

BRIEF CASE

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

BANNER TIMES AT THE BLAKLEY

Peter Hoffman
has the
Blakely
Advocacy
Institute
on the
Move

FALL 2006
VOLUME 26
NUMBER 1



University of Houston Law Center

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Q&A WITH DEAN NIMMER

Q. You served as dean 12 years ago, and now you're back at the helm. Glad you made the move?

A. *Yes I am. This is a stronger school than it was 12 years ago, and I think we're poised to achieve great things. When Provost Foss asked me if I wanted the job, I never hesitated. I told him I would be honored to serve.*

Q. Every dean puts an individual stamp on an institution. What will yours be?

A. *It's easy for me to point to the excellence of our school, because I see evidence of it every day. Now it's a matter of letting other people see it for themselves—and I want us to do everything we can to showcase our quality. Toward that end, we've started communicating with our audiences in new and different ways.*

Q. Like your "Dean's Note" emails, for example?

A. *Those simple notes have generated a tremendous amount of extremely positive feedback. I've heard from people who have not had contact with the UH Law Center in years, and they tell me how much they appreciate hearing a dean's perspective on accomplishments and initiatives. These notes have opened two-way communication, and that's a key goal for my deanship.*

Q. What has been your biggest challenge to date?

A. *I always knew budgets were tight—but sitting in this chair reinforces how tight they really are. Running a law school is an expensive operation, and deciding when and where to allocate resources is not always an easy task. Our faculty have been remarkably supportive of the "big picture" of what we want to accomplish, and I think everyone recognizes the importance of reinforcing the strengths of our school.*

Q. What's your short list of those strengths?

A. *It's a long list, actually. My background is in intellectual property, so I'll start there. We hold a national reputation for excellence in IP law, and we hold the same status in health law. We've always been strong in consumer law, and we've quietly developed one of the best advocacy programs in the country. Lots of law schools would give their eyeteeth for one or two of these types of programs, so it's really a testimony to the strength of our faculty that we have so many standouts.*

Q. Are you fluent in Portuguese?

A. *(laughs) Unfortunately, no. You're alluding to my Fulbright [Distinguished Chair in International Commercial Law] that will see me teach a 10-week course in Portugal starting in January. It's a special honor that was bestowed before I became dean, and I'm fortunate to be able to do it. Associate Dean Richard Alderman will sit in for me while I'm gone, and I will be in daily touch with the Law Center. I'm also planning several back-and forth trips during my Fulbright.*

Q. You took over as dean shortly after Nancy Rapoport resigned. Any comment about that sequence?

A. *I respect how much my friend Nancy did for this school, and she'll be getting a new start next summer with a chaired professorship at Boyd School of Law at UNLV. I know she's looking forward to the new challenge, and I think that's where we need to be, too—looking forward, not back.*

Q. Any final thoughts?

A. *Just that my door, telephone, and email are always open.*



BANNER TIMES FOR THE BLAKELY

*Professor Peter Hoffman set out with a simple goal:
building the nation's top advocacy program at the Law Center*

It wasn't too long ago that most law schools had a single objective: to train their students to think like lawyers. It was a simple mission with four easy steps: pound students with theory, weigh them down with case law, award them a law degree, and push them into the Real World.

Peter Hoffman excelled in just such a curriculum during the 1970s, and he vividly recalls being ill-prepared for his first day as a new associate at a large Chicago law firm. A partner thumped a thick stack of interrogatories on Hoffman's desk and gruffly asked him to begin writing objections. After his *cum laude* performance at a major law school, Hoffman believed he had the chops to handle any task his new employer could throw at him.

Wrong. The new associate stared blankly at the partner, squirming because he didn't have a clue about where to begin. . . .

Fast forward about 30 years. After a successful career as a litigator, and a 27-year year stint building outstanding trial advocacy and clinical programs at the University of Nebraska, Peter Hoffman arrived at the UH Law Center in 2002 determined to invigorate the school's practice-skills curriculum. And while he may have lacked a complete road map to success, he recalls owning a very clear picture of his goal. "I set out to build a first-class lawyering skills program that would teach our students to be competent and effective lawyers, and to show them how to handle a case from the first client meeting to arguing an appeal," Hoffman says. He would never admit it, but Hoffman may harbor an ulterior motive. Deep down, he's determined to protect his Law Center students from the waves of panic that engulfed him in his Chicago cubicle in 1971.

BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS

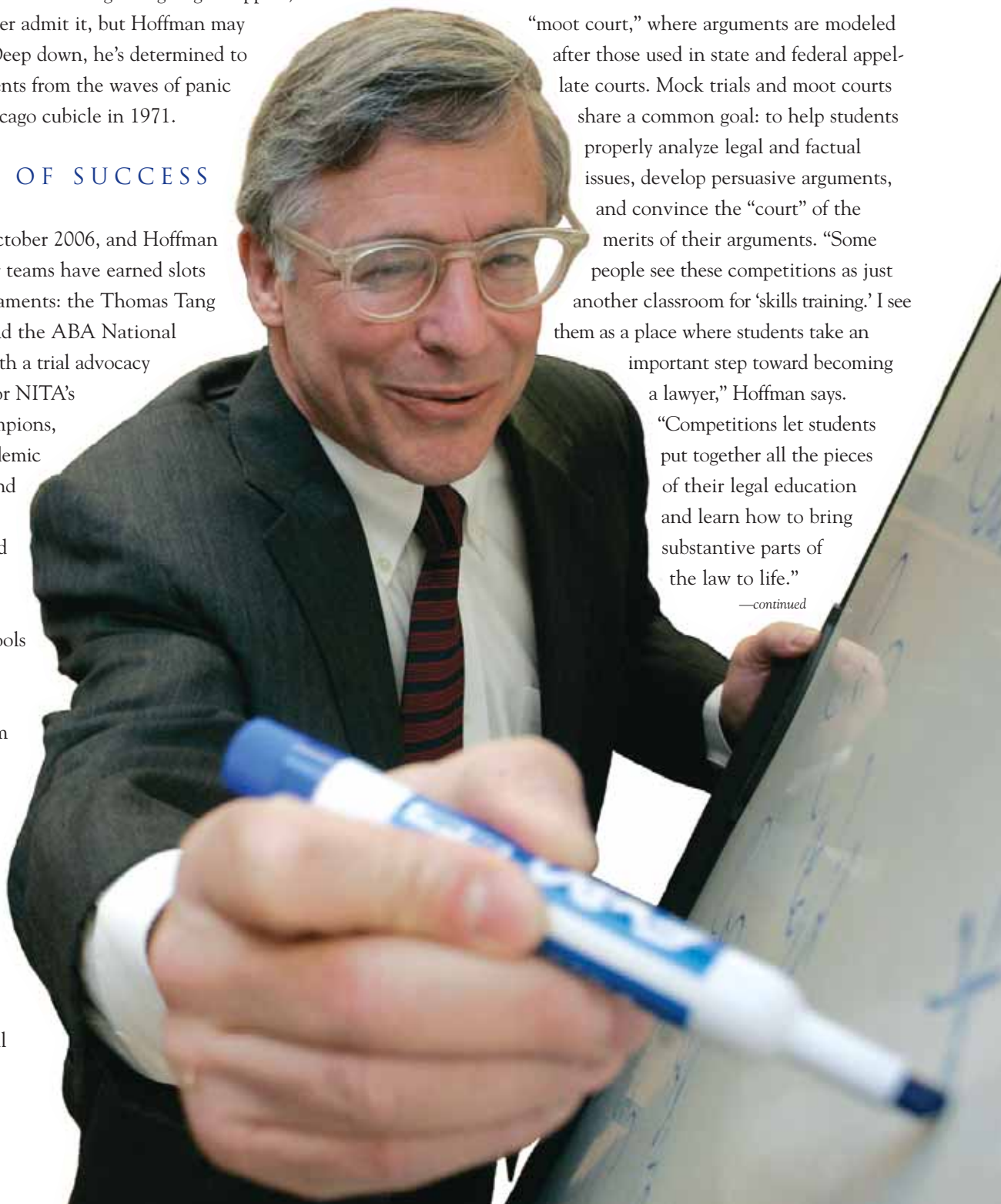
Fast forward again. It's October 2006, and Hoffman has learned that Law Center teams have earned slots in two major national tournaments: the Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition and the ABA National Arbitration Competition. With a trial advocacy invitation already in hand for NITA's annual Tournament of Champions, it's obvious that the new academic year is off to a good start—and new banners might soon be joining the 16 already draped outside the offices of the Blakely Advocacy Institute.

In a world where law schools and their specialties earn "national recognition" by an obscure system that few claim to understand, leadership in trial advocacy can be determined with a truly objective criterion: "wins" in mock trial and moot court competitions. In the years before Hoffman's arrival, Law Center teams fared well in regional tournaments, winning several titles from '96 through '02.

But when Hoffman took the reins at the Blakely Advocacy Institute, both the quantity and quality of the school's "wins" exploded. In the past two years, Law Center teams have won 16 regional, national and international titles in mock trial and moot court tournaments.

Virtually every law school blends mock trial and moot court work into its curriculum, and many require students to argue hypothetical cases before receiving their degrees. For the record, "mock trial" tournaments challenge students to conduct a trial before "mock" civil or criminal courts. Its cousin is "moot court," where arguments are modeled after those used in state and federal appellate courts. Mock trials and moot courts share a common goal: to help students properly analyze legal and factual issues, develop persuasive arguments, and convince the "court" of the merits of their arguments. "Some people see these competitions as just another classroom for 'skills training.' I see them as a place where students take an important step toward becoming a lawyer," Hoffman says. "Competitions let students put together all the pieces of their legal education and learn how to bring substantive parts of the law to life."

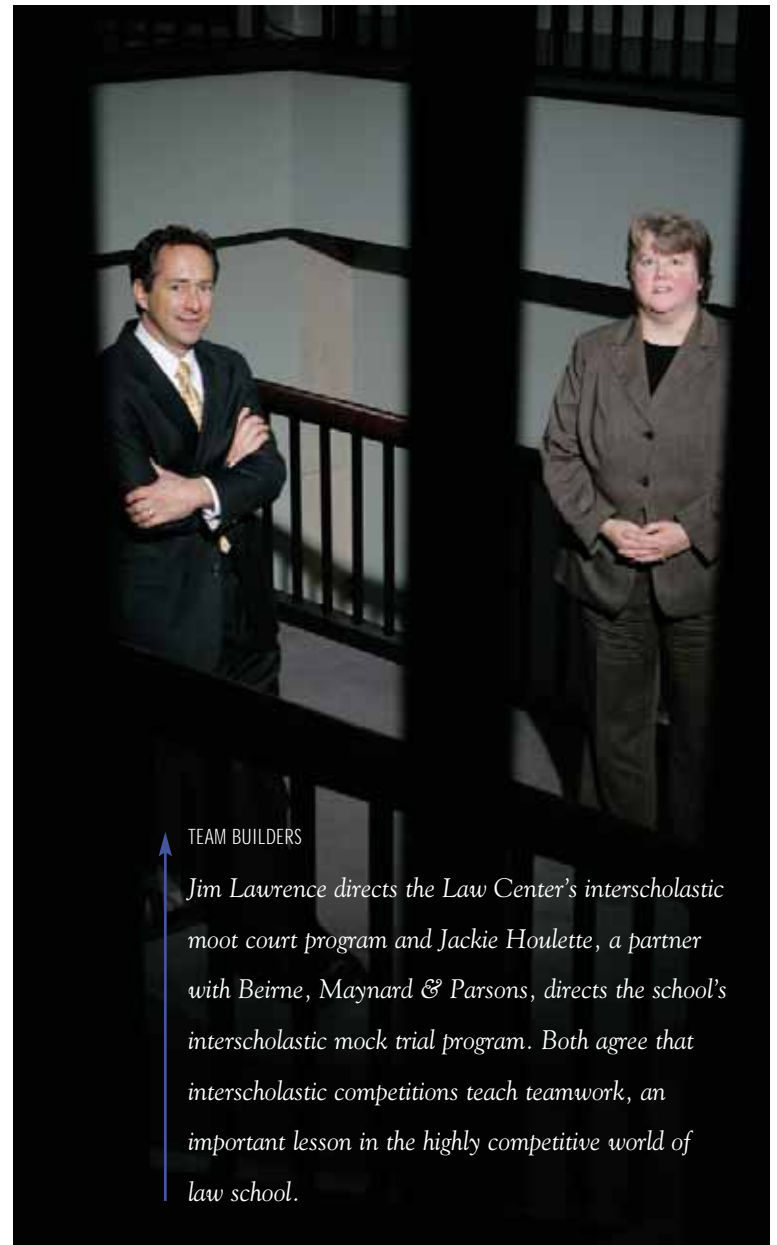
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Gus Schill, who has served the Law Center as an adjunct for nearly three decades, offers a blunt assessment of the value of mock trial and moot court teams fielded by the Blakely Advocacy Institute. “The kids who win these competitions are capable of practicing law the old-fashioned way. They are true advocates who can do it all—and I’ll put our students against those of any law school in the United States,” Schill says.

Banners *beaucoup* back up Schill’s boasts. The barrage of victories began in 2004, when a Law Center team of Michelle Benavides, Eddie Berbarie and Julie Gray took top honors in the most prestigious mock trial tournament: the National Trial Competition. Berbarie, who graduated in 2004 and now works as an associate with Brady & Cole in Dallas, looks back on that team and credits his mock trial efforts with defining his law school experience. “It was my best outlet, my best learning opportunity,” he says. “I had an idea that I wanted to be a litigator, but I didn’t know what that meant. And until my trial adv courses, I wasn’t sure I even wanted to be a lawyer.” Berbarie says the skills he learned at the Blakely Advocacy Institute continue to give him an advantage over other lawyers. “When I first started here, my boss told me how impressed he was with my knowledge of evidence. And that’s directly related to my hours and hours of mock trial courtroom experience,” he says.

Jackie Houlette, a partner with Houston-based Beirne, Maynard & Parsons and the director of the Law Center’s interscholastic mock trial program, includes the 2004 national championship team among more than a dozen teams she has



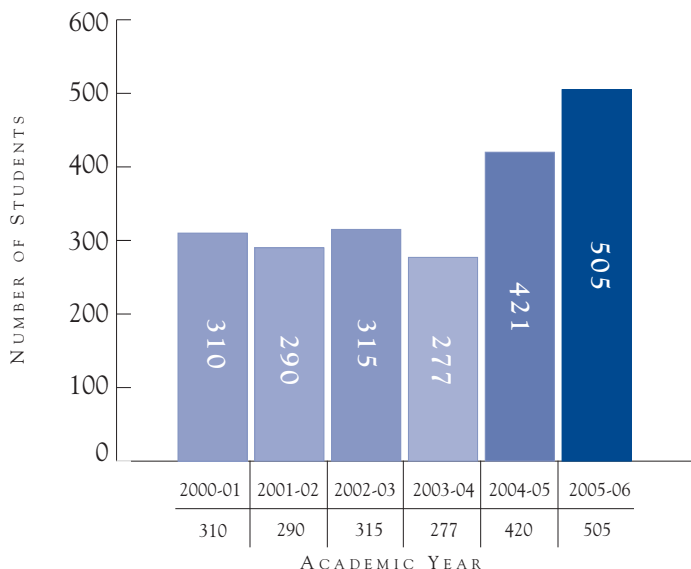
TEAM BUILDERS

Jim Lawrence directs the Law Center’s interscholastic moot court program and Jackie Houlette, a partner with Beirne, Maynard & Parsons, directs the school’s interscholastic mock trial program. Both agree that interscholastic competitions teach teamwork, an important lesson in the highly competitive world of law school.

coached at the school since 1994. She says the work fuels her innate competitiveness, and adds that coaching mock trial teams gives her something else: the satisfaction that comes from teaching skills that will immediately transfer to the real world of law. “The skills of communicating with a jury, a judge, and a witness are universal. Those are skills that help our students prepare for the rigors of practice, whether it be a trial, a deposition, mediation or even a client presentation about an IPO,” she says. She believes Blakely students learn something else, too. “Mock trial teaches teamwork, and that’s a tall order in the individually competitive world of law school,” she says. “For some students, that’s the most important lesson they learn.”

BLAKELY ADVOCACY INSTITUTE 2000-2006

SUMMARY ENROLLMENT CHART



BUILDING A CURRICULUM THAT WORKS

The name says it all: the Blakely Advocacy Institute, not the Blakely *Trial* Institute. Advocacy skills for a broad range of civil and criminal work—and not just trial lawyering—have long been a Blakely hallmark, and Hoffman inherited a strong curriculum developed by the late Byron McCoy. Rather than starting from scratch, Hoffman added what he calls “depth and width,” building stronger clinical programs and adding or expanding classes covering the nuts and bolts of pre-trial litigation, including discovery, motions and depositions. Campus observers note that Hoffman’s low-key personality and persuasive abilities effectively pushed “lawyering skills” higher on the school’s action agenda, and they credit him with helping to win faculty endorsement of key alterations to the curriculum.

As Hoffman expanded the number of courses offered through the Blakely, he was careful to maintain Blakely’s low student-teacher ratios that help students to quickly grasp new material. Adjunct professors drawn from Houston’s large and diverse bar—including practicing trial attorneys and judges—added prestige, energy and new perspectives to the program. Today, Hoffman says a key goal is within reach: an integrated curriculum where each course builds off others offered at the Blakely. The tinkering still continues, with the Law Center moving aggressively into areas such as mediation advocacy training. “But we’re not training mediators, we’re training students to represent clients in a mediation, something they are very likely to be doing after graduation,” Hoffman is quick to add.

There’s a good reason why Hoffman bristles when the word “training” is mentioned. In the highbrow world of legal education, some law professors nationwide still view trial advocacy programs as the toolbox of a trade school, not the mark of distinction for a leading law school. That argument does not carry much weight among practicing attorneys, including Bill Maynard, principal at Beirne, Maynard & Parsons and a key supporter of the Blakely program constructed by Hoffman.

“Understand, I’m biased, I’m a trial lawyer,” Maynard says. “But I tried 40 cases in my first five years out of law school, and I learned under fire. The new graduates of law schools will not have that kind of opportunity, and they need to learn to advocate on behalf of their clients.

“The most successful members of our bar association are lawyers who are trained in the skills of advocacy. Either oral or



BOTH THE CHAIR IN EVIDENCE held by Peter Hoffman and the Blakely Advocacy Institute he directs at the Law Center are named in honor of Newell Blakely, who served the school through six decades.

Blakely was known for demanding excellence—so it’s easy to imagine that he would be pleased by Hoffman’s efforts. Blakely taught at

the Law Center from 1949 until 1990, and served as dean from 1957 until 1964. He is credited with launching the Houston Law Review and building the foundation that led to the accreditation of the University of Houston School of Law in the Association of American Law Schools.

Professor John Mixon ’56, a student and a colleague of Blakely for more than 30 years, recounted that “Newell was a complex person. He had strong opinions and had expectations of a high level of performance from himself in preparation for class, and he expected his students to be just as prepared as he was.”

Blakely’s teaching style earned him a succession of nicknames, according to writer Leah Gross ’87. In the 1960s, Blakely was simply known as “The Blake,” and his students encouraged their classmates to “Take the Blake” and enroll in the professor’s acclaimed evidence class. In the 1970s, Blakely became “Professor Kingsfield”—the infamous John Houseman character from the movie *The Paper Chase*. In 1987, Blakely stepped back from official teaching duties, but continued to teach part-time as Emeritus Professor of Law until retiring in 1990.

“He worked hard,” Mixon recalls. “He worked himself hard and worked his students hard. People had a sense of accomplishment when they passed his class. But Newell was charming. He never put students down and he never fussed at them. He was a person of great gentility.” Professor Sidney Buchanan adds that Blakely wanted each student to perform at the highest level in his classroom. “He had strong beliefs both in teaching students how to analyze legal issues and in helping students develop good habits in life: discipline, timeliness, and good study habits. All of those things are valuable for students to practice in the real world.”

—continued

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— GUS SCHILL

written, these are skills that are very important to the practice of law,” he adds. Some law schools have long been recognized for their ability to train lawyers for the courtroom, and Maynard cites Baylor as one of the leading examples in the country. “My personal belief is that we’re better,” he says.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Maynard says Hoffman offers a unique blend of competence, experience and humility, and cites how students and others are immediately drawn to his “likeability.” “He’s very motivating, and we are blessed to have him,” Maynard says. Ann Ryan Robertson, a Houston practitioner of international law, recalls walking into Hoffman’s office and lobbying for the school to send a team to “the Vis,” one of the largest moot competitions in the world. “He instantly agreed—and he immediately asked me to serve as a coach!” she recalls. “Peter endorses new ideas and new opportunities, and he gives you all the support you need to succeed.”

Robertson traveled to Paris earlier this year and watched a UH Law Center team earn top honors in a major international media-ation competition sponsored by the International Chamber of Commerce. “We’re now going toe-to-toe with top schools, and we’re beating them. I think we’re clearly established as a national and international player,” she says. For his part, Hoffman takes all the mock and moot wins in stride, and says he’s gratified by the campus “buzz” it creates. “When you get students talking and excited about advocacy, it opens their eyes to the wide range of career options available to them,” he says.

Jim Lawrence, director of the Law Center’s interscholastic moot court program, says student attitudes about advocacy have changed dramatically during the dozen years he has worked with the program. Students now recognize how earning a spot on mock trial or moot court teams is a mark of honor and accomplishment, and they eagerly compete for the chance to represent the Law Center. “Then it’s up to them,” Lawrence says. “We coach them and build their confidence and their knowledge of the material. And when they ‘get it,’ a light bulb goes off. In the sports world, it’s called ‘getting into a zone’—and it’s fun to watch it happen.”

That’s where you can find Hoffman, the Blakely Advocacy Institute, and scores of skilled advocates under construction: “in the zone,” amid the rustle of championship banners.



MOOT COURT/MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

2004 - 2006

Hoffman & Co. have hoisted 16 "No.1" banners since 2004

COLOR KEY: INTERNATIONAL NATIONAL REGIONAL

YEAR	COMPETITION	AWARD	STUDENTS	COACHES	TEAM SPONSOR
2004	National Trial Competition	National Champions	Eddie Berbarie, Michelle Benavides, Julie Gray	Jackie Houlette	Beirne, Maynard, & Parsons
2004	ABA Negotiation Competition	Regional Champions	Julie Guzzo, Will Sutton	Je'anna Abbott Kevin Hedges	
2004-05	Pace Environmental Law Moot Court Competition	Best Speaker	Maritza Antu	Patricia Champan Todd Foss	
2004-05	ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition	Regional Champions	Kristina Frankel Daphne Newaz Ivy Phillips	Robert Dubose Sean Cox	
2004-05	ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition	Best Speaker National Competition	Kristina Frankel	Robert Dubose Sean Cox	
2004-05	Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot	Best Claimant Memorandum	Brett Thorstad	Ann Ryan Robertson	
2004-05	ABA Negotiation Competition	Regional Champions	Jenni Molina Will Sutton	Je'anna Abbott Kevin Hedges	
2005-06	Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition	Best Brief: Regional	Erica Thonsgard Heather Harriss	John Farrell Danny Davis	
2005-06	ICC International Commercial Mediation Competition	International Champions	Katharine Sands Jim Lawrence	Jeff Abrams Kevin Hedges	
2005-06	John R. Brown Admiralty Moot Court Competition	National Champions	Jim Nye Charlie Lestage Howard Marshall	Gus Schill, Tobi Tabor, Bree Perrin, Chad Newton, Becca Jackson, Matt Kita, Carlyn Burton	Marine Insurance Seminar-Houston
2005-06	John R. Brown Admiralty Moot Court Competition	Best Brief	Jim Nye Charlie Lestage Howard Marshall	Gus Schill, Tobi Tabor, Bree Perrin, Chad Newton, Becca Jackson, Matt Kita, Carlyn Burton	Marine Insurance Seminar-Houston
2005-06	Thomas Tang Moot Court Competition	Best Speaker Nationals	Daphne Newaz	Casie Gotro	
2005-06	Hispanic Bar National Assoc. Moot Court Competition	Best Speaker Nationals	Eric Muñoz	Cassandra Jeu	
2005-06	Scribes National Writing Award	Best Brief	Erica Thonsgard Heather Harriss	John Farrell Danny Davis	
2005-06	National Trial Competition	Regional Champions	R.C. Pate Lisa Collins Rick Dodson	Ed Sullivan Dennis Clifford	Beirne, Maynard, & Parsons
2006-07	ABA Arbitration Competition	Regional Champions	Brandi Branch Anna Lam Adam Muldrow Kevin Wright	Michelle Benavides	

FIGHTING THE MACHINERY OF DEATH

*David R. Dow and the
Texas Innocence Network
work to right judicial wrongs*

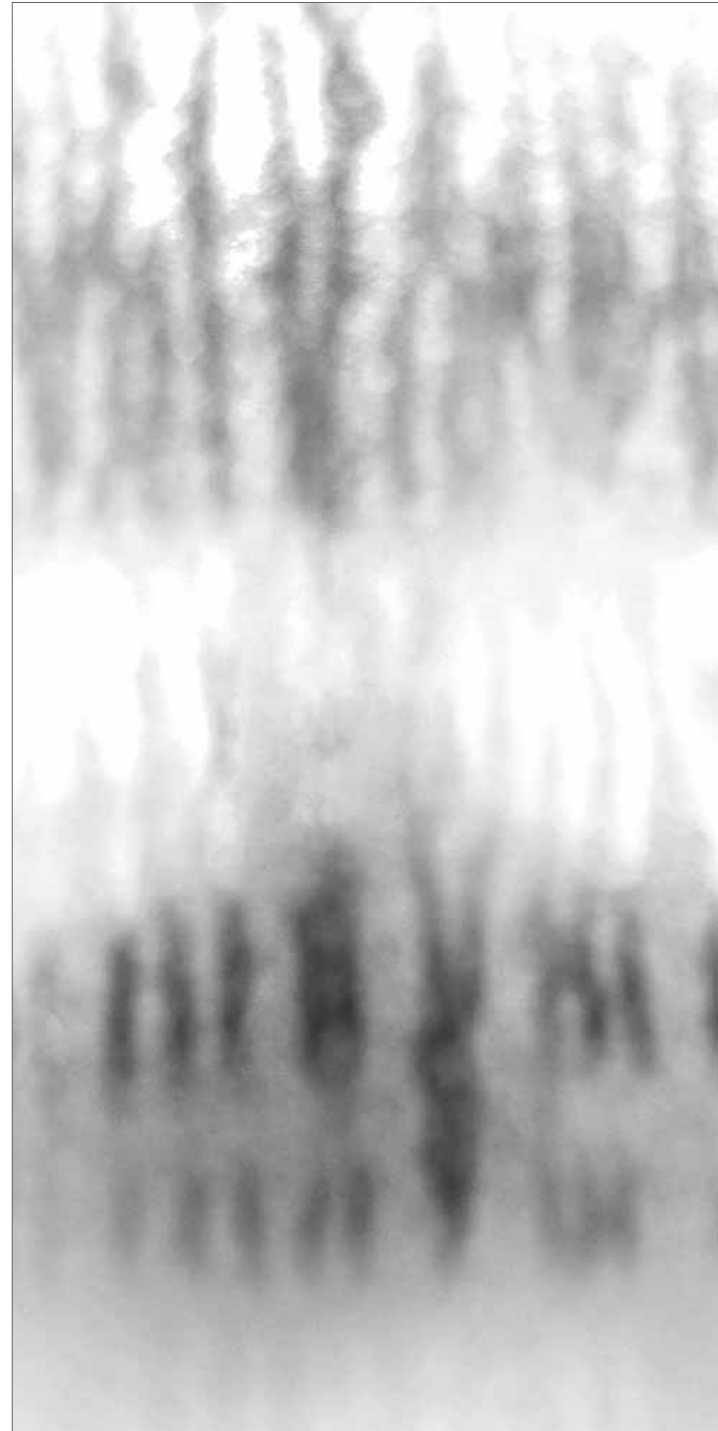
In our electronic age of emails and text messages, some letters are still scrawled by hand and stuffed into No. 10 envelopes that need three pieces of Scotch tape to keep them closed. Letters like this arrive every day in David Dow's in-box, sometimes only by the handful, and sometimes in bundles of 40 or more held together with fat rubber bands.

The handwriting is neat, as though the authors have plenty of time on their hands. Turn the envelopes over, and most of them bear a stamped notice:

PRIVILEGED OFFENDER MAIL NOT INSPECTED
BY TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
INSTITUTIONAL DIVISION.

Long before he opens them, Dow knows exactly what he will find: earnest appeals for help from Texas inmates claiming to be innocent of crimes that put them behind bars.

The Law Center community knows David R. Dow as the University Distinguished Professor who teaches constitutional law and contracts and publishes bookshelves of acclaimed research. But in the cinder-block maze of the Texas prison system, Dow's name is scrawled on slips of paper and passed among inmates looking for someone—anyone—who can help them fight a legal system that tried them, convicted them, and forgot about them.





With a degree from Rice University, two more from Yale, and prolific research to his credit, Dow has certainly earned the respect of his academic peers. But in the parlance of the prison yard, he owns something even more valuable: solid “street cred” that comes only when you can make things happen for some of the 180,000 men and women incarcerated in Texas prisons.

As the director of the Texas Innocence Network, Dow has helped win freedom for wrongfully imprisoned inmates, won new trials for murderers sitting on Death Row, and churned out scores of clemency petitions for prisoners locked away for everything from sexual assaults to white-collar crimes. Six years after he launched it, his Texas Innocence Network has also become something else: a learning laboratory for scores of eager and committed Law Center students who volunteer thousands of hours to right judicial wrongs.

THE EDUCATION OF A DEATH-PENALTY ABOLITIONIST

Some law professors find their calling from the start, and others fall into it almost by accident. Number Dow in the second group. He arrived at the Law Center in 1988 as a specialist in *habeas* jurisprudence, a complex area of the law in which many cases involve death penalty issues. Dow says he was a death-penalty moderate at the time, someone who believed capital punishment was probably warranted in some cases.

His philosophy began changing after he accompanied a lawyer friend to Huntsville State Prison, where they met with Death Row inmates. On the trip home, Dow’s friend noted how one of the men they had met was scheduled to be executed in two weeks—and how that morning, the assigned lawyer had quit the case by writing a letter. Dow’s friend asked a pointed question: did Dow want to work on the case? “The fact that I had mixed feelings about the death penalty was unimportant. At that moment, the key fact was that someone was about to be executed, and his lawyer had abandoned him,” Dow says. He worked on that case, and then another, and another. “I got involved in death penalty work because I wandered into Death Row on the day someone’s lawyer quit. I enjoyed the work, and I thought it was important work, because there were few people willing to do it,” he says.

Slowly, Dow’s work with Death Row inmates began to erode his position on capital punishment. He says he went through a “lawyer phase,” during which he realized rules are broken in virtually every death penalty case. “Some people might say the cheating is trivial, and that the result would have been the same. But if you’re going to execute someone, there shouldn’t be any

broken rules. It should be a procedurally pristine process,” he says. In case after case, he saw how evidence had been withheld or witnesses had been coached. Dow also saw something else: how the system clearly privileges people with white skin and people of means. “The premise in the legal system is that everyone is treated equally, regardless of color or wealth. That doesn’t change the fact that there is nothing more grave that society can do than to execute someone. If there’s one area where those factors should not be allowed to make a difference, it’s the death penalty regime,” he says.

Today, Dow is an abolitionist dead-set against the death penalty because it counters what he sees as the most widely shared value in human civilization: the command that thou shalt not kill. “I don’t think there’s any exception justifying the state executing convicted murderers to make society safe. [Oklahoma City bomber] Timothy McVeigh was never going to get out of prison, and there was no need to execute him,” he says. But what about victims’ rights groups that call for “eye for an eye” retribution? “That’s the most widely misunderstood argument in this debate,” Dow says. “The historical truth is that it’s a rule of proportionality. I read the same Bible as death penalty supporters, and what I see is a limitation on punishment, rather than a license to execute.”

As case after case ended with lethal injection, Dow found himself being drained emotionally, physically, and spiritually. When a client with whom he had developed a strong bond was executed in 1995, Dow impulsively decided to quit death penalty work. “You learn things about these clients that you would ordinarily expect mothers and fathers to know—but most of these people did not come from functioning families. It causes you to see somebody who has done a terrible, terrible thing as a human being in a way that no one in the criminal justice system has ever seen,” Dow says.

INNOCENCE TAKES HOLD AT THE LAW CENTER

Dow’s self-imposed moratorium lasted almost two years—until 1997, when he “convinced” himself he could work on these cases in moderation. He seems almost apologetic when he notes in hindsight how hard it was to say “no” to inmates looking for help. “And once you get a reputation as someone who can’t say no, you get more and more letters,” he says. At the same time Dow was rebuilding his portfolio of death penalty cases, a new science—DNA testing—was opening opportunities for prison inmates and lawyers who represent them. In case after case, the powerful

forensic tool helped prove innocent victims had been imprisoned for crimes they did not commit.

Dow admits he was initially skeptical of the rise of the innocence movement fueled by DNA science, and he cites how a “cultural division” continues to separate many innocence advocates from the anti-death-penalty community. “Who cares if the prosecution lied and withheld evidence?” he asks. “Who cares if it was a racist jury?” By focusing on the issue of innocence, Dow worried that key parts of a case—the “procedural processes” that were far from pristine—could be overlooked.



Throughout the country, groups dedicated to proving inmate innocence began popping up—but not in Texas. In 2000, as part of an ABA-sponsored conference, Dow joined a group of lawyers and other advocates at a Galleria-area hotel to discuss forming an innocence group to benefit Texas inmates. Dow recalls everyone quickly endorsed the concept, enthusiastically exchanged phone numbers and addresses—and left the conference waiting for someone else to make the first move.

Almost inadvertently Dow became that person. Upon returning to the Law Center, Dow sent students a blanket email alerting them to a potential new program that would allow them to work directly with innocence cases. With no chance for class credit, and certainly no chance to be paid for their work or even for their associated expenses, Dow said he expected only a handful of students to respond. Instead, he was deluged by more than 60 offers of help—and the persistent students kept badgering Dow for news about the “network.” At the time, Dow was working on four active death penalty cases, two of which appeared to have

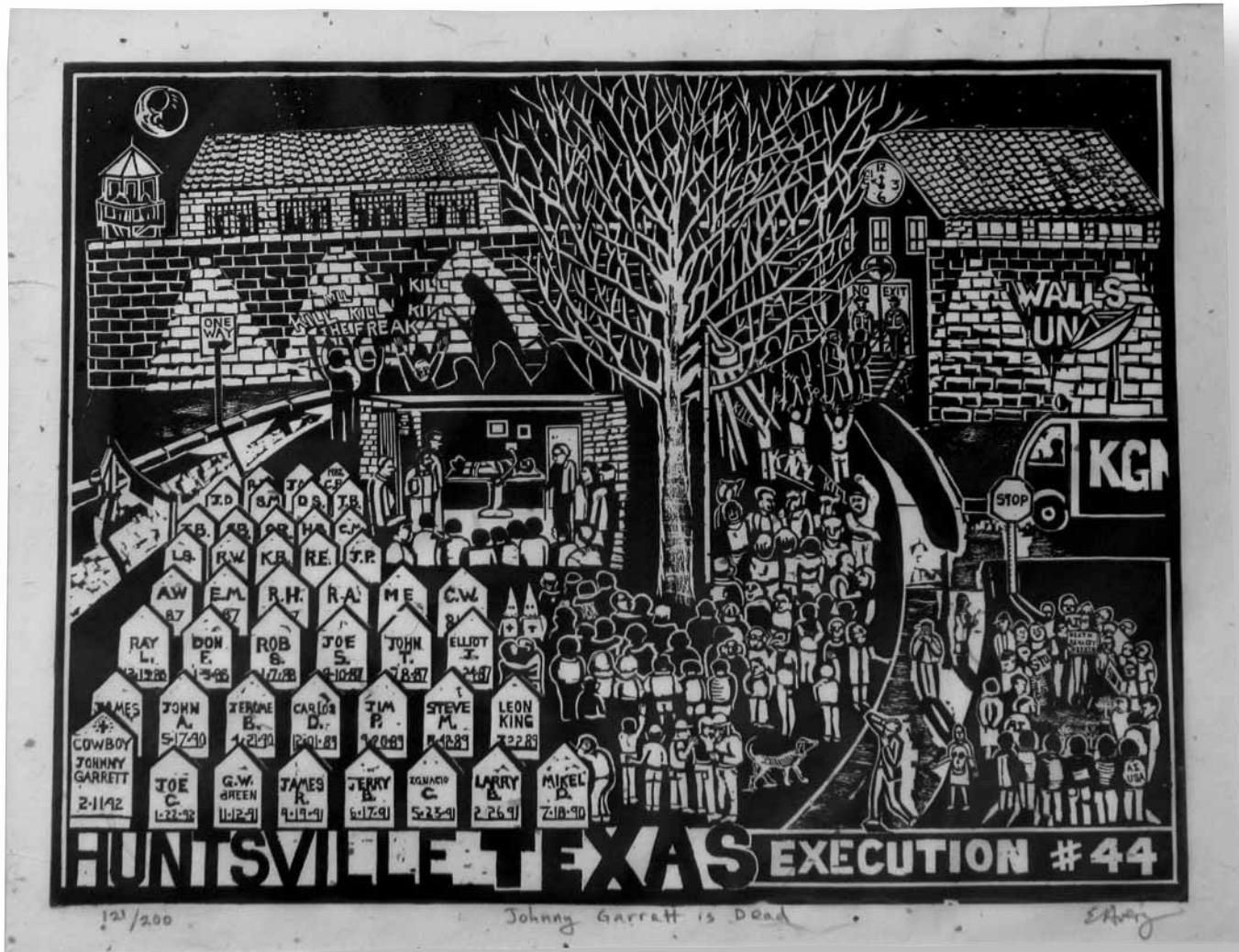
credible claims of innocence. He offered 30 students the chance to participate in his casework—and the Texas Innocence Network was born.

Dow still marvels at the way students gravitate to help inmates in need. “In many ways, these are quintessential law students who believe that part of being a lawyer is using the skill you acquire in law school to help those who cannot help themselves. That attitude can be expressed in many ways, and for these students it is in the criminal justice domain,” he says.

It quickly became obvious that the Texas Innocence Network would need more than Dow's limited directed-research funds to survive. "We were getting mail from all sorts of inmates, first from all over the state, then from all over the country. I realized I needed to build some sort of institution here, if for no other reason than to help open and read the mail," he says. In 2000, Dean Nancy Rapoport earmarked enough funds to allow the Texas Innocence Network to hire an employee and begin building a stable base. "I credit Nancy for realizing this was a program that had both great social value and great pedagogic value. You can't

simulate fact investigations—and investigating is something we teach our students to do. That's a skill that is valuable to many different areas of law practice, which is why I have such a wide array of students," Dow says.

Individuals who believed in the work of the Texas Innocence Network began to send personal checks, and the Texas Legislature and philanthropic groups provided additional support. Today, Dow knows exactly where he stands: "We're in business because people who believe in our work help fund it."



↑ A framed woodcut by artist Eric Avery—"Johnny Garrett is Dead"—hangs in Dow's office. In 1992, despite appeals for clemency from Pope John Paul II and others, Garrett became the 44th Texas inmate to be executed after capital punishment was reinstated. Today, the execution tally in Texas is approaching 400.

BUILDING SUCCESS ONE STEP AT A TIME

Law Center students now can earn up to four credits taking a class from Dow and working on a range of cases, some of which involve Death Row inmates. Students are admonished to avoid “even going down the road” of forming an opinion about whether a potential client is innocent. Instead, they are encouraged to review case evidence and identify ways they can prove innocence. The distinction is important, because it allows the Texas Innocence Network to weed through thousands of potential clients and focus its still-limited resources on cases that can turn on evidence or procedural errors uncovered by diligent students. And the hard work obviously pays off:

www.texasinnocencenetwork.com documents cases where new trials have been ordered, and innocent inmates have been released, because of the group’s persistence. Dow says “rockets go off” when students learn how their efforts have prompted a court to rethink its position on an inmate. “It’s great for the inmate, great for the students, and great for the network. It’s why students stay with their investigations even when the semester ends. I’ve had a dozen students completely pursue their investigations even after they graduate. That’s very rewarding for me,” Dow says.

Amid his Texas Innocence Network responsibilities, Dow is working on a new book that will document the day-to-day challenges of working death penalty cases. Another book is contemplated: one that advances Dow’s vision of a more robust judicial branch in the post-9/11 era. And, inexorably, death-penalty cases continue to consume significant increments of his time. “The difference is that my death penalty work is controlled by a fuse I do not light,” he says.

That fuse shows no sign of sputtering. Texas has executed nearly 400 inmates since the courts legalized capital punishment in 1976, and Dow has resigned himself to making more phone calls in the future to inform clients they soon will be summoned into the execution chamber. “They are hard conversations to have,” Dow admits. “When I tell them that we lost, that there’s nothing left to do, even the ones who were really prepared are finally having a tiny ember of hope extinguished.”

Dow leans back in his chair and stares through his window, his face impassive, almost expressionless, as he considers if these phone calls represent the toughest part of his job. The lawyer in him seems to take over.

“I don’t know which is harder. Learning that you’ve lost, or telling the client that you lost,” he says quietly.

**DOW STILL MARVELS AT THE
WAY STUDENTS GRAVITATE
TO HELP INMATES IN NEED.
“IN MANY WAYS, THESE ARE
QUINTESSENTIAL LAW
STUDENTS WHO BELIEVE
THAT PART OF BEING
A LAWYER IS USING THE
SKILL YOU ACQUIRE IN LAW
SCHOOL TO HELP THOSE
WHO CANNOT HELP
THEMSELVES. THAT ATTITUDE
CAN BE EXPRESSED IN MANY
WAYS, AND FOR THESE
STUDENTS IT IS IN THE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE DOMAIN.”**

CENTER FOR CONSUMER LAW

TEXAS CONSUMERS HAVE A NEW RESOURCE FOR HELP: THE TEXAS CONSUMER COMPLAINT CENTER OPERATING AT THE UH LAW CENTER under the direction of John Ventura. Armed with a \$364,000 cy pres award from Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, the Law Center and Professor Richard Alderman created a unique program that lets law students work directly with consumers to resolve legal issues. Click www.texasccc.com. Also on-line is the latest edition of the renamed Journal of Consumer & Commercial Law, an official publication of the State Bar of Texas. Click www.jtexconsumerlaw.com.

HURRICANE RELOCATION SAVES LOYOLA SEMESTER

WHEN HURRICANE KATRINA DECIMATED NEW ORLEANS, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

nearly added its Fall 2005 semester to the region's list of casualties. That's when the UH Law Center stepped in and offered to host the entire school—



from students to faculty to administrators—and allow Loyola law students to continue their studies. UHLC Professor Seth Chandler, a key architect of the logistical miracle, delivered Loyola's commencement address in May, and accepted a President's Medal and sincere thanks from Loyola President Rev. Kevin Wildes.

FRANKEL LECTURE EXAMINES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

AS PART OF A LECTURE SERIES MADE POSSIBLE BY THE FRANKEL FAMILY FOUNDATION, the Houston Law Review's 10th Annual Frankel Lecture went "beyond the numbers" and considered the issues of affirmative action. Dorothy A. Brown of Washington and Lee University School of Law delivered the keynote address, and commentators included Carla D. Pratt of Dickinson School of Law at the Pennsylvania State University, and Evan H. Caminker, dean and professor of law at University of Michigan Law School. A CD of the lecture is available by writing to BriefcaseEditor@uh.edu.

LAW CENTER LAUNCHES FACULTY BLOG

THE NEWEST ELECTRONIC CHANNEL FOR DEBATE AND DISCOURSE involving the law is available at www.uhlawblog.com. The UH Law Center faculty blog, or web log, includes links for email notices when new information is posted to the blog.

RAPOPORT ACCEPTS CHAIRED PROFESSORSHIP AT UNLV

PROFESSOR NANCY RAPOPORT, WHO SERVED AS DEAN AND PROFESSOR OF LAW AT THE UH LAW CENTER

from July 2000 until she resigned her deanship in May 2006, has accepted a chaired professorship at the Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Currently on sabbatical, Rapoport will become the Gordon & Silver, Ltd. Professor of Law at UNLV in Summer 2007.



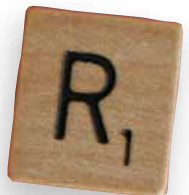
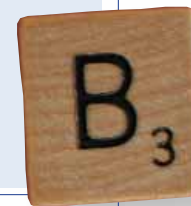
BRUHL JOINS LAW CENTER FACULTY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

AARON BRUHL IS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF

THE UH LAW CENTER FACULTY, joining the school after working as a litigation associate with Jenner & Block LLP in

Washington, D.C. He earned his law degree from Yale Law School, where he served as book reviews editor of the Yale Law Journal, and he clerked for Fifth Circuit Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King. Bruhl teaches and writes on the legislative process, statutory interpretation, and federal courts. Click www.law.uh.edu/faculty.



LAW CENTER HOSTS TWO COURTS OF APPEAL

JUSTICES OF TWO TEXAS APPELLATE COURTS—the Court of Criminal Appeals and the First Court of Appeals—honored the UH Law Center by hearing oral arguments on the campus. In October, the First Court of Appeals convened in the Vinson & Elkins Courtroom, marking the first time the facility has been used in an official court proceeding.

¡VIVA ZAMORA!

PROFESSOR STEPHEN ZAMORA HAS BEEN NAMED TO THE ORDER OF THE AZTEC EAGLE,

the highest recognition granted by the Mexican government to a non-Mexican

citizen. Luis Ernesto

Derbez, the Foreign

Minister of

Mexico,

acted on

behalf of

President Vicente Fox and

presented the

coveted medal

to Zamora in

October at a

special ceremony

in Mexico City.

The event

included a

celebratory

luncheon hosted by Ambassador Arturo

Dager, legal adviser to the Foreign Minister of

Mexico and a Law Center LL.M. alumnus.

Zamora is the Leonard B. Rosenberg

Professor of Law at the UH Law Center.



ANDREWS KURTH DEBATE TACKLES TIME OF TERROR

THE FIFTH ANNUAL ANDREWS KURTH DEBATE AT THE LAW CENTER

FEATURED TWO LUMINARIES: Susan Estrich of the University of Southern California School of Law, and John Choon Yoo of the Boalt Hall Law School at University of California, Berkeley. The debate centered on "Civil Rights in Times of Terror," and a CD of the debate is available by writing to BriefcaseEditor@uh.edu.



MILLER SPEAKS ON FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CHARLES MILLER, WHO LED A FEDERAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION,

SPOKE IN OCTOBER AT A UH LUNCHEON sponsored by the Law Center's Institute for Higher

Education, Law and Governance and the UH Faculty Senate. Miller noted how his panel called

for improvements in scholarships and need-based grants, and for a federal database to monitor

student performance. Michael A. Olivas, UHLC Bates Distinguished Chair in Law and Director of

IHELG, moderated the event.

ARGENTINIAN JUDGE *PRESENTA DISCURSO EN EL LAW CENTER*

THE HONORABLE AIDA KEMELMAJER, A JUDGE ON THE SUPREME COURT OF MENDOZA, ARGENTINA, VISITED THE LAW CENTER in April and spoke about

family law and human rights in her country. The justice delivered her talk

in Spanish to international law students and members of

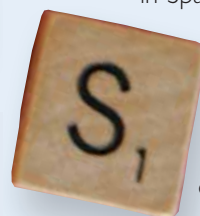
the Hispanic Law Students Association. Professor

Gidi noted how language ability is a competitive

advantage, and that Spanish skills among law stu-

dents "must be nourished and

celebrated, instead of forgotten and atrophied."



CENTER FOR CHILDREN, LAW & POLICY

PUBLIC INTEREST WILL FUEL THE WORK OF THE NEWLY ORGANIZED CENTER FOR CHILDREN, LAW & POLICY at the UH Law Center. Co-directors Ellen Marrus, George Butler Research Professor of

Law, and Laura Oren, Law Foundation Professor of Law, jointly oversee the new center and its

interdisciplinary work in policy studies and related research, including a planned April 2007 con-

ference on "Children and the Law after the Katrina Disaster." The center includes the Southwest

Juvenile Defender Center, which has made important contributions in the area of juvenile justice,

including providing training for lawyers, judges and other professionals who work with children.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

PUBLISHED FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

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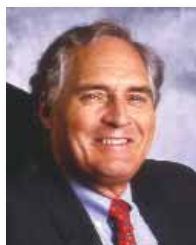
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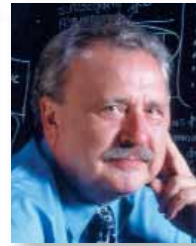
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CLASSNOTES

1959 • RICHARD 'RACEHORSE'

HAYNES was the featured speaker at the UH Alumni Club in Brenham, TX.

1969 • 3rd District Court Judge JIM PARSONS,

who counts being named UH Law Center Alumnus of the Year as one of the high honors received during his career, is stepping down from the bench and resuming private practice.

1970 • CHARLES MATHEWS, vice president

and general counsel of ExxonMobil Corp., earned the 2006 J. Chrys Dougherty Good Apple Award on Nov. 9, 2006 for promoting *pro bono* work by in-house attorneys.

1971 • CAROL DINKINS of Vinson & Elkins

has been appointed to chair the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

1973 • DOMINIC E. DUTTON has been

appointed to the Board of Bar Commissioners of the State Bar of New Mexico.

1976 • LINDA M. ROBISON is a shareholder

in the health law firm of Robison & Folk in Boca Raton, FL.

1977 • RICHARD GEORGE, president and

CEO of Suncor Energy Inc., was appointed to the Canadian Competitiveness Council. • **ROBERT E.**

MEADOWS has been elected managing partner of the Houston office of King & Spalding. • **RICHARD**

RAFES was named president of the 4,400-student East Central University by the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges. • **ANN RYAN ROBERTSON** (LL.M.

'05) has been elected to the Executive Board of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, North American Branch.

1979 • DENIS CLIVE BRAHAM, shareholder

and CEO elect of Winstead Sechrest & Minick PC., has been named to the Board of Trustees of the International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) Foundation.

• **JOHN B. STEVENS JR.,** presented Lamar University's library with rare documents chronicling the life of Mirabeau Lamar. • **ROYCE WEST** was inducted into the Texas Black Sports Hall of Fame.

1980 • DONALD L. HOLMQUEST, MD, Ph.D.,

has been appointed executive officer of the California Regional Health Information Organization.

1981 • MARCY KURTZ, bankruptcy partner with

Bracewell & Giuliani in Houston, was named one of 10 "Women on the Move" by Texas Executive Women and the *Houston Chronicle*. • **YVONNE WILLIAMS** was appointed an associate judge at the Central Booking Facility of the Austin Municipal Court in Austin, TX.

1982 • JEFF ABRAMS received the prestigious

Steve Brusche Award from the Association of Attorney-Mediators, a national association comprising many of the most experienced mediators in the country. He helped coach the UH Law Center's team to victory in the First Annual International Chamber of Commerce Mediation Competition in Paris.

1983 • LARRY GOLDBERG is a partner at

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP in San Francisco, where he is an expert in ESOPs. • **MARK JOHNSON,** president of ERISA Benefits Consulting, Inc. and an ERISA expert specializing in pension plans, fiduciary liability and retiree medical issues, addressed a Global Knowledge Congress teleconference on "ERISA & Analyzing The Pension Reform Act of 2006." • **MILLARD JOHNSON** was inducted into the Felton Waggoner Hall of Honor at Deer Park High School. He is the co-founder of the Johnson, DeLuca, Kennedy & Kurisky law firm. • **ANDREW OTTAWAY** is a staff attorney with the Business Administration Disaster Assistance Processing and Disbursement Center disbursing federal loan money to victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

1984 • CHARLES S. PARRISH is the senior

vice president, general counsel and secretary of Tesoro Corporation.

1985 • CHRIS A. BRISACK was sworn in

as one of six immigration judges serving in Houston's immigration courthouse. • **ALISA B. JOHNSON** joined Helix Energy Solutions as senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary. • **BURTON MANNE** with Emmons & Jackson, P.C. in Houston has been named Chair Elect of the Anti-Defamation League, Southwest Regional Board.

1986 • VICKI BRENTIN is president of the Rotary Club of Houston, devoting her energies to Rotary's East End Initiative. • **DR. FRANK J. COLLURA** is general counsel for the Dallas County Hospital District (Parkland Health & Hospital System). • **RICHARD LAMBERT JR.** is the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the Knoxville office of the FBI. • **ROSLAND F. MCLEOD** is vice president and general counsel of Novation, a contracting services company answering healthcare purchasing needs.

1988 • DR. JOSE ANGEL GUTIERREZ moderated "Borders Boundaries and Frontiers," a forum on immigration issues at Texas A&M University-Kingsville sponsored by the Hispanic Heritage Committee and the American Democracy Project. • **RANDA DUNCAN WILLIAMS**, president and CEO of EPCO, Inc. and president of DLD Family Investments LLC, has been named to the board of directors of Encore Bank and its parent company, Encore Bancshares, Inc.

1990 • KELLY K. KORDZIK is a principal with Fish & Richardson P.C. in Austin, TX. • **GREGG LASSEN**, vice president of business affairs at The University of Texas at Tyler, participates in a program to build interaction between business leaders and the community. • **MARY RAFIZADEH** is leaving the Kenton County (Kentucky) Public Defenders Office and plans to enter private practice. • **ANDREW SCHRECK** has joined Shannon, Gracey, Ratliff & Miller, LLP in Houston. • **TIMOTHY E. VAIL** has been named Global President & CEO of Synthesis Energy Systems, Inc. • **JIM R. YATES** is one of the 345 executives "you need to know," according to *Hawaii Business*.

1991 • RONALD KURTZ has joined the law firm of Lord, Bissell, & Brook. • **MICHAEL S. NUENKE** has been named senior vice president of the Program Operations unit of Glencoe U.S. Holdings Inc., part of the Glencoe Group of Companies and a subsidiary of Renaissance Holdings Ltd., a global provider of reinsurance and insurance.

1992 • THOMAS A. CROSLLEY has formed The Crosley Law Firm, a personal injury firm headquartered in San Antonio. • **JIM GRACE** was named an Outstanding Young Houstonian by the Houston Jaycees. • **HERNÁN RUIZ-BRAVO** (LL.M.) is the new Counselor of the Embassy of Mexico in Ottawa, Canada. • **MICHAEL J. SHORT** (LL.M.'02) is senior counsel with Shell Trading Gas & Power in Houston.

1993 • LINDA HERRON is the first female minister in the storied history of First Presbyterian Church in Palestine, TX. • **JACOB MONTY** is managing partner of Monty Partners LLP, a law firm specializing in employment, labor law and immigration issues. He is a member of the joint board of directors of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission, based in Juárez, and North American Development Bank, based in San Antonio. • **JIM M. PERDUE JR.**, a partner in the Perdue Law Firm in Houston, serves on the Texas Supreme Court Advisory Committee and was inducted into the International Society of Barristers at their annual convention in Scottsdale, AZ.

1994 • C. ROBERT BUNCH was elected to the board of directors of Olin Corporation. He is chairman, president and chief executive officer of Maverick Tube Corporation, a producer of welded tubular steel products used in energy and industrial applications. • **VICTOR CARRILLO** of the Texas State Railroad Commission is cited by *Hispanic Business Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in government. • **ANDREW W. MANUEL** was elected to the board of Meritas, the world's largest alliance of midsize law firms.

1995 • BRIAN BRADSHAW has joined Fulbright & Jaworski's Houston office as an energy partner. He previously worked with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. • **JENNIFER A. HASLEY** (LL.M.) was cited by *Texas Lawyer* as one of the top 50 in-house lawyers in Texas and dubbed "The Public's Champion." She has spent the past eight years as an assistant disciplinary counsel for the State Bar of Texas prosecuting lawyers for professional misconduct. • **RANDY ZAMORA** has been appointed to head the prosecutors of the Municipal Courts of the City of Houston.

1996 • LAURA SANGER KELLY has published *From the Garden*, the latest of five short stories she has published.

1997 • J. KEVIN BLODGETT is the general counsel and executive vice president of administration of Dynegy, Inc. • **TERI ELKINS LONGACRE**, associate professor of management at the University of Houston, has been named the school's first ombudswoman. She serves as a neutral party who confidentially advises faculty and staff members on workplace-related issues. • **E. ASHLEY SMITH** is the executive vice president, general counsel and chief legal officer of Stewart Information Services Corp.

1998 • SCOTT E. STEWART has been named partner with the law firm of Shannon, Gracey, Ratliff & Miller, LLP in Fort Worth, TX.



Scott E. Stewart

1999 • Houston attorney **ALAMDAR HAMDANI** was featured in a *Houston Chronicle* profile.

2000 • ANGELA AUGUSTUS has joined the IP group of Squire, Sanders and Dempsey in San Francisco. She formerly worked with Crutsinger & Booth.

• **DAVID R. BREWER** launched his law office in Kingwood, TX, where he has resided for the last 14 years.

• **PHILIP A. LAMSENS** has been named partner with the law firm of Shannon, Gracey, Ratliff & Miller, LLP in Fort Worth, TX. • **REBECCA RENTZ** is the new director of Air Programs for the Houston region. She was appointed by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).



David Brewer



Philip A. Lamsens

2001 • JOSEPH ALEXANDER, who works with Potter Clement Lowry & Duncan in Mount Dora, FL, was profiled in the 'Volunteer Spotlight' section of the *Orlando Sentinel* newspaper.

2002 • ALEJANDRO PUCHEU (LL.M.) is the new general counsel of Vesta, a Mexican real estate development company. He previously worked at Haynes and Boone.

• **MICHAEL J. SHORT** (LL.M., J.D. '92), formerly of The Williams Companies, Inc., is senior counsel with Shell Trading Gas & Power in Houston.

2003 • CHRISTINA LESHER has expanded the Law Office of Christina Leshar, P.C. in Houston by specializing in elder law and offering an umbrella of services aimed at seniors. • **BRENT TANTILLO** is counsel and legislative assistant with Congressman Todd Akin of Missouri. He formerly served with the Hudson Institute. •

SARAH A. PISKUN works at Moriarty Leyendecker P.C. in their new office in Boulder, Colorado, where her husband **JUSTIN C. BERG '03** practices at Berg Hill Greenleaf & Ruscitti LLP. • **JONATHAN M. SAENZ** is a litigation attorney and director of legislative

affairs for Liberty Legal Institute in Plano, TX, a non-profit legal organization that protects the religious freedoms and First Amendment rights of individuals and groups.

• **SIMON LOPEZ** is an associate in the Dallas office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.



Simon Lopez

2004 • ERIC BENTLEY published an article in *The Sports Journal* on intercollegiate athletic corporate sponsorships. • **JOE BOCK** is the chief marketing officer for gol, a special service of Mesa Air Group of Phoenix.

• **CHARLES R. HICKS** (LL.M.) is the chief counsel for the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services in Little Rock.



Charles R. Hicks

2005 • KRISTA FULLER works with Lerach Coughlin Stoia Geller Rudman Robbins LLP in Houston and served as a securities litigation attorney on the Enron case.

• **R. REAGAN SAHADI** joined Donnell, Abernethy & Kieschnick in Corpus Christi, TX. • **ANN RYAN**

ROBERTSON (J.D. '77, LL.M.) has been elected to the Executive Board of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, North American Branch.

• **BRITTANY PEREZ** joined the Dallas office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.



Brittany Perez

2006 • SCOTT D. ELLIS, one of the founding members of the Environmental and Energy Law & Policy Journal, earned a coveted position at the U.S. Department of Transportation's Honors Attorney Program. He is one of nine new Honors Attorneys selected from 1900 initial applicants and 90 finalists. • **JIM LLOYD** joins Winstead, Sechrest & Minick, P.C. in Houston, where his practice includes real estate and real estate finance.

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT A. ALLEN died June 10, 2006. A part-time student, Allen was in pursuit of the law degree that he hoped would lead to his dream job: a federal judgeship. A distinguished student, he held an editorial position on the *Houston Law Review* and served as a justice of the school's Honor Court.

WILEY N. ANDERSON III '82, 50, a sixth generation Texan and lifelong Houstonian, died April 3, 2006. He was the president of his legal fraternity, Pi Alpha Delta.

DAVID R. TOOMIM '79 died on May 31, 2006. Always in search of new challenges, he retired from his successful accounting practice at age 58 and earned his J.D. from the Law Center in 1979. He clerked at the 14th Court of Civil Appeals, and was of counsel at Schlanger, Silver, Barg & Paine, LLP.

RICHARD SIMMONS '77 died July 7, 2006. Throughout his legal career, Simmons specialized in bankruptcy law, representing both debtors and creditors and handling cases under Chapters 7, 11 and 13. In 1994, he was named one of 21 trustees under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Justice. Active in a number of professional associations, he was one of the founders of the University of Houston Black Law Alumni Association.

CLASSNOTES depends on Law Center alumni to submit information about their career accomplishments and advancements.

To alert your classmates to news of note, please send an email to BriefcaseNotes@uh.edu. Thank you!!



“I am indebted to the Law Center for the extraordinary educational and professional opportunities it has provided to me. Working to ensure that the Law Center continues to offer that same level of training and opportunity to future students is a rewarding way to repay that debt.”

RUSSELL A. CHORUSH, PH.D., J.D.
Heim, Payne & Chorush, L.L.P.
Law Center Class of '01

“I’m looking forward to completing my final year of law school and starting my career as an attorney. When I reflect on my time at the Law Center, I will remember it for what it is: a place where *everyone*—from students to the faculty—is driven to be the best. Once you catch that spirit, it becomes a permanent part of you.”

ROBERT B. JOHNSON
Member, UH System Board of Regents
Law Center Class of '07



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Thanks, *Wynonna*, for a wonderful party!
The country & western diva helped make the
30th Annual Law Gala & Auction sponsored by
the University of Houston Law Center
and the UH Law Alumni

Association a galloping
success. And quick on
its heels comes the next
neon-colored date on the
legal calendar: Viva Lex
Vegas!, the 31st Annual Law
Gala & Auction set for
Saturday, March 24, 2007.

Giddy Up!

Viva Lex Vegas! already looks

like a winner.
Andrews Kurth LLP
has anted up as a Principal Grand
Underwriter, and other fast-dealing
firms and individuals (*see list at right*)
obviously know a sure bet when they
see one!

More information about our
annual event is available at
www.law.uh.edu/alumni/gala.html.





Giddy Up!
Gala Chairs
Nicole and
Jim Perdue, Jr. '93

Viva Lex Vegas!

Early RSVPs

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Philip de Waal
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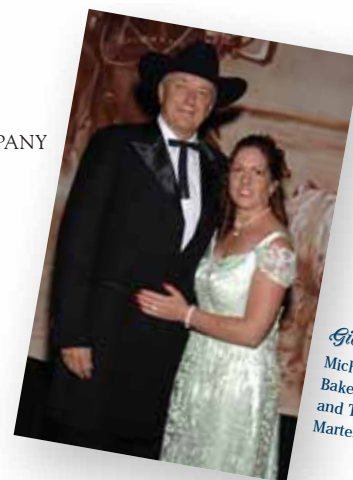
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BRIEFCASE went to press!*

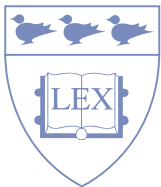




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