

W I N T E R 2 0 1 7 - 1 8

# UB LAW FORUM

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

## Reaching Out, Reaching Back



**Super-committed UB School of Law boosters  
reach back to support students  
and recent graduates**



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

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University at Buffalo  
School of Law

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Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83, Michael R.  
Wolford '68 and Randy C. Fahs '88  
Second row: Tamara S. Frazier '12, Jason J.  
Wawro '11, Jennifer M. Pacella '08,  
The Arthur A. Duncan '12, Julie M. Haley '91,  
Patrick J. Reinikainen '12, Ninteretse Jean  
Pierre '16 and Leanghour Lim '18

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# Embracing community support

As I brace for my first full winter in Western New York, I can't help but think that Buffalo is a very warm place. I recognize that having lived in Central New York for most of my life, I have built up a pretty strong tolerance for crisp air and chilly mornings. Nevertheless, I have been pleasantly surprised by the natural sense of warmth and comfort that Buffalo exudes, and I attribute that to this community.

During my first few months as dean I have **reached out** to as many members of the UB School of Law community as possible – students, alumni, donors, partners, collaborators and friends. And as I reflect upon everyone I have met, and on what makes Buffalo and the UB School of Law community so special, it all comes back to each of you. YOU are why this community is so special.

At each meeting and every event, I have been asked, **"How can I help?"** Your genuine commitment to the law school is clear and undeniable. You recognize the significance of preparing our students for a changing profession, and you share a vision for the education we provide.

Our law school has a bright and promising future. However, its progress is dependent upon the cumulative efforts of every one of us. In this issue of our law school magazine, you'll read about just a few of our amazing alumni ambassadors who contribute to these efforts in countless ways. The answer to how **you** can help is simple.

Get involved, **reach back** and be an active participant in the education of the next generation of lawyers. Mentor our students. Provide them with externship opportunities. Fund a scholarship. Assist with organizing events and programming. Advocate for the hiring of our students and act as our eyes and ears for placement opportunities.

You may have already heard me speak on the importance of helping every one of our students find a



**"We have a moral obligation to use our significant influence in this community to ensure that all of our students find employment upon completing their law degree and are fully embraced by the warmth of this community."**

job after graduation. It is our #1 priority and so it bears repeating. We have a moral obligation to use our significant influence in this community to ensure that all of our students find employment upon completing their law degree and are fully embraced by the warmth of this community.

I am incredibly grateful to know that I have your support. Thank you for your input and guidance, and for all of your contributions to the law school. I look forward to many new collaborations throughout the new year.

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2018,

Aviva Abramovsky



# Reaching Out, Reaching Back

OUR ALUMNI ARE THE LIFEblood OF OUR SUCCESS — AND OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, **DEAN AVIVA ABRAMOVSKY** HAS BEEN ON THE ROAD TO CONNECT WITH THEM. THE NEWLY INSTALLED DEAN MADE A LOT OF FRIENDSHIPS, DID A LOT OF LISTENING AND SHARED SOME IDEAS ABOUT HOW **YOU** CAN HELP OUR STUDENTS. THAT HELP TAKES MANY FORMS. • ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, MEET SOME SUPER-COMMITTED UB SCHOOL OF LAW BOOSTERS WHO ARE REACHING BACK TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND RECENT GRADUATES. THEY'RE HIRING NEW LAWYERS, PROVIDING MENTORING AND CAREER ADVICE, WELCOMING STUDENTS INTO CLERKSHIPS AND MEANINGFUL INTERNSHIPS. **AND THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE.**

**July 26, 2017**

*D.C. Alumni Chapter's  
Reception at U.S.  
District Court*



Vice Dean for Philanthropy  
& Engagement Karen R.  
Kaczmariski '89 and Mason P.  
Ashe '89



Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky  
greets Leighann  
Ramirez '19

**July 27, 2017**

*Dean's Advisory  
Council Reception  
at The Buffalo Club*



Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky and DAC Chair  
Douglas W. Dimitroff '89



Hon. Erin M. Peradotto '84,  
Diane F. Bosse '76 and  
Hon. Eugene F. Pigott Jr. '73

**Dec. 6, 2017**

*Reception with members  
of the Eighth Judicial District  
in the Ceremonial Courtroom,  
Erie County Court*



Hon. John L. Michalski '87,  
Dean Aviva Abramovsky,  
Hon. Russell P. Buscaglia '75  
and Hon. Paula L. Feroletto '82



Hon. Betty  
Calvo-Torres '98  
and Tiffany R.  
Perry '00



Alumni  
graduating 50  
or more years ago

**Aug. 2, 2017**

*50+ Alumni Reunion  
in John Lord O'Brian Hall*

Teia M. Bui '08,  
Major Gifts  
Officer Loraine L.  
Yates and Andrea  
Schillaci '82



**Aug. 3, 2017**

*Law Alumni Association  
Board of Directors  
Reception in John Lord  
O'Brian Hall*



LAA President  
Pietra G. Zaffram '01,  
Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky and  
Kevin J. Espinosa '09

Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky

**Oct. 4, 2017**

*Class of 1977 Reunion in NYC  
at Felidia Restaurant*



Class of  
1977 in  
NYC



Donald  
J. Carbone '77  
and Matthew J. Leeds '77

**Oct. 14, 2017**

*130-Year Anniversary  
Celebration. More  
photos on p. 32-33*



Robert M. Kornreich '67  
and NYC Chapter Chair  
Daisy A. Tomaselli '13



Gabrielle K.  
Walter '18 and  
Lauren L. Wardynski '18

**Nov. 2, 2017**

*Rochester Alumni Chapter's Reception  
at the Monroe County Bar Association*



Duwayne T. Bascoe '12  
and Jon P. Getz '92



Anthony R.  
Scalia '12, Dean  
Aviva Abramovsky  
and Rochester Chapter  
Co-Chair Helen Root Scalia '11

**Nov. 15, 2017**

*New York City Alumni  
Chapter's Reception  
at The Remi Restaurant*



Brendan C.  
Stone '18,  
Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky  
and Melissa J.  
Kathan '19

**Nov. 28, 2017**

*The Advocacy Institute  
Reception at  
Connors LLP*



Albany  
Chapter  
Co-Chair Caroline  
B. Brancatella '07 and  
Heather P. Behnke '98



Kenneth W. Africano '85  
with Dean Aviva  
Abramovsky

**Nov. 30, 2017**

*Albany Alumni  
Chapter's Reception  
at Olde English Pub*



Terrence M.  
Connors '71 and  
wife Peggy M.  
Connors

For full photo IDs and more photos from our events, visit:

[law.buffalo.edu/forum/extra](http://law.buffalo.edu/forum/extra)



# A CATALYST FOR SUCCESS

## *A federal judge helps legal talent flourish*

Even now, having taken senior status as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Third Circuit, **Hon. Julio M. Fuentes '75** hires law clerks and summer interns – every year, four of each.

And even now he looks west from his chambers in Newark, N.J., to Buffalo when he's deciding whom to bring aboard.

Five UB School of Law graduates have clerked for Fuentes – an intensive one-year posting and a prestigious position that can serve as a springboard to major career advances. And the judge has accepted nearly three dozen UB Law students into his internship program, a formal program that involves research and writing, exposure to the federal court system and a lot of face time with the law clerks and Fuentes himself.

"I look forward to having clerks and interns from Buffalo, and I take in as many as I can," Fuentes says.

The internship program, aimed especially at students in their 2L summer, is "very academic," the judge says. "The interns have writing requirements – they write two draft opinions each, under the supervision of the law clerks. They also observe proceedings in the district court, they watch jury selection, they see opening and closing statements and the examination of witnesses. And they go with me when the Court of Appeals sits in Philadelphia, to watch the oral arguments there."

The program, he says, is "really meant to give them a boost," just as his own legal career was shaped in part by his early exposure to Erie County's Pre-Trial Release Program where he worked part-time during his first two years in law school. "That was an extraordinary experience for me," he says, "and I hope that the interns get that same kind of experience."

He works with **Marc R. Davies '03** in the School of Law's Career Services Office to find promising students, then interviews them by Skype to choose the next



Judge Fuentes with Molly F. Spakowski '19, Joshua S. Wallace '19 and Margaret McKenzie '19

crop of interns.

By contrast, he estimates he gets 400 or 500 applications each year for the four year-long clerkships. About two-thirds of the successful applicants, Fuentes says, have been out of law school for a few years, either practicing litigation or clerking in a district court.

Those he has hired as UB School of Law graduates, he says, "do very well. They're just as good as those who graduated from the major law schools – they work very hard, and they're very smart."

## In their own words

*A sampling of Judge Fuentes' former clerks and interns reflect on their experience:*



**Nicole Grasso '17** had just one year of law school under her belt when she interned with Fuentes.

"I don't even think I realized what I was getting myself into, but you just want the best thing that's going to help you in the legal profession. Everyone told me, you really can't pass this up. The judge gave us exposure to all of his docket, a lot of different practice areas. We were responsible for writing squibs – brief write-ups for the judge about incoming cases. It really helped with our writing, because you had to get pages and pages of motion papers into a one-page paper for him."



**Matthew Paris '17** had finished his second year at UB School of Law when he joined three other Buffalo law students as Fuentes' interns.

"It was a great environment to work in. We primarily worked with the law clerks, who were awesome. The position is very intimidating, but the judge is just so welcoming that it made us all feel comfortable. He was very accessible – we had a lot of interactions with him, and on Fridays we would all eat lunch together with the judge."



After her clerkship with Fuentes, **Jennifer Pacella '08** joined the law faculty at Baruch College, City University of New York.

"Because the clerkship is just one year, it has to lead to something else by nature. It's a great credential to have when you're moving into academia – it's looked highly upon. It absolutely helped me to get noticed. "I think it's wonderful that he's committed to taking on students from his alma mater. The whole clerkship is a fascinating, wonderful opportunity that is very rare. It's of immense value to anyone who is lucky enough to be chosen."

**Patrick Reinikainen '12** clerked for a U.S. District Court judge in the Southern District of New York and worked in law practice before clerking for Fuentes. He now works at the New York City office of Ropes & Gray LLP.

"As clerks, we worked very closely with Judge Fuentes on a daily basis. Through that process, I learned an incredible amount about writing and legal analysis. I also had the opportunity to observe some of the country's top oral advocates in court as they argued important and often novel legal issues."



**"...I admire the judge's commitment to the law school, as**

**well as the interest that he takes in his clerks and interns and their career development. It was both the opportunity of a lifetime and a great honor to have clerked for Judge Fuentes."**

**— Patrick Reinikainen '12**

## How YOU Can Help

**Need a bright and talented addition to your team?**

**Hire a UB School of Law student or graduate and help launch a legal career.**

To post a job or schedule an on- or off-campus interview, contact:

Marc R. Davies '03  
Associate Director for Career Services  
(716) 645-3707  
mrdavies@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/cso

# THE VIEW FROM CORPORATE

Left to right:  
Jason J. Wawro '11,  
Randy C. Fahs '88  
(seated), Janette R.  
Clarke '09, Patrick  
D. Krey '07 (J.D.),  
'08 (LL.M.) and  
Julie M. Haley '91



## *Making the case for 'the last great generalists'*

Sometimes the best contribution that a committed alum can make is to help our students and graduates broaden their idea of legal practice.

**Randy Fahs '88** does just that from his position as manager of corporate contracts and legal counsel for Moog Inc., the Western New York aerospace, industrial and defense technology company.

Fahs practiced labor and employment law for four years before joining a small tech firm that was later acquired by defense giant Northrop Grumman Corp. He has been with Moog since 2010 – negotiating and overseeing contracts with U.S. and overseas clients, as well as sharing responsibility for labor and employment matters, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory

compliance, intellectual property, facility leases and litigation.

It's a varied portfolio in a company that not only makes the motion control systems for satellites, missiles and airliners, but also such exotica as servo controls for amusement park rides, the driving simulator for a well-known Formula One racing team, even the actuation system that opens and closes the roof at the Wimbledon tennis stadium.

"The great thing about being in-house with a small law department," Fahs says, "is that we're the last great generalists. In a large law firm, you become a subject matter expert, and it's a very narrow focus. Here we do everything from IP work to international commercial



transactions. Every day is different."

It takes a special kind of lawyer to do this work, Fahs says – those who can develop a working knowledge of the technology involved, and who can work effectively with tech-oriented colleagues on the fine points of the law. "They tend to like arithmetic formulas for problems," he says. "You have to be able to talk about potential risks and the likelihood of their happening. A lot of what we do is problem-solving. When there's a problem and our lawyers walk into the room, I want the Moog team to sigh in relief, because help has arrived."

In close concert with the School of Law's Career Services Office, Fahs has provided help to countless law students as well. "I had great professional mentors, and I'm just paying it forward," he says. "Any student or young professional who has the temerity to reach out to me, I'm happy to bring them in and find out more about their interests, and take them to lunch." His go-to advice: "It's very important to target employers and opportunities that you're going to find fulfilling. Pick something you're really going to love."

His outreach extends to hiring as well. In addition to Fahs, Moog's nine-person law department includes four other UB Law-trained attorneys.

"I don't just want people who are talented in the law," Fahs says. "I'm looking at their interpersonal skills, their background, their ability to be seven times zones away in a conference room with someone whose first language isn't English and be able to read body language. It's a competitive process, and our hiring decisions are based on merit, which not only includes education and experience, but their personal characteristics as well."

For example, the most recent UB Law graduate to join the firm, **Jason Wawro '11**, emerged from a field of 98 candidates after an exhausting interview process that included a telephone interview and an all-day grind of hour-long individual interviews by his soon-to-be colleagues. "They wanted to be certain that you're a match with the culture," Wawro says. "It's more about getting to know the person as a human being."

Wawro, who previously practiced banking law with a

**"I had great professional mentors, and I'm just paying it forward. Any student or young professional who has the temerity to reach out to me, I'm happy to bring them in and find out more about their interests, and take them to lunch."**

**— Randy Fahs '88**

large Buffalo firm, says he made the change because "I was looking for an in-house role where I could have a long career working with good and decent people who really enjoy what they are doing." Coincidentally, he had previously sat across a negotiation table from Fahs, who was doing pro bono representation of a not-for-profit seeking a loan.

"He is a heck of a negotiator," Wawro says, "and people work hard because they care about him. Randy does the right thing every time. He's a great person to work for and work with."

**Julie Haley '91** didn't have to be convinced of the attractions of corporate law – she worked as in-

house counsel for a number of companies before joining Moog in 2015.

"I've been doing this a long time," she says. "But Randy is very creative and knowledgeable – I learn something new from him every day. He just has such a different way of approaching issues."

And she has come to appreciate his continuing support of UB Law students and grads. "It's amazing to me, the time he puts in," Haley says. "I think there's a real connection there. He also gives a lot of himself and his time to the community, and because of that he's got a great network of people that he can put these aspiring lawyers in touch with."

## How YOU Can Help

### Know of a great opportunity for a recent grad?

**Share your knowledge and your network**, and help our students learn about all of the career options available to them. To tell us about job opportunities for our students, contact:

Lisa Patterson  
Vice Dean for Career Services  
(716) 645-6262  
lpatter@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/cso

# EXTENDING A HAND, OPENING DOORS

*A proud record of growing opportunities for all*

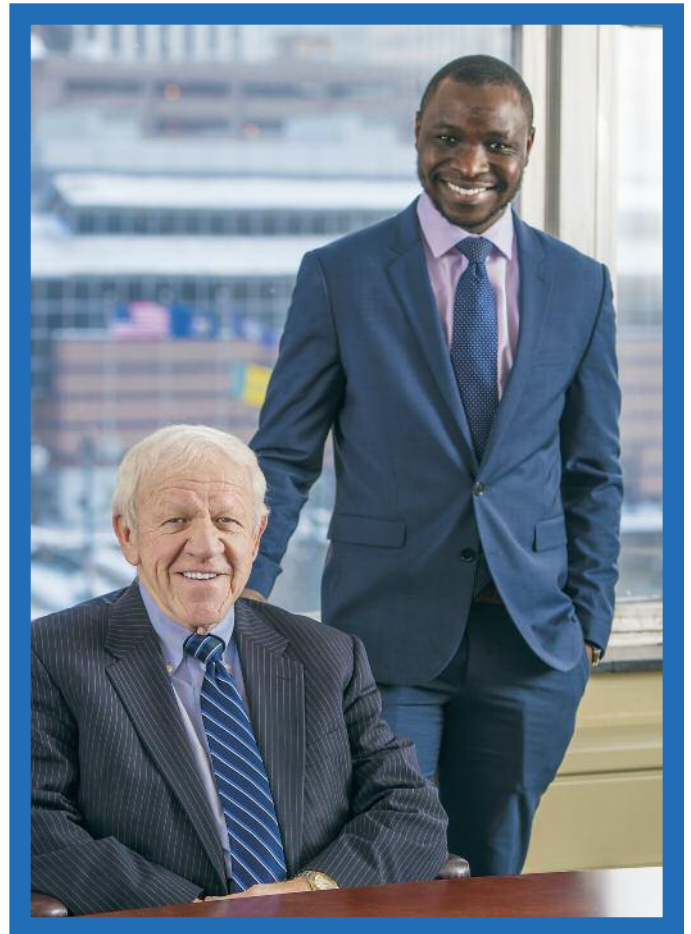
Like climbing a steep cliff, sometimes the hardest part of the transition from law school to practice is getting that first foothold. It can be especially difficult when a student or new graduate will be the first lawyer in the family.

For more than a decade, **Michael Wolford '68** has helped to serve as that point of entry – with special attention to extending a hand to UB School of Law students.

Wolford, a former Assistant U.S. Attorney, practiced for 21 years with the Rochester, N.Y., firm Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle, before founding his own litigation firm – now known as The Wolford Law Firm LLP – in 1993. It was during his year as president of the Monroe County Bar Association in 2004–05 that he learned about other bar associations' efforts to help grow the proportion of underrepresented minority lawyers in the profession. He gathered the managing partners of Rochester's biggest firms for lunch, and by dessert they had agreed to start a diversity clerkship program.

Eight firms, including Wolford's, hired summer associates that year through the program, all UB School of Law students. The program has been most successful ever since, now with support from the Monroe County Bar Foundation, the Greater Rochester Association of Women Attorneys and the Rochester Black Bar Association.

Wolford says the goal is to make the Rochester bar more diverse, but a side benefit is a slew of opportunities for students at New York State's top public law school, just an hour or so down the Thruway. In total, 140 law students have participated in the program since the summer of 2005, including 78 from UB.



**"Mike always made sure to introduce me to people; he was always talking me up and giving me confidence. He doesn't do things because it looks good. He just does it because he cares."**

**— Ninteretse Jean Pierre '16 with Michael Wolford '68**

"I look at it as a win-win proposition," says Wolford, who remains active in the program. "Nearly all the students we've had have been top-notch. We look at their application, their writing sample and their grades. They come in February or early March, and they are interviewed before they are extended any offers. It's a little like the NFL draft – we try to get the best students. The folks that we've had have been terrific people and fine students, and they've done very well and contributed to our practice."

Interns hired through the program earn a salary for legal tasks including research and writing. They can sit in on trials and hearings, and they're exposed to different practice areas. "We obviously try to convince them that Rochester is a great place to practice," Wolford says, "and we try to assimilate them into the legal community here."

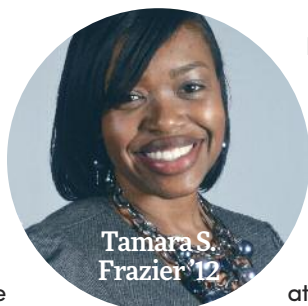
Besides Wolford, three attorneys at The Wolford Law Firm LLP are UB School of Law graduates. **Laura A. Myers '05**, who practices mostly in commercial litigation, is one of them.

"Mike is a genuinely good and caring person," she says, "and he really does believe it's part of his mission to give back and make the world a better place. He's also a person who can identify a problem and act on it. That's really inspiring to the people around him. He has more motivation and drive than most of us. It's impressive."

Myers also says the office's most recent interns – **Annabelle Gao '18** and **Ninteretse Jean Pierre '16** – have been outstanding.

"It's probably one of the best programs in Rochester," says Jean Pierre, now an associate attorney at the Rochester firm Nixon Peabody. "It was hands-on – I helped with research, legal writing, drafting memos, reviewing and summarizing documents, working on complaints and answers. It was a great experience."

About Wolford he says, "Mike always made sure to introduce me to people; he was always talking me up and giving me confidence. He doesn't do things



Tamara S. Frazier '12

because it looks good. He just does it because he cares."

Another former intern in the program, **Tamara S. Frazier '12**, now serves as associate counsel for the New York State Senate Democratic Conference.

"I really liked the law firm," Frazier says. "It was small, no more than 10 attorneys, and they gave you lots of opportunities to ask questions. It was

interesting, as an African-American female, to hear a complainant talk about her experience being discriminated against on the basis of race.

"Mike had a very open-door policy, and he didn't hesitate to introduce me to different people. Ultimately, they want to make sure we succeed in a profession where there are not a lot of professionals of color, especially women. Mike is such a genuine person, and a great mentor."

## How YOU Can Help

### Interested in supporting the law school's diversity efforts?

Help support the **Discover Law Program** and encourage promising undergraduate students to consider a career in law. To find out more about the program, see Page 17 or contact:

Lindsay Gladney  
Vice Dean for Admissions  
(716) 645-2907  
law-admissions@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/ScholarsProgram



# A GUIDE AND A FRIEND

## *Longtime judge shares life and career lessons*

By now, the **Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83** has lost track of the number of UB School of Law students and graduates for whom she has served as a professional mentor. Not one of them though, has lost track of her.

That's because Ogden, a former Buffalo City Court judge who now serves as a New York State Supreme Court justice, has made herself accessible to those who are seeking information, advice or wise counsel about anything from career paths to relationship problems. At first, the requests came periodically, by word of mouth or recommendation of former mentees. Later, as the law school and local bar associations developed formal mentor programs, she found herself guiding new mentees on a regular basis, in addition to the elementary, high school and undergraduate students whom she mentors.

It's an important role – and one that she approaches with careful intention. "When we first get together, I ask them what they're looking for in the mentor-mentee relationship and advise them that it takes work on both sides to make mentoring work. Their response determines the way the mentorship will go," Ogden says. "I tell them that a mentor can help a person improve their abilities and/or skills through observation, assessment, modeling, listening and providing guidance. I also tell them that I don't have an end date for their mentorship – we establish these relationships and continue them throughout our professional careers. We eventually become colleagues and sometimes we become friends. I am committed to helping them find success and gratification in their legal careers."

Whether she's meeting regularly with the person or just on call for questions, Ogden says the topics of conversation vary widely. "They ask me about the legal profession and how to navigate within it. Sometimes they ask me work-life balance questions. The topics vary on a case-by-case basis. Maybe they're thinking about changing their area of practice from criminal prosecution to civil litigation. We discuss preparation, job searching, law firm politics and whether I'm familiar with the firm. Sometimes we discuss more personal problems and/or concerns, their impact on professional standing or what recommendations I may have.

"I've had students tell me they're stressed, that they



With Jamella S. James '15

have family problems that affect their ability to focus and study. I'm always careful to maintain confidences, to be candid and truthful; characteristics that are crucial to building the trust that a good mentoring relationship requires. I tell them that I'm extending the attorney-client privilege to them, just as they'll be required to extend it to their clients. The duty of competence and confidentiality is not only crucial to a good mentoring relationship, it's the hallmark of a lawyer-client relationship." She also tells them to "Never underestimate the importance of listening. Sometimes people simply need you to listen to the problem."

For Ogden, the role of mentor has its roots in guidance that she received as a young lawyer. "I was a first-generation attorney, which meant I didn't have any attorneys in my family who could help me navigate within the legal profession," she says, "but I did meet people who mentored me. They taught me that you never get too busy to give back. Therefore, I adopted the motto 'lift as you climb.'"

That was a point of connection with **Hon. Betty Calvo-Torres '98**, now a Buffalo City Court judge. She was an intern in Ogden's office after her 2L year at UB School of Law and became her mentee. It was her goal to become a judge.

**“I was a first-generation attorney, which meant I didn’t have any attorneys in my family who could help me navigate within the legal profession, but I did meet people who mentored me. They taught me that you never get too busy to give back.”**

**— Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden ’83**



**With Amanda G. Brennan '17**



**With Leanghour Lim '18**

“I am the daughter of a first-generation immigrant – the first in my family to go to college and to law school. That was really pie in the sky, becoming an attorney,” Calvo-Torres says. But working with Ogden, she says, “I was able to obtain the perspective that many law students don’t have. I got to see what happened behind the scenes and how she prepared for court.”

“There was a whole myriad of cases that I saw firsthand. That was a very insightful experience. It gave me a leg up in understanding where the judges were coming from and it made me realize what a difference we can make as judges.”

Now, Calvo-Torres says, she accepts interns every semester, “due, in great part, to the fact that I was given that opportunity.”

It was also an internship that connected Ogden with **TheArthur A. Duncan '12**, a former City of Buffalo lawyer who has recently opened his own general law practice.

“If it weren’t for Judge Ogden, I wouldn’t be where I am right now,” Duncan says. “She was the first person in the Buffalo law community that I interacted with and who took an interest in

me. I got the internship, and it turned into a mentorship. Judge Ogden became a person I could turn to for advice, whether it was about the legal community, family, or dealing with certain things that I was going through.”

He says that sometimes meant a good talking-to, like she delivered when she learned he was going out on his own. “She sat me down and grilled me: ‘Is this the right move? Are you sure about this?’ She’s been there for me and I think the world of her. The mentorship is genuine. You get a lot of lip service in this field, but this is a relationship where I can call her any time and she’ll call me back.”

Ogden says she is motivated by the words of Lucia Bassas Traynor: “The mediocre mentor tells, the good mentor explains, the superior mentor demonstrates, and the great mentor inspires.” “UB School of Law has been a great mentor,” she says. “Inspiring me, and so many others, to be mentors.”



**TheArthur A. Duncan '12**

# MORE SUPPORT FOR MENTORING



Ashley R.  
Lowry '09 with  
Danielle G.  
Chamberlain '18

In a challenging legal marketplace, it's more important than ever that our law students have every tool at hand to help them find their niche in the legal world. That's why UB School of Law is putting additional muscle to work to make sure our students begin their career search with all of the right connections.

A new initiative, a joint effort between the Career Services Office, the Office of Alumni Relations and our incredibly engaged alumni network, expands upon the school's existing mentor program offering our students more opportunities to meet with and learn from the seasoned pros.

Ilene Fleischmann, Vice Dean for Alumni and Executive Director of the Law Alumni Association, has assembled a group of experienced and connected graduates from the Buffalo legal community to partner with our newest attorneys seeking that first post-law school job. The initiative, now in a limited pilot phase, will enable alumni mentors to draw on their personal connections in support of our graduates' job search, and extends to coaching the job-seekers on interview skills and search strategies.

Lisa Patterson, Vice Dean for Career Services, says that, typically, 30 to 40 percent of students graduate with a job offer in hand. For others, an employment offer awaits after they've passed the

bar. Those without a job waiting in the wings can benefit immensely from some professional guidance and an ally within the legal community.

The new 3L and graduate mentorship program, Patterson says, involves "some rather high-level hands-on matching. We have to know the alumnus and the student pretty well in this situation, so that we understand their needs and can make a good match. Sometimes that means reaching out to them and finding out what those needs are, and how the alums might be able to help."

In addition to 3Ls and recent graduates, 1Ls are also the beneficiaries of a renewed focus on mentoring. For several years, participation in the first-year mentor program was optional. But under William MacDonald, the law school's new Director of Academic Success, participation in the 1L mentoring program is a required part of his first-year Legal Profession course.

Alumni and students sign up for a mentor in December, and mentor matches are made in January. This year, a reception for mentors and their matches will be held on **Jan. 31** in the Center for Tomorrow on UB's North Campus from 6 to 8 p.m.

To accommodate all 144 first-year students, the Law Alumni Association has taken ownership of the 1Ls, says Fleischmann. Led by **Megan Gomez '05**, a LAA Mentoring Committee has reached out to other legal organizations to recruit mentors, including members of the Monroe County Bar Association, the Western New York Chapter of the Women's Bar Association, and the Minority Bar Association of Western New York.

Guidance and convenient online training will be provided so even those who have never mentored before have everything they need to develop a great mentoring relationship. A mentoring page on the law

school's website is in development and will include helpful tips, a Q&A and webinars, and will enable students to connect with mentors of their choice throughout the country via video.

"Hopefully, the matches will stick throughout the students' law school years," says Patterson. "Our alumni are our greatest asset and it is wonderful to see students connecting with them."

## How YOU Can Help

**Have you learned a thing or two along the way?**

**Volunteer your time and expertise by mentoring a law student** as he or she transitions to the legal profession. To participate in our mentor program, contact:

Ilene Fleischmann  
Vice Dean for Alumni  
(716) 645-7347  
fleisch@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/mentor



# A present from the past

*Alumni leaders step up to help our students get a foothold*

Drawing on the renewed energy of some of its most successful and committed graduates, the School of Law is convening a new alumni group for networking, mentoring and advocacy.



As its name indicates, the Council of UB Law Alumni Association Past Presidents includes more than a dozen alums who have led the alumni association in the past. It's chaired by the association's immediate past president, **Brian Gwitt '98**.

"We thought that this was a wonderful resource to be able to

tap into for the benefit of the Law Alumni Association, the School of Law and our students," says Ilene Fleischmann, Vice Dean for Alumni. "These are successful, well-connected alumni who have maintained their ties to the Law Alumni Association and who think it's a great idea to get together and help us."

The group's portfolio, Fleischmann says, is threefold: to provide mentoring to current students and recent graduates, to help connect them to employment opportunities in the Western New York legal community and beyond, and to think about how to raise the School of Law's profile within the state.

Gwitt says initial outreach to his fellow past presidents was well received. "We've had a terrific response," he says. "People were very interested."

"The School of Law very much wants to work with the student body in promoting their academic and professional success. We want to contribute our ideas to the school, but also tap into this network of people who

## Charter members of the Council of UB Law Alumni Association Past Presidents include:

Laurie Styka Bloom '83  
Robert L. Boreanaz '89  
Douglas S. Coppola '75  
Hon. John M. Curran '84  
Richard F. DiGiacomo '76  
Robert P. Fine '68  
Terrance P. Flynn '88  
Hon. Lenora B. Foote '97  
Terrence M. Gilbride '88  
Garry M. Graber '78  
Leslie M. Greenbaum '74  
Margaret P. Gryko '77  
Brian D. Gwitt '98  
Robert P. Heary '91  
Hon. Barbara Howe '80  
Joseph G. Makowski '79  
Kenneth A. Manning '77  
Dennis R. McCoy '77  
Brian M. Melber '96  
Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden '83  
Jean C. Powers '79  
William F. Savino '75  
Samuel L. Shapiro '65

can help with mentoring and introduce students to their network and the firms they work in."

"A number of our past presidents are just unbelievably successful and connected statewide," Gwitt says. "We're the only public law school in the State University of New York. Supporting public education and advocating to keep our tuition affordable is crucial."

## Pietra G. Zaffram '01 leads Law Alumni Association

The UB Law Alumni Association is led by a vibrant and ambitious group of UB School of Law ambassadors under the direction of 2017-18 president **Pietra G. Zaffram '01**. Zaffram is a partner at Harris Beach PLLC in Buffalo, where she represents clients in federal and New York state tax disputes from the audit level through the appellate process. She also negotiates and drafts a broad range of corporate and transactional documents, including business contracts, software license agreements, consulting agreements and nondisclosure agreements. She is a member of Child and Family Services' ambassador committee, and a member of Junior League of Buffalo.



**"I am proud and honored to serve the Law Alumni Association and to work with our exceptional board of directors who are each committed to serving the law school's alumni and students through events, programming, and networking opportunities that are second to none. The collective experience, dedication and talents of the board are truly remarkable and are a testament to the quality of a UB School of Law education."**

**— Pietra G. Zaffram '01**

# UB Law Alumni Association's 2017-18 officers and directors



2017-18 LAA Officers, Directors and Past Presidents

## Officers

- Pietra G. Zaffram '01, President  
*Partner, Harris Beach PLLC*
- Marc W. Brown '99, President-Elect  
*Partner, Goldberg Segalla LLP*
- Melissa A. Foti '03, Vice President  
*Partner, Kenney Shelton Liptak Nowak LLP*
- Amy L. Hemenway '01, Vice President  
*Partner, Harter Secrest & Emery LLP*
- Anne E. Joynt '05, Vice President  
*Junior Partner, Lipsitz & Ponterio, LLC*
- Tiffany R. Perry '00, Vice President  
*Court Attorney Referee, Erie County Family Court*
- Andrea Schillaci '82, Vice President  
*Partner, Hurwitz & Fine, PC*
- Stephanie A. Saunders '00, Treasurer  
*Principal Law Clerk to Hon. E. Jeannette Ogden New York State Supreme Court*
- Jaime C. Gallagher '02, Assistant Treasurer  
*Associate Counsel, New York State Liquor Authority*
- Amy P. Herstek '04, Secretary  
*Contract and Grant Specialist, University at Buffalo Technology Transfer Office*
- Scott C. Becker '93, Assistant Secretary  
*Partner, Kavinoky Cook LLP*
- Marion K. Henderson '65, Secretary Emerita  
*Retired*
- Brian D. Gwitt '98, Immediate Past President  
*Partner, Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP*

## Directors

- Thomas C. Burnham '03  
*Senior Partner, Lipsitz Green Scime Cambria LLP*
- Kevin J. Espinosa '09  
*In-House Counsel, M&T Bank*
- Heather A. Giambra '04  
*Partner, Schröder, Joseph & Associates*
- Megan A. Gomez '05  
*Associate Counsel, Univera Health Care*
- Thomas M. Gordon '05  
*Partner, Gross Shuman Brizdle & Gilfillan, PC*

- Kenneth M. Gossel '91  
*General Manager, National Fuel Gas*
- Christopher M. Grant '05  
*Consultant, Big Dog Strategies, LLC*
- Hon. William J. Hochul, Jr. '84  
*General Counsel, Delaware North*
- Andrew B. Isenberg '92  
*District Executive, New York State Unified Court System*
- Elizabeth A. Kraengel '07  
*Partner, Duke, Holzman, Photiadis & Gresens LLP*
- Marybeth Priore Mantharam '03  
*Shareholder, Colucci & Gallaher, PC*
- Erika M. Marabella '04  
*Corporate Counsel, Rich Products Corporation*
- Richard J. Marinaccio '07  
*Partner, Phillips Lytle LLP*
- Melissa Hancock Nickson '97  
*Confidential Law Clerk to Hon. Eugene F. Pigott Jr. New York State Supreme Court*
- Hon. Henry J. Nowak '93  
*Justice, New York State Supreme Court*
- Rachel M. Hezel Rzayev '07  
*Attorney, Cannon Heyman & Weiss, LLP*
- Elizabeth M. Savino '92  
*Vice President, Human Resources, CTG, Inc*
- Dennis K. Schaeffer '99  
*Partner, Bond Schoeneck & King, PLLC*
- Jeffrey C. Stravino '97  
*Partner, Hodgson Russ LLP*
- Jason G. Ulatowski '07  
*Associate General Counsel, PCB Piezotronics, Inc.*
- Dr. Sylvia Valentín '97  
*Associate Professor, Niagara University*
- Ilene R. Fleischmann  
*Executive Director*

### 2017-18 GOLD (Graduates of the Last Decade) Group Officers

- Ryan K. Parisi '10, President  
*Associate, Seaman Norris LLP*
- Aaron M. Saykin '13, President-Elect  
*Senior Associate, Hodgson Russ LLP*
- Cristin L. Murray '12, Treasurer  
*Senior Associate, Hodgson Russ LLP*
- Christopher S. Safulko '13, Treasurer-Elect  
*Assistant District Attorney, Erie County District Attorney's Office*
- Lydia H. Beebe Safulko '12, Secretary  
*Associate Attorney, Barclay Damon LLP*
- Henry A. Zomerfeld '14, Secretary-Elect  
*Associate Attorney, Kenney Shelton Liptak Nowak LLP*
- Jeffrey P. Gleason '08, Immediate Past President  
*Partner, Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP*

### GOLD Group Directors

- Meghan A. Corcoran '13  
*Attorney, National Fuel Gas*
- Heather L. Dechert '10  
*Associate Attorney, Webster Szanyi, LLP*
- Lisa M. Diaz-Ordaz '11  
*Attorney, Law Offices of Destin C. Santacrose*
- Andrea K. DiLuglio '15  
*Associate Attorney, Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP*



2017-18 GOLD Group Officers and Directors

- Ari M. Goldberg '17  
*Associate Attorney, Colucci & Gallaher, PC*
- Kerisha H. Hawthorne-Greer '14  
*Staff Attorney, Bar Association of Erie County's Volunteer Lawyers Project*
- Michael J. Hecker '09  
*Partner, Hodgson Russ LLP*
- Patrick D. Leavy '16  
*Associate Attorney, Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham LLC*
- Caitlin E. O'Neil '15  
*Attorney, Connors LLP*
- Seth D. Pullen '09  
*Attorney, Richardson & Pullen, PC*
- Nicholas A. Romano '13  
*Attorney, Connors LLP*
- Emily M. Rudroff '15  
*Compliance Analyst, MeT Bank*
- Sarah E. Siracusa '14  
*Attorney, Dempsey and Dempsey*
- Joseph G. Trapp '16  
*Associate, Greco Trapp, PLLC*
- Sarah M. Washington '16  
*Attorney, Connors LLP*
- Calvin D. Weaver '17  
*Associate, Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham LLC*
- Patricia L. Warrington  
*Assistant Director*

### 2017-18 Chairs of our Regional Alumni Chapters

#### Albany Chapter

- Caroline B. Brancatella '07  
*Of Counsel, Greenberg Traurig LLP*
- Patricia C. Sandison '07  
*Senior Associate, Hodgson Russ LLP*

#### Central New York Chapter

- Sam M. Tamburo '68  
*Law Office of Sam M. Tamburo*

#### New York City Chapter

- Daisy A. Tomaselli '13  
*Associate, Jackson Lewis PC*

#### Rochester Chapter

- Lawrence K. Bice '12  
*Counsel and Project Manager, Larimer Law*
- Helen K. Root Scalia '11  
*Contract Specialist, United Technologies*

#### Washington, D.C. Chapter

- Meredith Jolie '03  
*Attorney, Garfield Law Group*

## How YOU Can Help

### Ready to take the lead?

Join the **UB Law Alumni Association** and become an active part of our engaged and loyal alumni network. The LAA organizes social, networking and educational events for our 11,000-plus alumni around the world. To get involved, contact:

Ilene Fleischmann  
Vice Dean for Alumni  
(716) 645-7347  
fleisch@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/laa



# Leaving a legacy in the public interest



Terry M.  
Richman '86

UB School of Law's proud tradition of supporting its students' public-interest commitment has been strengthened with a bequest from **Terry M. Richman '86**.

Richman, who entered law school at age 39, passed away earlier this year in Wilmington, N.C. She leaves behind her husband of more than 50 years, Ted, and their daughter, Lisa.

At the School of Law, Richman was a senior editor of the *Buffalo Law Review*, and also won the intramural Charles S. Desmond Moot Court

Competition. After graduation, she worked in private practice, primarily with the Rochester law firm Underberg & Kessler. She was active with the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys, serving as its president in 1996-97 and receiving the organization's President's Award in 2000.

Among her many community service interests, she was on the board of Rochester's and Wilmington, N.C.'s public radio stations; served as a labor arbitrator; co-



Luwing Peché Loayza '18 and  
Sarah Gardner '19

founded a community giving organization; and was active in Democratic politics – "all while mentoring women lawyers, raising a wonderful daughter and reading bales of mystery books," her family notes.

The initial draw from her bequest supported the

summer public-interest internships of two students: Sarah Gardner '19 and two-year J.D. student Luwing Peché Loayza '18.

"It's heartening to see a classmate of mine provide funding so that people can continue in her footsteps

## Summers to remember

Twenty-six UB School of Law students spent their summer working in the public interest, with financial support that made these (typically unpaid) positions tenable.

Meet our 2017 Public Interest Fellows ...

### BPILP Fellows:

*Charles E. Mann Public Interest Award Recipient:*

- Kaitlin Kramer '19  
U.S. Attorney's Office,  
Western District of New  
York, Buffalo

*Dean's Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Fellow*

- Lindsey Johnson '19  
Hon. Charles J. Siragusa,  
U.S. District Court  
Western District of New  
York, Rochester

*UB Law Alumni Association's Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Fellow*

- Olenka Masny '19  
Legal Assistance of  
Western New York,  
Rochester

*Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Fellows*

- Alana Bernhardt '19  
Ontario County Public  
Defender's Office,  
Canandaigua
- Kodai Sinclair Okano '18  
Erie County District  
Attorney's Office, Buffalo
- Genevieve Rados '19  
Hon. Lawrence J. Vilardo,  
U.S. District Court  
Western District of New  
York, Buffalo

*Buffalo Public Interest Law Program Grantee*

- Emily Stoufer Quinn '18  
Legal Aid Society of  
Rochester, Family Law Unit,  
Rochester

### Julie Freudenheim '88 Fellow:

- Kaylan Porter '18  
Hon. William M. Skretny,  
U.S. District Court  
Western District of New  
York, Buffalo

### Garry Graber '78 Fellow:

- Breanna Reilly '19  
Erie County Bar  
Association's Volunteer  
Lawyers Project, Buffalo

### Kaplan & Reynolds Fellows:

- Allyson Kehl '18  
Federal Public Defender's  
Office, Western District of  
New York, Buffalo
- Amanda Oppermann '18  
Journey's End Refugee  
Services, Buffalo

- Luwing Peché Loayza '18  
Chautauqua County Public  
Defender's Office,  
Mayville

### Terry M. Richman '86 Fellows:

- Sarah Gardner '19  
Neighborhood Legal  
Services, Buffalo
- Luwing Peché Loayza '18  
Chautauqua County Public  
Defender's Office,  
Mayville

### Suzanne E. Tomkins Women, Children and Social Justice Advocacy Fellow:

- Chelsie Roberts '18  
Wyoming County District  
Attorney's Office, Warsaw

### Western New York Law Center Fellow:

- Alyssa Bergsten '19  
Western New York Law  
Center, Buffalo

working in public-interest areas while they pursue their legal education," says Melinda Saran '86, a law school classmate of Richman's and now the law school's vice dean for social justice initiatives. "I'm sure she was hoping that other law students will follow her lead and work in the public interest, either as their full-time endeavor or doing pro bono activities as she did."

The first two Terry M. Richman Fellows expressed gratitude for the opportunities that this financial support afforded them.

"I have learned invaluable skills and information," says Gardner, who interned at Neighborhood Legal Services in Buffalo. "But, more than anything, my eyes have been opened as to the need that is present not only for helping clients, but for new legislation. The laws themselves that disadvantage the poorest members of our communities, but favor those who are more well-off, are unfair and need to be changed. Often, such changes need to start with legislation. This is a part of the law that I would like to get a chance to pursue more in the future."

Says Loayza, a native of Peru who worked at the Chautauqua County Public Defender's Office: "I firmly believe that the work of the public defender is significant because it helps people to be heard and have, sometimes, another chance to change their lives. The experience I gained is valuable and has inspired me to continue a career in the public service."

Additional fellowship recipients:

**Catalyst Public Service Fellows:**

- Heather Burley '19 Chautauqua County Public Defender's Office, Mayville
- Andrew Plewinski '18 Legal Aid Society, Criminal Defense Practice, New York City
- Jordan Sieracki '18 Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Attorneys for Children Unit, Buffalo

**Buffalo Human Rights Center Fellows:**

- Chelsea Gonzalez '19 ACLU of Puerto Rico, Women's Rights Project, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Shazia Khan '18 Amnesty International USA, New York City
- Natalia Marte '19 ACLU of Puerto Rico,

Ending Mass Incarceration Project, San Juan, Puerto Rico

- Leighann Ramirez '19 Ayuda, Washington, D.C.
- Bethany Taylor '19 Legal Services of Central New York, Cancer Legal Advocacy & Services Project, Syracuse

**Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps J.D. Program Fellow:**

- Olenka Masny '19 Legal Assistance of Western New York, Rochester

**New York Bar Foundation Trusts and Estates Law Section Fellow:**

- Nicole Mutignani '19 Hon. Barbara Howe, Erie County Surrogate's Court, Buffalo



Past Discover Law Program participants

## Our award-winning Discover Law Program is back!

Thanks in part to a grant from the University at Buffalo, the law school is pleased to announce the sixth summer of Discover Law, our award-winning diversity pipeline program for undergraduate students. Designed to increase access and diversity in the legal profession, this four-week "law boot camp" program will be held again in June 2018.

Through Discover Law, a select group of up to 20 students will have the opportunity to learn firsthand about the rigors of law school and the legal profession, as well as how to best prepare for the law school admissions process.

To learn more about Discover Law or to support the program, visit: [law.buffalo.edu/ScholarsProgram](http://law.buffalo.edu/ScholarsProgram)



President Satish K. Tripathi, Anthony J. Colucci Jr. '58, Carmela M. Colucci and Dean Aviva Abramovsky

## Colucci gift promotes legal scholarship

A major gift by Anthony J. Colucci Jr. '58 and his wife, Carmela, has memorialized the couple's commitment to legal scholarship and the *Buffalo Law Review*, and includes an endowed scholarship for *Law Review* students. In recognition of the Coluccis' generosity, the *Law Review's* office suite on the sixth floor of O'Brian Hall has been renamed the "Anthony J. Colucci Jr. Esq. '58 Buffalo Law Review Suite."

# Stepping up for advocacy

*Lippes Mathias gift helps build the Advocacy Institute*

A Buffalo-based law firm has taken its support of the School of Law to the next level with a major gift to support the Advocacy Institute, which trains students in the critical task of advocating for their clients.

Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman put out a firm-wide call, and 15 attorneys – both UB Law alumni and non-alums – responded with individual pledges of support. Their gifts totaled more than \$100,000 – money that will strengthen the Advocacy Institute's skills training initiatives including moot courts, trial teams, mediation, legal writing and oral argument.

"The School of Law is a very important feeder for us," says Kevin J. Cross, managing partner, who says about half of the firm's 73 attorneys are UB School of Law graduates.

Lippes Mathias, he says, has significantly expanded its service offerings over the past five years, making the firm more of a full-service law firm.

"Part of our support for the school," Cross says, "is to make sure that students are given the opportunity to receive the type of training we think would be valuable in the legal field." Even lawyers who aren't practicing courtroom litigation, he says, need the negotiation, deal-making and mediation skills that are part of advocacy training.

**Dennis C. Vacco '78**, who practices commercial litigation with the firm, is a member of the Advocacy Institute's national advisory board, bringing his experience as a former New York State Attorney General and U.S. Attorney for the Western District of New York.

"I have a lot of respect for the people who sit on that board and have been the backbone of the



Dennis C. Vacco '78, Kevin J. Cross and Eliza P. Friedman '14

Institute," Vacco says. "There was no Advocacy Institute back in the 1970s when I was at UB. But there was a robust trial technique program, really the precursor of the Advocacy Institute, and I could attribute my entire public career to being part of that experience."

Vacco also has a vested interest in the Institute: His son Alex, a second-year UB School of Law student, is a member of one of the school's trial teams that competes in advocacy competitions across the nation.

**Eliza P. Friedman '14** was one of several recent graduates to participate in the firm's gift; she also helped coordinate the campaign internally.

Her law school experience did not specifically center on trial technique, but she recognizes the value of the skills that the Advocacy Institute imparts.

"Whether you're a litigator or a transactional attorney, you have to advocate for your clients," says Friedman, an associate in the firm's Corporate and Securities Practice Group. "That means understanding the client's position and making sure that their voice is heard and their points are understood. It also means thinking about things the client isn't thinking about that could be harmful to them."

Friedman says it wasn't hard to persuade people to give. "I think it says a lot about the School of Law," she says. "It's very ingrained in the legal community here, and this was important to everyone who contributed."

## Contributors include:

Sean P. Balkin '15  
 Brian J. Bocketti '98  
 Kevin J. Cross  
 Jillian E. Deck '07  
 Eliza P. Friedman '14  
 John J. Koepfel '98  
 Gerald S. Lippes '64  
 Christian M. Lovelace '06  
 William E. Mathias II '71  
 Vincent M. Miranda '10  
 and Molly L. Miranda '05  
 Paul A. Mitchell '85  
 Brendan J. Rich '05  
 Richard M. Scherer Jr. '10  
 Dennis C. Vacco '78



# Entering class profile



144	154	3.53	42%	58%	20–52	24	33%	13%	18%
Matriculates	Median LSAT	Median GPA	Males	Females	Age Range	Average Age	Age 25+	Advanced Degrees	Ethnic Diversity

## Introducing the Class of 2020



*"I am particularly proud of the Fall 2017 incoming class, the first cohort of students I have enrolled in my relatively new position as Vice Dean for Admissions. They are a bright and diverse group that includes engineers, educators, CPAs, musicians and military veterans. The*

*range of their backgrounds and experiences will undoubtedly enhance our interdisciplinary approach to the study of law. Boasting an impressive cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.53, I certainly anticipate great contributions to our legal community from the Class of 2020."*

– Lindsay J. Gladney, Vice Dean for Admissions

### How YOU Can Help

**Do you know someone with a penchant for the law and a passion for justice?**

**Introduce him or her to the UB School of Law community.** Our Admissions team will answer their questions, review their options and give them a tour of the law school. And our

**newly reduced tuition for out-of-state students**

makes a UB School of Law education an exceptional value for all of our students, whether their hometown is Buffalo or Brazil. Refer a future lawyer to:

Lindsay Gladney  
Vice Dean for Admissions  
(716) 645-2907  
law-admissions@buffalo.edu  
www.law.buffalo.edu/admissions



## Building strength in the courtroom

*“Our Advocacy Institute just took two giant steps forward with the addition of Tim Franczyk and Jen Scharf – comparable to the signing of first-round draft choices. Clearly, the Institute and the School of Law continue in the right direction.” — Terrence M. Connors ’71, National Advisory Board Chair*

### From courtroom to classroom

**Hon. Thomas P. Franczyk** is stepping down from the Erie County Court bench, ending nearly two decades of service as a judge – and stepping up for UB School of Law.

The longtime co-director of the school’s trial advocacy program will add significant teaching responsibilities to that role. “My goal is to bring 34 years of practical experience from the courtroom into the classroom, and give students a real-life perspective on the practice of law,” says Franczyk, who spent 14 years as a prosecutor before his election to Buffalo City Court and then County Court.

That experience will be in play as he teaches a course in Evidence starting this spring, as well as a course designed especially for students in the two-year J.D. and master of laws programs, many of them foreign-trained lawyers seeking

a further academic credential.

Franczyk first got involved with the School of Law’s trial teams – which travel the world representing the law school at high-level competitions – back in 1994. “I got the bug back then, but I could only participate on a limited basis,” he says. “I’ve always enjoyed working with the students, and I still enjoy it. I enjoy watching them progress from people who look uncomfortable in the courtroom to becoming lawyers who are ready to walk into a courtroom and try a case.”

In his trial advocacy role, he will continue to coach teams in both fall and spring semesters, and to oversee the Buffalo–Niagara Mock Trial Competition, the largest such competition in the nation. He’ll also draft some of the case problems that the school’s Trial Technique instructors use in their courses.

Franczyk also says he’s looking forward to returning to the classroom. “As a judge, I’ve always enjoyed doing the

### How YOU Can Help

#### Know your way around a courtroom?

**Coach a trial team or judge an advocacy competition** at the law school. To be a part of our advocacy program, contact:

Jennifer Scharf ’05  
Co-Director of the Trial  
Advocacy Program  
(716) 220-4875  
jrscharf@buffalo.edu  
law.buffalo.edu/advocacy





Far left:  
Hon. Thomas P.  
Franczyk  
explains jury  
instructions.

Left: Jennifer  
Scharf '05  
provides tips on  
closing  
arguments.

research and writing, some of the scholarly aspects of the law," he says. "This gives me an opportunity to dig down a little deeper on the academic side."

## The coach's corner

"The amount of work you put into a trial team is unlike any law school class," says **Jennifer Scharf '05**. "It's more like a job than a class."

She should know. As a UB Law student, she says, being on one of those teams made all the difference.

"It was a pivotal course for me," says Scharf, newly named to succeed Christopher J. O'Brien as a co-director of the school's trial advocacy program. "It was really one of those courses that taught you the skills of being a lawyer. All law school courses are important, but trial team taught you how to do the day-to-day. It made you feel courtroom-ready from the day you walk out the door."

Scharf, whose day job is as legal counsel for Erie County Medical Center, will coach teams each fall and spring semester, as she has done since 2007. She'll also continue teaching as an adjunct instructor, leading classes in Trial Technique, and serving as overall administrator for the trial advocacy program.

In that role, she says, "One of my major goals is to recruit new talent and a diverse and inclusive group of instructors." She'll also be thinking about how to broaden the base of students who come into the program – reminding them, for one thing, that it's not uncommon for the lawyers who judge or watch these competitions to approach good performers afterward with offers of job interviews or employment. "We're really proud of our job placement record for trial team students," she says.

She has coached a lot of teams over the years. "There are so many high points," Scharf says. "We've had a lot of great successes on my teams. But the thing I'm most proud of is that so many of the students I've coached are now my colleagues and my friends."

# Kudos

to all of our students who have tested out their new-found advocacy skills in a recent competition or event.

Below is just a sampling of some of our top advocates:



Andrew B. Plewinski '18 and Allyson L. Kehl '18, pictured with guest judges Hon. Kenneth F. Case (far left), Dean Aviva Abramovsky and Hon. Thomas P. Franczyk (far right), took first place in the 2017 Desmond Moot Court Competition held at the law school.



Margaret L. McKenzie '19 (left) and Alexandria N. Frainier '19 (right), pictured with Steven R. Sugarman, director of the mediation clinic, won the 2017 Representation in Mediation Competition held in O'Brien Hall.



Left to right: Vicki M. Bell '19, Amanda L. Oppermann '18, Kaylan C. Porter '18 and Luwing Peché Loayza '18 took third place in the NYS Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section's 2017 Judith S. Kaye Arbitration Competition in New York City.



# New director sharpens tools for students' success

Something happens to law students between their first and third years of law school. They learn to think like lawyers.

It's a twofold process, says **William MacDonald**, the School of Law's new director of academic success. At first, he says, the challenge is to open up their thinking, so they can flexibly apply a given set of principles to a variety of fact patterns and situations. As they head into their final year, though, the focus turns to the bar exam and amassing the substantive law that gets new graduates past that final hurdle.

Those challenges play out in every classroom, every day. MacDonald is helping to give all students the tools and support they need to flourish academically.

"Law school has become more intense than it used to be," he says. "There are increasingly more requirements in experiential learning and writing classes, long-term writing projects, and there are a lot of expectations that students will pursue internships and externships. Academic support is a way for students to get up to speed in the skills they need to be lawyers and to succeed in law school."

MacDonald was a private practitioner and a legal research and writing professor before he decided to focus his career on student services. He worked as a career adviser for master of laws students at Georgetown University School of Law, where he earned his J.D., and then in academic support at Whittier Law School in California before joining the UB School of Law faculty this summer.

Now he's the go-to person for students who will benefit from one-on-one coaching in academic skills. More than that, he's looking to make it clear that all students have room to grow and improve, not just those who find themselves struggling.

"There's a perception that these services are about

filling in deficits that some people have," MacDonald says, "and certainly there's always a subset of people who are just not getting it. You can't always identify from test scores where people are going to falter coming into law school. But I really want to reach out to the bulk of people in the middle. We're trying to turn this into a culture where academic success is seen as a great resource that is available to everybody in the school,

and you can take advantage of it to the extent that it's helpful to you."

All first-year students take Legal Profession, which MacDonald teaches with adjunct professor **Helen "Nellie" Drew '88**. It's a nuts-and-bolts course, he says, that answers a lot of standard 1L questions: How do you take notes? What is a legal rule? How do you apply logic? How do I manage exams? What is it my professors really expect from me?

In the spring, he'll also lead a teaching team in a bar preparation course for third-year students – not the grinding review of substantive law for which most students seek out commercial review courses, but making sure they have the study skills that will make their bar prep fruitful and effective. The course also introduces students to the formats of exams including the Multistate Performance Test, with its emphasis on

demonstrating logical and creative approaches to legal questions.

MacDonald is also looking to build on the school's existing mentor program by collaborating with the law school's Career Services Office and the Office of Alumni Relations. "Ultimately, we'd like to have a seamless program where students are matched up with mentors and those mentors form a long-term connection with their mentee and are a resource for them," he says. "In order to do that, we need to be resources for the mentors themselves, and provide them with materials and coaching, so they can be effective in that role."



**"Academic support is a way for students to get up to speed in the skills they need to be lawyers and to succeed in law school."**

**— William MacDonald, director of academic success**

# Masters of the Earth

## *New Environmental LL.M. program deepens our green commitment*

At a time when businesses, politicians and activists are increasingly concerned with care for the environment, UB School of Law is equipping lawyers with the tools they'll need to make sense of it all.

The school's newly minted Environmental Law LL.M. program offers students the chance to deepen their knowledge of environmental law and policy. Like the master of laws programs in general law, criminal law and cross-border legal studies, the new one-year program includes specialized courses, experiential learning and one-on-one academic advising.

Though some make it a professional specialty, environmental law is not just a niche area of practice, says **Professor Kim Diana Connolly**, vice dean for advocacy and experiential education, who co-directs the program with **Professor Jessica Owley**.

"Whether advocating the position of a public interest group, a corporate client, a government agency or a private citizen, almost every area of legal practice today touches upon some aspect of environmental law," says Connolly, an expert in wetlands law. "At a global level, critically important issues such as climate change, sustainability and transnational pollution require an understanding of environmental law and policy."

In the program, students take at least 24 credits of coursework on topics including pollution control, greening Buffalo, land use, climate change law and policy, historic preservation law and international environmental law. They also complete a clinic, practicum or externship where they work directly with clients on real-world environmental disputes, and complete a capstone research project that engages their skills in analyzing environmental law issues and constructing arguments around those issues.

Already the program has its first graduate:

**Benjamin E. Wisniewski**, who earned his J.D. from UB in 2014 and received his LL.M. degree (with honors) this year. Wisniewski is an associate attorney with the Buffalo-based law firm Lippes Mathias Wexler Friedman LLP, where he practices environmental and energy law and serves on the firm's Government Investigations & Enforcement Actions Practice Team.

"Pursuing an LL.M. is a fantastic way to gain a deeper knowledge of a specific area of the law," Wisniewski says. "This knowledge can be used to build a resume, enhance an existing career, or simply gain expertise in a growing area of jurisprudence. I specifically chose UB to pursue my master of laws degree because of the flexible curriculum that allowed me to tailor my education to the environmental, energy and local government law issues I deal with on a daily basis."



That included his final research project, which addressed one area of focus in his practice: New York State's process for siting new power plants.

"My capstone thesis addressed the relatively narrow issue of whether the local legislative power described in Article IX of the state Constitution is in direct conflict with the state legislature's delegation of a discretionary pre-emption power to a state-level administrative siting board," Wisniewski says. "I concluded that much of the case law relating to Home Rule and state legislative pre-emption is based on a version of the state Constitution that no longer exists. I also concluded that Article IX of the state Constitution should be amended to more clearly state whether the legislative power wielded by local governments is organic and derived directly from the people, or instead merely derivative of the general legislative power vested in the state legislature."

The Environmental Law LL.M. program builds on the school's strength in this area of law. J.D. students may pursue a concentration in environmental law, work on cases in the Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, and publish in the *Buffalo Environmental Law Journal*. Faculty research interests include wetlands law and policy; international environmental law; the transnational governance of forests, animals and biodiversity; local environmental law; and conservation.

The University at Buffalo, too, has been an early leader in addressing environmental issues. A signatory of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, the University has pledged to minimize its adverse impact on the environment and achieve "climate neutrality" by 2030.

**Studying wind energy**

## Our clinics

	<b>Training more than 65 student attorneys (2016-17)</b>		<b>Empowering victims of domestic violence to break free from abuse</b>
<b>Seeking accountability for veterans exposed to toxic smoke</b>		<b>Tackling national, state and local policy on animal welfare issues</b>	
			<b>Protecting the immigrant community in Western New York</b>
<b>Reforming court secrecy rules to protect the public interest</b>		<b>Advocating for vital and cutting-edge environmental issues</b>	
	<b>Helping cancer care patients navigate civil legal problems</b>		<b>Providing over 8,130 clinical service hours (2016-17)</b>

To learn more about how our clinic students are taught to change the world, visit:

[www.law.buffalo.edu/clinics](http://www.law.buffalo.edu/clinics)



# A quick response to Puerto Rico's urgent need

## #UBLawResponds

In times of crisis, immediate action and collaborative efforts are crucial to recovery. Recent devastation brought by Hurricane Maria left thousands of Puerto Ricans in critical need of legal assistance. In response, the University at Buffalo School of Law reacted swiftly, launching a new law clinic, the Puerto Rico Recovery Assistance Legal Clinic, and reaching out to the law school community for its support. As a result, through this clinic, a group of specially trained law students will learn relevant law in Buffalo, and then travel to Puerto Rico in January to offer hands-on legal assistance, providing direct access to justice for those in urgent need.

"Puerto Rico is facing not just a natural disaster, but a legal disaster," says **Kim Diana Connolly**, professor and vice dean for advocacy and experiential education, and director of the law school's clinical legal education program. "As electricity and other basics have started to come online for less than half of the island's citizens – more than three months after the hurricane – the people of the island must adjust to a new normal. The demand for legal assistance has become paramount. The immediate needs are vast, and we are working with experts on the ground in Puerto Rico to identify the best projects for UB School of Law students to handle. Needs range from direct legal representation of individuals and families, to supporting those working within the Puerto Rican legal system trying to help citizens best navigate this tragedy – UB School of Law is working to design the best response."

During December and January, students will prepare by doing research for and participating in intensive training from law school faculty, alumni and other legal experts including attorneys in Puerto Rico. Students will acquire the skills and substantive knowledge required to address legal aspects of disaster response. Connolly will coordinate the program, including rigorous classes that will take place at the law school.

After the class component is completed, students will travel to Puerto Rico for a 10-day service experience, providing essential legal assistance as supervised student attorneys. In addition to earning academic credit for their participation, students will emerge with practical skills and firsthand experience applying the rule of law to restore order and justice in an unsettled context.

**Luis Chiesa**, a criminal law professor at the law school and a native of Puerto Rico, will act as an academic consultant. "It is heartening to know that a group of UB law clinic students will head to my hometown of Puerto Rico to deliver sorely needed legal services," says Chiesa. "This will not only benefit Puerto

## How YOU can help



### Want to join our efforts?

**Donations are needed** to help offset the costs associated with sending law students to provide critical assistance. To learn more about the clinic or to make a donation, visit:

**[law.buffalo.edu/support-puerto-rico-clinic](http://law.buffalo.edu/support-puerto-rico-clinic)**

Or contact:

Professor Kim Diana Connolly  
Director of Clinical Legal Education  
(716) 645-2092  
[kimconno@buffalo.edu](mailto:kimconno@buffalo.edu)

## #UBLawResponds

Rico, but also our students, as it affords them the opportunity to apply the legal skills that they have honed during the course of their legal studies."

The greater law school community will participate, as volunteer alumni and faculty have agreed to consult in their areas of expertise in order to support the law students serving clients in Puerto Rico. Alumni and friends have also made generous donations to help offset travel and other expenses incurred by the students while providing legal assistance.

"Access to justice is at the heart of everything we do at the law school and this initiative is a perfect example," says Aviva Abramovsky, dean of the law school. "We have a long history of providing pro bono service and teaching our students to view the world with compassion, knowing that regardless of where they ultimately choose to work, they have a moral responsibility, as lawyers and as leaders, to use their skills and knowledge to ensure justice and to give back."

# Growing the clinics

*Powered by major new grants, the School of Law's clinical education program is expanding its reach in serving the community. Our students will provide critical legal counsel to two vital groups of people: women at risk of lethal family violence, and military veterans and active service members.*

## New funding to provide legal help to women at high risk of violence

Students in the Family Violence and Women's Rights Clinic will step up their efforts to provide legal help for women in perilous home situations, with the support of a major new grant.

The \$25,000 grant, from the Buffalo-based Garman Family Foundation, will further develop the partnership between the clinic and the Family Justice Center of Erie County, which provides comprehensive services to clients, mostly women, experiencing intimate partner violence.



**"The students will fill an important gap in representing domestic violence victims who are at the highest risk of danger and find it hard to leave because of legal issues."**

**— Tiffany Pavone '02, director of operations at the Family Justice Center**

Center's Main Street facility, focusing on those who cannot afford a private attorney but earn too much to qualify for other free legal services. The grant money will also fund a student summer fellowship to carry on the work between academic years.

"The relationship we have with the clinic is critical to what we do," says **Tiffany M. Pavone '02**, director of operations at the Family Justice Center. "The students will fill an important gap in representing domestic violence victims who are at the highest risk of danger and find it hard to leave because of legal issues."

In the Domestic Violence High Risk Collaboration, says clinic director **Judith Olin '85**, students will work directly with Family Justice Center clients who are identified as being at the highest risk for serious, even lethal, violence. "We will address legal issues that may be stopping them from leaving the situation," says Olin, including issues involving housing, employment, child support, divorce and child custody. Under her supervision, clinic students will represent clients in court on some issues and refer them to other legal services providers on others.

This new effort will enable students to serve clients in immediate danger, Olin says, and teach them how to ensure the client's safety. Students will meet with clients in the Family Justice

## A \$50,000 "Justice for Heroes" grant – one of five awarded by New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo – will fund the creation of a new Veterans Legal Practicum at UB School of Law

The grants, which the governor announced on Veterans Day, are designed to enable New York law schools to provide legal services to military veterans, active service members and their families.

The UB Law practicum will establish "legal help desks" at several locations in Buffalo and other Western NY locations, aimed at helping veterans with their civil legal needs.

There will be a rigorous classroom component to get law students ready to provide service. The service-learning component will be performed under the supervision of a licensed lawyer. Law students will staff help desks and provide other services during the semester, with student fellows hired to ensure continuing coverage during the summer months. Students in the practicum will also develop and maintain a website to inform Western New York veterans, active-duty military members and their families about benefits, programs and services available to them.

The grant is eligible for renewal in each of the next two years.

"This is an important service-learning addition to our law school and community. Making an immediate



difference in the lives of those who served while learning hands-on legal skills that can be deployed in the future is a win-win program," says **Professor Kim Diana Connolly**, director of clinical legal education. "I am especially honored to have our experiential learning program

launch this effort, because my father was a veteran, and in caring for him during his final years I had the honor to meet many Western NY veterans and get to know more about some of the legal issues they face."

# Pro se program expands to Rochester

There was one visitor to the Pro Se Assistance Program whose image has stuck with **Vice Dean Bernadette Gargano**. He was disabled, not a person of means, but someone with important questions about a federal court case that he was handling on his own. So he took a bus from Rochester to Buffalo where the law school and the Bar Association of Erie County's Volunteer Lawyers Project offered its pro se legal assistance program – a two-hour ride just to get his questions answered.

Plenty of people who are trying to represent themselves in U.S. District Court are desperate for just that kind of help. In response, the School of Law has now expanded its program, bringing much-needed assistance to pro se plaintiffs in the Western District's Rochester hub.

"It's about meeting a need, and a pretty important one," says Gargano, who teaches a practicum course that guides students in their pro se assistance work. "The program provides pro bono services in underrepresented communities, and it's great for our students – they have absolutely loved the experience."

In the program, students staff a help desk at federal court, conduct intake interviews, confer with a lawyer volunteering to provide assistance, and then are present as the attorney counsels the client. The Rochester program began with a weekly one-day commitment last spring, continued over the summer and now is offered Wednesdays and Fridays with student staff and lawyers from Volunteer Legal Services of Monroe County.

The chief judge in the Rochester court, **Hon. Frank Geraci Jr.**, says the help is welcome. "About one-third of our cases are pro se cases," Geraci says. "Obviously pro se litigants don't have a legal background, and a lot of their motions and complaints are hard to decipher. With these volunteers, we get a much better work product and they can also help litigants maneuver through the system. The students and lawyers just do an



**"The program provides pro bono services in underrepresented communities, and it's great for our students – they have absolutely loved the experience."  
— Vice Dean Bernadette Gargano**

outstanding job."

In addition, points out retired attorney **Robert B. Conklin '68**, who helped get the program going in both Buffalo and Rochester, some would-be litigants learn that they really don't have a federal case to bring. "The backlog for civil cases in the Western District of New York is one of the highest in the country," he says, "because we have a shortage of judges. Anything that helps deal with that volume in any effective way at all is a huge help."

And the students, he says, "get the hands-on experience of working with an experienced federal court lawyer on real-time cases. They're getting the educational opportunity to see how a real lawyer works."

Prior to graduating, **Vicki Economou '17** was one of the students who staffed the help desk last spring.

"We saw a lot of employer-employee issues," she says. "The most interesting thing to me was how much work these people had done. They were doing all this essentially by themselves, and they just came to ask questions of the attorney. It was inspiring what they had done – they had binders full of stuff. A lot of people were stuck in the spot they were in and just needed to ask a question."

**Karen Chung**, a staff attorney at Volunteer Legal Services of Monroe County, runs the pro se program day to day. She says advertising and word of mouth are bringing more potential litigants into the program.

"We've had great feedback from the volunteer attorneys about the great work the students do," she reports. "They like that the students are there to do the screening and intake, so that they know what kind of legal issue they have before the client consultation."

"The students are also there to provide support. They can pull the data sheet to check on the progress of a case, search a case online through the case management system, or quickly look up a provision of law – all to better advise the person."



# Solutions that work

*New collaboration sheds light on public policy challenges*



Joseph Belluck '94

From sanctuary cities to immigrant rights, from criminal justice reform to the opioid crisis, New York's state and local governments are wrestling with some of the most difficult issues of our time. But where can policy makers find solid research and information on solutions that work?

Enter the new Center for Law and Policy Solutions, developed by the Rockefeller Institute of Government, the State University of New York's public policy research arm. UB School of Law will be a key partner in the center's work, in concert with units of Albany Law School and the University of Albany.

The Center for Law and Policy Solutions will examine pressing societal issues that raise questions of law and policy, with special attention to their effects on local communities. It will be led by Dr. Katie Zuber, the Rockefeller Institute's assistant director for policy and research.

Student interns will play a key role, helping researchers to analyze and interpret research findings and

communicate them to lawmakers and others in a position to act on them.

"As New York State's flagship public law school with a long-standing history of interdisciplinary education in the pursuit of social justice, the University at Buffalo School of Law is particularly suited to partner in this critical effort to craft real solutions for New York citizens," says **Dean Aviva Abramovsky**, who will serve as part of a five-person advisory committee for the center. "Together we can achieve results none of us could do alone."

UB Law alum **Joseph Belluck '94**, a member of the SUNY Board of Trustees, will also serve on the advisory committee.

"The center will be on the cutting edge of analyzing problems at the intersection of law and policy," Belluck says. "The serious issues facing our society in regards to immigration and criminal justice demand serious analysis. The CLPS will pull together the best minds to significantly move the dial on these issues."

# The passing of an interdisciplinary scholar



Richard D. Schwartz

**Richard D. "Red" Schwartz**, who served from 1971 to 1976 as UB School of Law's 12th dean, died Oct. 10 at his home. He was 92 years old.

Schwartz, who earned bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Yale University, was a sociologist of law and brought that focus to his deanship, expanding the school's course offerings taught from the perspective of other academic disciplines and supporting faculty interest in the field. He was the first and only dean of the law school who was not a lawyer.

He held the school's top position at a time of great change in the nation and at UB. As the women's movement came into full flower, women began making up a greater proportion of Buffalo Law students, as did historically underrepresented minorities. Also under Schwartz's leadership, the School of Law appointed its first African-American lecturer, its first African-American assistant professor and its first tenured female professor. The school also hired its first full-time placement director, forerunner of today's busy Career Services Office.

When John Lord O'Brian Hall was dedicated in 1974, it was Schwartz who welcomed the first class of law students to the Amherst campus.

"I believe that I am the last full-time faculty member who knew 'Red,'" says **Professor John Henry Schlegel**. "It was a great idea to hire him, and doing so made this a better place."

Schwartz focused his own legal scholarship on natural law, administrative law and the impact of welfare reform. After leaving UB School of Law, he held an endowed chair at Syracuse University College of Law; he also taught at Yale and Northwestern universities.

Legend has it, says **Professor David Engel**, that the first national meeting of the Law & Society Association took place in the Schwartzes' living room. Schwartz was a co-founder of that scholarly organization, which now numbers in the thousands and is the world's premier organization for the interdisciplinary study of law.

An advocate for global peace, Schwartz also helped found the Syracuse-Area Middle East Dialogue Group. He co-authored and edited numerous books.

Survivors include his wife of 71 years, Emilie; a son, David; two daughters, Jane and Debbie; and three grandchildren.

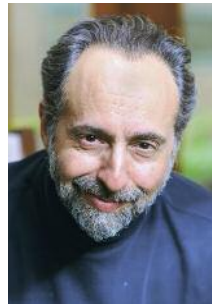
To hear an excerpt from Dean Schwartz's oral history interview, visit [www.tinyurl.com/richard-schwartz](http://www.tinyurl.com/richard-schwartz).

# Professors make their mark

## Scholarship bears fruit

In a split decision, Massachusetts' highest court abolished felony murder in that state – and both the majority and the minority cited scholarly writing by **SUNY Distinguished Professor and Hodgson Russ Faculty Scholar Guyora Binder** in their rationales.

Previously, participants in certain felonies that resulted in death were liable for first-degree murder, even if they did not expect death to result. In the 2017 case of *Commonwealth v. Timothy Brown*, however, the court relied on Professor Binder's research in concluding that the Massachusetts murder statute does not require this. It only imposes first degree murder liability on those who commit murder in the course of such felonies. The Court held that in the future, defendants cannot be convicted of murder without proof of either intent to kill, intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, or extreme indifference to human life.



A minority of the judges cited Professor Binder's research in arguing that some felons who cause death inadvertently deserve murder liability. However, the majority responded that such cases would likely still qualify for murder liability in Massachusetts on the basis of intent to inflict grievous bodily harm or extreme indifference to human life.

"Massachusetts defines factors like gross recklessness and extreme indifference more expansively than most other American jurisdictions do. ... My historical scholarship told the majority that they had the power to abolish felony murder, it was a judicially created rule in Massachusetts."

In the case, *Commonwealth vs. Timothy Brown*, the defendant provided a gun and hooded sweatshirts to his co-defendants, but was not present when they committed a robbery and shot and killed two victims.

The appropriateness of the felony murder law was one of several issues raised on appeal, with the defendant's lawyers arguing that it was arbitrary and unjust. Binder says there had been hints in a previous case that the Supreme Judicial Court was looking for an opportunity to reassess the law.

"They decided it was time," says Binder, whose scholarly books include *Felony Murder* (Stanford University Press), "and they were waiting for a case with sympathetic facts that illustrated the potential injustice of the felony murder rules."

The court's decision is available at [www.tinyurl.com/y75v3mbw](http://www.tinyurl.com/y75v3mbw).

## Decoding the power of stories

Can someone whose story keeps changing be a credible witness for herself? That is the question at the heart of an article by legal analysis, writing and research lecturer, **Stephen Paskey**, that takes a critical look at how federal immigration judges decide whether to grant refugees' asylum requests.

The article, "Telling Refugee Stories: Trauma, Credibility, and the Adversarial Adjudication of Claims for Asylum," was published last year in the *Santa Clara Law Review*. Now it has been recognized with the Penny Pether Law & Language Scholarship Award, given



biennially to acknowledge excellence in interdisciplinary law scholarship, especially work drawing on language theory. The award is named for Penny Pether, a distinguished scholar who had a particular interest in language and literature and a passion for social justice. This is the third time the award has been conferred; the previous winners were from Harvard and Columbia Law Schools.

Paskey says the article grew out of his experience as a litigating attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, where he represented the government in hundreds of asylum hearings. The administrative law judges who decide these cases, he says, typically base their decisions on whether the petitioners tell a credible story about abuse they have suffered in their homeland, or the threat of persecution if they were to return. The issue of credibility often hinges on whether the facts of the story stay consistent over the long course of the application process, which typically includes both oral testimony and a written declaration.

But an article by an Israeli scholar, noting that people who suffer post-traumatic stress often tell fragmented, inconsistent narratives, convinced him that factual consistency was not a fair criterion for judging the plaintiff's credibility.

With a grant from the Baldy Center for Law & Social Policy, he studied 369 asylum decisions issued by federal appeals courts in 2010. What he found: "When immigration judges conclude an applicant is not credible, they *overwhelmingly* rely on inconsistencies within or among the various versions of the applicant's story, and especially inconsistencies between the testimony and declaration."

The article uses the approach of structuralist narrative theory to distinguish between the content of the story that a witness tells – its timeline, characters and events – and the way the story is told. For survivors of traumatic events, Paskey argues, it's the latter that coheres as evidence of truth-telling, rather than absolute consistency in the details of the story.

His findings may change the way these asylum decisions are made. "The hope," he says, "is that further discussion would motivate the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge to provide training to all immigration judges on the effects of trauma" – giving them the tools to make better judgments in these life-and-death cases.

Paskey's article can be accessed at [www.tinyurl.com/yaxkgeet](http://www.tinyurl.com/yaxkgeet).

# From the courtroom to the classroom

*Two new adjunct instructors are introducing their hard-won lessons into their teaching*

## Practical wisdom from a long career



Back when he was a law student, says **Christopher Belling '74**, the curriculum tilted more toward the theoretical than the practical. "There was very little relationship between going to law school and practicing law," he remembers. "You stumbled out the door, you stumbled through the bar exam, and then you were completely on your own." Now, he says, "the School of Law has moved to a more practical approach, and I

can help with that."

Belling, who recently joined the faculty as an adjunct instructor, has plenty to draw on in that role. A longtime and high-profile trial prosecutor in the Erie County District Attorney's Office, he is now of counsel to the Chautauqua County DA's Office. He also has mentored new trial attorneys as colleagues and taught widely on subjects including trial advocacy and prosecutorial ethics.

He says his Criminal Procedure II course at the School of Law "puts the emphasis on the practical issues that we deal with on a daily basis in the courts." For example, Belling says, he speaks to the students about the intricacies of jury selection that aren't reflected in the statutes; how to negotiate a plea disposition in a case; and how to safeguard a defendant's rights as his case progresses. The emphasis is on the nuts and bolts of practice in state court, rather than at the federal level. "If the law students have this information," he says, "it might determine whether they want to practice criminal law at all, and it might impact their development as a lawyer."

Belling previously taught a bridge-term course at the School of Law on the state laws that govern decisions on suppression of evidence. In addition to presenting many continuing legal education seminars over the years, he has trained prosecutors at the state and national levels, as well as police and other forensic professionals.

He also has served as trial counsel for the New York Prosecutors Training Institute, in Albany; as a consultant to the 62 district attorneys in New York State; and as a special district attorney and special counsel in several DA's offices statewide.

## Focused attention on a crucial skill



As supervising attorney for the Federal Public Defender's Office in Buffalo, **Kimberly Schechter** represented indigent defendants charged with federal offenses. Her position involved mentoring younger associates, as well as defending her own roster of clients, all while facing multiple deadlines and responding to a never-ending stream of email.

What a difference retirement makes. Now, as an adjunct

instructor in the School of Law's LAWR program, she can bring that same attention to small classes in her Persuasive Legal Writing class, a high-level elective. The result is focused attention for second-year students who want to get even better at persuading a judge to rule in their favor.

"This course brings it up a notch," says Schechter, whose career at the Federal Public Defender's Office spanned 23 years. "It's a little more intense, and geared more toward advocacy as opposed to general research. Students need to learn the case law that applies and figure out what the issues are. The main goal of the course is to convert that research into persuasive legal argument."

The course is built around a single hypothetical case based on a fact pattern of a typical federal criminal case. The students then research the issues and create separate documents that track the evolution of a case throughout the court process. Typically, those documents will be an interoffice memorandum assessing the case, a motion addressing substantive issues that were uncovered in their research, and then an appeal to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Schechter took an unusual route to law school. She was working as a paralegal on Long Island when she realized that her work was not all that different from what the firm's associate attorneys were doing. "It seemed silly not to go to law school," she says, and so she entered Hofstra University School of Law, graduating with honors. She completed Hofstra's J.D. program in two years. She then started her own practice before she was lured away by the Federal Public Defender's Office in 1994. "I never regretted that choice for a minute. It was a great 23 years."



# Two new faculty books

## Rethinking the vote

Timing is everything, and the timing couldn't be better for **SUNY Distinguished and Bridget and Thomas Black Professor James Gardner's** newly revised *Election Law in the American Political System* (Aspen).

On the heels of the 2016 presidential vote, the second edition of the casebook includes substantial materials in which scholars wrestle with the voting patterns and the campaign that put Donald Trump in the White House.

But there's plenty more for students and professors to glean from Gardner's book, which he co-wrote with

Duke Law School Professor Guy-Uriel Charles. Election law, Gardner says, is mercurial: "This area is changing at an extremely rapid rate. The Supreme Court issues three or four decisions every term in this field, and they are not typically decisions that affirm the way things have been."

Like the 2012 first edition, the textbook weighs in at close to 1,000

pages. "It's quite lean in comparison to its competitors," Gardner says, and law professors can teach the entire book in a single course if they choose.

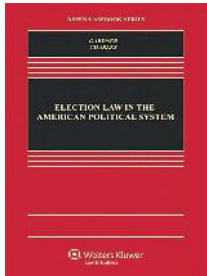
It's not, though, only a casebook. "Typically," Gardner says, "legal principles are taught almost exclusively through the reading of cases. Our book is very different. We think that election law is so closely connected to other fields, and other ways of thinking about the topic, that cases are not our exclusive means of instruction."

The book includes readings from sociologists, political scientists and democratic theorists, as well as excerpts from historical materials to help students understand the context behind election law as well as how the American electoral process plays out in practice.

"There's a lot of reporting on empirical political science research," he says, including updates on research into legislative redistricting, how campaigns are financed and how money influences the process.

There's also discussion of what Gardner called "very significant changes" that the Supreme Court made in application of the Voting Rights Act, as well as on the Court's landmark *Citizens United* decision, which opened the door to campaign donations by corporations and organizations.

And there's even a section covering breaking developments in the area of "ballot selfies." That's the practice of taking your own photo with your completed ballot, then posting that photo on social media. As Gardner notes, in most states ballot selfies violate long-standing prohibitions against publicly exposing a voted ballot – laws enacted to guard against buying votes.



## Hard questions on the genetic frontier

Legal and ethical issues surrounding some startling new technologies in genetic engineering were recently tackled at a UB School of Law conference.

**Professor and William J. Magavern Faculty Scholar Irus Braverman**, who organized the 2016 conference, edited the talks and presentations from the conference into a book. The book, *Gene Editing, Law, and the Environment: Life Beyond the Human*, was

published by Routledge in summer 2017. The publication collects essays from ten scholars in fields as diverse as law, bioethics, philosophy, biology and wildlife management, a multidisciplinary approach to a field full of complexity.

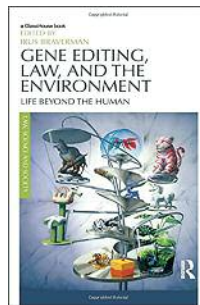
"The technical means to modify DNA are cheaper, faster, more accurate, and more widely accessible than ever before,"

Braverman writes in her introduction. "These cutting-edge gene editing technologies raise ethical, legal, and ecological questions that are so broad and consequential for both human and more-than-human life that they can be difficult to grasp. What is clear, however, is that the power to directly alter, not just a singular form of life, but also the genetics of entire species and thus the composition of ecosystems, is currently both under-regulated and under-theorized."

The volume is especially focused on gene drives, genetic systems which greatly increase the odds that a genetic alteration performed with CRISPR or similar technologies will be passed on to offspring, eventually instilling the new characteristic in entire populations of a species. Geneticists have been particularly interested in applying gene drives technologies to populations of mosquitoes, for example, creating male-only populations that therefore result in their eradication.

In addition to the book's introduction, Braverman contributed a chapter called "Gene Drives, Nature, Governance: An Ethnographic Perspective." This chapter delves into the philosophical and ethical assumptions that govern scientists' work in this area, including their ideological stance toward nature itself.

Other contributors to the book address issues in environmental conservation, gene editing in law and the arts, human embryo modification, and the "one health" approach that seeks to improve the health of people and animals, including pets, livestock and wildlife.



# PARTYING LIKE IT'S 1887

It seems like just yesterday that UB School of Law marked its milestone quasiquicentennial. But five years have come and gone, and over 200 alumni and friends gathered at an All Alumni and Reunion Celebration to celebrate the 130th anniversary of UB Law's founding.

For many, the Oct. 14 gathering was their first opportunity to welcome newly installed Dean Aviva Abramovsky. It was also an occasion to celebrate some exciting developments of just the past few years:

- The creation of master of laws programs in cross-border and environmental law.
- The introduction of a two-year J.D. program for internationally trained attorneys.
- UB Law's new Advocacy Institute, which – under the guidance of its National Advisory Board – focuses the school's efforts on training students in the skills of oral and written advocacy.

Plus an increased emphasis on students services, academic success and social justice initiatives.







1. Left to right: Hector F. Chavez '97, George J. Hamboussi Jr. '97, Hon. Lenora Foote '97, Dr. Sylvia Valentin '97 and Lourdes M. Ventura '98
2. Class of 1987
3. Class of 2007
4. Class of 1982 with Professor John Schlegel
5. Class of 1997
6. Class of 1962
7. Left to right: Anne M. Noble '92, Executive Director of the Bar Association of Erie County, and Pamela D. Heilman '75
8. Left to right: Kenneth A. Manning '77, Vice Dean for Alumni Ilene Fleischmann, Hon. Barbara Howe '80 and Peter Brunner
9. Left to right: Professor Michael Boucai, Professor Christine P. Bartholomew, Professor Mark Bartholomew and Professor S. Todd Brown
10. Left to right: Nadia N. Shahram '97 and Dean Aviva Abramovsky
11. Left to right: Hon. John L. Michalski '87 and Frank J. Longo '97
12. LAA President Pietra G. Zaffram '01
13. Left to right: Stephen L. Yonaty '94, Hon. Lisa Bloch Rodwin '85, Marla K. Babat-Yonaty '97 and Caroline A. Wojtaszek '97
14. Left to right: Major Gifts Officer Lucy A. Dadd '04 and Anthony J. Spann '52

For full photo IDs and more photos from the gala, visit: [law.buffalo.edu/alumni-celebration](http://law.buffalo.edu/alumni-celebration)

# Here

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THE CELEBRATION CONTINUES

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**Hon. Barbara Howe '80**

Former New York State Surrogate Judge, Erie County  
with the

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the highest honor

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

**Friday, Jan. 26, 2018**

**Noon to 2 p.m.**

**The Union League Club**

**38 E. 37th St.**

**New York City**

To register, visit: [law.buffalo.edu/AlumniEvent](http://law.buffalo.edu/AlumniEvent) or call the Alumni Office at (716) 645-2107

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