

2023

# UB LAW *f*ORUM

The Magazine of the University at Buffalo School of Law The State University of New York



## PATHWAYS *to justice*

Professor S. Todd Brown  
steps up as interim dean

## A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM DEAN S. TODD BROWN



“The work already accomplished in partnership with so many of you is exceptional. I am proud to be a part of this community of good people.”

Dear Friends,

As arctic temperatures sweep the nation, I extend warm greetings from Buffalo. For those who may not know me, I first came to Western New York in 2009 to join the UB Law faculty. I was excited to meet my new colleagues but braced for the inevitable cold. Upon our arrival, my family and I were immediately charmed by the warmth of a community that quickly made us feel at home. Now, 14 years later, I am truly honored to serve as UB Law’s interim dean.

My appreciation for the Buffalo community stems from my upbringing as the son of a U.S. Navy chief living in several southern states before attending Columbia Law School in Manhattan. While Buffalo may be miles away from my roots, I see parallels between the hospitality I experienced growing up and the spirit of Buffalo’s residents, good people who come together with a shared sense of community and purpose.

That’s especially true at the law school, where we understand that building pathways to justice—the theme of this issue—takes more than individual efforts; it takes a collective commitment to build upon and honor the great work that has already been done.

This issue looks back on some of our most recent accomplishments resulting from those collective efforts. That includes the critical community service provided by our clinics (pages 4–8), new initiatives to prepare our students for success (pages 10–13), and the outstanding work of our growing faculty (pages 25–32). Our shared purpose and mission are also reflected by our many alumni and friends who have dedicated their careers to the pursuit of justice (pages 14–19) and supporting the next generation of justice seekers (pages 7, 9, 11, and 33).

The work already accomplished in partnership with so many of you is exceptional. I am proud to be a part of this community of good people, and I thank you for your warmth and support.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Todd Brown', written in a cursive style.

**S. Todd Brown**  
Interim Dean and Professor of Law

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# UB LAW FORUM

The Magazine of the University at Buffalo School of Law

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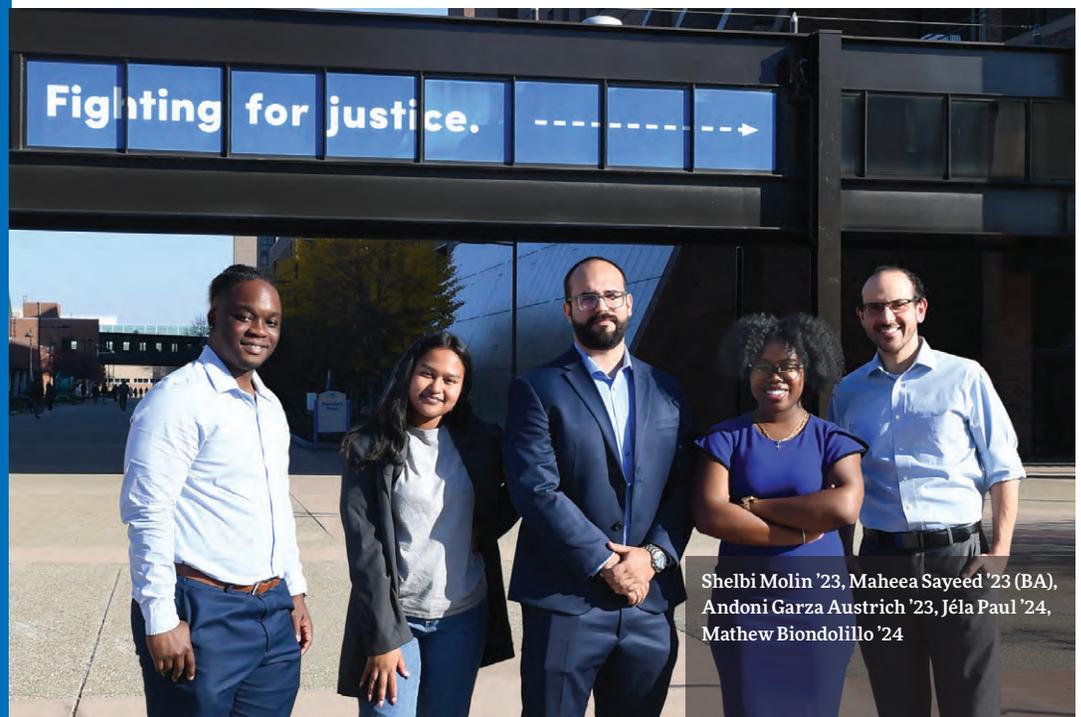
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Mathew Biondolillo '24

# NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

**UB** School of Law’s longstanding commitment to access to justice has always stood at the core of the school’s mission. In so many ways—in the classroom, through experiential learning opportunities, through its commitment to diversity and inclusion, and by promoting student success—the law school continues to forge new pathways to educate the next generations of lawyers who are passionate about making justice a reality.

Now the next chapter in the advancement of that mission has begun, as **Professor S. Todd Brown** embraces his role as interim dean of the law school. Appointed before the start of the academic year, Brown, who joined the faculty in 2009 and has served since 2016 as vice dean for academic affairs, brings to the role both deep experience at the law school and the practical wisdom of his time in high-level legal practice. He holds a JD from Columbia Law School and a master of laws degree from Temple University. Before entering academia, he was the managing partner of a small business and he practiced with the law firms Jones Day in Washington, D.C. and Cleveland, and WilmerHale in D.C.

A conversation with Interim Dean Brown reveals his commitment to the law school’s mission and his vision for its future.

## What attracted you to serving as the law school’s interim dean?

I’ve served as vice dean for academic affairs under two deans, so I am quite familiar with our strategic direction and the initiatives that have been put in place over the past several years. I’ve been a part of implementing many, if not most, of them. This position provides me with an opportunity to further our efforts to move our school forward and continue to serve our students, faculty and staff.

## What do you see as the law school’s role in promoting the pursuit of justice?

Most people think that promoting justice is about what lawyers do. For the law school, it’s about giving our students opportunities to do that work. UB School of Law has always worked aggressively to provide students with exposure to access to justice work and to place our new graduates in public interest positions.

For the many students who pick a path that may not appear to “advance justice” in the traditional sense—in the corporate or private sectors—it comes back to the people again and again. We have to provide people with pathways to bring their diverse life experiences to every area of law. How do you get justice for a community if it’s not properly represented?

## What is the law school doing now that serves that important role?

Our Experiential Education Program does an incredible job of collaborating with community partners to offer clinical, externship and fellowship opportunities. And our Pro Bono Scholars Program gives students who are committed to public interest work a head start on launching their careers.

We also remain committed to providing access to legal education and admitting students who will bring a broad range of life experience to the classroom. Our Discover Law Undergraduate Scholars Program recently graduated its 10th cohort of rising stars, and we’ve hosted a number of youth-focused programs to expose high school students from Buffalo city schools to the law school experience.

We also offer an outstanding Jump Start Program every August that helps incoming law students who have had limited exposure to the fundamentals of our legal system. It’s all about doing everything we can to level the playing field and expand opportunity.

## What’s your broader vision for the law school?

Over the past several years, the law school has advanced its metrics in critical areas. Our alumni are more active and engaged than ever, our recent bar passage numbers jumped significantly, and our faculty productivity has reached new heights. Since 2022, our faculty have published more than 15 books and dozens of articles and book chapters. They are frequently quoted in the media as industry experts on some of the most pressing and cutting-edge issues of our time. We need to raise the visibility of these accomplishments and emphasize the law school’s vital role in addressing local, national and global issues.

## What challenges do you anticipate?

Legal education continues to be in a transition period. All law schools are adapting to rapidly changing technology and how legal services are delivered, and consequently, the way we think about the law and how it affects our lives. As those changes rapidly accelerate, we cannot be complacent. We have to stay ahead of them and equip our students to be responsive and agile as they enter the legal profession.

## What do you see as the law school’s greatest strengths?

Our greatest strength is undoubtedly our community—our dedicated faculty and staff, and our alumni and the members of the practicing bar who care deeply about our school and our students and who want to help us succeed. The support they provide, both financially and in so many other ways, is critical to our progress. We have an outstanding relationship with the community and I’m excited to continue to build upon those partnerships.

## A new advocate for academic life

### *Professor Christine Bartholomew named vice dean for academic affairs*

**E**ffective law school leadership requires strong support, particularly in guiding the direction of the school's academic programs. With seven years of experience as academic dean, **Interim Dean S. Todd Brown** understood that well when he appointed **Professor Christine Bartholomew** the law school's vice dean for academic affairs.

Bartholomew is no stranger to the challenge of continually improving the law school's academic offerings. She served as the inaugural chair of the school's Committee on Curricular Innovation and Pedagogy in 2016 and has continued to assist with leading those efforts ever since. She helped develop a rigorous program of learning outcomes and procedures for assessing student progress and, on the university level, she represents the law school on the Institutional Assessment Council, which advises UB's Office of Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching Transformation.

An expert in antitrust law and civil procedure, Bartholomew is also a prolific scholar, with articles in leading law reviews published at Duke, UCLA, Fordham, the University of Virginia and Vanderbilt, and her work has been cited by state and federal courts. She serves as an assistant editor of the *ABA Antitrust Law Journal* and a contributing editor for *Jotwell*.

**“My hope is to strengthen what we already do well,” says Bartholomew. “It is easy in academia to focus on a particular class or program. I am working with the faculty to evaluate our curriculum holistically, thinking about how each facet of our existing strong offerings fits together to promote graduates ready to undertake the growing challenges of legal justice.”**

And her impact in the classroom has been broadly recognized with multiple honors. She is a six-time winner of the law school's Faculty Award, selected each year by the graduating class, and a 2021 recipient of the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, among other honors.

**S. Todd Brown  
and Christine P. Bartholomew**

# #UBLawResponds

## Providing service and promoting justice through clinic programs

Robust legal education extends beyond the classroom. At UB School of Law, student attorneys use their developing skills and knowledge in the community to make a real difference in the advancement of justice. In the process, they're a vital force for good for clients in need, throughout Western New York and beyond.

Those opportunities take many forms, including a wide variety of externship and fellowship placements in government and non-profit organizations; the chance to spend their final semester serving the public as Pro Bono Scholars; and the ever-increasing range of UB Law clinics.

Read on for updates on the incredible work recently done in our Clinical Legal Education Program—work that, for both our students and their clients, changes lives.

## Entrepreneurship Law Clinic

Western New York's burgeoning biotech sector has received major support from students in the **Entrepreneurship Law Clinic**, where student attorneys are providing the legal advice that enables small start-up companies to reach for big goals. **To date, the clinic—directed by Matthew Pelkey '10—has worked with more than 142 start-ups and has helped to create or retain more than 110 jobs.** "Our team had little understanding of what it meant to start a company," says one founder of a firm that's seeking to create personalized cancer therapies. "The clinic gave us insight into corporate structure, best practices, regulatory pathways, and helped us set up the company from the ground up."



## Environmental Advocacy Clinic

Work by students in the **Environmental Advocacy Clinic** gained **international exposure at an important conference on global wetlands preservation.** Student attorneys provided daily research during the 2022 Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, held in Geneva, Switzerland. Their work supported the World Wetland Network, which builds capacity in local communities to protect these vital biomes. The students' research was part of the clinic's continuing effort to increase public recognition of wetland ecosystems worldwide.



## Mediation Clinic

"Gain a new superpower!" touted publicity for a day of enriching skill-building through a **Youth Conflict Resolution Training** run by student attorneys in the Mediation Clinic. Designed for young people ages 15 to 21, some of whom have been involved in the child welfare system, the full-day training taught negotiation tactics and other skills to help them navigate conflicts in their lives, advocate for themselves effectively, and communicate better with peers and adults. "We wanted to emphasize to the participants that they all have a voice," says **Abigail Jackson '23**, "and that their voices matter."



Mediation Clinic Director Steve Sugarman '85 with student attorneys.

## Puerto Rico Recovery Assistance Legal Clinic

For the sixth time, students in the **Puerto Rico Recovery Assistance Legal Clinic** traveled to the island to support the **continuing rebuilding effort following the devastation of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and severe earthquakes in 2019**. Ten student attorneys spent a week meeting with community partners and government leaders, with a focus on developing policy, improving resilience, and identifying the population's most urgent legal and policy needs. Among those they've identified: a severe need for mental health services, as well as improved access to justice, water, energy and food.



## Civil Rights and Transparency Clinic

In a free society, the work of defending civil rights and demanding transparency from government is never-ending. Students in the Civil Rights and Transparency Clinic (CRTC)—with guidance from clinic director, **Professor Heather Abraham**—have taken on a broad portfolio of issues, working to safeguard those rights and give citizens the tools they need to ensure accountability.

To enforce civil rights and protect our democracy, student attorneys:

- **Compiled a self-help guide for people seeking government records** through New York State's Freedom of Information Law.
- Filed a Freedom of Information Law request followed by a lawsuit to **secure public records on proposed funding for the new Buffalo Bills stadium** on behalf of Investigative Post, a local non-profit investigative news organization.
- **Drafted demand letters to police departments that refused to disclose officer disciplinary records**, as required after New York repealed a law that once shielded those records from public view. They later filed lawsuits against those departments and are currently litigating to obtain the records as a part of a state-wide collaboration with other legal and news organizations.

Student attorneys MacKenzie Vergason '24 and Jared Waldron '23 at the Fourth Department, where Waldron presented his first appellate oral argument on behalf of Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME).

In recognition of the public obstacles encountered by transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, the CRTC has initiated the following:

- In collaboration with BestSelf Behavioral Health and Neighborhood Legal Services, student attorneys **have advised and represented clients seeking to change their legal names to align with their identities**. The students met with clients, conducted intake interviews, provided advice and counsel, and completed the required petitions. They also helped clients invoke New York State's new provision on official documents, such as driver's licenses, providing the option to choose the gender marker "X" rather than "Male" or "Female."
- In partnership with Gay and Lesbian Youth Services, student attorneys **created and delivered a "know your rights" community presentation for parents of transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming youth**.

Watch Here:



Student attorneys also challenged unlawful debt collections as a civil rights issue. Taking a creative approach to the vexing problem of individual consumer debt, they **served clients contesting debts that have been erroneously attributed to them or unlawfully secured by default judgment**. Working with the Western New York Law Center's CLARO (Civil Legal Advice Resource Office) Program, students met with low-income clients at the public library to advise them of their rights. Typically, clients had received notice of default on a debt or notice of garnishment—especially problematic for people living paycheck to paycheck. The students assessed their situation, reviewed the legal options, drafted motions, responded to discovery requests, and appeared in Buffalo City Court seeking to vacate judgments or stay proceedings.



## Community Engagement Legal Clinic

The Community Engagement Legal Clinic (CELC) was first created in response to legal issues generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but its focus has rapidly broadened to include other pressing issues. Addressing legal needs brought forward by community partners, student attorneys tackle access to justice on several fronts. These have included assessing the adequacy of police training, examining civil responses to racially motivated violence, advocating for the rights of non-professional school employees to secure access to unemployment benefits during COVID-19, and protecting the civil rights of veterans.

**With new funding in the amount of \$100,000, secured by New York State Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner '12 (District 77) and supported by Assemblymembers Monica Wallace '94 (District 143), Karen McMahon '86 (District 146), and Patrick Burke (District 142),** the clinic is expanding its history of representing individuals applying for unemployment insurance benefits.

**Among the clinic's most recent work:**

- Local parents and guardians of students in the Buffalo Public Schools have benefited from **"know your rights" presentations by an expert coalition including student attorneys, educating the local community on school**



**suspension policies**, informing them of rights under state education law, and confronting issues of racial inequality. Research shows that Black students often are more likely to be suspended, and for longer periods of time, than white students who have committed similar infractions. Student attorneys worked with families seeking to challenge unjust suspensions.

- Partnering with the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, student attorneys have worked on cutting-edge legal issues affecting veterans. UB Law was one of four New York State law schools to receive a **\$150,000 grant from the state's "Justice for Heroes" program**, targeting "innovative collaborative programs to assist veterans, service members and their family members with previously unmet legal needs."

The clinic provides legal services free of charge to veterans, service members and their families to help with matters identified as underserved by experts and community partners, including Western New York Heroes, in coordination with expert volunteer lawyers.

"As is true in many places across the country, Western New York veterans often face severe access to justice issues," says **CELC Clinic Director Kim Diana Connolly**. "Our longstanding clinical program has deep expertise, such as family law issues, small business and entrepreneurship needs, public benefits appeals and civil matters."



Peter Dellinger, Eoin Gallagher '23, Rae Shih, Anne Marie Marcoccia '24, Michaela Reisdorf '24, Matthew Mendoza '23 and Prof. Kim Diana Connolly.

## Criminal Justice Advocacy Clinic

Perhaps nowhere is the need for access to justice more apparent—and increasingly critical—than in criminal legal defense. The Criminal Justice Advocacy Clinic, in partnership with the law school's Innocence and Justice Project—both led by **Professor Alexandra Harrington**—steps up to meet that need. Their efforts include a variety of initiatives aimed at providing legal assistance to individuals navigating the criminal system and policy work focused on making the system more just, such as:



- **New York State's recently enacted Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA)**, which affords individuals the opportunity to reduce their sentences for crimes connected to domestic violence they suffered. The clinic is working to make that promise a reality for incarcerated survivors of domestic violence. Student attorneys meet with incarcerated clients, gather evidence and prepare resentencing applications. Clinic students represent applicants at resentencing hearings and on appeal. One recent success: The clinic represented one of the few incarcerated persons to be resentenced under the DVSJA. This was the first case to adopt reasoning that the DVSJA could be used to decrease a period of post-release supervision.
- Student attorneys **also represent individuals preparing for hearings before the New York State Board of Parole**, as well as those appealing denials of parole. A team of student attorneys secured a new parole hearing for a clinic client who had been improperly denied parole after serving more than 25 years in prison with an exemplary record. On re-hearing in July of 2023, that client was granted parole. Another client serving an indeterminate life sentence obtained parole at her first hearing.

- In addition to work on behalf of individual clients, the clinic's work includes policy advocacy, pressing for justice on a systemic level. **Clinic representatives, including Professor Harrington and Alexis DiCarlo '24, traveled to Albany for Parole Justice Advocacy Day**, where advocates from around the state urged the State Legislature to pass two bills that would make the parole process in New York more equitable for all.



## A longtime advocate supports the work of the Innocence and Justice Project

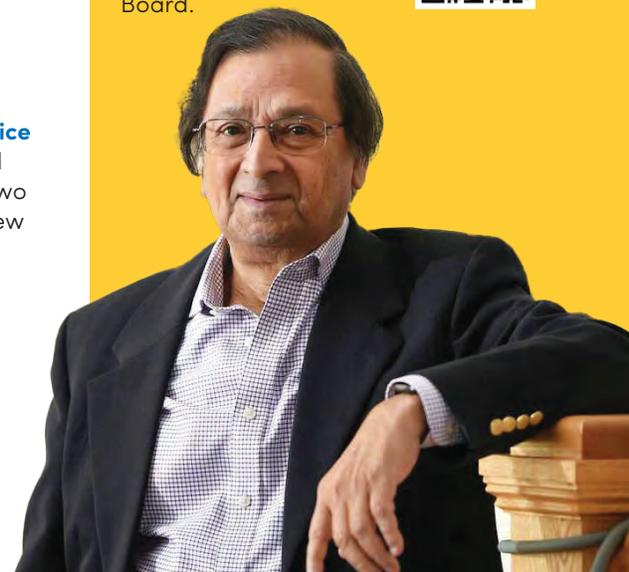
For **Clarence Sundram '72**, the lessons he learned early in his law school career about the injustices in our legal system have never left him. As a young student, he spent a semester clerking for an Erie County Court Judge, and on weekends he'd work in the pre-trial release program.

"I saw a lot of poor people who ended up in jail," Sundram says. "I saw that there was a series of collateral consequences that fell upon people because they were poor and incarcerated. It really brought home the impact of law and poverty on the lives of people."

Now, with a lifetime of work in the public interest to his credit, including as a special master in the U.S. District Court system, Sundram is making it possible for new generations of law students to correct inequities in the justice system. A major financial gift from Sundram and his wife, Theresa Rodrigues, will fund fellowships for students participating in the law school's **Innocence and Justice Project**, strengthening the project's work in identifying cases with strong evidence of a miscarriage of justice or denial of due process, and pressing for redress.

The project is part of the law school's Advocacy Institute, and Sundram serves on the institute's National Advisory Board.

Read More



## Family Violence and Women’s Rights Clinic

### Tackling family violence issues

It has been estimated that domestic violence accounts for 21 percent of all violent crime. The dedicated students in the Family Violence and Women’s Rights Clinic (FVWRC) are addressing that sad reality through advocacy, education and client service—a multi-pronged approach to what sometimes seems an intractable challenge.

Recent projects aimed at abating domestic violence issues include:

- **Outreach to the area teenage population** with video and other materials to educate them about the potential for dating violence. “Teen dating violence is pretty nuanced,” says **Lindsey Pastuszynski ’23**, who designed and delivered training to over 50 teens at the Healthy Relationship Summit held at the Buffalo History Museum last February. “There are different aspects of power and control issues, such as controlling friendships; isolation; and modern issues like sexting and revenge porn that weren’t being addressed.”
- A continuation of the clinic’s important work in direct client service, as students prepared **emergency family offense petitions for family violence survivors** seeking an order of protection in Family Court. In the past year, students have succeeded in securing more than 20 emergency temporary orders of protection for their clients. In addition, students represented clients in cases involving civil family offenses, custody and visitation, child support and divorce. At any given time, the clinic’s docket has about 15 such cases ongoing.
- Creating **toolkits and trainings for court watchers** in several local courts in Western New York, enabling them to assess how well the courts ensure the safety of domestic violence survivors when they interact with the court system—a situation that can be a flashpoint for further violence.
- The clinic is celebrating a **major new allocation from the Erie County Legislature—\$500,000 over three years**—that will enable it to improve civil legal services for targets of domestic violence in Erie County. The new money, championed by Legislator **Jeanne Vinal ’89**, will enable the clinic to hire another full-time staff attorney to supervise the students’ legal work, making it possible for them to represent more clients. And recognizing the importance of a holistic approach to helping clients, the allocation will make it possible to include a social work presence on the clinic team.



FVWRC Clinic Director Judith Olin '85, Teresa Cappiello '24, Jordynn-Celeste Harter '23, Lindsey Pastuszynski '23, Lexi Horton '24, NYS Assemblymember Karen McMahan '86, Shelby Majda '24, Mykala Pierce '23, Shamira Nawz '23 and Jake Giovati '23.

# Moving the wheels of justice requires many hands, including those of the new staff attorneys and paralegals who recently joined the clinic team.

**Darryl McPherson, Esq. '92**  
Housing Law  
Supervising Attorney,  
Civil Rights and  
Transparency Clinic



**M. Annabel Mireles, Esq.**  
Staff Attorney, Criminal  
Justice Advocacy Clinic



**Corey Hugill**  
Paralegal, Civil Rights  
and Transparency  
Clinic, and the Family  
Violence and Women’s  
Rights Clinic



**Julie Schuster**  
Office Manager/  
Paralegal



In addition to our full-time team, the clinic is also guided and supported by

**Peter Dellinger, Esq.**  
**Erin Goldberg, Esq. '17**  
**Nicole Grasso, Esq. '17**  
and **Rae Shih, Esq.**

# A \$1 million gift supports law school's clinics

Alumni and friends of the law school are the engine that keeps our clinical legal education program moving forward. Philanthropic support funds the clinics' important work, nourishing the talent and passion of our student attorneys while furthering the law school's commitment to serving the public interest and closing the gap in access to justice.

In that generous spirit, alum **Lew Rose '81 and his wife, Jacqui**, recently made a transformative gift — a \$1 million bequest. The resulting endowment, the Lew and Jacqui Rose Fund for Clinics, is expected to generate at least \$40,000 a year to support the school's expansive clinical program.

**“Jacqui and I hope that our gift will not only help law students get very valuable training to launch their legal careers, but also help solidify the law school with the local community.”**

Rose built his career around expertise in advertising law. He worked for several years at the Federal Trade Commission in Washington, D.C., before joining the international law firm now known as Kelley Drye, comprising more than 350 lawyers and other professionals. In private practice, Rose specialized in consumer protection, advertising and consumer product safety law. At the time of his retirement, he served as managing partner of the firm, working from its New York City headquarters.

Rose says the gift stems in part from his own experience in a UB Law clinic addressing the rights of prisoners, including filing a class-action lawsuit over what they argued was cruel and unusual treatment of inmates in the punitive segregation unit of Attica State Prison.

“The world, our country and our communities have gotten very polarized over the recent past,” he says. “Jacqui and I hope that our gift will not only help law students get very valuable training to launch their legal careers, but also help solidify the law school with the local community.”

Read More



# CLEARING THE WAY FOR STUDENT SUCCESS



**2023 1L Section Reveal Event**  
Caleigh Castlevetere '26 and  
Parizoda Nasimjonova '26

With a shared commitment to supporting the law school journey, UB Law is working as one community to furnish students with the tools and support they'll need to succeed. Faculty and administrators, alumni and friends, student groups and leaders, are combining their efforts to clear pathways for success and promote inclusivity. Step by step, they are united in their goal: to foster the education

and professional success of well-rounded, well-prepared lawyers who are committed to the highest levels of service. Here are recent initiatives aimed at preparing each and every student to excel.

## Off the Starting Blocks

The law school's **Jump Start Program**, led by **William MacDonald**, assistant dean for academic and bar success, invites a group of accepted students into an intensive prep camp in the weeks preceding the start of classes.

The training begins with a week devoted to incoming international students. They're coached in reading and understanding case law, and the concepts of legal writing, and are exposed to U.S. legal terms. These students are then joined by approximately two dozen incoming domestic students who have been identified as those who might benefit from this preparatory coaching.

"We want students to be aware that there are going to be demands on them right from the first week, and we don't want them to be blindsided by that," MacDonald says.

## A Place for Belonging

Integrated into every step forward is **a key pillar of the law school's strategic plan: to "cultivate a diverse, equitable and inclusive community that celebrates differences, encourages collaboration, and promotes the success, wellness and sense of belonging of all members."**

That broad mandate shows itself in myriad ways. Many are student-led, including the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council, which works to ensure all students know they are a valued part of the law school community and feel their voices are heard. Student affinity groups also carry this idea forward, with new groups for first-generation law students, students

with disabilities, Indigenous students and military veterans.

Under the leadership of the school's DEI Office, extensive programming and anti-bias and cross-cultural competency training is provided to faculty, staff and students, fostering an atmosphere in which differences are valued. The law school also partners with UB's Office of Accessibility Resources to ensure expanded services and equitable access for students with specific needs.

And for those juggling infant care and coursework, a relaxing and private dedicated space for nursing mothers is available in the Charles B. Sears Law Library.

## Focused on Wellness

Mental and physical health go hand in hand with excellence in the classroom, and the law school's Office of Student Affairs works tirelessly to facilitate it.

Wellness programming is offered as classes begin, with a series of **"Fall Into Wellness"** events including **"Wellness Wednesdays."** The programs connect students with university and law school resources, and address some of the stressors that law students encounter: test anxiety, depression, perfectionism and imposter syndrome.

The spring semester arrives with **"Spring Into Wellness."** Programs explore meditation and mindfulness, financial and career well-being, physical health—even random acts of kindness. The semester concludes with **"Wellness Week,"** daily mini-events in the stressful week leading up to final exams. One of the most popular features: therapy with dogs, sure to ease anxiety with a wag of the tail.

The law school also hosts an on-site counselor and is in the midst of construction on a new wellness space in the law library, a refuge for meditation and quiet escape.



Therapups

## Cultivating a Commitment to Justice

A signature strength of the law school is its commitment to making the justice system work for all. That means helping to connect its students with opportunities to put their passion for the law to work for those who need it most.

Summer positions with nonprofit organizations, government agencies and law-related positions that further the public interest are typically unpaid but offer students life-changing exposure to access to justice work and real-world experience as practicing lawyers. Thanks to the generous support of our loyal donors, **the law school's summer fellowship program provides more than 30 fellowships to offset living expenses and encourage students to do this important justice work.**

This past summer, for the third year in a row, all our summer fellows who needed financial help received a stipend, enabling students to gain experience in elder law, prisoners’ rights, housing issues, educational advocacy and more.

## Helping Students Finish Strong

For most law students, the ultimate destination is the bar exam, the final hurdle before a graduate can practice. Preparations for the rigors of the exam are incorporated throughout the law school journey and new initiatives aim to increase bar readiness. They include a **mini-bar exam** administered at the end of students’ first year replicating the style of the New York State bar exam, which familiarizes students with the exam format and provides valuable feedback to the faculty. Additionally, students are encouraged to take challenging upper-division courses to grow their areas of expertise.

But the support and encouragement doesn’t end at Commencement. Following graduation in May, the law school coordinates a **summer bar prep program** that provides group and individual study space in the law library, as well as courses in test-taking strategies, and a series of supplemental workshops and Q&A opportunities taught by the school’s doctrinal faculty.

For students in financial need, **scholarships funded by both private donations and a significant investment by the University** cover the cost of commercial bar prep courses, eliminating the need for many to have to work while preparing for the bar and freeing up valuable study time. The goal is to help all students complete at least 90 percent of their bar prep courses—a mark that has been shown to significantly improve their odds of passing.

**“Students of color face many obstacles accessing the practice of law,” says H. Todd Bullard ’87, a partner in the Rochester law firm Harris Beach. “First is the law school admission process; second, the financing of a law school education; and after successful completion of those steps, then those students—who often have limited resources—have to raise funds for bar review courses as well as pay a fee to actually sit for the bar exam. The latter obstacle to me is one that illustrates that access to our profession is too often based on financial resources and not talent, desire and a deep commitment to equal justice. This must change.”**



– H. Todd Bullard ’87, donor to Bar Exam Support Fund

### And the results are paying off:

**85.48 percent of UB Law graduates who took the July 2023 New York State Bar Exam for the first time passed—an increase of more than 10 percentage points from last year.**

## The Team Behind the Students

Law school is a challenge, but no one goes it alone. A committed group of professionals work to make sure that our students’ experience is positive and productive, from their first day to the last. For the past two years, these efforts have been led by the following members of our Student Affairs team.



**Bernadette Gargano**  
Vice Dean for Student Affairs and LAWR Faculty



**Jamila Lee '15**  
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs



**Michael Hilburger '11**  
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

### LAW LIBRARY LIAISON



**Ashley Abbott**  
Student Life Coordinator

and **Cheri Tubinis**  
Administrator for Student Services (not pictured)



**Austin Waters**  
Student Services Librarian

### Our Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

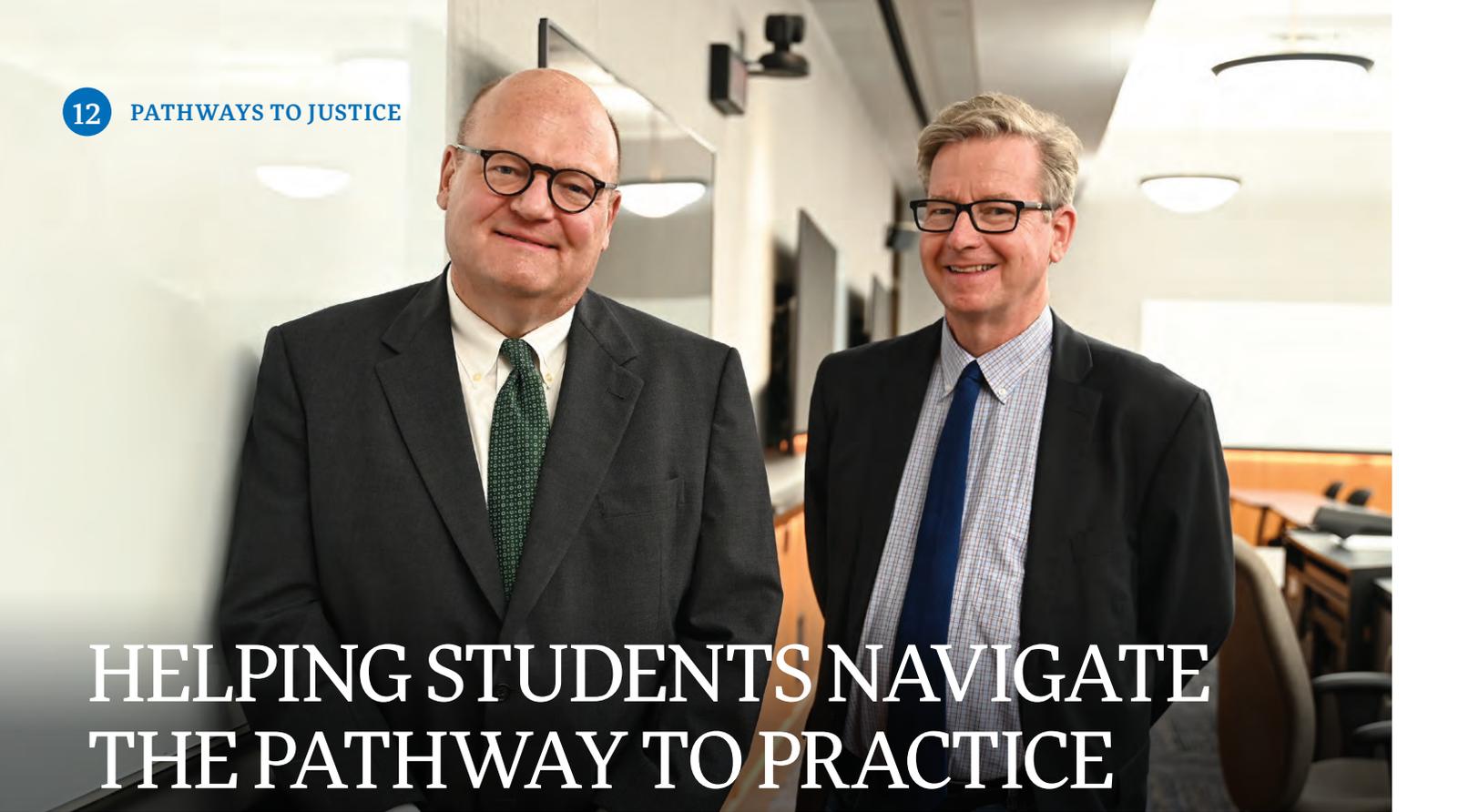
With programming and supportive services, DEI strives to celebrate the gifts of our diverse population and develops relationships of support with students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. The team includes:



**Luis Chiesa**  
Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Dr. Teresa A. Miller Professor in Law



**Kristen Kelly**  
Associate Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



# HELPING STUDENTS NAVIGATE THE PATHWAY TO PRACTICE

With the promotion of two veteran educators, the School of Law is doubling its efforts to help students navigate the rigors of law school and enter the professional world ready to practice.

The appointments of **William MacDonald** as assistant dean for academic and bar success, and **Patrick J. Long '00** as assistant dean for professional development, aim to create seamless support for students as they grow into their roles as effective, ethical attorneys. The moves come partly in response to revised standards issued by the American Bar Association, which now requires accredited law schools to address professional identity as part of their legal education program, as well as incorporate training in cross-cultural competencies in their classes.

Long will concentrate on first-year students, MacDonald on second and third-years.

A longtime instructor in the Legal Analysis, Writing and Research (LAWR) program, Long is teaching Professional Development, a required course for 1Ls that spans two semesters. He says the course, a re-envisioned version of one previously called Legal Profession, goes deeper into the ABA's expectation that law schools "provide substantial opportunities for students to develop their professional identity—the values, principles and practices of well-being

essential to the profession."

The course's fall semester focuses on the skills students need to do well in law school—taking lecture notes, reading critically, preparing for exams—as well as self-care strategies that will serve them in school and beyond.

In the spring semester, he says, the class will turn to the principles that undergird the profession. He plans to show students *The Verdict*, a 1982 movie in which Paul Newman plays a lawyer trying a medical malpractice case while struggling with addiction. "It shows the kinds of decisions that real lawyers have to make, with the moral ambiguities and real challenges that legal practice provides," Long says. He also plans to bring to class successful practitioners, "people from the local bar who are models in corporate law or criminal defense or trial work, to talk to students about their day-to-day life as attorneys, but also about how to fashion a career that allows you to remain human."

As assistant dean for academic and bar success, MacDonald will continue to teach a spring-semester course for third-year students, Bar Exam Strategies and Skills, aimed at "giving people

a running start on their summer bar preparation." Its purpose, he says, is threefold: to bolster students' general skills in test-taking, to offer direct feedback on students' work, and to impress upon them that bar prep needs their serious and early attention. "Law school classes are philosophical," he says, "but bar prep spews a firehose of information at you. If you're not expecting that, you might not even think you need to go to the prep classes."

MacDonald also taught a newly created course this past fall called Bar Success Essay Writing, which addresses the writing exercises that count for about half of a test-taker's bar exam score. The class provides intensive instruction to a small cohort of about 15 third-year students, some of them Pro Bono Scholars who will take the bar in February.

In conjunction with the Office of Student Affairs, MacDonald will also continue to provide individual support for students whose grades may be cause for concern, helping to address not only academic issues but complicating factors such as a family illness. "Very often I'll meet with students weekly or biweekly," he says. "There are many who don't make the transition to law school as quickly as others; they just need a little more time and guidance to get on their feet."

# Making connections for career success

It's all about making connections – and to head the Career Services Office (CSO), the School of Law turned to an alum with broad connections both inside the law school and in the wider legal community.

Meet **Jennifer Scharf '05**. If you don't already know her, she's been an active advocate for the law school for many years, teaching litigation-based courses as an adjunct faculty member, coaching dozens of trial teams, and serving as director of the Trial Advocacy Program. She has also helped to make connections and secure employment for countless UB Law graduates, all long before her current role in CSO.

Now Scharf, a trial attorney and former law firm manager, oversees the law school's career services work on behalf of both new graduates and alumni at all stages of their professional lives.

A few words with a key member of the law school leadership team:

**You've worked behind the scenes for a long time to connect UB Law graduates with jobs. What satisfaction have you found in that work, and how does this official role widen the scope of that process?**

There is nothing better than helping to make a perfect connection. It's like being a professional matchmaker. I have had the incredible opportunity to work with countless law firms, lawyers and other legal employers for nearly two decades. In doing that, I've been able to learn a great deal about the ethos of the employer. When I work with students—especially in an intense program like trial advocacy—I get to see their strengths and passions. In a perfect world, there is a student who fits like a perfect puzzle piece with an employer. It is so rewarding when a student tells me they have their dream job—or an employer tells me how well a new lawyer is doing (though it usually comes in the form of, “can you find me another [name]?”).



**Do you see increasing numbers of UB Law alumni looking to practice in places beyond Western New York?**

UB Law graduates love Buffalo. I mean, don't we all? It is a pretty great place to live—and our legal community is second to none. I've been fortunate to handle cases across the state and across the country. There is no place like Buffalo. You pick up the phone to ask a “competitor” a question about how to do something or a strategy, and they invariably will help you. The bench and bar enjoy an especially collegial relationship, which makes entering practice pretty seamless.

But there is law life beyond Buffalo. There are firms, agencies and government entities across the country that provide incredible experiences. We have an amazing alumni network across the globe, and they are always willing to help with job placement. Certainly New York City is a big market for UB Law graduates and a special focus for our office, but California has a lot of sought-after positions. So does

Washington, D.C. There are even unique positions in places like Alaska and Guam that students should look at if they have the ability to move. Federal jobs and clerkships are, of course, nationwide and should be top of mind.

**How often does the Career Services Office work with alumni who've been out of school for a while and are looking to move into a second or third legal position?**

Historically, the Career Services Office has provided alumni with access to our job postings on LOCK, our online job bank. We post jobs that are lateral positions. But I want to dramatically increase our efforts in this area. Our alumni need a safe, confidential space to come and talk about career transitions. I can tell you that employers of all kinds reach out to me to find lateral hires. While we want to be laser focused on helping our students get that first job, there are some positions that simply require several years of experience. We owe it to our alumni to help with that.

# THE JUSTICE LEAGUE

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It was Learned Hand, the legendary federal judge and judicial philosopher, who said, “If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice.”

And for UB Law alumni who are putting their training into action by advancing the cause of justice, that work has never been more important.

Lawyers, of course, form the backbone of the American system of justice. In practice and by their example, they pledge themselves to the rule of law, an aspiration that unifies us as a nation. They also work in the real world, one constrained by budgets and caseloads and never enough hours in the day. The best of them, though, persist—following their principles day after day, confident that their work moves the needle a little closer to a more just society.

Meet 10 of our many alums who are bringing their best selves to the cause of seeking justice.



Elizabeth  
De León  
Bhargava '03

J. Miles  
Gresham '11

Elisha A.  
Dunn-Georgiou '06

Marianne  
Mariano '94

Elizabeth  
Fox-Solomon '06

Nelson Mar '98

Shawn  
Boehringer '93

Tina Palmer  
Stanford '90

Christopher  
Phillips '20

Trini Ross '92



### Elizabeth De León Bhargava *Housing as a civil right*

**E**lizabeth De León Bhargava '03 has been advocating for people her entire life. In the trenches of New York City government. In Albany making state policy. And now, as Assistant Secretary for Administration at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in a position of nationwide impact.

Bhargava's career in public service is rooted in her experience seeing how government can help people. As a child, her family was displaced by a fire in their Bronx apartment building and left briefly homeless. **"Because of my own experience, helping rebuild people's lives is something that resonates with me in a real way,"** she says.

When it came time to pick a law school, Bhargava chose UB. She has continued to use her UB education in a succession of impactful positions. At the state Attorney General's office, she prosecuted cases in defense of livable, affordable housing. In New York City, she worked to resource small business owners and to support the City Council speaker. And in Albany, as Deputy Secretary for Labor and Workforce, she was instrumental in securing the state's \$15 minimum hourly wage and establishing the nation's most robust Paid Family Leave program, which covers more than 9 million workers.

At HUD, Bhargava is responsible for "the people and the processes" of the department that enforces fair-housing law and provides rental assistance.

"I consider housing to be a civil rights issue," says Bhargava. "It is an honor to be a part of the team that is tackling these inequities every day."

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### Shawn Boehringer *Timely help for the neediest clients*

**A**fter his 1L summer working in South Carolina, **Shawn Boehringer '93** took a circuitous route home to Pennsylvania. "It was the first time I had driven through the heart of impoverished Appalachia," he says, "I had the idea that this would be a terrific area to start my legal career. The need seemed to be so great."

That led the young lawyer to the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund of Kentucky, where his work included representing miners making claims for black lung compensation. His other cases included the all too frequent issues for civil legal service providers anywhere: substandard housing, foreclosures and evictions; SSI claims; employment disputes; and family issues including domestic violence.

He's never looked back. Boehringer has built his career with legal services programs in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Baltimore before becoming executive director of Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP) in 2018. The busy nonprofit, with nine offices, serves clients in four suburban counties outside of Philadelphia.

With more than 80 staff members, LASP's assistance ranges from providing advice—letting callers know their rights, making referrals, pointing them in the right direction—to brief services like drafting a letter to a landlord, and all the way up to extended representation in a court case.

**"At its core, LASP is a human rights law firm, providing voices to those who are often voiceless in those forums where civil disputes are decided,"**

Boehringer says. "We advocate for fairness, equity and due process for those who access our services."

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**Elisha A. Dunn-Georgiou**  
*An advocate for health beyond borders*

**E**lisha A. Dunn-Georgiou '06 has the widest professional portfolio imaginable: improving the health of everyone in the world.

She's not intimidated. As president and CEO of Global Health Council in Washington, D.C., Dunn-Georgiou coordinates the work of over 100 member organizations, focusing attention and resources on critical global health issues. She took the job after 13 years as an executive with PAI (Population Action International), an advocacy agency for women's reproductive health.

Dunn-Georgiou brings to the task both her UB Law degree and a UB master's degree in epidemiology, which she followed up with an assignment in the Peace Corps as a maternal and child health volunteer in Morocco. While working in Buffalo for a program helping low-income women obtain cancer screenings, she had an epiphany. "It was rewarding work," she says, "but the biggest changes in access came from changes in policy or the allocation of resources at the state level. I realized that I really wanted to change how health equity works."

Health equity, of course, is far from a reality globally, and there's a moral imperative to American leadership in this area, she says: **"Health is a human right and health is a political choice. What we're trying to do is create an enabling environment so people everywhere can access health services."**

When asked why Americans need to be leaders in global health, Dunn-Georgiou responds, "Why isn't it our responsibility? Everybody is human. We all have the obligation to make other people's lives better if we have the opportunity."

Read More



**Elizabeth Fox-Solomon**  
*Ensuring dignity in the working world*

**A**s chief of staff to the chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), **Elizabeth Fox-Solomon '06** is a key player in addressing employment issues and promoting the EEOC's mission to make workplaces free of harassment and discrimination.

A lot of employers go wrong without ill intent, she says, "much of what happens in workplaces is the result of people trying to do the right thing but not succeeding, or they are just ignorant of the law that applies." But there are also plenty of real horrors: racist graffiti in restrooms and on bulletin boards, sexual assault, nooses at construction sites. "If the EEOC is going to sue you, it's most likely a truly egregious case," she says.

Fox-Solomon worked for five years in Buffalo as a trial attorney in the agency's local office. In addition to advocating for individuals, she led cases with nationwide implications. Chief among them was a \$4.9 million, five-year consent decree she won against United Parcel Service in a case alleging religious discrimination.

Now, after a few years in our nation's capital, she's more committed than ever to the EEOC's goals. "The whole mission of our agency is to seek justice for America's workers," she says. **"The right to work in a place where you're treated with dignity and respect and able to compete fairly to earn a livelihood for your family, that's fundamental to the American way of life."**

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### J. Miles Gresham

#### *Changing policy to promote justice*

**“I’m a history nerd,” J. Miles Gresham ’11 acknowledges cheerfully. “One of my heroes growing up was Thurgood Marshall. I learned that the way Black people in this country have advanced has been through successful movement of public sentiment and of law and policy, and I wanted to contribute to that.”**

That sense of history informs Gresham’s thinking about how justice can move forward. And it animates his work as campaign director for Neighbor 2 Neighbor Massachusetts, an advocacy organization that works in both electoral politics and issue-based campaigns. Gresham works with local chapters, coaching them and advising on strategies, and represents the organization with its coalition partners.

Community organizing is labor-intensive, but the fruits of justice are real. Neighbor 2 Neighbor helped convince the City of Lynn to allocate \$10.6 million from its American Rescue Plan grant to affordable housing; it won a major increase in the non-police public safety budget in Holyoke; and statewide, Massachusetts voters approved a law that raises taxes on its wealthiest residents, generating \$2 billion in revenue for education and transportation. The organization also led efforts to stall the passing of a law that would have denied driving privileges to undocumented people. “We were able to rally our base to get that done,” Gresham says.

Now in Worcester, Mass., he retains ties to Buffalo, where he worked as a policy fellow with Partnership for the Public Good, a progressive think tank. At the Partnership, Gresham researched and wrote about policing, and how law enforcement can be made more transparent and equitable.

Read More 



### Nelson Mar

#### *A voice for kids in crisis*

**F**or some students, says Nelson Mar ’98, being suspended from school can be a turning point for the better if school officials address the root causes for the behavior.

When families call Mar, a senior staff attorney with Bronx Legal Services, often their child is back in the classroom sooner but more importantly, he says, “this is one of the few times in their lives that someone is actually in their corner.”

Mar has been with the agency for over 24 years. His clients are low-income families in crisis—their child is facing suspension/expulsion, or their child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) is not being fulfilled.

In disciplinary proceedings, he says, “we advocate for students staying in school. Excluding students from their classrooms for long periods is harmful for the student and should be avoided except in the most severe instances. **That leads students down the schools to prison pipeline: academic failure, increased dropout rates, and ultimately increased contact with the justice system.**

“This is a racial justice and equity issue,” Mar says. “Black children are suspended more often than children of other racial backgrounds and face more severe penalties for the same infractions. Students with disabilities are more disproportionately disciplined than all other students.”

Sometimes a pattern will emerge. When it became apparent that school administrators were routinely calling 911 when students acted out, sending kids to hospital emergency rooms, Mar challenged the practice in federal court. The affected families won a financial settlement—and the city changed its policies.

Read More 



## Marianne Mariano

### *Equal access to justice, case by case*

It used to be, says **Marianne Mariano '94**, the Western District of New York's federal public defender, that the prosecutors' disclosure in a case would fit in a single manila envelope. "Now it takes a hard drive or virtual platform," she says. "There's no simple case anymore."

Technological changes are just one of the myriad challenges in providing what Mariano calls "the gold standard of representation" to their clients, indigent people accused of federal crimes, a standard she has pursued since joining the office as an assistant federal public defender in 1995, and as head of the office since 2008. Mariano leads a staff of 32 people split between Buffalo and Rochester.

Managing a defender office is all-involving, particularly in times of crisis. Mariano led the office through unprecedented budget cuts during the federal sequester in 2013 and then the COVID-19 pandemic. **"My goal in managing a crisis, and what I try to communicate to my folks, is that if I have confidence that they're holding our clients up, I will take care of them and their families. And my staff has never let me down."**

And that sense of fair treatment is the lodestar of the work they do every day. "Our office is driven by client-centered representation," Mariano says. "That means every person assigned to us is treated as a person with rights and feelings. My entire staff is dedicated to ensuring that every person accused of a federal offense is given the highest quality of representation, regardless of means."

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## Christopher Phillips

### *Navigating justice for the elderly*

**Christopher Phillips '20** remembers one client as clear as yesterday. A transgender woman in her 60s, she wanted to execute a legal name change. For four long years she tried to navigate the legal system by herself.

Within two months after she called Phillips, the name change was accomplished.

That was a quick fix for a clear barrier to justice. And it's emblematic of the cases Phillips handles as a staff attorney with the Center for Elder Law & Justice, in Buffalo.

In the Guardianship Unit, Phillips works with other attorneys and professionals to act as guardians for vulnerable older adults. What sets him apart, though, is his work on behalf of elderly LGBTQ+ clients through the center's Aging with Pride Project, providing civil legal services on a broad spectrum of issues.

"Many older LGBTQ+ adults faced discrimination throughout their lives," he says. **"A lot of them have had longtime domestic partners for 30 or 40 years, but they're not married because that wasn't an option for them. Often that creates difficulties as they face the end of their lives. Much of what I do is discussing these issues with them."**

Older LGBTQ+ people may be reticent to seek out legal counsel, so a service designed for their needs helps overcome that hurdle. Phillips often connects with clients through his volunteer work with the advocacy group Niagara Pride.

"It's so meaningful," he says, "to be able to effect change for just one person's life."

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### Trini Ross *Turing the wheels of justice*

The Department of Justice, notes **Trini Ross '92**, is the oldest federal agency with justice in its name.

“Everything we do is about justice,” she says, “which means fairness, equity and thoughtfulness, and protecting the victims but also making sure the defendants have their constitutional rights.”

That is an ongoing mission for Ross, who has been the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of New York since 2021. It’s familiar territory for a career prosecutor who served as an assistant U.S. Attorney, in the office she now heads, for 23 years.

Six months into her tenure as chief prosecutor, the U.S. Attorney’s office was faced with a horrific tragedy: the mass shooting at a Buffalo supermarket in a predominantly Black neighborhood. Ten people were killed. The gunman was charged with federal hate crimes, in a case eligible for the death penalty.

Ross cannot discuss the case but says her office responded by going into the victimized neighborhood on the city’s East Side to build trust with the people they serve. “We gave out food, and we walked through the community,” she says. “It was important for the community to get to know us.”

That kind of personal connection has served Ross well from her early days as a prosecutor, a job she sought out because she saw bias in the justice system. **“I realized I needed to be part of the institution of prosecutors,”** she says, **“to be on the inside and question certain issues when we see them.”**



### Tina Palmer Stanford *Serving and protecting*

When a crime is committed, the justice system takes on the interests of a range of people: the convicted, the victims and the public.

Over her career, **Tina Palmer Stanford '90** has looked out for all of them.

In 14 years as an assistant Erie County district attorney, she handled thousands of cases, ranging from domestic violence to sexual assault and homicide, and represented the county in appeals. “I’m old enough to remember John Wayne, and I always felt I was wearing the white hat,” she says.

Stanford was later recruited to head the New York State Crime Victims Board (later the Office of Victim Services), which compensates and advocates for those who have been victimized.

She went on to chair the state’s Board of Parole, a position she held for over nine years before recently retiring. In that role, Stanford balanced public safety with the fate of those seeking release. The agency’s commissioners meet as panels of two or three, interview those eligible for parole consideration, and render their decisions based on a carefully parsed set of criteria under state executive law.

No one takes the task lightly. **“It’s not just what’s best for the victim, it’s not just what’s best for the incarcerated person, or the rest of the public who are impacted by both of those groups,”** she says. “The board takes *all* of those members of society into account and determines what’s in their best interest collectively and makes those very delicate decisions based on the standards in the law.”



# CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2023

The Class of 2023 had a UB Law experience like no other, including a first year spent learning entirely online during a global pandemic. So their Commencement ceremony was especially sweet for a class nicknamed Excelsior, Latin for “higher.” Our newest graduates are indeed going forth with the highest aspirations—to become agents of justice in whatever they do. Here’s a look back at that joy-filled celebration of achievement.



## Keynote Address

**Hon. Rose H. Sconiers '73**  
Associate Justice (Ret.)  
New York State Supreme Court  
Appellate Division, Fourth  
Department

“I encourage you to find a way to serve and create a legacy beyond your legal career. Remember this moment. As I look at all of you, I see infinite potential, boundless optimism, and endless opportunity ahead. Imagine the positive impact you can have on your community.”



## Dean's Address

**Aviva Abramovsky**

“Three years ago, I welcomed you to the law school via Zoom amid a global health crisis. Nothing was certain. Our world had never seen such disorder. Nevertheless, you showed up... You would not let the pandemic deny your goal of obtaining your law degree. And you did not. And that is the embodiment of courage, as well as hope, and faith in yourselves and in this institution.”



## Student Address

**Chanel Mònet Powell '23**

“Over the past few years, I’ve had the opportunity to bear witness to the growth of changemakers, future policy writers, and people who have fire in their hearts. Everyone in this room has been able to learn from someone else, to partner with someone who inspires you to be better or work harder, to watch people lift others up and encourage them while we’re all aboard this crazy ride.”

## Top Honors

### Dean's Medal

Buffalo 5/14 Survivors Fund  
Local Steering Committee



Committee Co-Chairs Paul Vukelic  
and Rev. Mark Blue

### Ken Joyce Excellence in Teaching Award

Hon. Glenn Murray, Administrative Law Judge



Prof. S. Todd Brown with Hon. Glenn Murray

## Student Awards

### Max Koren Award

Jennifer S. Shelton

### John N. Bennett Achievement Award

Jessica Kathryn Stickl Asbach

### Dale S. Margulis Award

Yomaris Sánchez-Orona

### Bachelor of Arts in Law Achievement Award

Annabella Bogart

View the  
Commencement  
Ceremony



## Faculty and Staff Awards

### Faculty Award

Professor Christine P. Bartholomew

### Staff Award

Elisa D. Lackey  
Managing Director,  
Clinical Legal Education

**MORE THAN  
225 GRADUATES  
INCLUDING:**

**7** LLMs

**159** JDs

**63** BAs in Law

## Our Proud Graduates



Esther Dasol Kim and Nicole D. Hart



Alexander M. Guarino, Stephen C. Edgett, Jason Delmont and Michael W. Perlo



LLM graduates E. Joo Chua and Mohsin Ilyas



Geoffrey Chiwetalu Adonu, Petra A. Holness and Steven Arias

# GLOBAL PATHWAYS FOR FIRST COHORT OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

UB Law's newly established doctoral program has hit its stride this past fall with the arrival of the first full cohort of students pursuing the JSD degree.

The inaugural group of JSD students is global in scope. They bring to Buffalo experience in legal practice and academia, and a broad and ambitious roster of research projects aimed at enhancing international relations and examining international human rights.

**“This program lets us build out the research side of the student experience,” says Professor Mateo Taussig-Rubbo, who directs the JSD program, “both for these individual students and also in their interaction with our JD students. They’ll be exposing our JDs to other ways of legal thinking they might not otherwise have.”**

As the four JSD students—all practicing lawyers—settled in for an intense period of academic work, they shared some of the ambitions that a doctorate in law can make possible.

**A.B.M. Asrafuzzaman** is an associate professor of law at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and an advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. His research interests include the law of inheritance, women's rights, sustainable development law, family law, torts, international human rights, intellectual property and constitutional law.

The author of ten articles in highly regarded academic journals, his current thesis project bears the title “Women's Unequal Inheritance Right Over Property in Bangladesh.”

“Women's rights to inherit property are complicated in Bangladesh by the strictures of religious law,” says Asrafuzzaman. In his thesis, he intends to put forth proposed legal reforms so that the nation can fulfill its obligations under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

“I love to be busy,” says **Carlos Federico Aguirre Cárdenas**, a lawyer from Mexico who comes to the law school with aspirations to transition from legal practice to full-time teaching. He founded a law firm that largely represents foreign companies seeking to do business in Mexico, as well as Mexican companies doing international transactions.

His research centers on the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement, the free trade agreement that replaced NAFTA and took effect in 2020. Specifically, he's looking at the role of rules of origin—which determine whether products are eligible for duty-free status or reduced duties—in trade governed by the agreement.

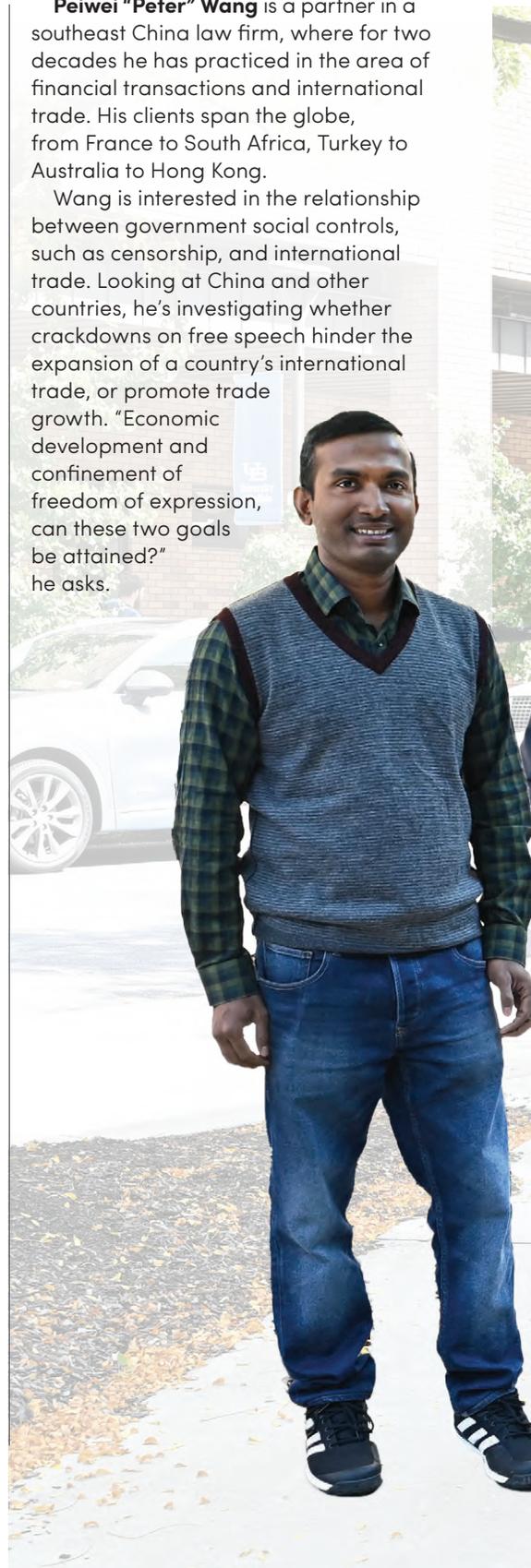
**Bianca Robertson**, of Cape Town, South Africa, has wide experience as an international human rights lawyer. She has worked with the United Nations, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations and the South African Parliament. Robertson comes to UB Law as a Fulbright Scholar.

Her particular interest is in the rights of children, and the advancement of those rights through law reform. Her research project will focus on law reform in South Africa but will compare other countries' efforts.

“We had an unequal society before we had democracy in South Africa,” Robertson says. “With democracy we developed a comprehensive and progressive Constitution. It provides a specific section on the rights of children, and from that South Africa developed national laws to ensure those rights. It is essential to monitor and evaluate the body of law to assess how far we have come as a country. I aim to assess how South Africa has progressed in law reform on children's rights to make them more practical and sustainable.”

**Peiwei “Peter” Wang** is a partner in a southeast China law firm, where for two decades he has practiced in the area of financial transactions and international trade. His clients span the globe, from France to South Africa, Turkey to Australia to Hong Kong.

Wang is interested in the relationship between government social controls, such as censorship, and international trade. Looking at China and other countries, he's investigating whether crackdowns on free speech hinder the expansion of a country's international trade, or promote trade growth. “Economic development and confinement of freedom of expression, can these two goals be attained?” he asks.





Left to right: A.B.M. Asrafuzzaman, Carlos Federico Aguirre Cárdenas, Bianca Robertson, Prof. Mateo Tausig-Rubbo and Peiwei "Peter" Wang

# STUDENT DEMAND DRIVES A GROWING BA IN LAW PROGRAM

Law enforcement. Businesses large and small. The FBI or the CIA. Regulatory compliance. The armed forces.

For the students in the law school’s undergraduate program in law, the career motivations are as diverse as the students enrolled in the program. And, of course, many aspire to go on to law school at UB or elsewhere.

The BA in Law program, which launched with four students minoring in the program in 2018, has quickly become a mainstay of UB’s undergraduate curriculum. And student interest has outpaced expectations, with more than 260 students currently pursuing the degree. This past fall, 44 freshmen declared the major along with 17 transfer students.

To meet that demand, says **Professor James Milles**, who directs the BA in Law program as vice dean for undergraduate studies, the law school has built up a dedicated faculty and greatly increased the program’s course offerings. In its first semester, he says, six courses were offered; the tally this fall is 21, including multiple sections of large, required courses.

Those courses include standards like Introduction to Criminal Law and Introduction to the American Legal System, as well as Advanced Special Investigations, which focuses on white-collar crime, and new offerings like Advanced Topics in Family Law, Health Law, Real Estate Transactions, and a seminar called Russia’s War of Aggression Against Ukraine.

“It’s a pretty unique program,” Milles says. “Our philosophy is that there are a number of careers where it’s useful and valuable to know about the law, but you don’t have to be a lawyer to do them. It’s also a degree in citizenship, in a way. The law is complex, and it shouldn’t be just lawyers who know a little about it, so we’re trying to demystify the law to some degree. And the program gives students a chance to get a taste of law school and see if it’s for them.”

The BA in Law program, which in its early incarnation relied heavily on adjunct instructors, now also has four full-time instructors as well as two faculty members who split their time between the BA and JD programs. Three have come on board this year—**Joshua Coene**, **David Coombs** and **Orlando Dickson ’19**—joining three instructors who were hired last year, **Joel Black**, **Thomas Hare** and **Paul Linden-Retek**. In addition, several other members of the JD faculty teach undergraduate courses periodically.



James Milles

Staffing the effort is newly installed program coordinator **Karen Joppe**, a 2018 UB graduate who coordinates special events, presents to prospective and incoming students, and serves as an academic adviser to degree seekers. She shares that responsibility with **Melinda R. Saran ’86**, vice dean for undergraduate student affairs. Both Milles and Saran teach in the program.

Saran notes that of the incoming freshman law majors, three-fourths are women, and more than half are from underrepresented backgrounds. Many students, she says, come to the program as sophomores or juniors, switching from other majors, and transferring from community colleges, as they explore their options.

Many BA in Law majors have specific career plans, Saran says, but all are exposed to a way of thinking about the law that they could encounter nowhere else. “I just had one student talking about the course on the Ukraine war and how fascinating the discussion is,” she says. “Students are studying how law and the rule of law affect the situation in Ukraine.

“Their No. 1 reason to enroll is curiosity: What is the law? You could take political science or history, but before this program, you never got to see what law was about before law school. Here you can learn about the law, get a minor in something else and really expand your horizons. You can see how the law fits in with everything else.”



Karen Joppe



Melinda R. Saran '86

## FALL ENROLLMENT SINCE 2018

	MINORS	MAJORS
2018	4	NA
2019	36	11
2020	66	107
2021	87	190
2022	80	248
2023	99*	263*

\*As of 9.18.23

“My internship at Volunteer Lawyers Project taught me that not all people have equal access to the law. As a result, people can lose things like their homes, migrant status or go bankrupt. For low-income families, hiring the best lawyer or law firm in town can be super costly, which is why pro bono work is so valuable.”

- Maheea Sayeed '23 (BA)



1



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4



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6

## Our Expanding Undergraduate Faculty

The newest members of our BA faculty bring a wide array of expertise to the classroom. Here's a sample of the courses they offer on law and how it shapes our society:

### 1. Joel Black

- Introduction to the American Legal System
- Common Law
- Legal Reasoning

### 2. Joshua Coene

- Common Law
- Law, Politics and Mass Incarceration

### 3. David Coombs

- Military Justice
- Criminal Procedure Investigation

### 4. Orlando Dickson '19

- Legal Reasoning
- Introduction to Criminal Law

### 5. Thomas Hare

- Introduction to Business Organizations and Business Law
- Introduction to the American Legal System
- Common Law
- Legal Reasoning

### 6. Paul Linden-Retek

- Introduction to the American Legal System
- Justice: What's the Right Thing
- Public Law

# NEW VOICES AMONG THE JD FACULTY

UB School of Law's faculty roster has broadened and deepened over the past two academic years, with the hiring of an impressive group of full-time instructors and scholars in the JD program. They bring a wide variety of experience and expertise and augment the law school's strengths in the interdisciplinary study of the law. Meet our next generation of academic leaders:



**Theophilus Edwin Coleman**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of Law*

On the horizon is another international voice, as **Theophilus Edwin Coleman** joins the faculty in January as a visiting assistant professor. A human rights specialist, Coleman holds a bachelor of laws degree from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and master of laws and doctor of laws degrees from the University of Johannesburg, where he is a senior postdoctoral research fellow.



**David Coombs**  
*Lecturer in Law*

**David Coombs** brings an exceptional skill set from a 21-year career in the Army JAG Corps, where he worked as both a prosecutor and a defense attorney. He draws on that experience teaching Evidence in the JD program, and Military Justice as well as Criminal Procedure Investigation to both undergraduate and law students. Coombs most recently taught at Roger Williams School of Law in Rhode Island. He holds bachelor's and JD degrees from the University of Idaho, and an LLM from the Judge Advocate General's School.



**Jorge Luis Fabra-Zamora**  
*Associate Professor of Law*

A native of Columbia, **Jorge Luis Fabra-Zamora** earned a bachelor of laws degree from the Universidad de Cartagena before moving to Canada for master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy from McMaster University. At the law school, he teaches Torts and Conflict of Laws. In keeping with his scholarly interest in legal philosophy, his recently published and co-edited book, *Objectivity in Jurisprudence, Legal Interpretation and Practical Reasoning* (Edward Elgar Publishing), gathers essays from scholars worldwide on the meaning of objectivity in the law.



**John Harland Giammatteo**  
*Associate Professor of Law*

**John Harland Giammatteo** comes to UB Law following a clinical teaching fellowship at Georgetown University Law Center. He earned his bachelor's degree from Syracuse University, master's degrees from the University of London and London's City University, a JD from Yale Law School, and an LLM from Georgetown. He also served two year-long clerkships for judges at the U.S. District Court and U.S. Court of Appeals levels. Giammatteo's particular interest is in civil procedure, which he teaches, and the ways it affects the administration of justice.

## A safe haven for human rights work

### Mihreteab Tsighe Taye *Scholar at Risk*

The School of Law's global presence took another step forward this fall when **Mihreteab Tsighe Taye** joined the faculty as a lecturer.

Taye, a native of Ethiopia, came to UB through the university's Scholars at Risk fellowship program, which provides a safe and supportive academic home to scholars who face threats in their country of origin.

"The risk of persecution in Ethiopia manifests in several ways," Taye says. "Academics and researchers who address sensitive topics or expose human rights violations face threats to their personal safety and academic freedom. In the past two years, the risk of persecution has been deeply concerning, particularly regarding academics targeted based on their ethnicity."

"We are very fortunate to have Dr. Taye join us," says **Professor James Wooten**, vice dean for research and faculty development. "He is a gifted young scholar who has done highly regarded research on the creation and development of regional international courts in Africa. He also has expertise in international commercial law, criminal law and human rights law that will be welcome additions to our curricular offerings in these areas."

Taye's academic background includes a PhD in law from the Center of Excellence for International Courts (iCourts) at Copenhagen University, an LLM in international law from Erasmus University Rotterdam, and a bachelor of laws degree from Addis Ababa University. Most recently he was a postdoctoral fellow and human rights researcher at New York University. At UB

Law, he'll teach courses this spring on international commercial arbitration and comparative regional human rights systems, and will continue his research into the workings of international courts.



### Clayton Masterman *Associate Professor of Law*

**Clayton Masterman's** background in economics offers a unique look at how our legal system functions. After his undergraduate work at Vassar College, he earned a JD and, concurrently, a PhD in Law and Economics from Vanderbilt University. His scholarship has explored the legal implications of public policy around opioid abuse, and the public health sector's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Masterman, who teaches Torts at the law school, served two year-long clerkships for federal Court of Appeals judges, and has extensive experience in private practice.



### Tanya Monestier *Professor of Law*

**Tanya Monestier** holds an LLM from the University of Cambridge in England and an LLB from Toronto's Osgoode Hall Law School, in addition to her bachelor's degree from York University in Toronto. Her teaching portfolio at UB Law includes courses in Contracts, Sales, and Transnational Litigation. Monestier came to Buffalo from Roger Williams School of Law. Her research interests center around issues of the law of jurisdiction in Canada and U.S. cases, and her law review articles have been widely cited, including by the Supreme Court of Canada.





## NEW LEADERSHIP FOR A FOUNDATIONAL CURRICULUM

**W**hen **Angie McDuff '12** pivoted her career to become an instructor in the law school's Legal Analysis, Writing and Research (LAWR) program, she was looking for a deeper sense of meaning in her work. She had taught as an adjunct professor at the law school, and her experience in coaching the law school's Jessup International Law Moot Court teams persuaded her that shaping the next generation of legal minds was exactly the deeper meaning she was looking for.

Now, just a few years later, McDuff has

been named director of the LAWR program, whose instructors teach the three-semester sequence that gets every student up to speed in those fundamental skills of lawyers through small classes and intensive one-on-one coaching.

McDuff, who also earned a master of laws degree from UB Law, brings to her new role both a deep familiarity with the program through her teaching, and also wide experience in legal practice. Before entering academia, she worked in immigration law and corporate regulatory analysis and compliance.

"In teaching LAWR, I draw on the skills I've learned from almost every job I've ever had," she says. "Immigration law helped me better understand trauma-informed lawyering, while compliance helped me hone my analytical skills. However, I also carry into the classroom lessons I learned from my time waiting tables in college and nearly 10 years of working retail. And that's something I try to help my students understand: they all have transferable skills. It's a matter of figuring out what those skills are and how they relate to their future careers."

## Four experienced practitioners join LAWR program

As the School of Law continues to build students' competencies in the essential skills of lawyering, new hiring over the past two years in the Legal Analysis, Writing and Research (LAWR) program has deepened the roster of faculty and brought a new range of skill sets to this critical effort.

The new instructors—including two UB Law alumni—have honed their teaching skills alongside their work in private practice, corporate and government settings. They bring to the task a real commitment to helping students succeed in law school and in practice.



As a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo for more than three years, doing criminal defense work in Buffalo City Court, **Farina Barth '17** handled over 300 cases a year. Now, as a lecturer in the LAWR program, she guides about two dozen first-year students through two semesters of building the fundamental skills of lawyering. Barth brings teaching experience from the State University of New York at Brockport, where she taught undergraduates criminal law and adjudication.



A former editor in chief of the *Buffalo Law Review*, **Emily Dinsmore '14** has returned to O'Brian Hall as a member of the LAWR faculty. After several years of practice in the areas of bond offerings and structured lending, she comes back to her alma mater with extensive teaching experience, including a post-college stint with Teach for America, working with underserved high schoolers in Arizona. She's also presented multiple Continuing Legal Education seminars to her law firm colleagues and has coached many new associates, all preparing her for her new role in the classroom.



**Pamela Newell's** wide professional experience provides plenty of opportunities to expose her LAWR students to the breadth of legal practice. She has worked in private practice, taught at the university and community college levels, worked as an appellate court clerk and in worker's compensation, and investigated EEO complaints. Newell holds a master of laws degree and a master's degree in forensic psychology. She is the author of *Understanding Criminal Procedure* (Great River Learning, 2022), a digital textbook designed for students majoring in criminal justice.



**Carina Schoenberger** has made the move to academia after a dozen years as an Assistant United States Attorney. With extensive trial experience in matters ranging from financial and health care fraud to immigration and drug crimes, she represented the United States in both criminal and civil appellate cases. She also brings to the classroom the context of three years of litigation practice with a St. Louis firm, where she handled cases involving intellectual property, class and derivative actions, and commercial litigation.

# Faculty library rapidly expands

Society’s intersection with law is ever-changing, and UB Law faculty members are thinking and writing at the cutting edge of that analysis. Over the past two years they’ve produced dozens of peer-reviewed law review articles and book chapters, as well as 17 published books. Their topics—from neuroscience to legal history, constitutional law to global political transformation—reflect the creative ferment of scholars at the forefront of critical legal studies.

**1. Postnational Constitutionalism: Europe and the Time of Law**  
Oxford University Press, 2023



**Paul Linden-Retek**  
Associate Professor

**2. Comparative Election Law**  
Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022 (editor)

**3. Election Law in the American Political System**  
Aspen, 3rd ed., 2023  
(with Guy-Uriel Charles)



**James A. Gardner (ed.)**  
Bridget and Thomas Black  
SUNY Distinguished Professor

**4. Sh\*t No One Tells You About Law School**  
Carolina Academic Press, 2022



**Tanya J. Monestier**  
Professor

**5. Organizational Structures of Academic Law Libraries: Past, Present, and Future, Volume 1**

W.S. Hein & Co., 2023 (co-edited with Jessica de Perio Wittman)



**Elizabeth G. Adelman**  
Vice Dean for Legal Information Services  
Director of the Charles B. Sears Law Library and Teaching Faculty

**6. Legal Writing Handbook for Clinical Students**

CALI eLangdell Press, 2023



**Nan L. Haynes**  
Lecturer in Law Emerita

**7. Intellectual Property and the Brain: How Neuroscience Will Reshape Legal Protection for Creations of the Mind**

Cambridge University Press, 2022



**Mark Bartholomew**  
Professor



**8. While Waiting for Rain: Community, Economy, and Law in a Time of Change**

University of Michigan Press, 2022



**John Henry Schlegel**  
UB Distinguished Professor  
Floyd H. & Hilda L. Hurst  
Faculty Scholar

**9. The Palgrave Handbook of Democracy, Governance and Justice in Africa**

Palgrave Macmillan, 2022  
(co-edited with Aderomola Adeola)



**Makau W. Mutua**  
SUNY Distinguished Professor  
Margaret W. Wong Professor

**10. Objectivity in Jurisprudence, Legal Interpretation and Practical Reasoning**

Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022  
(co-edited with Gonzala Villa Rosas)

**11. Truth, Justice, and Non-Repetition in the Columbian Conflict**

Bogotá: Tirant Lo Blanch, 2023  
(in Spanish) (co-edited with Andrés Molina-Ochoa and Nancy Doubleday)



**Jorge Luis Fabra-Zamora**  
Associate Professor

**12. Puerto Rico's Constitutional Paradox: Colonial Subordination, Democratic Tension, and Promise of Progressive Transformation**

Hart Publishing, 2023



**Jorge M. Farinacci-Fernós**  
Visiting Assistant Professor,  
2022-2023

**13. The Asian Law and Society Reader**

Cambridge University Press, 2023  
(co-edited with Lynette J. Chua and Sida Lui)



**David M. Engel**  
SUNY Distinguished Service  
Professor Emeritus

**14. Actual Malice: Civil Rights and Freedom of the Press in *New York Times v. Sullivan***

University of California Press, 2023



**Samantha Barbas**  
Professor  
Director of The Baldy Center  
for Law and Social Policy

**15. More-Than-One Health: Humans, Animals, and the Environment Post-COVID**

Routledge Press, 2022 (editor)

**16. Settling Nature: The Conservation Regime in Palestine-Israel**

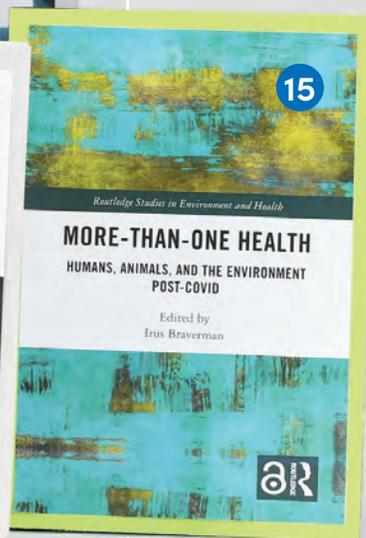
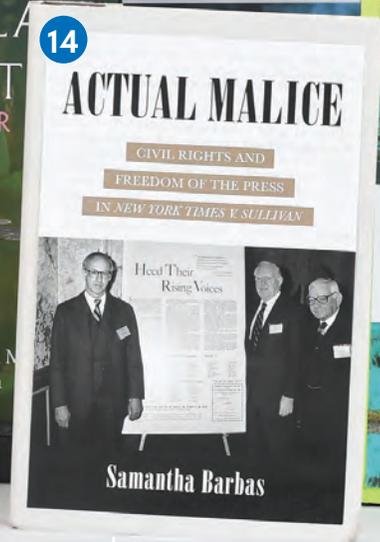
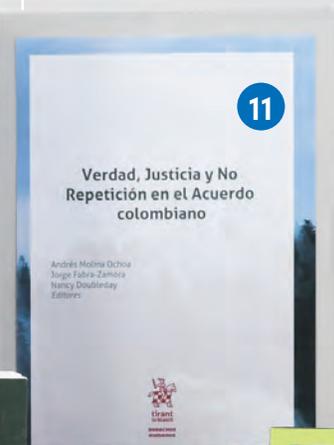
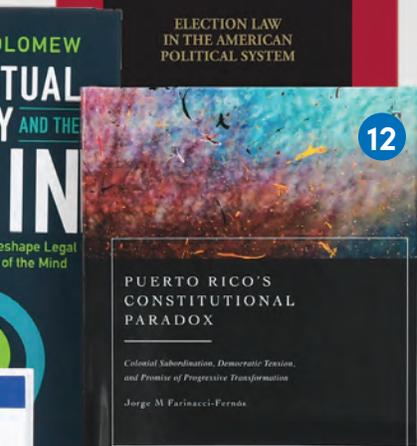
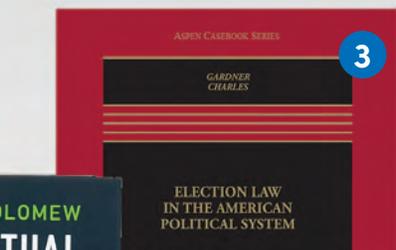
University of Minnesota Press, 2023

**17. Laws of the Sea: Interdisciplinary Currents**

Routledge, 2023 (editor)



**Irus Braverman**  
Professor  
William J. Magavern  
Faculty Scholar



# ALL THE BEST

## Faculty awards and achievements

Scholars. Leaders. Globally recognized experts. UB Law faculty have impact and influence on research, policy and practice. And their recent accomplishments and well-deserved honors show it. Here are some of the many ways our faculty make a difference through community engagement and thought leadership.

Associate Professor **Heather Abraham**, director of the Civil Rights and Transparency Clinic, received the 2023 Change Now! Award from Housing Opportunities Made Equal, a Western New York agency serving victims of housing discrimination.

**Elizabeth Adelman**, vice dean for legal information services and director of the Charles B. Sears Law Library, recently completed her term as president of the American Association of Law Libraries.

Professor **Samantha Barbas**, director of The Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, appeared on CNN's *Inside Politics With John King*, where she discussed the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1964 decision in *New York Times v. Sullivan*.

Professor **Mark Bartholomew** was named a co-principal investigator on a \$3.4 million grant recently approved by the National Science Foundation to support the education, recruitment and development of a cybersecurity work force.

*Settling Nature: The Conservation Regime in Palestine-Israel (2023)*, by **Irus Braverman**, professor and William J. Magavern Faculty Scholar, was recognized by the Western Political Science Association as Best Book in Environmental Political Theory.

**Rebecca Chapman**, senior assistant law librarian, received the 2023 Minority Leadership Development Award from the American Association of Law Libraries' Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Professor **Kim Diana Connolly**, vice dean for innovation, interdisciplinarity and community impact, received the 2023 SLICE (Sustainability Leadership, Innovation and Collaborative Engagement) Faculty Award for Sustainability in Higher Education from UB's Office of Sustainability. Connolly also served as part of the World Wetland Network delegation at the 2022 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Geneva, Switzerland.

Lecturer **David Coombs** has been appointed a fellow of the National Institute of Military Justice, the nation's premier organization devoted to studying and improving the military justice system.

**Orlando Dickson '19**, undergraduate lecturer in law, was elected chairman of the Buffalo School Board's Ethics Commission.

Professor **Meredith Kolsky Lewis**, vice dean for international and graduate programs, has been appointed co-chair of the United States APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Study Centers Consortium and recently joined the editorial board of the *Journal of World Investment and Trade*.

**Paul Linden-Retek**, who teaches in the areas of constitutional law and international human rights, has been promoted to associate professor.

An amicus curiae brief filed by Professor **Tanya Monestier** was quoted by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito Jr. in his concurring opinion in the Court's decision in *Mallory v. Norfolk Southern Railway Co.*

Professor **Matthew Steilen** has been invited to visit the University of Cambridge Faculty of Law, where he will concurrently be a senior visitor at Emmanuel College and a visiting fellow at Wolfson College, both in Cambridge. While in residence at Cambridge, he will work on completing his book manuscript, tentatively titled *Legislative Power in Early English Parliaments: A Constitutional History*.



**Athena Mutua**, professor and Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar, serves as vice president of ClassCrits, a network for the critical analysis of law and economic inequality.



**John Henry Schlegel**, UB Distinguished Professor and Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar (with UB President Satish Tripathi), was recognized for 50 years of service to the university and the law school.



**David "Bert" Westbrook**, Louis A. Del Cotto Professor and co-director of the New York City Program in Finance and Law, participated in the U.S. Army War College's 64th annual National Security Seminar. Westbrook was sponsored by a former student, **Lt. Col. Stephen Trynosky '05**, practitioner-in-residence and senior military adviser at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.

# THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME AND A LIFETIME OF COMMITMENT

## Heilmans endow new faculty position

When Pamela Davis Heilman '75 and Robert Heilman decided to make a game-changing gift to the law school, it was no snap decision. The couple talked it over with each other, discussed it with their family, spoke with the university about it, and weighed their values against what they wanted this gift to accomplish.

But in a larger sense, this philanthropic gesture was the natural next step in the Heilmans' longtime commitment to their alma mater—an investment in the future of UB and UB Law that they see as an extension of their decades of involvement, from mentoring to alumni leadership to philanthropy.

The result is an extraordinary bequest commitment of \$1 million that will endow a new faculty position, the **Pamela D. Heilman, JD '75 and Robert D. Heilman, MBA '75 Professor of Social Equity and Justice**.

It's an important step forward for the law school and the university. President Satish K. Tripathi has identified an increase in the number of endowed professorships as a crucial factor in further solidifying UB's reputation as a world-class research university, and the Heilmans have been an integral part of that ambition. Pam has served on both the UB Council—the university's primary oversight and advisory body—and the law school's Dean's Advisory Council, which advises the dean on curriculum and other matters.

"Both of us have the highest level of respect for Satish, and Pam has had very close involvement," Bob says. "So that became a guiding light that emerged later in our life. We decided we've got to do something that's significant, to support what the president is trying to do."

Adds Pam: "We gave thought to some other (ways of giving), but at the end of the day, we came back to the law school, tying us back to the gift of my education there and what that has allowed the two of us to do. UB cannot be a great university without a great law school,

and vice versa. Those two things tie strongly together."

Now retired, Pam was a longtime corporate law partner in the Buffalo law firm Hodgson Russ LLP, where she specialized in not-for-profit law as well as cross-border legal issues and helped establish the firm's office in Toronto. As one of the firm's first women partners, she was also in the vanguard of the democratization of the profession along gender lines, and in retirement continues to mentor and advocate for women lawyers.

Her commitment to the diversification of the legal profession is evident in her vision for this new endowed professor role. The Heilmans' gift specifies that the professorship is open to outstanding

faculty members whose teaching and scholarship focus on how the law can build equity in U.S. society, with preference given to a female academic.

"This professorship is being designated as one for social equity and justice," Pam says. "The only way to go back to the core values of this country that we love, and to allow all American people to have the opportunities that Bob and I had to become who we are today, is a return to those values. And the law school can play a very pivotal role in that, through its research, through its faculty, through the learning and the interdisciplinary scholarship that engages the law school community in our wonderful university campus. It's just essential."



Robert Heilman '75 (MBA) and Pamela Davis Heilman '75 (JD).

As this issue went to press, we learned of the untimely passing of Robert Heilman. The School of Law and the University mourn the loss of a dedicated advocate and loyal friend. We extend sincere condolences to Pam and the Heilman family.

# A SPACE AND A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

With a little vision and a lot of support from the University and our loyal donors and friends, O’Brian Hall continues to evolve with redesigned areas where students can learn, work and stay well. Plus, new dedicated facilities in downtown Buffalo all play a part in making students’ law school journey an unparalleled experience, and fostering learning and leadership along the way.

## The Downtown Gateway

Students participating in The Advocacy Institute and the Clinical Legal Education Program now have access to classrooms, conference rooms and offices for meetings with colleagues and clients downtown in the UB Gateway building adjacent to the center of the Western New York legal community.



## Student attorney workroom

A lot of work happens outside the classroom, especially for student attorneys in the clinical program. A recently renovated workroom provides ample and comfortable space where students can collaborate on projects and prepare to be excellent advocates.



## A quiet space for nursing mothers

Sometimes life outside of law school needs a place in O’Brian Hall. And the Law Library has provided it, converting an underused office into a beautiful, private sanctuary for nursing mothers.



## Coming soon!

Construction has begun on a new suite for our student organizations including lockers, storage space and a beautiful conference room on the second floor of O'Brian across from the Law Library.

And be sure to visit O'Brian Hall this spring for the debut of our new Wellness Room on the 6th floor, offering a peaceful retreat where students can prioritize their well-being and attend to their personal health through meditation, yoga, reflection and more.



## Support our bright students and bold programs

*Make a gift to an initiative that means the most to you, including:*

- The Advocacy Institute
- Social Justice and Racial Equity Fund
- New York City Program in Finance and Law
- UB Law Clinics
- Summer Fellowship Program
- and many more

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Director of Advancement  
(716) 645-2113 or [ebrosenb@Buffalo.edu](mailto:ebrosenb@Buffalo.edu)

[law.buffalo.edu/giving](http://law.buffalo.edu/giving)



# BOLD MEANS EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS.

Matthew Pelkey, JD '10, BA '07, directs the School of Law's Entrepreneurship Law Center Clinic.

At UB, we've proven we can do anything when we come together. Our students have boundless ambition. Our faculty have unstoppable drive. And we're fueling the future with discovery



and innovation. *Boldly Buffalo* is the largest campaign in SUNY history. Learn more at

[buffalo.edu/campaign](http://buffalo.edu/campaign).

# BOLDLY BUFFALO

THE CAMPAIGN FOR UB

# RAISING THE BAR

When you're in the company of experts and industry icons, everyone's game ramps up. Our signature programs, unique excursions, and visits by the bench and bar, offer students opportunities to watch and learn from the very best.



## Leading the charge

Students in the **New York City Program in Law and Finance** took a break from corporate finance class to visit the Charging Bull on Wall Street.

## Lessons from the bench

There's no better way to become a good advocate than to watch great advocacy in action. Visits by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and by members of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, brought live oral arguments to the Francis M. Letro Courtroom in O'Brien Hall. And a panel discussion with the New York State Court of Appeals gave students an exclusive session with the members of our state's highest court.



### New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department

Left to right: Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83, Hon. Erin M. Peradotto '84, Hon. Gerald J. Whalen '83, Hon. Stephen K. Lindley '89 and Hon. Donald A. Greenwood.



### U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims

Left to right: Interim Dean S. Todd Brown, Hon. Joseph L. Falvey Jr., Hon. Margaret Bartley, Hon. Scott J. Laurer and Vice Dean Kim Diana Connolly.



### New York Court of Appeals

Left to right: Hon. Gerald J. Whalen '83, Presiding Justice of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department with Court of Appeals judges, Hon. Shirley Troutman, Hon. Madeline Singas, Hon. Jenny Rivera, Hon. Rowan D. Wilson (Chief Judge), Hon. Michael J. Garcia, Hon. Anthony Cannataro, Hon. Caitlin J. Halligan and Interim Dean S. Todd Brown.



## Victory formation

The **UB Center for the Advancement of Sport** was well represented at the 2023 MIT Sloan Sports Analytics Conference in Boston, where Joseph O'Bryan '23, Connor Johnson '23 and Michael Perlo '23 presented their paper on NIL deals in the Big Ten, with an able assist from Center Director **Nellie Drew '88**.



## Global citizens

**Prof. Jorge Fabra-Zamora** (second from left) toured the United Nations headquarters with members of the **International Law Students Association**, where they were briefed on international treaty law.



## Insight from the top

The Western District of New York's top prosecutor, U.S. Attorney **Trini Ross '92**, engaged students in a discussion about the importance of diversity in prosecutorial offices.

## Rising stars

Opportunity plus passion often leads to success. We celebrate the hard work and outstanding achievements of our students and most recent graduates, and the team efforts that make those accomplishments possible. Here are just a few of our student stars.



**Glencé Garlock '24** Recipient of the Minority Bar Association of Western New York's 2022 John L. Hargrave Law Student Award.



**Qui'Essence Harris '23** Selected by the Northeastern Black Law Students Association as the Northeast Region President of the Year.



**Patrick Higgins '25** Named Best Advocate at UCLA School of Law's 2023 Trial Competition.



**Julia Merante '23** Recipient of a 2023 UB Excellence in Research, Scholarship and Creativity Award for her project titled "Her Crusade Across the Country: Erin Merryn's Law Leading the Fight Against Child Sexual Abuse."



**Tyler Myszka '25 and Katherine Kio '25** 2023 Winners of the Charles S. Desmond Moot Court Competition.



**Jéla Paul '24** Recipient of the 2023 Future Legal Scholar Award presented by the Minority Bar Association of Western New York.



**Madelyn Storms '24** Named a 2023 Equal Justice Works Student Fellow in the Rural Summer Legal Corps Program.



**Matthew Taboni '25** Named a 2023 Western New York Prosperity Fellow for his commitment to the economic viability of the region.



**Erin Welsh '24** Author of *Kid Off the Grid: 'Sovereign Citizen Parenting' and Its Legal Impacts for Children*, published in the New York State Bar Association's *Family Law Review*, vol. 55, no. 2 (2023).

# Awards, presentations and community celebrations

We're all in it together. And nothing says community better than the much-anticipated annual dinners, receptions, lectures and programs that bring us together to celebrate, connect and continue to learn. Check out these highlights from our recent law school gatherings and special events.

## OUTLaw Awards Dinner

March 10, 2023



Jessica M. Baker '03, OUTLaw Honoree (center) with Lindsey Hornung '24 (left) and Daniel Kahl '24 (right).



Neil A. Pawlowski '10, OUTLaw Honoree (center) with Hon. Gary A. Wilson, Jr. '08 (left) and City of Buffalo Council Member Mitch Nowakowski (right).

## Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Annual Auction

March 31, 2023



Anna E. Lawrence '24, Mia A. Forney '25 and Jenna Wojdan '24.



Kerisha H. Hawthorne-Greer '14.

## Spring Mitchell Lecture—Race, the Supreme Court and Police Power

April 7, 2023



Guest Speaker Devon W. Carbado, The Honorable Harry Pregerson Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law, with UB Law faculty members, Prof. Guyora Binder, Prof. Alexandra Harrington and Prof. Athena Mutua.

## Annual Students of Color Dinner

April 12, 2023



Kumar Wise, Marie Nesbitt 2023 Promise Prize Scholar; Olivia Binda '23, Ally Award Honoree; Hon. Kevin M. Carter '89, Distinguished Alumni Award Honoree; Alicia Artis '23, Monique E. Emdin Award Honoree; and Prof. Heather Abraham, Jacob D. Hyman Professor of the Year.



Sarah M. Washington '16, Trailblazer Award Honoree and Immediate Past President of the GOLD Group; and Jodaliza Gloder '24.



Keynote Speaker Joseph M. Hanna '05, Jeannine Weber Kahabka and Michael T. Glascott.

## New York City Program Reception

April 17, 2023



Terrence M. Gilbride '88; Prof. David (Bert) Westbrook, Co-Director of the NYC Program; and Hon. Lourdes M. Ventura '98.

**Buffalo Law Review  
Annual Dinner**  
April 28, 2023



Jessica Ortiz '05, Distinguished Alumni Honoree, with her daughters Reagan (left) and Olivia (right).



Hannah F. Atkinson '23 and Hon. Brenda M. Freedman '89, Distinguished Alumni Honoree.

**Discover Law**  
June 2023



Our 10th Cohort of Discover Law Undergraduate Scholars.

William Savino '75 with Dean Aviva Abramovsky (left) and 2022-23 Law Alumni Association President Elizabeth Kraengel '07 (right) at the 2023 award presentation.

**2023 Edwin F. Jaeckle Award Winner**  
Held February 8 at Kleinhans Music Hall

**'The luckiest UB Law graduate'**

In recognition of far more than luck, **William F. Savino '75** received the 2023 Edwin F. Jaeckle Award, the highest honor bestowed by the law school and the Law Alumni Association. A prominent litigator and a senior partner in the Buffalo office of Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP, Savino has taught business law at the UB School of Management since 1979 and a course on commercial litigation at the law school since 2001. In 2019, he received the law school's Ken Joyce Excellence in Teaching Award for his outstanding performance in the classroom and his longstanding service to the law school.

He is a past president of the Law Alumni Association and a longtime member of the Dean's Advisory Council, and in 2014, he received a Distinguished Alumni Award for Business Achievements.

**"I am the luckiest UB Law graduate I know...**

**We need to ensure that UB Law graduates coming up learn that you can be a zealous advocate and a tenacious negotiator without breaking rules or undermining civility. We need to ensure that UB Law graduates coming up remember that we must internalize the goals of diversity, equity and inclusion, and act on those goals daily... We need to ensure that the UB Law graduates coming up recognize that as they too become successful, it is essential that they give back to UB Law School the way that all the lawyers in this room do each and every year. Then and only then will they understand that they have not been merely lucky, but deserving of everything they received as UB Law graduates."**

- William F. Savino '75



Watch a video of the presentation of the 2023 Jaeckle Award



# Cultivating connections from coast to coast

UB Law graduates comprise the majority of the Western New York legal community. But many of our alumni work and live across the country and around the globe. The UB Law Alumni Association makes sure that wherever our graduates are located, they stay connected to their law school and to each other, with a variety of events and programs held in cities nationwide.

## Honoring leadership and service at Distinguished Alumni Awards presentation

The Law Alumni Association's signature event—its annual alumni dinner and presentation of the Distinguished Alumni Awards—celebrated its **60th anniversary** at a diamond jubilee held on May 11, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Buffalo. Five outstanding graduates and one non-alumna were recognized by their peers for their extraordinary contributions to the legal profession and their community.

Watch a video of the awards presentation



FOR PUBLIC SERVICE  
**Hon. Shelley B. Mayer '79**  
Senator, New York State Senate, 37th District  
Westchester, NY

FOR BUSINESS  
**Marc A. Alpert '86**  
Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Loews Corporation  
New York City

FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE BY A NON-ALUMNUS  
**Hon. Elizabeth A. Wolford**  
Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, WDNY  
Rochester, NY



FOR THE JUDICIARY  
**Hon. Kathy J. King '84**  
Justice, New York State Supreme Court, Civil Branch,  
New York County  
New York City

FOR PRIVATE PRACTICE  
**James W. Grable Jr. '96**  
Partner, Connors LLP  
Buffalo

FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE  
**Anne E. Joynt '05**  
Partner, Lipsitz, Ponterio & Comerford LLC  
Buffalo

## A Hop Down The Thruway Rochester, NY



Reception for Newly Admitted Attorneys  
Richelle R. Kloch '22 and Hon. Richard C. Kloch Sr. '76.

## The Big Apple New York City



Lobster Boat Cruise in New York Harbor  
Members of the NYC Alumni Chapter with LAA Executive Director Stephanie A. Mack '08 (far left) and Executive Director Emerita Ilene R. Fleischmann (second row, third from left).

## Back Home in Buffalo



LAA Welcome Party for New Students  
Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83; Maria Marullo '26; Hon. Barbara Johnson-Lee '86, LAA Vice President; Linda Roman Marquez '26; Julia Hoffmann '26 and Asia Alexander '26.

### Our Nation's Capital Washington, D.C.



**D.C. Alumni Reception at U.S. District Courthouse**  
Hon. Paul L. Friedman '68 hosted Interim Dean S. Todd Brown, LAA President Michael J. Hecker '09, members of the D.C. Alumni Chapter and UB Law staff and friends.

### East Coast Meets West Coast San Francisco, CA



**Bay Area Alumni Reception**  
Members of the Dean's Advisory Council, led by DAC Chair Christopher A. Wightmann '99 (back row, third from left), joined UB Law staff and friends at a reception with our west coast alumni.

### All-Alumni Reunion Celebration marks the start of a new era



### The UB Law Alumni Association is in good hands. Literally.

The handoff took place this past October at a special All-Alumni Reunion Celebration, when the Association's outgoing executive director, **Ilene Fleischmann**, vice dean for alumni, passed a ceremonial baton to her successor, **Stephanie Mack '08**, the Association's new executive director.

Fleischmann, known to generations of students and alumni as Dean Ilene, has transitioned to emerita status, and now focuses her energy and decades of UB Law knowledge on the law school's oral history project and other archival efforts. The move comes 15 months after she and Mack have worked side by side, with the goal of making the transition between LAA executive directors a seamless one.

"I'm thrilled to have such an able successor in Stephanie Mack, who will go on to do great things in her own right," Fleischmann says. "Under her leadership, the law school will certainly strengthen and deepen its relationships with our alumni."

The event also brought together alumni celebrating milestone anniversaries, with more than 100 graduates in attendance, and representatives from multiple classes.



**LAA Appreciation Luncheon**  
Samuel A. Alba '14, 2022-23 GOLD Group President, and Henry A. Zomerfeld '14, 2023-24 GOLD Group President.



**LAA Pre-Game Party and UB Bulls Event**  
Michael J. Hecker '09, 2023-24 LAA President, with his wife, Dayna Hecker '10, and children, Tori (left) and Bennett (right).



### Mentor Reception in the Law Library

Left: Lillian Brown '25, Jessica Pisano '25 and Erin Carlin '25.

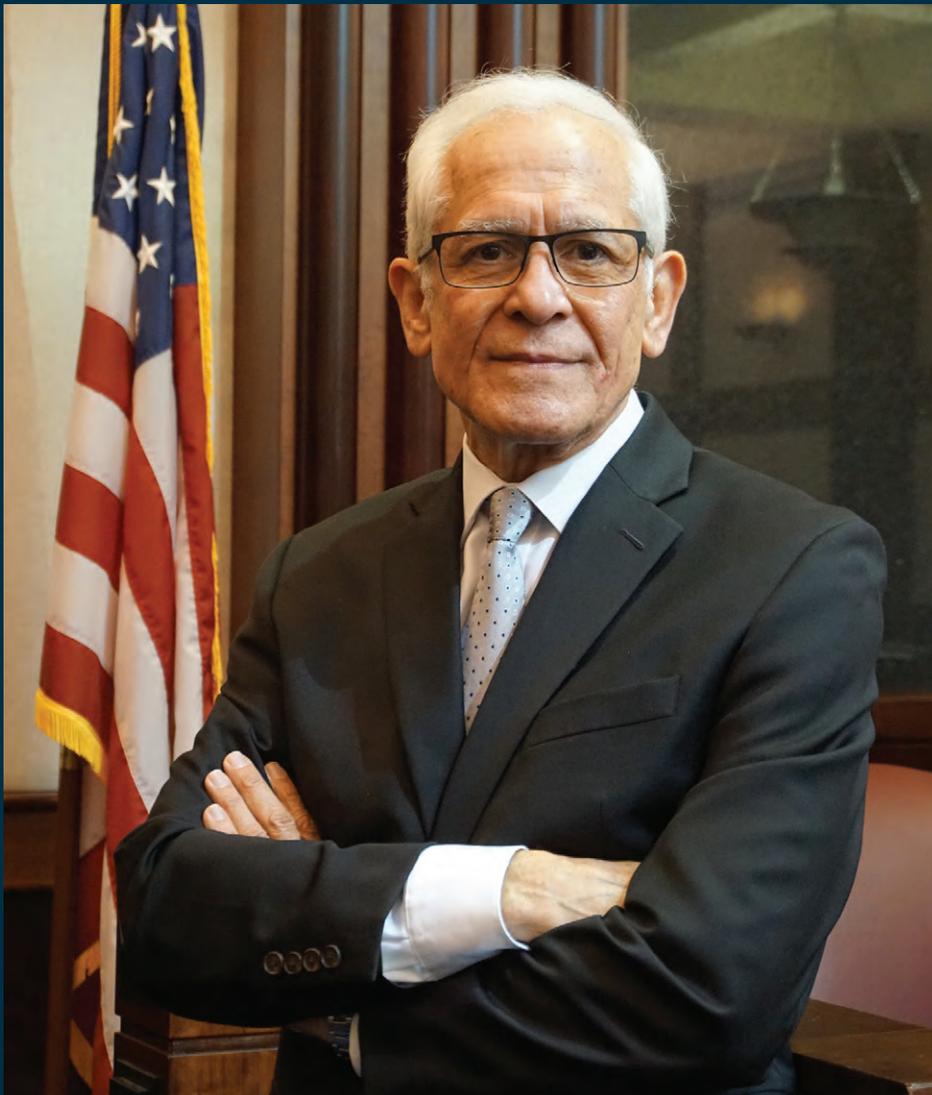
Right: Katherine England-Johns '25 with Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres '98.



Scan here to view photos from the event.

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO**

**Hon. Julio M. Fuentes '75**

Senior United States Circuit Judge  
U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit

Recipient of the

**2024 Edwin F. Jaeckle Award**

The highest honor the University  
at Buffalo School of Law and the  
Law Alumni Association can bestow

**Friday, January 19, 2024**

**The Union League Club**

READ MORE

