TRACES OF Ourselves

Teaching the ambiguity of forensic evidence
Sitting pretty

No one is throwing elbows to find a seat even when classes are in session. The Muse Law Library boasts one of the best seats-to-students ratios in the country, according to *preLaw* magazine. There are 684 seats total, and each student is guaranteed one of the 468 study carrels for all three years. (See page 8 for more.) The biggest demand, the staff says, is the prime real estate on the second floor, where a series of carrels sits near a window-lined hallway. Ah, natural light!  
*Photograph by Casey Templeton*
Marks of excellence

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Great law schools have top-notch faculties, facilities, and curriculum. But the true mark of a great law school is the impact of its alumni in the world. This issue highlights all of these marks of excellence at Richmond Law.

The cover story is a feature on one of our many areas of curricular strength — criminal law. Our curriculum includes not only the foundational criminal law course and robust trial advocacy program, but also advanced courses such as scientific evidence, ethics and criminal litigation, domestic violence, white collar crime, and international criminal justice, along with two clinics with a criminal focus and numerous criminal law clinical placements. It is no wonder we have such an impressive list of distinguished alumni practicing in this area.

A second feature recounts the exceptional career of Victor Narro, L’91, and his work on behalf of immigrants and workers in Los Angeles. Victor’s story is one of passion and purpose that was nurtured at Richmond Law. Victor credits in particular Professor Ann Hodges for mentoring and inspiring him — a gift that 23 years later, he brought full circle when he nominated Professor Hodges for the prestigious Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award, which is given to the country’s most inspirational teachers. The story is an example of the unique bonds that develop at Richmond Law between faculty and students, and the impact these bonds have on the lives of our graduates and on the communities our graduates serve.

Finally, we celebrate the Robert Taylor Muse Law Library and Associate Dean Tim Coggins, who has presided over the library since 1997 and will be retiring this summer. In his tenure, Dean Coggins has built what is widely regarded as one of the finest law libraries in the nation — one that combines state-of-the-art informational resources with a remarkably dedicated and knowledgeable staff.

Best wishes to each of you for a happy and productive 2015. I look forward to seeing you at reunion or one of many other alumni events throughout the year.

Wendy Perdue
Dean
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“You’ve got to start with the law a lot of the time”

*Richmond Law symposium marks the 50th anniversary of Civil Rights Act of 1964.*

How do we advance social justice? According to Chai Feldblum, commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), we need three ingredients: law, policies and practice, and social norms.

“The process of change is a synergistic effort, but you’ve got to start with the law a lot of the time because people don’t want to change,” she said at the *Journal of Law and Public Interest*’s symposium marking the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in September.

Feldblum has long been an advocate for a fairer, more productive workplace, drafting the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and co-directing Georgetown’s Workplace Flexibility Project in 2010. She has been with the EEOC since 2009, focusing on “gender equality, the advancements we have made, and the miles we have to go,” she said.

“Title VII made it so private employers could not discriminate on sex, race, or national origin,” said Feldblum. “But it did not include discrimination on sexual orientation and gender identity.”

However, the Supreme Court has ruled against acting on the basis of sexual orientation or gender stereotyping. These recent additions to Title VII now fall under sex discrimination, making the EEOC a leader in shaping laws against sex discrimination.

Despite this major advancement, “sex and gender discrimination in the workplace is not where it should be,” said Feldblum. “There is still sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, pay inequality, and gender job segregation, with male-dominated occupations paying more.”

But Feldblum wants to celebrate the progress we have made and inspire current students of law to grow such progress. “There are now codes for sex discrimination and gender identity, and there is now coverage of LGBTQ people under Title VII, and we have made many social advances since Congress first passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” she said.

“Law has both shaped and continues to shape social norms,” said Feldblum, “and we must keep doing our part to give complete equality in the workplace.”

—Anna Allen, ’15
Death penalty’s uncertain future

“The death penalty is not imposed for doing the worst crime but for having the worst lawyer,” Stephen Bright, president of the Southern Center for Human Rights, told legal experts and others gathered at the law school this fall to discuss capital punishment, and particularly lethal injection, during the 2014 Allen Chair Symposium.

Other participants at the daylong event, called “Lethal Injection, Politics, and the Future of the Death Penalty,” included former Virginia attorney general Mark Early, Fordham law professor Deborah Denno, and other leading experts.

Equally notable were speakers from outside the legal profession who brought perspectives not often included in legal symposia. Richmond Times-Dispatch reporter Frank Green used plain, factual language to describe the executions he’s witnessed during his career. The procedures, he said, “appear clinical, but there’s also a very surreal element to it. You can see the chemicals flow. The IV lines are transparent.”

Anesthesiologist Joel Zivot, director of the cardiothoracic intensive care unit at Emory Hospital in Atlanta, picked up on the theme of the clinical appearance of lethal injections, arguing that medical professionals have no proper role in executions. Referring to a photo of an inmate strapped to a gurney just before his execution, Zivot said, “This image looks like what I do in the operating room, and that offends me. Medicine hasn’t allowed itself to be impersonated, but the state is doing it anyway.”

Most-cited

Richmond Law was well-represented in a study that examined how often articles on intellectual property were cited by other authors writing in law reviews. Chris Cotropia, director of the Intellectual Property Institute, made three of the study’s lists. His article “Copying in Patent Law” was listed as the ninth most-cited article among all intellectual property articles published in 2009–13. That article and Cotropia’s “Modernizing Patent Law’s Inequitable Conduct Doctrine” ranked sixth and 18th, respectively, among patent law articles published in 2009–13.

“Risk Aversion and Rights Accretion in Intellectual Property Law,” an article by Jim Gibson, associate dean for academic affairs and the IP Institute’s founding director, was the eighth most-cited article among all intellectual property articles published from 2004–08, according to the study.

Meet the first-year class

Each year, associate dean for admissions Michelle Rahman puts together a must-read profile of the incoming class. Here are a few of the more humorous lines from her Class of 2017 edition:

• “Thought of a career as a competitive figure skater? One of you did.”
• “I am reassured, and feel safer knowing that we have in this class someone trained on explosives, interrogation, how to follow people, and how to target terrorists. At least I think I feel safer.”
• “I have never seen a class with so many who have been involved in marching bands.”
• “Nine of you have graduate degrees and eight of you are married — or were at the time you applied.”
• “You might notice some mighty big guys in your class. I believe this is the only class in my memory with so many former D1 football players. Look around — you’ll spot them.”

Read her entire piece at http://bit.ly/1wWaONy.

Inside Gitmo

Courtroom sketch artist Janet Hamlin has practiced her art in a courtroom few attorneys will ever see: the military commissions at Guantánamo Bay. She brought that experience to Richmond Law students during a visit and an exhibit of her courtroom sketches on campus during the fall.

During a Q&A in the moot court room, she talked with Richmond Law students about the process and constraints of her work. Because cameras are not allowed in the courtroom, her sketches are the only public visual record of the proceedings there.

“Psychologically, it was very intimidating to come into the courtroom and draw somebody, a person that’s a terrorist on that level, of that magnitude,” she said during the exhibit opening. “It is a tremendous responsibility to do what a journalist would do and try to be as neutral and open as possible and let the picture tell the story.”

Hamlin, the daughter of an Air Force pilot, said the military base at Guantánamo felt strangely familiar to her. When the invitation first came, she thought she’d be making just a couple of trips to the base, but more than 27 trips later, she’s still capturing the trials.

“It’s not always easy, but it’s also a responsibility and something that’s very gratifying for me as an artist, to be able to use my abilities in such a way that makes art into a historical document,” she said.
For the Record

SUPREME COURT

Faculty argue 
Yates v. United States

The case started as a whale of a tale: A commercial fisherman, caught red-handed at sea with undersized red grouper, ignored the order of a federal official to return the fish to shore where they could be seized as evidence. Instead, he tossed the fish overboard.

In response, the government charged him with federal obstruction of justice under a statute intended to strengthen white collar criminal investigations in the wake of the Enron scandal.

As part of orientation this fall, professors Jack Preis and Kevin Walsh argued the case, then pending before the Supreme Court, for first-year students. (The real case was argued in November.) Professors Mary Heen, Mary Tate, and Kimberly Robinson acted as judges on a “hot bench” — launching a question within the first minute of argument.

“This case is about whether a fish is a ‘tangible object,’” began Preis, who then argued that the term needed to be understood within the broader context of the statute.

Kevin Walsh represented the government’s position, arguing “the fish here would fit” the law’s language targeting “things of a similar nature to a record or document.”

“It’s a courtroom, but it’s a classroom at the same time,” Alexandra Cook, ’17, said, “so it was really great to be engrossed in that part of it.”


D.C. externship program launches

In fall 2015, Richmond Law will launch a semester-long externship program in Washington, D.C., for third-year students with an interest in federal agencies and nonprofit organizations. Students will spend 35 hours a week over 15 weeks doing substantive legal work at a qualifying placement, plus meet weekly as a cohort for reflection and analysis of the professional issues they encounter.

“This gives students the opportunity to try something that will help solidify or clarify their professional goals.”

“D.C. externship program will direct the program. “This gives students the opportunity to try something that will help solidify or clarify their professional goals.”

The program expands Richmond’s extensive clinical placement program. Alumni interested in partnering with this and other clinical placement programs are welcome to contact Valerie L’Herrou in the Career Development Office at 804-287-6673 or valerie.lherrou@richmond.edu.

“This is another opportunity for alumni to lend substantive support for Richmond Law,” Allred said.

Caudill retires

Mary Caudill, the affable, welcoming face of Richmond Law, has retired. She says that what she will miss the
most is the students, which is no surprise. She helped bring every one of them here for the last 28 years as the administrative coordinator in the law school's admissions office.

Her style combined warmth with straightforwardness for prospective students. “I always tell them, this is what you need to do — schedule a visit to a first-year class, tour the school, talk to students and professors, and see if this school is a good fit for you,” she said.

She always considered the law school part of her extended family, often joking with her five children that they had 400 brothers and sisters at the law school. She treated them like family.

“I try to make them feel at home,” she said. Law school is “not always a bed of roses. If you have a problem, just come on in.”

It was that camaraderie that kept her coming back every day to the campus for nearly three decades. Every morning, she said, she smiled on the drive in. “I work hard, but I have a good time,” she said. “To me, it’s a job that you want to do well, and you want to help other people.”

Mock trial, real winners
In October, third-year law students Danielle Bringard, Shaun Freiman, Timothy Patterson, and Amy Whitelaw won the San Diego Defense Lawyers Mock Trial Competition. Coached by Kelly Bundy, L’13, the Richmond team defeated 22 teams from states as diverse as California, Florida, Indiana, New York, and Texas. The tournament coordinators reported that in the tournament’s 24-year history, no team has ever swept the competition as Richmond did.

The diversity and contrasts of India were on display in an exhibition this winter showcasing the photography of Noah Sachs, director of the Merhige Center in Environmental Law. He took the images, on display at UR’s Carole Weinstein International Center, in the spring of 2014 when he was on a Fulbright fellowship to study the country’s climate change policies. “I could step outside the door of my apartment and find a hundred amazing scenes to photograph,” he said. “There were temples, cows, chai wallahs, coconut sellers, and boys playing cricket. India is alive with color and beauty and also extreme poverty. It is twisting and contorting with rapid development, but there is a stable soul of the place.”

Evil twin debate
Does the Supreme Court offer guidance or garbage when it comes to intellectual property cases?
That was the question debated at this year’s iteration of the Intellectual Property Institute’s annual Evil Twin debate in the moot court room. The series “is founded on the notion that experts are often at loggerheads on important issues of IP policy, yet remain friendly on a personal level,” said the organizers. It offers a forum where scholars “can air their disagreements in a friendly exchange — serious in substance but lighthearted in tone.”

John Golden, a professor at the University of Texas School of Law, offered the guidance view, arguing that the court provides sufficient guidance while showing restraint that allows the U.S. Patent Office and other more expert bodies “to figure out how to work in the wake of” its decisions.

Garbage is what the Supreme Court often offers, argued Tim Holbrook of Emory University School of Law. Using the court’s own words to make his point, he offered quotes from the court’s opinions, such as this: “In determining equivalents, things equal to the same thing may not be equal to each other and, by the same token, things for most purposes different may sometimes be equivalent.”

Video of the entire debate is available at http://bit.ly/1xi0L4c.
The Muse Law Library doesn’t keep stats on the number of students who enter and exit during the 106 hours it’s open each week. But it’s safe to say the traffic is pretty constant among the nearly 700 seats. Scattered among the stacks of legal tomes are the study carrels of each student where it’s easy to spot textbooks, hoodies, coffee cups, loose papers, and occasionally a sleeping student.

“It really is their home away from home,” says Timothy Coggins, the associate dean for library and information services.

Coggins should know. He’s been the library’s director since 1997, and in that time he has led efforts to bolster collections and improve the physical space, all while managing major shifts in technology and the increasingly seamless integration of library staff into the classroom.

Law librarians teach anything from first-year classes to upper-level courses, and also teach research sessions in upper-level seminars, where more than 75 percent of the law faculty invite them to instruct. The library also offers workshops on case law research and how to leverage Muse’s robust digital access for research on special topics. Last year, those workshops and sessions drew in more than 1,300 attendees from students and faculty members.

It’s no wonder the fall issue of preLaw magazine named the University of Richmond School of Law as having the 6th best facility in the nation. That’s partially because of the library space for students, including their individual carrels. But excellent space is not all. The Best 169 Law Schools by the Princeton Review mentions Muse’s excellent services and very helpful library staff members. These signs keep Coggins hopeful as he prepares to retire in July.

“I’m not one of those people who believes that law libraries are going to disappear,” Coggins says. “The role of the librarian has changed a lot from people who organize and provide access to books to people who are more actively involved in teaching and instruction.”
t doesn’t take long sitting in Stephanie Merritt’s Forensic Science Evidence class to start seeing your life differently. Whatever else you may be — student, professor, athlete, high school class valedictorian, that person who never forgets a birthday — you are also, every day, a steadily unspooling trail of evidence. You are scraped skin cells and shed hairs. Carpet fibers snagged in your shoe heel. Fingerprints on an iPhone screen. The vapor of that glass of wine on your breath.

“It’s almost creepy when you think about it,” said Sarah Rose, L’15, who is enrolled in Merritt’s class. “After taking this class I’ve realized how much you leave behind.”

On an evening late in the fall semester, guest speaker Robyn Weimer, a specialist in trace evidence for the Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS), was itemizing some of what might be left behind, as well as some of what might be taken away, that could tie a person to a crime: trace evidence of hair, fibers, paint, glass, fractured materials, lamp filaments, general chemicals, fire debris, and more. Slide after slide clicked past on a projection screen, a litany of bad choices, fatal encounters, ruined lives, abandoned hope, and sometimes plain bungling ineptitude, all distilled within the evidence of a microscopic splatter of paint, a spill of garden chemicals, human hairs embedded in a windshield, or the scissored fabric of a hoodie sweatshirt.
Locard’s Exchange Principle — named after pioneering French forensic investigator Edmond Locard — posits that “every time you make contact with another person, place, or thing, it results in an exchange of physical materials,” explained Weimer. Trace evidence, she said, was like pieces in a puzzle. It is “associative” evidence, the bits and fragments and residues that can suggest — although not prove — a link between a victim and a crime scene, a suspect and a weapon, a vehicle and a body. This hair is consistent with the victim’s hair. That fiber is similar to those found in the defendant’s car.

It was valuable knowledge for students, another addition to a growing repository they had assembled over the course of the semester. Experts on toxicology, fingerprints, firearms, toolmakers, autopsies, and crime-scene investigations had visited them. A bloodhound had tracked them around the Richmond campus. And the perspectives and experiences of their professor had guided them; Merritt was a prosecutor in the city of Richmond before joining the staff of DFS as legal advisor and liaison to the Virginia General Assembly.

And what had the students learned? That forensic science evidence tells a story. But not necessarily only one story, and never the complete story. Truth is elusive. Narrative is a construct. And that’s where the attorneys come in.

“What I’ve taken away from this class,” said Rose, “is that none of this is foolproof. All of these things can be challenged. Even a fingerprint identification, which we might think of as infallible — it could be wrong. From both a defense and a prosecutor’s point of view, just because you found evidence that is similar doesn’t absolutely mean it is this person.”

Her classmate Katy Groover, L’15, said that she was intrigued by this comprehensive look at all that goes into the evidence for each case. Leaning towards a career in prosecution, she said that the class also made her recognize “that there is a misconception that prosecution has the easiest job and cases are so solid. But it’s clear that a lot of the evidence is ambiguous — they can’t really say it is definitely this or definitely that. That can be hard for the jury to understand after they’ve seen CSI, where everything is really clear.”

That kind of awareness is precisely what Merritt wants her students to develop. “This class is meant to be where the rubber meets the road for students who want to be involved in criminal law in Virginia,” she said. “It is important to inform yourself about basic premises of forensic science disciplines and their strengths and limitations. As students become more familiar with these disciplines, they can become better representatives of their clients and better in the courtroom.”

Mary Kelly Tate, director of Richmond Law’s in-house Institute for Actual Innocence, which works to identify and exonerate the wrongfully convicted in Virginia, underscores the course’s importance. “Without a doubt, both prosecutors and criminal defense attorneys will need to be able to nimbly and confidently engage this sort of evidence. It’s a huge advantage to be familiar with the concepts, language, protocols, and methods that underpin all manner of scientific evidence.” Noting that forensic DNA evidence was instrumental in an exoneration won by the institute in 2013, she added, “Courses with forensic science as a cornerstone are great breeding grounds for practical training.”

FROM LAW SCHOOL TO LAWYER

If you want to be a prosecutor, you want to learn from prosecutors. If you want to ably cross-examine an expert witness on DNA evidence, you want to understand the science behind that witness’s testimony. If you want to pursue a career as a criminal defense attorney, you want a thorough grounding in client management — which is sometimes the most challenging part of the job.
Richmond Law has a well-established reputation for its strength in criminal law. But as many career prosecutors and defenders can attest, the transition from classroom to courtroom can be a bumpy road of hard-learned lessons. There are statutes, constitutional principles, and the orderly progression of instructional PowerPoint slides — and then there is the real, messy business of human life being wrung through a complicated and imperfect justice system. How can a law school most effectively prepare its students to make that transition not only successfully, but confidently?

“For a long time, Richmond Law has been known as having a strength in the criminal law,” said Corinna Lain, professor and associate dean for faculty development. “But the school doesn’t want to just rest on its laurels. We want to push ourselves further so that our graduates have a sophisticated knowledge of criminal law. In recent years, we have been asking attorneys practicing criminal law throughout Virginia what graduates coming fresh out of law school need to give them an edge. What can they have learned and experienced during law school so that, if you want to hire a criminal lawyer, you want to look first to Richmond Law graduates?”

EXPERTS IN THE CLASSROOM

The backbone of Richmond’s criminal law program, according to Lain, has long been the faculty. Many of its members bring not only a rich depth of scholarly knowledge but also a solid grounding in courtroom practice. “Nationally leading experts in their fields are teaching here,” she said.

Full-time faculty include Ronald Bacigal, who, Lain notes, is widely respected as an authority on Virginia criminal law. “He is the author of Criminal Offenses and Defenses in Virginia and Virginia Criminal Procedure Forms — texts that I received desk copies of as a young prosecutor,” says Lain. As reporter of criminal decisions for the Virginia Court of Appeals, she notes, he is “uniquely positioned to track and comment on Virginia criminal law decisions.” He also conducts judicial training in Virginia and across the country.

Dean emeritus and professor of law John Douglass is a former assistant U.S. attorney and served as chief of the criminal division for the U.S. attorney’s office in Richmond. “He’s a leading figure on the confrontation clause of the Sixth Amendment, and he has chaired or sat on many, if not most, of the most important criminal justice commissions and study groups here in Virginia over the past decade,” said Lain.

Lain herself is a former prosecutor who also conducts training around the state. Julie McConnell, ’99, who directs the Children’s Defense Clinic, is both a former prosecutor and a former public defender. Tate, of the Institute for Actual Innocence, is a former public defender.

The quality and accessibility of the faculty were significant factors for Albert Flores, ’16, in his choice of Richmond Law. He hopes to become a local prosecutor after graduation. “The close professional relationships students have with professors sold me on coming to Richmond. These are relationships of mutual respect, and I have access to professors in all different disciplines, which broadens my legal education so that I can be a better lawyer,” he said.

Barrett Enix, ’16, agreed. “Your professors want you to be a great lawyer and want you to know how to solve these issues, how you can map them out and solve them like any puzzle. When they say ‘thinking like a lawyer,’ that is what they mean,” he said.

Richmond Law’s easy proximity to both state and federal courts, five local city and county jurisdictions, and the state legislature is a unique advantage for these students, giving the school the ability to complement its full-time faculty and enrich its course offerings by drawing adjunct faculty from a deep pool of seasoned professionals, like Stephanie Merritt.

Professor Merritt is an excellent example of the depth of expertise we have in our adjunct faculty,” said Lain. (In fact, during the fall semester, adjunct professor Stephanie Merritt became the Honorable Stephanie Merritt, ascending to the bench as a judge for the General District Court of the Ninth Judicial District in Gloucester County.) “We recruit our adjunct faculty from among the leading practitioners in the region. They are out in the field actively practicing and working cases and then bringing that expertise to our students.”

Sandy Hausrath, ’07, an attorney in the public defender’s office in Richmond since 2008, says that the wealth of knowledge, as well as the networking opportunities afforded to students through connections with adjunct faculty and area alumni, were important reasons that she chose Richmond Law.
And the courses taught by local practitioners helped provide her a broader understanding of the real-world scenarios she would face in practice. “They bring to you the real-life situations and issues — here is a war story, here is a problem you will run into in the real world, and here is how you deal with it. That practical information begins to prepare you for what your job is actually going to be.”

The courses themselves — whether taught by full-time or adjunct faculty — and the criminal law curriculum as a whole, emphasize a thorough grounding in both doctrinal principles and practical knowledge. “For example,” said Lain, “I teach criminal procedure, which includes Fourth Amendment issues such as search and seizure, arrests, and interrogation practices. The class involves a lot of high-level theory, but I also require students to go on a ride-along with the police and then write about the experience. This gives them a very grounded view of what they are learning.”

Some courses in the criminal law curriculum, such as Merritt’s Forensic Science Evidence course, have been developed specifically to provide even more practice-oriented instruction. The school also offers classes on the criminal-client relationship and ethics in the criminal law. Next year, a new course will be offered on psychiatry and criminal law because many criminal defendants present with a range of mental health issues.

“Practical training” might be the mantra of the criminal law program. It’s what Albert Flores appreciated in the fall when he paired semester the criminal procedures class with participation in Richmond Law’s Institute for Actual Innocence. A major in the U.S. Marines and a veteran of deployments to combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan, Flores says that witnessing the ways that governments and systems of law can fail their citizens has inspired his interest in pursuing a career as a prosecutor. “I want to be a capable advocate for people who are unable to do so for themselves.”
Yet, he said, "The fall semester opened my eyes to a delicate balance. Overly aggressive prosecutors can take advantage of every procedure to lock up criminals, but if they do so irresponsibly, innocent people will end up incarcerated, and the last thing I want to do is convict somebody who is innocent."

His work in the clinic, added Flores, complemented a summer clerkship with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit where, he said, "I saw how much effort U.S. Circuit Court judges put into ensuring that they get their decisions right."

Lain said that these kinds of experiences are transformative for students when added to the knowledge they've gained in the classroom. "They work in real settings, with real clients and issues as complex as they come, under the supervision of seasoned professionals. Few things are more rewarding than hearing from students at the end of summer about their experiences — what they learned and how much they loved it."

Richmond Law encourages and facilitates externships for their pragmatic benefits, of course; the best-prepared graduates enjoy the most promising career prospects. There is, however, a higher ideal at work as well. In criminal law, human life is on the line; when the system fails, the innocent lose their freedom and the guilty walk free. The student who sits in a law school classroom today is the prosecutor, the defense attorney, the judge who tomorrow takes responsibility to make sure that failure does not happen, that justice is not an abstraction, that the Constitution is not merely words on a page but principles at work in the lives of every individual who walks into a court of law.

Said Merritt, "The better the quality of legal representation you see in the courtroom, the more the entire criminal justice system is advanced."

Caroline Kettlewell is a freelance writer in Richmond.
n a cool autumn night in Los Angeles, a diverse procession of labor lawyers, union workers, immigrant day laborers, students, and activists makes its way slowly but purposefully through the streets of the largely working class Latino neighborhood of Pico-Union. Roughly 60 in number, the group walks in complete silence, its collective determination attracting the gaze of local residents, despite the surrounding darkness.

At the head of the assembly, Victor Narro, L’91, walks with his head down, his hands clasped in front of him. A lean, soft-spoken man in his early 50s, small of stature, but with a bushy salt-and-pepper beard that projects a wise-man sense of gravitas, Narro has a presence that exceeds his frame. A UCLA law professor, project director of the UCLA Labor Center, and a tireless immigration and labor activist, Narro is one of California’s leading advocates for immigration reform and workers’ rights.

Over the past two decades in L.A., Narro has helped to build and lead an impressive coalition that has been on the forefront of securing national legal protections for day laborers, low-income workers, and undocumented immigrants. His seminal work organizing undocumented day laborers on the streets of L.A. led to the creation of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and shaped a national strategy for protecting the right of these individuals to freely pursue work. More recently, Narro fought for nearly a decade to secure a California state law protecting the rights of local car wash workers — thousands of whom were making less than three dollars an hour after the industry decided to forgo...
paying workers a salary and forced them to subsist on tips instead. In 2008, Narro worked with the AFL-CIO and United Steelworkers to launch the CLEAN Carwash Campaign to organize the first ever union in this industry. Today, there are 25 unions in formerly exploitative carwash establishments.

Not surprisingly, tonight's march is not the first one Narro has led through the years.

“I've been arrested more times than I can count for civil disobedience,” he had told me earlier that week. “There's a certain irony, being a lawyer, to willfully breaking the law. But it can be an effective tool for justice.”

The timing of this night's march seems to indicate this might be one of those occasions. Only hours before, President Obama made a surprise announcement about his plan for sweeping immigration reform. Many here, though grateful for some long-awaited federal action — any action — on the issue, felt the move was far too cautious, Narro among them.

“This is the beginning of a long fight,” he assured me earlier in the evening. “It will impact four million people that are today undocumented and unprotected by many laws.”

But despite the gravity of Obama’s announcement, and despite the fact that most of the march's participants will be directly impacted one way or the other by Obama's plan, this gathering is no protest or play for political awareness. The walk is a silent meditation inspired by the teaching of Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

Narro, the tireless legal activist, has entered a new phase in his career — one devoted to the principle of “self-care.”

“All of us in the legal profession need to look after ourselves,” he said. “It doesn't matter if you're a labor lawyer or a corporate attorney with billable hours — you need and deserve the time to take care of yourself.”

This walk is part of a seminar Narro has convened surrounding his new book, Living Peace: Connecting Your Spirituality With Your Work for Justice, which advocates for making the compassionate, community-building aspects of Franciscan Catholicism an integral part of one's personal legal philosophy. But while selflessness is a virtue, the book also implores avoiding the literal example of St. Francis, who died at age 45 after an exhausting and restless life of service.

In the worlds of law and activism, there are battles to be waged — but not at the expense of the long-term physical and mental health of its soldiers.

At the march, a worker's compensation attorney explained the appeal of Narro's methods: “Everyone knows lawyers have a higher rate of alcoholism and suicide than most other professions. We need to take care of our mental health and build a sense of community, just like everyone else.”

It was a lesson Narro learned the hard way. Five years ago, after a lifetime of work and struggle, “I finally burnt out,” he admitted. “Year after year of 16 hour days add up.”

Narro's unyielding drive for justice was born of his humble beginnings. The son of a Spanish mother and a Peruvian father, Narro immigrated to America during the mid-1960s when he was a small child — settling with his family in a tough neighborhood of New York's Brooklyn borough. Violence and street crime were omnipresent, worsened by a dysfunctional family life.

“I was not one of those kids who was motivated by education,” he remembered. “Schools were dangerous. My goal was to get out of school without getting mugged.”

Instead of hardening him, however, the adversity strengthened his compassion and instilled in him a desire to stand up for those who couldn't defend themselves.

“Growing up surrounded by poor migrant families, I developed a sensitivity for kids who were even worse off than I was. And there were plenty of them.”

After graduating high school, Narro wanted something different for himself that the unforgiving streets of Brooklyn couldn't offer. So he moved to Richmond — where he had distant relatives — to start a new path in life.

“I had never seen a mountain before,” Narro remembered of his first trip to Virginia. “But I soon realized I enjoyed the state. I felt safe. And when you feel like you're in a safe, secure environment, learning suddenly becomes a priority.”

Narro enrolled at Virginia Commonwealth University and began to study history. It was there he first put action to his quest for justice, helping lead campus protests against apartheid in South Africa, as well as U.S. government policy in Central America — particularly the Reagan administration's decision to fund armed rebellion against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

“Anything Ronald Reagan stood for, I was against,” he said, laughing.

After graduation, he wanted to become an activist full time — but realized something was missing.

“I needed another weapon in my arsenal. I saw the law as a potential tool in my belt, not a profession.”

Narro chose Richmond Law, where he instantly found the perfect mentor to help him accomplish just that task — labor law professor Ann Hodges.

“I was one of maybe three minority students on
campus at the time,” remembered Narro. “And Ann was
brand new to the school and one of the few female pro-
fessors. I think we were naturally drawn to each other.”

Hodges helped Narro channel his raw passion to
where it could be most effective — labor law.

“His politics were different than most of his class, let
me tell you,” Hodges said with a laugh. “But even then he
was a force for bringing people together, even when they
didn't agree or come from the same background.”

In addition to his studies, Narro spent his free
time lending his legal and activist mind to a local
homeless shelter. His work ethic and his ability to rally
diverse groups to his respective causes earned the admi-
ration and respect of his peers and Richmond’s faculty.

Upon graduation, “The faculty agreed that we
didn’t have an award for someone like Victor,” remem-
ered Hodges. “Other awards were about highest GPA,
those kinds of things. But there was no award for ser-
vice and professionalism.”

So Richmond Law created the Nina R. Kestin Service
Award and made Narro its first recipient. The award
stands to this day — as does the mentorship between
Hodges and Narro. Last year, Narro wrote a touching
nomination letter on behalf of his former professor for the
prestigious Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award, given to
the country’s most inspirational professors.

“All of us in the legal profession need to look
after ourselves,” said
Narro. “It doesn’t matter
if you’re a labor lawyer
or a corporate attorney
with billable hours.”

Narro’s connection to Richmond Law doesn’t end
with his relationship to Hodges. He plans to bring his
teachings on self-care back to his alma mater. He and
Hodges are brainstorming a seminar that would be
appropriate for a Richmond Law audience.

“We can’t do the same type of program we would
here in Los Angeles,” he said, laughing. “Things are a
little looser out here.”

After graduation, he realized that as much as he
loved Richmond and was indebted to the city for his
intellectual evolution, there were simply no opportuni-
ties at that time to pursue his passions for immigrant
and labor rights. That would require a move to L.A. —
which was then the country’s most vigorous battle-
ground for immigration issues. California had just passed
Proposition 187, a controversial ballot measure that
denied services to people in the country illegally, and the
organized labor movement, strong in L.A., had begun
to consider embracing the city’s massive population of
undocumented immigrant workers.

At organizations like Coalition for Humane

Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, the work was constant and fulfilling. Eventually, Narro made his move to UCLA, where he has been for the past decade. Five years ago, however, despite his many legal and political victories, Narro’s full-bore approach finally took its toll.

And he wasn’t alone. “A lot of the people I had been working with over the years were having terrible health problems. They couldn’t work anymore.”

Narro knew he had to make a change or he would suffer the same fate. Thankfully, that change came upon him sooner than he could have hoped for. He fell in love. Three years ago he wed longtime journalist and labor activist Laureen Lazarovici. Adjusting to married life, however, took time and effort.

“I was a workaholic,” said Narro. “It was all I knew. So I had to make time at home. I needed balance.”

His wife introduced him to the Zen teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh and, inspired by civil and labor rights legend Cesar Chavez’s devotion to St. Francis, Narro began his personal quest for balance in “self-care,” a mantra he has practiced ever since.

Chris Newman, legal director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network and a longtime mentee of Narro’s, has worked alongside Narro for the past 12 years. He described Narro’s professional career as “at the forefront of a movement that combines law and organizing.” To Newman, who is now as familiar with the fray of battle as any, self-care is simply an extension of that work.

“To me it seems like a natural progression,” he said. “Victor has brought so many people like myself into the movement for workers’ rights. It makes sense for him to work to sustain that involvement — to systematize it. He’s in the next phase of his coaching.”

That’s not to say Narro’s role in the broader fight for social justice is over.

He and colleagues at the Labor Center are working with UCLA students and a coalition of worker centers and unions on a campaign to combat wage theft.

“Every week, employers steal $26.2 million in wages from their employees here in Los Angeles,” said Narro. “The next closest city is New York, with $22 million. This is a crisis for low-wage workers.”

Narro is working with the coalition to pass an ordinance that would enable city officials to suspend or revoke business licenses or permits and put a lien on the assets of any business that steals wages from its workers.

Then, of course, there’s the broader federal struggle over immigration.

“President Obama’s plan was a start,” said Narro. “But we still have a lot of work to do.”

For Narro, the fight and the work go on. But so does life. He has no plans to miss out on any of it.

“It’s been almost 30 years since the last major immigration decision came down from Washington,” Narro said. “It may take another 30 to get the laws right. We need to take care of ourselves.”

Matthew Fleischer is a freelance writer in Los Angeles who writes frequently about social justice issues.

Press outlets including the Richmond Times-Dispatch and Daily Press turned to Ron Bacigal for insight on high-profile criminal cases, including the murder of University of Virginia student Hannah Graham and the trial of former Gov. Bob McDonnell. Speaking during the latter’s trial, Bacigal told Daily Press, “The ironic thing is the defense wanted separate trials, when a joint trial may help the former governor. He wasn’t a model citizen, but the way [Maureen McDonnell] looks right now, he comes off much better.”

Hamilton Bryson edited and published via LexisNexis Volume 87 of Virginia Circuit Court Opinions; he is its founding editor.

Virginia Business named Tara Casey, director of the Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service, to its 2014 list of Virginia Legal Elite in the area of Legal Services/Pro Bono. “Most law students do not lack for passion,” she told the magazine. “Indeed, I believe we could light our city with the energy these students provide. However, as a lawyer, I must be attuned to the needs of our community, and as an educator, I must be attuned to the capacity of my students to meet those needs.”

Dale Cecka wrote an essay for a collection titled Feminist Judgments: Rewritten Opinions of the United States Supreme Court. Authors in the collection are rewriting, from a feminist perspective, key Supreme Court decisions relevant to gender issues. In November, she spoke at the Family Law Reform Conference. Her article “The Crisis Facing Adolescents of Color in Foster Care: Present and Future” is forthcoming in West Virginia Law Review.

Multiple outlets quoted Hank Chambers, including Richmond Times-Dispatch, Washington Examiner, The Roanoke Times, The Virginian-Pilot, FindLaw, and Voice of America. He also made an appearance on WRIC television in Richmond for a story on a Brunswick County, Va., politician accused of filing inaccurate disclosure statements.

Chris Cotropia made a presentation on trade secrets to the State-Federal Judicial Council of Virginia. Law360.com interviewed him as part of its “IP Professors Q&A” series. “The recent rash of Supreme Court decisions in the patent law area have left us with new standards in many doctrinal areas,” he said. “…The exact contours of these doctrines and laws will not fully develop, perhaps unfortunately, until the lower courts and the Federal Circuit have some time to apply the new law.”

Joel Eisen wrote about Electric Power Supply Association v. FERC as a guest blogger on LegalPlanet.org. New York Law Journal published his article “Tackling Climate Change: Don’t Forget Energy Efficiency,” and SNL Energy ran a story focused on his UCLA Law Review article. He spoke at a conference at Northwestern Law School in November and was a keynote speaker at a conference in Columbus, Ohio, in February.

Bill Fisher will write the case law portion of the annual survey of business law developments for The Business Lawyer.

Jim Gibson discussed arbitration clauses during an interview with Richmond’s NBC affiliate, WWBT. “The dirty little secret of arbitration clauses is that they usually prohibit participation in class-action lawsuits,” he said. On the same station, he commented on the decision by the Trademark and Patent Office to cancel the Washington Redskins’ trademark protection. Said Gibson, “This is bad for the Redskins from a public relations perspective but does not [yet] actually affect the team’s trademark rights in a significant way.”

Virginia’s governor appointed Meredith Harbach to the Virginia Council on Women; she chairs its Women’s Healthcare Initiative subcommittee. Her paper “One of the Family” was selected for the Workshop on Shifting Foundations: Family Law’s Response to Changing Families, which the Association of American Law Schools will host in Orlando, Fla., in June. She participated in the second annual Junior Faculty Scholars Works-in-Progress Conference at Marquette University Law School in September.

Ann Hodges’ paper “Trilogy Redux: Using Arbitration to Rebuild the Labor Movement” was listed by SSRN as one of its top-10 downloads, and she received the 2014 Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award (see opposite page).

Joyce Janto spoke at the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries about the legalities and logistics of terminating employees.

Corinna Lain spoke at the annual conference of the National Association of Appellate Court Attorneys and on several panels at the Southeastern Association of Law Schools conference. Her paper “God, Civic Virtue, and the American Way: Reconstructing Engel” was recently listed on SSRN’s list of the top-10 downloads in the religion and theory category. Her article co-authored with Jim Gibson, “Death Penalty Drugs and the International Moral Marketplace,” is forthcoming in *Georgetown Law Journal*.

TechPolicyDaily.com published Kristen Osenga’s article “An Emphatic ‘NO’ to Justice Sotomayor’s Question on Software Patents in *Alice Corp. v. CLS Bank*.” Intellectual Asset Management published her essay based on her *Connecticut Law Review* piece on so-called “patent trolls.” *Virginia Business* magazine quoted her comments on the potential unintended consequences of legislative attempts to curb frivolous patent infringement claims. She participated in a teleforum for the Federalist Society regarding a patent case and joined the executive committee of its Intellectual Property Group, and became a senior scholar of the Center for the Protection of Intellectual Property.

An observation to a reporter by John Pagan inspired a story on Slate.com called “Southern Justice: How an 1865 Ruling in Favor of Confederate Soldiers Just Protected the Vote for Minorities in Arkansas.” The Arkansas Supreme Court’s ruling in *Rison v. Farr*, Pagan told the reporter, “has to be one of the most remarkable turnabouts in the legal history of the South.” NBC News turned to him for analysis of the Supreme Court’s October decision bringing to 30 the number of states allowing same-sex marriage. Pagan said, “What happened today was gay marriage moved from a minority position into a majority position in the United States.”

Wendy Perdue was a speaker at Promoting Diversity in Law School Leadership, a biennial workshop cosponsored by the Society of American Law Teachers.

Kimberly Robinson discussed Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal’s lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education over the Common Core initiative on Bloomberg Radio. “I don’t think his arguments [that Common Core is unconstitutional under the 10th Amendment] are going to get very far in court,” she said.

In June, Atlantic.com published Noah Sachs’ article “Garbage Everywhere: What Refuse in India’s Streets Reveals About America’s Hidden Trash Problem.”
“As I wound my way through Bangalore’s streets in the Daily Dump van,” he wrote, “I spotted numerous American brands out the window.”

Andrew Spalding wrote a number of posts, including a four-part series called “The Much Misunderstood Miscellaneous Receipts Act,” on FCPAblog.com, which covers enforcement related to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Multiple media outlets, including ABC News, MSN News, Voice of America, AllAfrica, and JD Supra, quoted him for various stories on bribery and corruption.

Richmond Times-Dispatch quoted Rachel Suddarth in a story about a provider of diagnostic testing whose unusually rapid growth brought it to the attention of federal investigators. Being an outlier “is not a position you generally want to be in, in a highly regulated industry,” she said.


Georgetown University’s National Technical Assistance Center for Children’s Mental Health interviewed Adrienne Volenik for a video about trauma as it relates to educational settings. Children acting out in school may be experiencing things in their home lives “that make it very difficult for them to get up the next morning and walk into a classroom, access their executive functioning, and be able to learn,” she said.

Kevin Walsh analyzed the Supreme Court’s decision in the Hobby Lobby case for SCOTUSBlog.com, writing, “in the end, Burwell v. Hobby Lobby came out largely as most predicted (somepublicly, some privately, many hopefully, many fearfully, few dispassionately).” His article “In the Beginning There Was None” appeared in Notre Dame Law Review’s annual federal courts issue. On Constitution Day, he was a guest lecturer at Newman University.

The Supreme Court of Virginia appointed Carole Yeatts vice chair of the Minimum Continuing Legal Education Board.

A grateful student and a pleasant surprise

Ann Hodges

Ann Hodges was surprised when she got the phone call announcing she had won the 2014 Elizabeth Hurlock Beckman Award recognizing “professors who inspire.”

“I’d never heard of the award and certainly didn’t know I’d been nominated,” she said.

A member of the law faculty since 1988, Hodges teaches labor and employment law, and nonprofit organizations. She has been named University Distinguished Educator twice, and she has been recognized for her work with LINC, the Legal Information Network for Cancer, a nonprofit that assists cancer patients and their families with legal and business needs.

Victor Narro, L’91, (see page 16) put her up for the award, citing Hodges as the inspiration for his life of activism.

In nominating Hodges, Narro emphasized her ability to teach law at a personal level. “We all will be employees or employers for a large part of our lives,” Hodges said. “It’s where we get our identities, our self-respect. It’s how we support our families, so it has to be personal.”

These are exciting times to be teaching labor law, Hodges said, with minimum wage, immigration, gay rights, and income disparity among the hot topics of the day. “When people are marching in the streets, students get interested.”

Recently, Hodges presented on employment discrimination to federal judges who offered in return “valuable real-world perspectives.” As students, she said, the judges “had a lot of questions, a lot of opinions. They were lively.”

Hodges went to Atlanta to receive the Beckman award. She was so inspired by the other honorees, her former students, and the celebration of teaching and learning that she reached out to her labor law professor at Northwestern University, Steve Goldberg, to thank him.

“If I did this for someone, someone did this for me,” she said. “It’s a continuum.”

—Rob Walker
1Ls serve, grow close together

In August, before the fury of late nights, readings, and class outlines, a group of 27 first-years got their hands dirty on a service trip to the Community Kitchen Garden at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.

The timing was perfect, according to Brian Vick, former Community Kitchen Garden coordinator at Lewis Ginter. The garden was beginning to switch into fall mode. “We plant hundreds of Brassicaceae transplants — broccoli, cabbages, cauliflower — and many hands are welcome to do the bed preparations, planting, and mulching,” Vick said. The volunteer outing was arranged by Tara Casey, director of Richmond Law’s Harry L. Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service, and led by Miles Jolley, L’15. This is the second year Casey has sent students to the Community Kitchen Garden for community service.

“At 9 o’clock on an overcast Saturday morning, a parade of fresh-faced law students arrived, eager to make a positive impact on the community that many of us had just joined. We began the most natural process for a group of law students: gardening. The morning began with laying out and planting rows of cauliflower and broccoli that, when harvested, will help feed hungry children, seniors, and families as part of the FeedMore program of Central Virginia. A short two hours later, soil had been turned over, tomatoes had been picked, and we had planted enough vegetables to contribute to over 800 meals for the needy in our community. And in doing so, we learned about ourselves, too. We learned that what we lack in skill, we make up for in enthusiasm. We learned that we should bring raincoats when we volunteer for an outdoor service project. But most of all, we learned that a gray, Saturday morning spent in service to the community — if we take the time and we’re not too scared — can give us the opportunity to enjoy the butterflies around us that we rarely get to stop and see.”

— John O’Malley, L’17
Trial Advocacy Board members help local anti-drug program

Everything changed the moment Savannah got caught with pot at middle school.

She got expelled from Carver Middle School and ended up facing 30 days of juvenile detention.

Savannah is a fictional character, but the process by which she faces the educational and legal consequences of marijuana possession was demonstrated for students in Chesterfield County, Va., with a cast of real-life school administrators, judges, attorneys, and law enforcement.

For several years, members of Richmond Law’s Trial Advocacy Board (TAB) have volunteered as defense attorneys with the Student vs. Marijuana program, a collaboration between the School of Law and Chesterfield County schools, law enforcement, and the justice system.

Through the program, students get to see both what a student conduct hearing and a court hearing look like. The TAB members play a key role in these demonstrations as they defend the accused student. This year, Katy Groover, L'15, Chris Leslie, L'16, and Greg Collins, L'15, stepped into that role and saw it as a chance to work in the law from a different perspective.

“I appreciated the opportunity to educate,” said Leslie. “We think of lawyers as getting involved after the crime occurs, but there’s no reason why we shouldn’t work to prevent one from occurring too.”

For Groover, the program connected her law school experience with her pre-law career. “I was a high school teacher and had many students who were caught with drugs on campus,” she explained. “I have a lot of interest in representing juvenile defendants, so the program immediately interested me as something I’d like to be involved with.”

Leslie hopes that the program served to open students’ eyes. “I hope it demonstrated how quickly small mistakes could change your life,” he said. “Also the power behind the law, and that despite the increasing legalization and social acceptance of marijuana, it remains illegal in Virginia.”

Patently interesting field trips

In November, a group of seven members of the Student Intellectual Property Association ventured up to Washington, D.C., to hear oral arguments at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit. The students heard three arguments on patent appeals — an area over which the Federal Circuit has nationwide jurisdiction.

Everyone in the group was very impressed by the display of oral advocacy by all of the lawyers,” said Billy Raska, L'15.

After the arguments, students had the opportunity to meet with Judge Richard Linn, a member of the three-judge panel hearing the cases, for a private Q&A session during which he described the Federal Circuit’s process of writing opinions.

“Judge Linn took us on a step-by-step journey of how he approaches intellectual property cases, including how he and the other judges keep up with the technology required to make an informed decision on IP cases,” said Kat Gavin, L'16. “Not only that, but he also discussed our individual plans and gave us real-world advice on how to pursue a career in IP law. I could not be more pleased with my experience.”

Linn also led the students on a tour of one of the courtrooms and the behind-the-scenes area where judges take an initial straw vote after hearing oral arguments.
Rock ‘n’ Robes

By day, Richard Campbell, L’93, is a judge in Richmond’s Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Out of the robes, he is a passionate and knowledgeable fan of 1960s music. Along with writing liner notes for more than 25 re-releases of albums from The Mamas and the Papas, Campbell also maintains an extensive website (casselliot.com) devoted to The Mamas and the Papas singer Cass Elliot, who died in 1974.

Now he’s sharing that knowledge on campus. Last fall, Campbell began teaching a survey of rock music of the 1960s for the University’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies. It’s an 8-week, 16-hour look at the decade’s sounds and musicians.

“It seemed like a great fit for what we are trying to do,” said Mary Catherine Raymond, program manager for the SPCS noncredit courses. The goal of noncredit programs is to cover topics of interest to both the community and University students, she said.

“Musically, it’s the place where a lot of genres and styles and traditions blend,” Campbell said of what appeals to him about the turbulent decade’s music.

Campbell has previously helped teach SPCS courses in criminal law and popular music. His course is being offered again next semester, he said, and he’s glad to have the support of the University.

— Ben Panko, ’14

Richmond alumni leading in Virginia

Two Richmond Law alumni have recently been elected to serve as leaders in their professional fields.

Nancy Grace Parr, L’83, was elected president of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth’s Attorneys in August. She is the commonwealth’s attorney for Chesapeake, Va.

Edward Weiner, L’80, is president-elect of the Virginia State Bar. Weiner is founder and senior partner at Weiner Spivey and Miller. Weiner also founded Jazz 4 Justice, a fundraising model that partners local bar associations with university music departments to raise money for legal aid and pro bono programs and music scholarships.

Teacher’s aid

How much power should ordinary citizens have to enforce criminal laws? It’s an issue one Virginia task force is currently wrestling with and one that Shannon Dion, L’01, director of policy and legislative affairs for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, recently asked Professor Jack Preis for some guidance on as they prepare to make recommendations this winter.

“I didn’t hesitate to seek expertise from Richmond Law,” Dion said. “Keeping in touch with fellow alumni is good for both personal and professional reasons. Including faculty in my network offers even more value.”
We want to hear from you. Send us your note via the “Submit a Class Note” link at lawmagazine.richmond.edu, email us at lawalumni@richmond.edu, or contact us by mail at Law Alumni, University of Richmond School of Law, University of Richmond, VA 23173, or at 804-289-8028.

1960s

Reggie Jones, R’65 and L’68, has been practicing law for 45 years. He was the founding president of the Henrico County Bar Association. He has served as president of the Virginia Law Foundation and was selected as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. A rabid Spider, Reggie is a season ticket holder for football and basketball. He considers it a privilege to have served on the board of the Robins Foundation for more than 15 years, as it allowed him to be involved in the historical philanthropy made possible by the beneficence of Mr. and Mrs. E. Claiborne Robins and their family. Jones has four wonderful children and six grandchildren.

Walter Felton Jr., R’66 and L’69, the chief judge of the Virginia Court of Appeals, received the 2013 Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award. He was honored in May at the Judicial Conference of Virginia.

1970s

William Muse, L’73, retired in July after 12 years of private practice and 29 years in state government. For most of those years, he was a senior assistant attorney general in the correctional litigation section. In 2011, he was appointed by then-Gov. Bob McDonnell as chair of the Virginia Parole Board, a position he held until retiring.

Mitch Garbee, B’72 and L’75, and his wife, Patty Stringfellow Garbee, W’73, live in Lynchburg, Va., and enjoy retirement.

Robert Leonard Flax, L’77, was part of a panel discussing Virginia’s involuntary mental health commitment process at the fall meeting of the Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Healthcare Risk Management. Flax has also been a special justice for mental health commitment hearings for more than five years.

Burton Dodd, L’78, was included in the 2015 Best Lawyers in America. He is an attorney in the Atlanta office of Fisher & Phillips, a labor and employment law firm.

Douglas Romaine, L’78, has been honored by Best Lawyers as “Lawyer of the Year,” tax law. He is an attorney in Stoll Keenon Ogden’s Lexington, Ky., office.

Betty Jo Clark Anthony, W’69 and L’79, is a deputy commonwealth’s attorney for the city of Roanoke, Va. Anthony also teaches a law elective twice a year at the medical school of St. George’s University in Grenada, and usually teaches one semester of criminal law at Hollins University.

Stephen Botti, R’76 and L’79, will serve as president of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers for 2015–16. He was also named a fellow of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, a worldwide association of lawyers recognized by their peers as family law specialists. Botti was also named a 2015 Illinois Super Lawyer for the 11th consecutive year. He is president of Botti Marinaccio Ltd. in Oak Brook, Ill.

1980s

Edward Weiner, L’80, is president-elect of the Virginia State Bar. He is founder and senior partner at Weiner Spivey and Miller and a member of the board of directors of the George Mason University Center for the Performing Arts. He founded Jazz 4 Justice, a fundraising model that partners local bar associations with university music departments to raise money for legal aid.

At Fall Gathering 2014: John Anderson, R’73 and L’77; Liz Tyler, L’16; and Camm Tyler; Ron Kuykendall, L’78; Joyce Ballato, GB’87; and Michael Ballato, L’80
aid and pro bono programs as well as music scholarships.

**Steve Farrar, L’82**, is president-elect of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel. Farrar was also appointed to a three-year term on the board of directors of the Defense Research Institute, the largest international association of attorneys who defend corporate and individual interests in civil litigation. Farrar, who was also honored in the 2014 *Super Lawyers* Business Edition for business litigation, is an attorney at Smith Moore Leatherwood in Greenville, S.C.

**Nancy Grace Parr, L’83**, was elected president of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth’s Attorneys in August. She is the commonwealth’s attorney for the city of Chesapeake, Va.

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe appointed **Pia Trigiani, L’83**, to the Longwood University board of visitors. She is an attorney at MercerTrigiani.

**Ben Emerson, R’73 and L’84**, and his wife, **Nancy Bendall Emerson, W’73**, went to Atlanta in December 2013 to watch their son, Benjamin, graduate with his doctorate in aerospace engineering. In July, the whole family, including Benjamin and his wife, Kelsey, and Taylor and his girlfriend, flew to the island of Bonaire for a week of scuba diving and snorkeling. It was the first time in four years that they were all able to spend a week together.

Virginia state delegate **Benton Chafin, L’85**, received the Legislative Champion Award from the Virginia Education Association. The award is given to lawmakers whose records demonstrate a commitment to education.

**Joseph Corish, R’83 and L’86**, was included in the 2015 *Best Lawyers in America* for banking and finance law. He is an attorney at Bean, Kinney & Korman in Arlington, Va.

**Mary Burkey Owens, L’86**, a founding partner at Owen & Owens in Midlothian, Va., was included in the 2014 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*. She was named to the Top 50 Richmond, Top 50 Women, and Top 100 *Virginia Super Lawyers* for 2014. She was selected for the family law category.

**Roger Glover III, L’88**, is the founder of Cornerstone Homes based in Henrico County, Va. He has been involved in real estate development for 25 years and has built more than 1,000 homes in 13 communities in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

**Deborah Singleton Tinsley, W’85 and L’88**, was elected juvenile and domestic relations district court judge for the 16th Judicial District by the Virginia General Assembly.

**1990s**

**Eric Hurlocker, R’87 and L’92**, co-managing partner of the GreeneHurlocker law firm, was elected vice president of the Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia Solar Industry Association. He joined its board last year and serves as general counsel to the organization.

**Henry Spalding III, L’92**, is a director and lawyer at ThompsonMcMullan in Richmond, where he focuses on civil litigation, specializing in construction law, employment law, and representing insurance companies and their policyholders.

**Kristi Swisher Wright, L’93**, is the director of the department of legislative and public relations for the Supreme Court of Virginia Office of the Executive Secretary.

**Richard C. Patterson, L’95**, was elected by the Virginia General Assembly to fill a newly created circuit court judgeship. He was previously a general district court judge for the 29th Judicial District.

**Jonathon Lack, L’96**, is commissioner for the Family and Juvenile Court for Thurston County Superior Court in Olympia, Wash. In April, he was elected to the Pride Foundation board of directors.

**David Marks, L’97**, was elected president of the Fairfax (Va.) Bar Association. He recently celebrated the 10th year of his personal injury firm.

**Jeff Selser, L’98**, an attorney at Verrill Dana, was recognized as a leading lawyer by London-based Chambers & Partners in the field of real estate law for timberland and conservation. Jeff lives in South Portland, Maine.

**Maria de Guzman Aguila, L’99**, is a general magistrate for the Fourth Judicial Circuit serving Duval, Clay, and Nassau counties in Jacksonville, Fla., where she presides mostly over family law hearings.
2000s

Jane Allen Imperatore, L’00, is a partner at VLP Law Group in Palo Alto, Calif. Her practice focuses on construction law and affordable housing.

Cory Kuhlenschmidt, L’00, is a partner at Bamberger, Foreman, Oswald & Hahn in Evansville, Ohio, where he lives with his wife and two daughters. He is on the board of Inspiring Autism Spectrum Families, which places a strong emphasis on outreach and awareness.

William Burns, L’01, is an active pediatric cancer advocate, founder of #SAVEJOH, and a member of the Coalition Against Childhood Cancer. He works in the Trenton, N.J., office of Capehart Scatchard, where he is a shareholder.

Laurence Parker, GB and L’03, is a partner in the business and corporate law section at Williams Mullen in Richmond.

In August 2014, Kelleigh Domaingue Murphy, L’04, and her husband, Keith, welcomed a son, Finian Andrew Murphy, who joins siblings Alexandra Tenley and Aidan August.

Ed Wallis III, L’04, was elected a shareholder of Glassman, Wyatt, Tuttle & Cox in Memphis, Tenn., where he focuses on a wide variety of civil litigation.

Ashley Dobbs, L’05, an intellectual property and business transactions attorney at Bean, Kinney & Korman, was appointed to the board of Legal Services of Northern Virginia as the Arlington County representative.

From courtroom to classroom

Ian Drake, L’96

Insurance law had never struck Ian Drake as a particularly fascinating subject. In fact, it had not struck him at all until he took a class with professor Pete Swisher.

“From the outside, insurance law sounded horrifically boring at first glance, but I realized how fundamental it was once I took his course and how it permeates a lot of litigation,” Drake says. “It really was an example of where a teacher was inspirational to me, and the subject matter was really intriguing.”

The seven years that Drake practiced insurance and tort law were helpful in understanding his current role on the policy side of law. He has focused his attention on publishing and teaching about contemporary and historical law. Now an assistant professor at Montclair State University in New Jersey, Drake says he made the transition because he was interested in exploring policy options and being able to provide his own point of view.

“When you’re representing a client, your main concern is vindicating their interests,” says Drake, who obtained a doctorate in American history from the University of Maryland at College Park in 2010. “In policy, you get to make your own opinions known.”

For instance, Drake has recently published articles concerning the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which aims to elect the president by popular vote in lieu of the Electoral College. Drake argues that the initiative violates the U.S. Constitution’s compact clause, which requires that no interstate agreements take place without the consent of U.S. Congress.

“Basically, I think it’s unconstitutional for states to get together and try to make it a majority vote rule in terms of how a president is elected,” he says. “It has to be a constitutional amendment, versus states getting together.”

Drake is also interested in the history of animal protection laws in the United States.

“It’s my theory that as nations grow wealthy, people become more interested in treating animals better,” Drake says, adding that animal protection has grown in China during the past couple decades.

Drake was drawn to the topic after being unable to find a book exploring how views on animals have changed over time that didn’t push an agenda.

“It’s not meant to be an advocacy book,” he says. “It’s meant to be a disinterested, scholarly history.”

—Rich Griset
Jamie L. Karek, L’05, a partner at Commonwealth Law Group in Richmond, was named to the 2014 Super Lawyers Rising Stars list. She was also named one of the top 100 injured workers attorneys in the country by the Workers’ Injury Law & Advocacy Group.

Charron H. Montgomery, L’05, an attorney and CPA in Charlottesville, Va., is a shareholder in McCallum and Kudravetz. She focuses on estate planning and administration, taxation, business and corporate law, and real estate. Montgomery joined the firm in 2006 and earned her CPA license in 2010.

Joe Rezabek, L’05, and Kate Materna Rezabek, ’02, welcomed a son, William Traynor, in March 2014. He and his big brother, Ryan, 2, live in Richmond with their parents. Rezabek is senior counsel at McGuireWoods.

Alex Case, L’06, welcomed a daughter, Faith RuthAnne Case, in July. Alex is assistant general counsel and e-discovery counsel for the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission in Washington, D.C.

Sarah Cone, L’06, is director of annual giving for the Alpha Delta Pi Foundation in Atlanta. Previously, she was the director of external relations for Richmond Law.

John T. Farnum, L and GB’06, was recognized as a Rising Star for bankruptcy & creditor/debtor rights in both Virginia and the District of Columbia by Super Lawyers Magazine. He is a business attorney focusing on bankruptcy and commercial litigation at Wiley Rein LLP.

Laura Marston, L’06, has joined the firm of Bean, Kinney & Korman as an associate attorney. She focuses on technology law, IP licensing, IT procurement, and contract negotiation.

Jack Robb, L’06, received the Richmond Bar Association’s John C. Kenny Pro Bono Award in January. Robb is a partner at LeClairRyan, where he focuses on commercial litigation and advocates for pro bono work.

Linda Shin, L’06, is a member of Mediation.com, an alternative dispute resolution community. She is the founder of Cedar Law Center in Virginia Beach, Va.

Kimberly Brown-Gibbs, L’07, is senior legal counsel at WellPoint (Anthem) in the Memphis, Tenn., area. She was also included in Lawyers of Color’s second annual Hot List issue. The list recognizes early- to mid-career minority attorneys working as in-house counsel, government attorneys, and law firm associates and partners who are excelling in the legal profession.

S. Mohsin Reza, L’07, is named in Virginia Business magazine’s list of the 2013 “Legal Elite” in the Young Lawyer category. He is an associate at Troutman Sanders in Tysons Corner, Va., where he serves on the firm’s electronic discovery and data management team.

Mark Graybeal, L’08, was elected to the board of governors for the Real Property Section of the Virginia State Bar.

Trevor Reid, L’08, married Andrea Niculescu on May 12, 2013, in Midlothian, Va. He is an attorney at Parker, Pollard, Walton & Peaden.

Melissa Isbell York, L’08, joined the firm of Harman Claytor Corrigan & Wellman in Glen Allen, Va. She continues to focus on civil litigation defense.

Chivonne Thomas Jones, L’09, is an assistant attorney general in the Office of Collective Bargaining for the government of the Virgin Islands.

Ryan E. Wind, L’09, joined the personal injury law firm of Allen Allen Allen & Allen as a trial attorney in the Mechanicsville, Va., office.

2010s

Faith Alejandro, L’10, and her husband, Chris Nixon, welcomed a daughter, Elena Alejandro Nixon, in March 2014. Alejandro was named to the Lawyers of Color’s Second Annual Hot List, which recognizes early- to mid-career attorneys excelling in the legal profession.

Lindsay Builder, L’10, is an associate at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough in Greenville, S.C. He practices in the areas of professional liability defense, construction litigation, commercial litigation, and products liability.
Alissa Hurley, L’10, joined the HCC Public Risk Claim Service as a claims attorney.

Lindsay Jefferies, L’10, is named in Virginia Business magazine’s list of the 2013 “Legal Elite” in the Young Lawyer category. She is an attorney at Havrilak Law Firm in Fairfax, Va.

Scott St. Amand, L’10, is the inaugural chair of the young professionals board of Communities in Schools of Jacksonville, Fla. He is an associate at Rogers Towers.

Michael Giordano, L’11, is an associate in the government contracts practice of Baker & Hostetler LLP in the firm’s Washington, D.C., office. He focuses on all aspects of government contract law at the federal, state, and local levels.

Kathryn B. Pfeiffer, L’11, is an associate in the corporate section of the Virginia Beach, Va., office of Williams Mullen.

In October, Julia Bizer, ’09 and L’12, got together with former Spider soccer teammates Jessstine Wolfe, ’09, Ashleigh Blumer Kohlitz, ’09, Melissa Pacheco, ’12, Susan Boyer Ferralli, ’09, and Katy Hudson Webb, ’09. “Part of the reason was to visit Ashleigh, who has been fighting brain cancer since June, and to celebrate her recent scan revealing that she is now tumor-free,” Bizer writes.

Amy Weiss, L’12, is working at the Virginia Department of Health Professions as an adjudication specialist.

———Kim Catley

ALUMNI PROFILE

Family matters

Vidal Torres, L and GB’03

Vidal Torres came to the U.S. from the Dominican Republic as a 5-year-old with no English skills but an incredibly determined spirit. He told Style Weekly — who recently named him to Richmond’s Top 40 Under 40 list — that he showed up for school on the first day wearing a three-piece suit with his passport in hand.

From there, he earned full scholarships to the Hotchkiss School and Hamilton College, and completed the joint J.D.-MBA program at the University of Richmond in just three years. He parlayed an internship at General Electric into a full-time position and quickly rose through the ranks of corporate governance and mergers and acquisitions before becoming an associate general counsel at Genworth Financial in Richmond.

He’s quick to point out, however, that the credit doesn’t rest squarely on him. His extended family was a tight-knit microsociety, helping each other navigate language barriers, get to the store, learn sports — and for Torres, to study.

“I remember my aunt would yell at her kids to leave me alone because I was studying,” Torres says. “That left an impression on me. While I’m studying, I’m doing it for myself and I’m doing it for my cousins, my aunts and uncles, my parents and grandparents, who really put that effort into giving me the opportunity.”

That communal support influences his work today. At Genworth, he served five years on the board of the credit union, whose goal was to help customers who weren’t in a position to get services from other banks.

“When people are unaware of a system, there’s a tendency to expect things to be just and fair,” he says. “I try to work with folks to explain the implications of a decision in a way that they understand why that is fair. Otherwise, they’re at a real disadvantage, and that breeds this sense of unfairness.”

Torres also gives back to children growing up in circumstances similar to his own. He’s a football coach and formerly served on the advisory board of the Avanzando Latino Education Initiative, a Steward School program for academically gifted, low-income Latino students.

He wants to be a role model for other children trying to get ahead. But he also hopes they’ll learn from his experiences and take them a step further — something Torres tries to do every day.

“There’s no point when I’ll sit down and count my chips,” Torres says, “because then I’d no longer feel like I have to be the best at what I do. My whole life I’ve been trying to make the most of the opportunities that come my way, and I want to continue to do that.”

———Kim Catley
Clint A. Nichols, L’13, has joined Christian & Barton as an associate in the labor and employment litigation departments. He had previously served as a clerk to the Hon. Henry E. Hudson of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Kathleen Dwyer, L’14, received the 2014 Oliver White Hill Law Student Pro Bono Award from the state bar’s Committee on Access to Legal Service. The award recognizes her commitment as a student to public service law.

Antrell Tyson, L’14, is serving as the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation incorporated science and technology fellow for 2014–16. He began this fellowship after working with the federal public defender’s office in Richmond on a Bridge to Practice Fellowship.

Called to public service
Jessica Stuart, L’13

Growing up in Arizona, Jessica Stuart, L’13, had plenty of first-hand experience with the law. “My father was in and out of prison and jail,” says Stuart. Now an attorney with the Georgia Legal Services Program, much of her work aims to help underserved segments of the population.

“I’ve been in a position with my family in the legal realm where I felt like it was happening to me, and I didn’t have my voice and my say,” says Stuart. “It’s driven me to want to give back and be a voice for children who might not be able to be their own advocate.”

Part of what drew Stuart to Richmond Law was the many programs addressing juvenile issues. While in law school, she volunteered with a number of nonprofits that help children and the homeless, including CASA and the Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service. At Carrico, she facilitated the development of a Restoration of Rights Clinic. Because of her work within the public interest sector, Stuart received the 2013 Public Interest Law Association Pro Bono Award and applied for a Bridge to Practice Fellowship to help fund her professional experience with pro bono work while awaiting bar results.

Stuart’s journey to the Georgia Legal Services Program started with a leap of faith. Her husband’s medical residency took them to a new, unfamiliar place and a completely new legal community. She used her Bridge to Practice Fellowship to work with the Georgia Legal Services Program, a nonprofit firm which serves 154 counties outside of Atlanta and aims to make sure that everyone has equal access to justice.

Near the end of her fellowship, Stuart also split her time with DeKalb Juvenile Public Defender’s Office before receiving an offer to work for GLSP full time.

Much of what Stuart sees are cases relating to domestic violence, public housing, and student discipline. Stuart says that many school systems in Georgia suspend African-American students at a wildly disproportionate rate and that the education many receive at alternative schools is subpar at best.

“There’s still a lot of segregation, there’s still a lot of racism, students being unfairly disciplined and kicked out of school without adequate due process,” Stuart says. “Coming to Georgia and working in the rural areas has been a wake-up call that there are still a lot of racism and poverty issues that are deeply rooted in communities.”

—Rich Griset
At Richmond Law, education starts in the classroom, but it doesn’t come close to ending there.

Since the summer after her first year in law school, Jasmine McKinney, L’15, has been building on her interest in civil rights law through practical experiences that deepen her education. Working with the ACLU after her first year, she conducted research, particularly on students’ rights for its Know Your Rights project and other ACLU initiatives.

She built on that experience the following year when she volunteered with an advocacy organization, Housing Opportunities Made Equal, through the Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service. The experience led to a summer internship at HOME, where she got more experience with client contact, wrote reasonable accommodation requests, and helped draft an administrative complaint with HUD to ensure that a group of young immigrants were not being discriminated against on the basis of their national origin.

Summer experiences have been an important component of her education as they have helped sharpen her skills and furthered her professional development, she said. “I can’t stress enough how important it is for students to have these opportunities.”

A summer stipend supported her during her internships with the ACLU and HOME, one of the many examples of how alumni giving provides critical support for the exceptional opportunities available to Richmond Law students to pursue their passions. Your gift is an investment in them.

By giving to the University of Richmond School of Law’s Annual Fund, you ensure that students like McKinney can pursue a comprehensive legal education. These opportunities to experience the legal profession firsthand would not be possible without the generosity of alumni and friends. Your gift is an investment in our students and the law school’s future.

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