and write some things that broader effects on how we think about the courts and their role in regulating the political process," he says.

- John Ryan