Terror victory gives 'morale booster'  
By John Flynn Rooney  
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The killing of Osama bin Laden represents a triumph for President Barack Obama and provides a morale booster for the nation, local law school professors said.

Bin Laden, the face of global terrorism and architect of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks was killed in a firefight with elite American military forces. Bin Laden was tracked down in a costly, custom-built hideout not far from a Pakistani military academy.

"Justice has been done," Obama said late Sunday night in an announcement from the White House.

Obama made the decision to launch the operation on Friday.

"This is a morale booster at least in the short run and should boost President Obama's favorability rating," said Harold J. Krent, dean of Chicago-Kent College of Law, who wrote a book titled, "Presidential Powers." "To some extent, [bin Laden's death] reflects upon [Obama's] conduct of the war on terrorism.

"But there still remains an enormous amount to be done and our mettle will likely be tested by the terrorists in the coming months," Krent said. "We have to be vigilant."

Allen E. Schoenberger, who teaches international human rights and other classes at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, said bin Laden's death "is a major success that no previous president has been able to achieve. So, it's a triumph for President Obama as the president who got Osama."

Ann M. Lousin, a professor at The John Marshall Law School, said, "I think it's probably nothing but good. Who is going to object to anybody fulfilling the objective we had in going into Afghanistan in 2001 after the World Trade Center bombing?"

Kent Redfield, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Illinois Springfield, said bin Laden's death "will be a big plus for Obama in terms of both his foreign policy credentials and his credentials as commander in chief."

But Redfield said regarding the 2012 elections, "the voters biggest concerns are, is the economy turning around, are there jobs? Then in terms of foreign policy, people want to see us out of Iran, out of Afghanistan [and] disengaged from Libya."

Samuel K. Skinner, counsel at Greenberg, Traurig LLP in Chicago, said bin Laden's death "is a culmination of a 10-year effort by two presidents and the CIA in particular."
Skinner previously served as federal secretary of transportation and chief of staff for President George H.W. Bush.

The mission against bin Laden "is a wonderful accomplishment and I think everybody is gratified," Skinner said. "But people will now turn back to the economy and that's the major issue in the country at this time."

While living in Chicago before his election as president, Obama, a Harvard Law School graduate, worked as a lawyer at Miner, Barnhill & Galland P.C.

The mission against bin Laden "demonstrates that [Obama] kept his eye on the ball," said Judson H. Miner, a partner with the Miner, Barnhill firm. Obama "has accomplished something that was a high priority and he deserves credit for it."

John G. Levi, a Sidley, Austin LLP partner, said "In my view this demonstrates the president's leadership, drive and determination, qualities I've seen since I first met him during a summer [associate] job interview more than 20 years ago."

Schoenberger said Obama's training in law and logic helped him as the plan against bin Laden evolved.

"The logic says you don't build multimillion dollar mansions today with no telephone, no Internet connection," Schoenberger said. "I think the training [Obama] had in logical deduction and the reasonableness of inferences from legal training helped to conclude that this was a prime target."

But Kim D. Chanbonpin, an assistant professor at The John Marshall Law School, who has taught national security law and other classes, offered a different take.

"I think this has less to do with the president as a lawyer than it does with him being a politician and commander in chief," Chanbonpin said. "It was a political and military strike."