

**Sharing Our Stories -
Alumni Engagement
by
Kimberly Batchelor Davis**



Why Storytelling Matters

Facts tell, but stories sell

Humans are wired for narrative — it builds emotional connection and trust

In a University setting, storytelling personalizes abstract goals (like access to scholarships, engagement, and alumni impact)



Make the Mission Personal- Donor Engagement through Storytelling

Share Student journeys and successes
(Especially first-gen students)

Use Alumni stories to reflect the legacy and continuity of the institution

Highlight specific outcomes such as gifts, donations, scholarships, academic success



Elevating Contribution through Narrative

Share personal narratives of volunteers impacting student lives through mentorship or coaching

Frame volunteer opportunities as acts of legacy building

Celebrate behind the scenes of contributions
(committee work, outreach, other forms of engagement)



Engagement – Creating Community through Shared Stories

Use consistent storytelling across platforms (emails, socials, and publications)

Invite students, faculty, and alumni to share their own moments of achievements

Story driven campaigns: reunions, fundraising campaigns, and student spotlights



THE LEGACY PROJECT

SHARING OUR STORIES

“ Meet everyone that you can in law school because the friendships, the relationships that you make in law school will stay with you for lifetime.



Judge Keith

THE LEGACY PROJECT

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Andrew

“ Tribal law is definitely something I’m interested in, which would mean the area of law that includes how the United States treaties were made and upheld with tribal nations.



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Christin

“ I feel like Detroit Mercy prioritizes diversity, and providing opportunities to women, Black women of color, students of color in general, because it is so difficult for us.”



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Kumar

“ How I became a law student here was by reading a Wall Street Journal article about all the great clinics and internships at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law.



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Dennis

“The people that got accepted in the 2000 Summer Law Program and where they ended up were amazing. I chose Detroit Mercy Law School because it's a small school, it's Jesuit and you feel more like a person than a number.”



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Mike

66 Figure out how to be memorable and stand out. Figure out what's cool or unique about you.



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Brandon

“ I was initially thinking about focusing on the veterans law system because once you leave the military it's a hard adjustment for a lot of us, that would be one way to help.





Practical Tips for Effective Storytelling

Keep it authentic (use your voice)

Focus on transformation (before/after narratives)

Use visuals (photos, short video clips)

Know your audience: tailor your stories to resonate with your specific groups



Channels to Share Your Stories

Email Newsletters

Alumni Magazines

Social Media (LinkedIn)

Events (Live storytelling or testimonials)

Thank you communications (make them personal and story based)



Measuring Impact

Click through rates

Event Attendance

Repeat Giving or First-time donors

Volunteer sign ups and event registrations

(I gave because I saw myself in that story)



**Conclusion: Storytelling isn't an add-on – it's
the strategy**

**Every University or College has powerful stories
waiting to be told**

**When we tell the right stories, we don't just
raise funds – we raise the community**



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