Awarded a prestigious MacArthur “genius” fellowship in 2011, Marie-Therese Connolly is a leading voice in efforts to prevent the suffering of older adults and ensure that elder abuse becomes a priority on the national agenda. As a lawyer, she draws on a blend of legal, policy and legislative skills to combat the largely hidden but immense problem of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

As director of the Department of Justice’s Elder Justice and Nursing Home Initiative, Connolly developed new legal theories of liability and novel investigation and litigation strategies that led to successful prosecution of cases of abuse and neglect in nursing homes. Recognizing that the vast human and economic costs of elder abuse cannot be solved by prosecution alone, Connolly was instrumental in the drafting and passage of the Elder Justice Act, the first comprehensive piece of federal legislation to address the issue.

She is currently writing a book on elder justice issues and is launching Life Long Justice, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing elder justice-related research, policy, practice and laws.

The Daynard Public Interest Visiting Fellows Program brings two distinguished public interest practitioners to campus each academic year for a three-day visit. The fellows serve as role models for students, demonstrating how legal skills can be used effectively and creatively to make the world a better place.

This vibrant program was established in 2004 through the generosity of Professor Richard A. Daynard, president of the law school’s Public Health Advocacy Institute, and his wife, Carol Iskols Daynard.