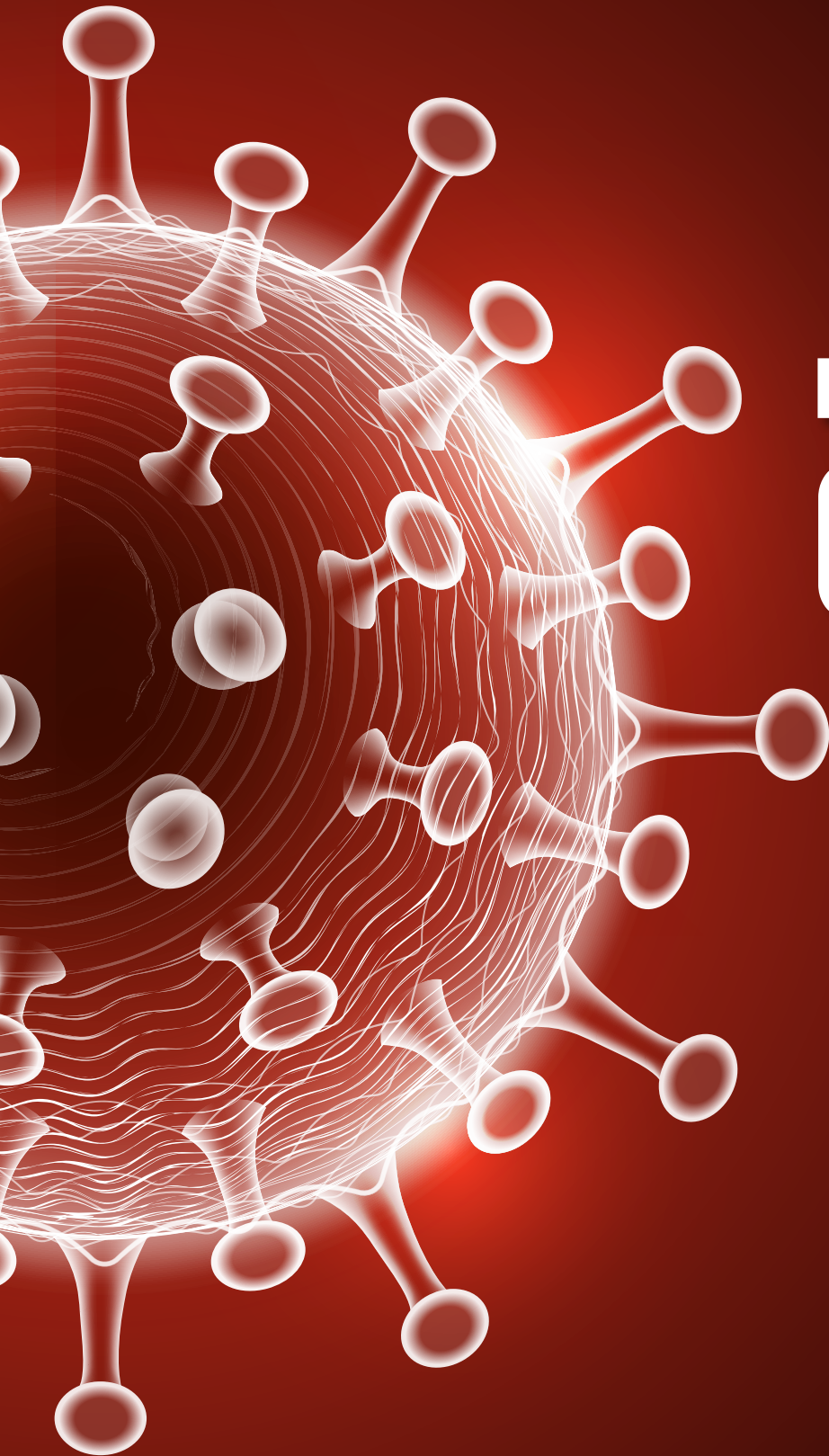


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**LAW CENTER
RESPONDS TO
COVID-19**

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Dean Leonard M. Baynes

DEAN'S MESSAGE

The University of Houston Law Center reacted to the coronavirus as did most of the world, by drastically changing life as we knew it — teaching and learning remotely, changing the grading system, shuttering the building, and postponing commencement indefinitely. Students and faculty adapted to meet the challenges of life in the midst of a viral pandemic.

Despite the upheaval, the 2019–2020 school year, my sixth as dean, was filled with successes, underscoring our standing among the nation's top law schools. Our rankings will undoubtedly rise when we move into the new state-of-the-art John M. O'Quinn Law Building, which construction is set to begin during Fall 2020. Our rankings remain high and the entering class is competitive with the record-setting academic credentials of the previous year. We increased our clinical outreach to the community, expanded ongoing programs and launched new initiatives, and enhanced our academic expertise in the areas of immigration and international law with new faculty.

Please take a moment to read through this combined issue of Briefcase magazine and Annual Report to find out about all that is happening at the Law Center and with former classmates and fellow alums. Then let me know how you think we are doing and pass along your ideas of where we should be headed.

We will work through the current crisis and the Law Center will emerge stronger than ever. The future is bright.

Sincerely,

Leonard M. Baynes

Dean and Professor of Law

JOSEPH QUEZADA '16

UHLC ALUMNUS QUEZADA PAIRS DIVERSE BACKGROUND WITH J.D. TO LAND MAJOR LEAGUE ROLE



When applying for a dream job to work for the St. Louis Cardinals, Joseph Quezada knew he needed something that would make him stand out from other candidates. For the 2016 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, a legal education proved to be part of the winning formula.

“Having a J.D. and being an attorney with two years of experience was a huge plus,” Quezada said. “I was born in the U.S., but I’m of Mexican and Panamanian descent and can speak Spanish. I marketed myself as being passionate about the game, being bilingual and having a J.D.”

“If you show up to an interview and tell somebody, I’m passionate about sports, I’ve always wanted to work in sports, so that’s why you should give me the job,’ that’s not something they’ve never heard before. Finding a way to make yourself stand out and resonate with your audience is critical. Everyone is marketable in a special way. No one is the same.”

Quezada began working for the Cardinals as coordinator of International Operations in February 2018. He was promoted to manager of International Operations in

November 2019. Being promoted in short order was a humbling accomplishment for him.

“It would be an understatement to say it’s an honor,” Quezada said. “First of all, working in this industry is something that I take very seriously. But working for this class and level of organization is something that I take a lot of pride in. To have been offered this position, this title, this promotion with the Cardinals is something I hold very dear. It’s a responsibility for me to uphold that tradition and that respect that this organization commands.”

“I’m very excited to run with this opportunity and take our department to the next level, and help us get to that next level of competition.”

In his current role, Quezada’s primary duty is to oversee the Cardinals’ interests outside of the U.S. He is based in Jupiter, Fla., at the Cardinals’ spring training facility, but also spends a great portion of his time at the club’s academy in Boca Chica, Dominican Republic.

“Whether it be player acquisitions, player development, scouting, contract analysis — anything involving those facets of baseball operations outside of the United States and outside of the domestic process is what I’m essentially responsible for,” Quezada said. “I help oversee the entire academy that we have based in the Dominican Republic. Essentially that’s 99 percent of my focus on a daily basis.”

Prior to joining the Cardinals, Quezada practiced as an insurance litigation trial attorney at the Quezada Law Firm, founded by his father Jesus Quezada, Jr., a 1995 alumnus of the Law Center. His time spent in depositions, hearings, mediations and trials has helped him transition into the business of sports.

“All of those abilities, all of that experience, and all of the courses that I took at the Law Center have helped me transition so much more smoothly and so much more easily,” Quezada said. “I’m just so glad to have that education to get me where I am now.”

“The world of baseball is a world of contracts at every level. Whether you come through the draft, or whether you sign as a player internationally, you are signing a contract with an organization. That involves negotiations, contract analysis and understanding how to navigate that aspect of the industry is something that having a law degree gives you a tremendous advantage over other people who don’t have that training or experience.”

Quezada said he always envisioned himself working in baseball, partly because of the game providing a generational familial bond. A native of Brownsville, Texas, he did not grow up around the sport. He traces his passion back to his grandfather, who passed it along to his father.



“My father was born and raised in San Francisco,” Quezada said. “When he was a kid, my grandfather would take him to Giants games in the ’60s. He went to go watch Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, the Alou brothers, Juan Marichal — all of these players that were essentially soon-to-be Hall of Famers.”

Quezada’s father remains an avid baseball fan, and passed along the trait to his sons. He felt an awakening in 2004 when he was 13 and he, his brother and father traveled to Arizona to watch spring training.

“Ever since then I just became a baseball junkie,” Quezada said. “Being in the Texas Rangers facility and around the players, seeing them interact, taking batting practice and throwing bullpen sessions — it was something I always dreamed of working in. I just hoped I could have that opportunity someday to work for an organization or in the realm of sports.”

Quezada determined early in his undergraduate education at Texas A&M that he wanted to pursue a law degree. When provided the opportunity to follow in his father’s footsteps at the Law Center, it made his choice for law school an easy one.

“I was always really close to the Law Center because of my father,” he said. “I was a kid when I went to his graduation. He gave the commencement speech at the ceremony. I was young, but I remember that experience.”

“Houston was also a city I saw myself growing in. It’s a place that represents growth and advancement, and the University of Houston Law Center is one of the pinnacle institutions in the city that represent that. Attending the Law Center has had nothing but a positive impact on my life and my career. It’s something I cherish and I’m very proud to be a Cougar in that regard.”

KIRK DOBBINS '93



Law school was not the initial plan for Kirk Dobbins. The 1993 alumnus of the University of Houston Law Center graduated from the University of Dallas with a degree in biochemistry. He was a year into medical school when he stumbled upon the intersection of healthcare and law while conducting research at a sleep clinic.

“While talking with one of my subjects, who happened to work at a law school,” Dobbins said. “He mentioned a new program focusing on healthcare law and exactly what that is. It piqued my interest, and this was something I had to explore.”

After applying to several law schools across the state, Dobbins said he selected the Law Center after getting a scholarship and due to the prominence of the Health Law & Policy Institute.

“I had a really positive impression after speaking with a number of people at the Law Center before I made the decision. There was something about those conversations and interactions that led me to choose the Law Center.”

Dobbins currently serves as Vice President and Regional Counsel at Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals in Portland, Ore. He was previously Senior Counsel based in Oakland, Calif. He described how his legal training has helped him progress in his career.

“As a senior executive you are not only a legal partner, but a thought partner from a business perspective, and that’s one thing I really love about this role,” he said. “Having a law degree opens doors to enable you to succeed in a role like this because you learn how to analyze issues, present a cogent argument or cogent analysis on your feet, and really coalesce thought partners on your legal team and also on your senior executive team that you are advising on any number of issues.”

As a member of the legal profession, Dobbins is a believer in the adage of, “to much is given, much is expected.” He credits people who were mentors to him, whether knowingly or unknowingly, who helped guide him in his career.

Dobbins supports numerous initiatives at the Law Center, volunteering his time and serving as a distinguished speaker at recent Law Center events. He also has made major benefits giving to the Dean’s Society and the new building campaign.

“I feel at this point in time it’s really important to give back,” Dobbins said. “I really enjoyed the professors I had at the Law Center. It was a turning point in my life, and it was a significant change coming from a pure science background to go into the law. I was able to do that through a lot of hard work and talking with some of my professors and section members.

“I want to provide that to the Law Center for those who are coming behind me. If there’s anything I can do to help future attorneys, some of whom this may be their first time going to a graduate school in their family, I will.” Dobbins also made a significant impact on the Pre-Law Pipeline Program and the Building Campaign.

An additional example of Dobbins’ involvement is his generous support of the Law Center’s Pre-Law Pipeline Program. In his role at Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals he also supports efforts to reach out to minority students who have an interest in pursuing a legal education.

“It’s important that there is an equal voice of people of color and that there are equitable ways to have access to our justice system,” Dobbins said. “Regardless of someone’s background, they may not have had the same experiences to help them understand what you need to do, and how to prepare yourself to do well in law school. That’s why it’s important for me to support the Pre-Law Pipeline Program and the pipeline programs my company supports.

“The ability to write well, think critically and logically are elements you need to do well in law school and are provided in pipeline programs. Often, it’s just helpful to have someone who has done it before talk to you and explain how they got to where they are.”

Dobbins noted that a legal education has empowered him by giving him a strong foundation of expertise in legal analysis, writing and speaking — assets that can translate to a variety of professional settings.

“Whether it’s at a law firm, educational, pharmaceutical, or other corporate/in-house department, a law degree can really help you,” Dobbins said. “It’s made an incredible impact on my life. It’s given me the opportunity to work at top-tier law firms in Washington D.C., but also as an attorney for the government at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is a strong foundation to have, whether you want to work in the law or do something else with it.”

ROXELLA CAVAZOS '82



CAVAZOS MAKES MARK AT UHLC WITH ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

With the skills a law degree provides, Roxella Cavazos, a 1982 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, believes it is important for attorneys to give back to their respective communities. One of the ways she does this is through the Roxella T. Cavazos scholarship.

“The scholarship is a means of leaving a legacy and express gratitude for the education that has guided my life and impacted me for the better,” Cavazos said. “It is a means of validating myself to assist a law student with financial need to do better in school. The student will

have some funds to help pay for essentials such as food, utilities, tires or gas for the vehicle that gets the student to school.

“Philanthropy is an opportunity to exercise social responsibility and a conscience.”

Cavazos serves as Associate General Counsel for the Alamo Community College District in San Antonio. Her decision to pursue a career in law came from her background growing up in an economically and educationally disadvantaged area.

**“Philanthropy is an
opportunity to exercise
social responsibility
and a conscience.”**

“I was motivated to become educated in a field that touches every part of our lives, personal and professional,” she said.

Cavazos firmly believes that having a legal education made a difference in her life, and that it has made her a better person. It has also defined and allowed her to conduct personal and business affairs with skills most people do not have.

“The incredible professional opportunities, including 25 years of private practice, that my legal education provided, have enabled me to successfully perform and expand my role in public higher education, an industry new to me,” Cavazos said. “My law degree enables me to practice the transparency and governance required of a public servant.”

For more information on how you can support your legacy or the memory of a loved one with a scholarship, contact Director of Development, Stephanie Johnson at sejohnsg@central.uh.edu or 713-743-3839.

MALCOM DISHONGH '93 & KENNETH DISHONGH '20

SHARE MUTUAL LAW CENTER EXPERIENCE

From the time he was in fourth grade, Malcolm Dishongh intended to become a lawyer. The 1993 University of Houston Law Center alumnus participated in debate in high school which earned him a scholarship at Houston Baptist University. Throughout most of his law school tenure he worked full time at Abraham Watkins to sharpen his skills.

"I was 10 years old and never changed my mind," he said. "I set my career path on what I wanted to become, and every step of the way I worked with counselors, school administrators and different activities that would help me."

His son, Kenneth Andrew Dishongh's path to law school was not as direct. But the 2020 Law Center graduate eventually received instruction from some of the same Law Center professors who taught his father. Among Kenneth Dishongh's favorite activities at the Law Center was participating on the mock trial team.

"I was very aware of the different legal markets and I preferred Houston's," Kenneth Dishongh said. "There's been a lot of growth here in the past 10 or so years and that really had a big impact on my decision."

"I'm very interested in the soft IP world, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets and those sort of issues. I'm also really interested in labor and employment law."

Kenneth Dishongh initially intended to practice medicine, but had a change of heart when he thought he would be better suited for a career in law. During his time as a college student, he changed his major to political science, a popular choice for pre-law students.

"It was kind of a shock because we hadn't discussed it before his undergraduate years at Texas A&M at all," Malcolm Dishongh said. "It had never been a topic of discussion. With me, I knew what I was going to do from an early age. Kenneth realized it when he was in college. He really thought the process through and chose the best school not only for him, but how he wants to proceed in his life and his career."

Kenneth Dishongh, who is referred to as Drew by his classmates, was named in part after his father's close friend Andrew Thigpen. Thigpen passed away in 1998, but his legacy of advocacy lives on at the Law Center with the Andrew B. Thigpen '93 Scholarship founded by Malcolm Dishongh in honor of his friend. It is awarded annually to a student who wins an essay-writing competition.

"Andy and I worked at Abraham Watkins and went to the Law Center together," Malcolm said. "One of my greatest memories was studying for the bar with him and knocking ideas off of him concerning the bar exam and how to prepare for it."

Malcolm Dishongh currently works as a solo practitioner and is the owner of Dishongh Law, PLLC in Humble, where he assists clients in civil litigation, including family and probate law issues, among other matters.

"Through law school and through practice, I have been able to help people," Malcolm said. "That's why I got into law, and it's what I've been able to do with my law degree. The greatest satisfaction I get is referrals and recommendations from previous clients."

Malcolm Dishongh's firm was one of the lead donors of the Law Building Campaign: More Than Bricks. With his giving, he hopes to see the Law Center become a world class learning environment with the implementation and use of growing technology that helps students be prepared for the ever-changing legal environment.

"I hope that others will see the vision that the Law Center has to continue to improve its top-tier law school status and create the team-work spirit of accomplishing something that in a few years we can all celebrate and appreciate for many years to come," he said. "The building campaign is bringing a collective spirit to a singular goal – make the University of Houston Law Center the best it can be."



Malcolm Dishongh '93 and son, Kenneth Dishongh '20

LOVE FOR LITIGATION FUELS BO DAWSON '91 AND RISING 3L SON THOMAS

UH LAW CENTER ALUMNUS PLAYS CRITICAL ROLE IN FUNDING FOR NEW BUILDING



When the next generations of University of Houston Law Center student attorneys receive hands-on experience in the school's renowned clinics at the John M. O'Quinn Law Building, they will be doing this important work in the Carl "Bo" Dawson Family Clinic Office.

Carl "Bo" Dawson, a member of the Law Center class of 1991, said he contributed this space to the Law Center's new facility because of how much he relishes his career in the legal profession.

"If I can look at everything that has contributed to my being personally successful, not just monetarily - but successful in terms of doing something that's rewarding in my life, the Law Center is obviously at the top of the list," Bo Dawson said. "I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't gone to the Law Center and become a lawyer."

"I wouldn't be having as much fun, I wouldn't be doing as well. I wouldn't have met some of my best friends who I met at law school. It's a special place for me.

I'm very blessed. I don't have the jet airplanes, but it's been a lot of fun and it's been very rewarding."

Bo Dawson is a founding partner at Ryan & Dawson, a firm that specializes in business and consumer litigation, commercial and personal transactions and a variety of other services. The firm has locations in Houston, Schulenberg and Weimar.

Like many attorneys who excel doing competitive trial work, Bo Dawson enjoys practicing his craft in the courtroom setting.

"I love trying lawsuits - it's a blast," Bo Dawson said. "You don't make the facts, but when you can present the facts in a way that a jury comes back and agrees with your position it's just awesome. I have plenty of cases where lawyers on the opposing side wouldn't take it personally, and those are the most fun. We agree we didn't make the facts, we're just here to advocate." Bo Dawson also serves as Weimar's City Attorney, where his responsibilities touch other areas of law than the work done at his firm.

"I can be in a city council meeting where I work with council members from all walks of life, none of who are professional politicians," he said. "They're just trying to make democracy work. They need that help sometimes, and I can provide that."

"If we didn't have lawyers, how would we resolve issues? Just as companies need legal help, there is a great need at all levels for people to get legal advice."

Bo Dawson's connection to the Law Center has extended to another generation. His son, Thomas Dawson, will be entering his 3L year in August 2020. In addition to his father, his maternal grandfather also served as a role model who worked in the legal profession as a trial lawyer in San Antonio.

"I'm very close to both of them and have looked up to them since I was very young. They were both a significant influence on my decision to attend law school," Thomas Dawson said. "Especially my dad, and especially the decision to attend the Law Center. Through college, they were definitely been a significance influence on my want to attend law school and become a lawyer eventually."

During the summer of 2020 Thomas Dawson clerked with Donato Brown Pool & Moehlmann in Houston. He previously has experience with Ryan & Dawson and several other personal injury firms. Like his father, Thomas Dawson envisions himself as a litigator.

"I really like digging into the information and facts of a case," he said. "You can attack it from what seems like 10 different angles. All of those angles seem like they're a solid way to attack a problem or argue something. Once you have the basic information down, it leads to a lot of intelligent creativity that opens up for a good

litigator. I'm really interested in that because you can constantly hone and learn and prove on that."

"I took a trial advocacy class in the fall semester of my 2L year and got the bug from that course. I see myself doing a mix of general litigation and business litigation. I'm not necessarily

going to limit myself. I want a good mix of experience, to be able to stand in front of a judge and maybe go to trial even though that's rare these days."

While Thomas Dawson may be a member of the Class of 2021 and will not take any courses at the John M. O'Quinn Law Building, he feels a sense of gratification that his family's name will have a presence at the Law Center's future home.

"My dad is so honored and proud to be able to donate and be able to give back in that way," Thomas Dawson said. "I am really excited for the new building to open up. I won't be a student, but I'll be an alumni and just as proud of that new building. Hopefully I can do something similar in the future considering the skills the Law Center gives you to be a successful attorney."

For Bo Dawson, he looks forward to seeing how Thomas' legal education from the Law Center will benefit him in the future.

"I'm excited for him," Bo Dawson said. "I'm 30 years out of law school. My assumption is he's going to have as much fun doing this as I've had."

"The Law Center gives a really solid foundation for practicing law. I'm excited that he's at the Law Center because its reputation just keeps going up. I am proud of Thomas and I'm proud of the Law Center."

"If we didn't have lawyers, how would we resolve issues?"



VICTOR WRIGHT '98

UHLC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT WRIGHT
ENCOURAGES SUPPORT FOR
AFFINITY STUDENT AND
GRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS

As president of the UH Law Alumni Association, Victor Wright '98 juggles numerous responsibilities, including chairing the Law Review Board, with a singular mission of continuing to strengthen the University of Houston Law Center's standing as a premier law school.

Part of that mission involves providing resources to minority students to help them be successful throughout their legal education.

"I see it as my obligation to give in serving the school with my time, talents and resources," Wright said. "It is undeniable that Black law school students and practicing attorneys in particular face unique challenges in the legal profession which pose racial barriers to our future success."

"For me personally, giving back to the Law Center, which operates as the legal training ground for Black students who choose to attend our esteemed law school, and remaining steadfast and consistent in my commitment to do so is an obligation I take freely and without any reservation."

Wright said he is particularly proud to be in a position to support the Black Law Students Association and other minority affinity groups at the Law Center.

"It is imperative for all alumni to serve as role models and to mentor those who follow behind us in pursuing their career goals within or outside of the legal profession."

Wright currently serves as the director of the global labor and employment law group at KBR, Inc. Being an active duty member of the Air Force during his time in law school, Wright said the Law Center served as a bridge from his military background and experience to his career in law.

"The Law Center served as a foundational catalyst to my becoming a military attorney and later transitioning to practice law in civilian private law firm and corporate legal department settings," Wright said. "My Law Center education has been invaluable and life-changing. It put me on a path to a legal career spent serving in the federal government, private law firm practice, and now as in-house counsel at a large publicly traded corporation."



EZEQUIEL REYNA '80 PAYS IT FORWARD

AFTER RECEIVING
TRANSFORMATIVE
EDUCATION FROM
UH LAW CENTER

Ezequiel Reyna, Jr., a 1980 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, credits the school for altering the trajectory of his professional career and allowing him to help countless people through his South Texas law practice in Weslaco.

"I come from a very poor background," Reyna said. "I always had aspirations of doing something with myself, but law was not at the forefront of my aspirations. It just seemed somewhat farfetched."

Reyna thanks his close childhood friend, the late George Almaraz '77, for convincing him to apply to law school.

"I had the good fortune of getting into the Law Center, which is a fantastic law school," Reyna said.

Shortly after completing his legal education, Reyna founded the Law Office of Ezequiel Reyna, Jr., where he continues to serve as managing partner. The firm specializes in personal injury law and has five attorneys and more than 50 employees.

**"To say the Law Center
was a life-changer
would be an
understatement."**

"There are a lot of impoverished people in South Texas," Reyna said. "I've loved personal injury work from the beginning since it's about helping those in need and righting a wrong. We've been blessed to be able to help many thousands of South Texas families."

Reyna affirms "without hesitation" that the Law Center altered the trajectory of his career. As the newest member of the Cornerstone Club, Reyna hopes to change the lives of aspiring attorneys for years to come, just as the Law Center did for him.

"To say the Law Center was a life-changer would be an understatement," Reyna said. "It was a no-brainer for me to give back. What makes institutions great are the professors and the administration. Having good administrators and good professors takes resources. A good portion of those resources must come from alumni."



STANLEY BLEND '67

PASSION FOR TAX LAW

A KEY MOTIVATOR FOR STANLEY BLEND TO GIVE TO LAW CENTER BUILDING CAMPAIGN

Stanley Blend went to law school on an impulse, applying the summer before his acceptance to the then-Bates College of Law. The 1967 graduate realized he made the correct decision early in the first semester of his 1L year.

"The professors made it a challenge and made me think," Blend said. "I quickly developed new friends like John O'Quinn, and classmates who could bring the best out of each other."

Blend serves as senior counsel at Clark Hill in San Antonio. His practice involves federal income and estate tax planning, state sales tax and margin tax planning, federal income and estate tax controversy and mergers and acquisitions negotiations. He said he gravitated towards tax law because of the teaching of Professor Jim Wright.

"He made us realize that tax was a creative law in which one could plan creatively," Blend said.

However, Blend pointed to a single drawback from his time as a law student - facilities.

"We always felt like second-class citizens because our school was in the basement of the MD Anderson Library. Our Law Review office was the size of a

large closet. I vowed at that time that if I ever had the fiscal opportunity, I would help the law school have a building that was equal to its faculty and student body."

I have always supported the law school, even when I did not have the finances, because it directed me into tax law which has been professionally and financially rewarding to me and my family."

When Blend had a chance and ability to make good on that vow to himself, he jumped at the opportunity. He became a member of the Cornerstone Club, a vital fundraising and leadership arm of the Law Center's building campaign. He has also hosted a number of events in San Antonio to encourage alumni support. For his philanthropy, the Business and Tax Law Journal office will bear his name in the new Law Center facility.

"I was one of the first to commit to the fundraising campaign," he said. "How could I say no to the Dean, who I find to be a compassionate, professional and dynamic leader?"

"We are lucky to have him and with this new building, I do not believe we will have to consider ourselves 'second-class citizens' ever again."



ABBY KOTUN '13

UHLC ALUMNA KOTUN SHOWS SUPPORT THROUGH NEW BLACK LAW ALUMNI GROUP

The law school process can bring unique challenges to any person. University of Houston Law Center graduate Modinat “Abby” Kotun ’13 acknowledges that these obstacles can be compounded internally and externally as a student who comes from a minority background.

“Individuals have to combat imposter syndrome. Macroaggressions, however unintentional, exist

everywhere,” Kotun said. “The Black student or Black lawyer feels like they are representing their entire race and culture.”

“I’ve found that affinity organizations, including the Black Law Students Association and the Black Law Alumni Association, serve as a home base of sorts. They provide a place to recharge in order to fight the battles coexistent with the Black student/lawyer experience. If done well, a Black student or lawyer can thrive within an affinity organization and gain the confidence necessary to bring leadership qualities to bear in their practice and among the Bar at large.”

Kotun said that the Law Center has made strides in its commitment to diversity, and she has thoroughly enjoyed Black Law alumni programming. Kotun has also supported the BLA Alumni Building Fund.

“I’ve had opportunities to meet those that came before and to hear from authorities on various legal topics as they speak on current events,” Kotun said. “Gathering the Black Law Alumni to give to the new facility and be reflected in the brick and mortar building has been yet another opportunity for us to join forces and show the importance of diversity to generations to come.”

Kotun said that the need for diversity in the legal profession is especially pronounced, as attorneys represent clients in every facet of life and from various backgrounds.

“Diverse teams come up with better solutions to problems because thinking out of the box is somewhat built in,” Kotun said. “Diverse individuals bring a diversity of experience and approach. It only makes sense that the individuals representing clients be able to understand and connect with those clients. Racial diversity is not the only type of diversity, but it certainly helps in broadening a team’s range of cultural acumen, which can be invaluable.”

In her current role as an associate at Reed Smith, Kotun represents employers in disputes with their employees and former employees.

“I love being able to use my various experiences to help employers do the right thing for their employees,” Kotun said. “I bring to every case my diversity of experience from my race, culture and gender as well as my prior career as an individual contributor and engineer.”



NEAL SUTTON '72

UHLC ALUMNUS NEAL SUTTON'S
FOND MEMORIES AS LAW
STUDENT DRIVES GENEROSITY
TOWARD FUTURE LAWYERS

As a 1972 graduate of the University of Houston Law Center, Neal Sutton recalls his law school experience as a special time, whether it is recalling a list of legendary faculty members, the camaraderie he formed with classmates over bridge games, or his involvement in student organizations.

"I had some of the great professors that there are marvelous stories about," Sutton said. "I was in the first class of the current Law Center building. I started in the summer of 1969 with a torts class at night while I was still working. You can just go through the names like Sidney Buchanan, John Mixon, Dwight Olds, Tom Newhouse, Dean White, Dean Blakely. John O'Quinn was my instructor for Texas Procedure.

"I basically lived at the law school. It was a wonderful experience - great people, great professors, great courses. I learned a heck of a lot."

Sutton, who also attended the University of Houston for his undergraduate education, paid his way through college and law school. He was one of the first students to attend the Law Center at its current site. There will be a visible testament to his career and leadership in the Law Center's next facility.

Through generous contributions, Sutton will provide student scholarships and will have a leadership conference room in the new building named after him.

"One thing I want to continue to do is to support the University of Houston Law Center's growth, and part of that is attracting quality and diverse students," Sutton said. "I'm reminded of what it took for me to get through school, and whatever I can do to help someone else make that journey without having to be overly concerned financially seems well worth it."

Leadership was a theme throughout Sutton's career, including spending more than 15 years as the Senior Vice President for Administration and General Counsel at Smith International, a former Fortune 500 company prior to merging with Schlumberger. He credited his legal education for allowing him to remain versatile while working in a high-leverage role in the business.

"Legal training, problem solving, being analytical, being able to see and work in an advisory capacity as well as to manage, I learned all of that at UH, and the Law Center was the larger part of that," Sutton said. "You can imagine the kinds of stuff you have to do when you're running legal, patent, environmental, human resources, contracts administration, insurance and risk management, health and safety. It was a pretty diverse set of responsibilities, and I loved it. It was a great time."

Sutton is no longer a practicing attorney and is retired in Austin. However, he has still managed to use his legal education in a meaningful way and give back to his community as a mentor and philanthropist.

"The training that a law degree gave me is the ticket to the success I had throughout my career and where I am now in retirement," Sutton said. "I still use it. I was president of our homeowner's association for 10 years here, just to kind of keep my foot in the managerial door. My training and experience allow me to do a diverse number of things.

"My wife and I have been involved with several non-profits in different disciplines. One, in particular, provides support and mentoring for students, mostly minority, who would be the first in their families to go to college. We continue to support the regional food bank, more so in these difficult times, as well as conservation efforts in the state of Texas. My experience and training at UHLC have been, in large part, the genesis of what has carried me through."



AMY SPRINGS '06

UHLC ALUMNA SPRINGS PARTNERS WITH WOL GROUP TO EMPOWER WOMEN ATTORNEYS

While the number of women entering law school continues to rise, this is not necessarily reflected in many of the senior positions at companies or partners at law firms.

This disparity is just one of many reasons why University of Houston Law Center graduate Amy Springs, a member of the class of 2006, supports the Women of the Law affinity group. The Women of the Law group is focused on engagement and education through social activities that highlight the diversity of achievement at UHLC, broaden and deepen giving, cultivate and mentor women as philanthropists and leaders, identify and support UHLC programs that reflect women's varied interests, and advocate on behalf of women's leadership in law and within the Law Center.

"It's important to have representation of the community in any profession," Springs said. "If you have a group of people with a variety of backgrounds and upbringings and different views of the world, it's a formula for diverse and creative thinking and women are a large part of that community. This fosters inclusion and creativity."

Springs joined the organization in August of 2019 and is currently serving on the Women of the Law host and steering committees. The steering committee provides guidance on the planning of annual fall and spring WOL events and outreach such as marketing, networking and fundraising.

"Several of the events we have organized in the past year have been well attended," Springs said. "Our 2020 dinner event had attendees move tables for each course and each table had a UHLC female alumni leading conversations on topics women lawyers face today. This year we are contemplating scholarships as an additional way to support and retain women at UHLC."

When approached to volunteer with the Women of the Law group, Springs noted that it was an easy decision participate in the initiative.

"I'm thrilled to give my time and energy to help UHLC WOL inspire, mentor and educate blossoming women lawyers in our community," she said. "Many of the women involved in this group exemplify excellence and have overcome many challenges that face women in the Houston legal community. It is inspiring to see that more women are making it to top roles in the legal community."

"The organization has provided an opportunity for me personally to get to know and work with a number of incredible UHLC women alumni and students on matters that are near and dear to me, supporting and lifting women up in the Houston legal community and giving back to UHLC."

Springs works as a Senior Vice President and Associate General Counsel at EIG Global Energy Partners. Her legal education set the foundation for legal skills (identifying, assessing, and managing risk) that she has built upon over the years and uses every day. UHLC gave her networking, programming and scholarship opportunities that were critical in landing that first job out of law school.

"As the initial and now senior transactions counsel at EIG, I have been able to build a program from the ground up, a team that is diverse and respected at our firm," Springs said. "I enjoy the complexity of deal and finance work with sophisticated parties and outside counsel and that I'm constantly learning and being challenging. If I turn on the news in the morning, inevitably something in the programming is related to something I am working on."



CHRISTOPHER DOMINGO '09

DEMONSTRATES LEADERSHIP AMONG LOCAL HISPANIC LEGAL COMMUNITY

UHLC GRADUATE RALLIES
SUPPORT FOR OLIVAS-REYES
READING ROOM IN
NEW BUILDING

As a University of Houston Law Center student, Christopher Domingo's interactions with Professor Michael A. Olivas were minimal. The member of the Law Center Class of 2009 became more familiar with Olivas' work once he became a part of the Board of Directors for the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston, three years into his legal career.

"When I joined, the organization was celebrating its 25th anniversary, and I joined a committee focused on researching and documenting HisBA's history," Domingo said. "Through that effort, I learned more about Professor Olivas and his role as one of HisBA's founding members. Since then I have had the good fortune to spend time with him at various HisBA events and learn more about his long history with the University and his trailblazing efforts to increase diversity in the Houston legal community."

Domingo was part of an effort by the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston and UHLC Hispanic Law Alumni to support what will be known as the Olivas-Reyes Reading Room in the new John M. O'Quinn Law Building. The space is named after Olivas and his wife, Tina Reyes, who was a professor at the University of Houston's College of Education.

"They dedicated much of their professional lives to the Law Center and the University of Houston system," Domingo said. "Dedicating a reading room in their honor is a perfect tribute, especially in light of Professor Olivas's recent retirement after almost 40 years of teaching at the Law Center."

Domingo said without enterprising leaders like Olivas, the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston would not be where it is today.

"Professor Olivas is not only a founding member of the organization, but a long-time member of our Advisory Board and a recipient of one of HisBA's most prestigious honors – the Lifetime Achievement Award," Domingo said.

Having served in every officer position within the organization, Domingo's commitment to empowering the Hispanic community in the legal profession remains strong. Among his favorite aspects are mentorship opportunities, connections with community leaders and friendships made along the way.

"This group gives me a tremendous sense of pride," he said. "I've seen our mission play out in our work to empower the Hispanic community, in our scholarships to deserving high school and law school students, and in our efforts to promote diversity initiatives and seek legal reform to ensure fairness in the administration of justice."

ALUMNI FUEL THE FUTURE OF UHLC AT 100% CHALLENGE KICKOFF EVENT

UHLC 100% CHALLENGE CO-CHAIRS



Sean Cichowski, '09
Akerman LLP



Sara Longtain, '07
Locke Lord LLP



David Rusk, '14
Thompson & Knight



Harve Truskett, '08
Hunton Andrews
Kurth LLP



Keli Viereck, '95
Total Petrochemicals
& Refining USA, Inc



Richard Whiteley, '99
Bracewell LLP

University of Houston Law Center graduates detailed how their legal education has made a profound impact on their lives and how they pay it forward during the official start of the 100% Challenge during a Zoom gathering in June.

The 100% Challenge is the Law Center's annual alumni-driven campaign to increase the impact of unrestricted giving to the Law Fund. Volunteer captains at participating organizations share the message of Law Fund supports several key areas across the Law Center, including emergency aid and scholarships for students, stipends for internships, career development services, faculty recruitment and alumni programming. Together with their colleagues, these captains help to raise tens of thousands of dollars to support these areas of impact.

The first alumnus to speak was Richard Whiteley '99, a partner at Bracewell LLP and one of the co-chairs of the campaign.

"I've been involved in the 100% Challenge for many, many years just because of how proud I am of the Law Center and what it stands for and the ideals it has been committed to for a long time," Whiteley, who serves on the Alumni Association Board and the Foundation Board, said. "This is a very important year for the Law Fund. The building is a huge accomplishment, but what we have to turn our attention to now is the Law Fund."

Michelle Gray '11, a founding partner at Fogler, Brar, O'Neil & Gray LLP, and a board member of the Law Center's Alumni Association, discussed her motivation to contribute to the future of the Law Center.

"There are so many reasons I give, but the past few months have made me reflect on what's important," Gray said. "The University of Houston Law Center has had one of the most profound impacts on specifically where I am today and who I am. The Law Center has opened so many doors, and it is the doorway for so many others."

UHLC KEEP LOCAL ATTORNEYS AWARE OF EVOLVING PRACTICES THROUGH FREE CLE SESSIONS

Every year the University of Houston Law Center offers continuing legal education for alumni and others in the legal community, the majority of which are at no cost, so that attorneys can remain abreast of ever-changing laws.

"The Law Center strives to present quality programming that leads to more knowledgeable, competent and effective lawyers so they may better serve their firms, practices, and the community," said Director of CLE Tanisha Green.

From May 2019 through July 2020, the Law Center offered 29 approved events that covered topics ranging from business litigation, immigration, intellectual property, medical-legal partnerships, youth advocacy and more. During this time, 89.25 hours of CLE was offered, with 16.5 hours counting as ethics credits. The Law Center reported attendance for 1,050 practitioners licensed in Texas totaling 4,871.75 hours reported to the Texas State Bar.

PANDEMIC OUTBREAK



No one saw it coming in January, but life at the Law Center —and around the globe — was about to take a dramatic turn. The outbreak of a viral infection, first thought to be pneumonia, but soon found to be a highly contagious and deadly coronavirus, was reported in the Chinese provincial capital of Wuhan. The epidemic quickly spread to become a global pandemic. Houston was not initially hit as hard as cities such as New York, Seattle, and San Francisco, but nonetheless schools, including the Law Center, switched to remote learning, businesses closed, events were canceled and everyone was told to practice social distancing, stay at home and wear masks in public.

The Law Center reacted quickly, well before the scope of the threat became clear. The Health Law & Policy Institute alerted the public, media, and health and safety officials to the dangers of the coronavirus by hosting a webinar on Feb. 19, 10 days before the first reported death in the U.S. The HLPI also compiled a Covid-19 “toolkit” for the school’s website with links to various sources of information, including the Institute’s 2020 Texas bench book, “Control Measures and Public Health Emergencies.”

In the days to come, faculty, students and staff adapted to a number of extraordinary measures to make the best of an unprecedented situation: the IT staff taught faculty on the ins and outs of teaching via Zoom; students went off to Spring Break and learned classes would switch to remote-teaching upon their return; the building was closed; faculty voted to change the grading system to Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory-No Credit Reported; and commencement was postponed indefinitely. Students already dealing with the stress of law school, faced the added anxiety of family, friends and themselves potentially contracting a deadly disease.

Though the law school experience had changed dramatically for students, the Law Center’s mission of providing a quality legal education remained. By most accounts, remote teaching was a success; student support services, including online counseling and



employer networking opportunities continued; and special events and panel discussions were held virtually.

“I greatly appreciate the faculty, staff and students adapting to these unprecedented circumstances with humbleness and courage,” said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. “Each has demonstrated their remarkable leadership skills and flexibility as we moved forward during the pandemic. Also, everyone has shown incredible patience and cooperation under these very trying circumstances. Lastly our IT Department and Law Librarians were there for us as we trained faculty and staff to be much more proficient in the online delivery of classes and services.”

At this point, the Law Center will reopen for the fall semester, with a mix of all online and HyFlex formats. The HyFlex format would allow for a combination of face-to-face and online instruction. To the best extent possible, based on prevailing local guidance, we plan to offer the incoming first year students the traditional law school experience just in a socially distant manner. For the foreseeable future, we also plan that most upcoming alumni, student, and faculty events to be offered online.

“We neither know the lasting effects nor the duration of the coronavirus crisis, but do know that we plan to remain flexible and adaptive by balancing the safety of our community while providing our students the best legal education like we have done in the past,” Baynes said.

UHLC COVID-19 RESPONSE

UHLC'S HEALTH LAW & POLICY INSTITUTE HELD CORONAVIRUS WEBINAR AMID GROWING GLOBAL CONCERN



As COVID-19 continued to spread abroad, experts in law, infectious diseases, medicine and public health discussed potential outcomes and methods to confront the pandemic in a webinar in February hosted by the University of Houston Law Center's Health Law & Policy Institute.

The webinar was intended for the general public and media, but was of particular interest to those in law enforcement, the judiciary, public health, business and education. Speakers discussed laws pertaining to isolation and quarantine while local health analyzed the epidemiology of the outbreak and efforts to prevent and respond to a potential emergency. There was also discussions of legal and practical issues for employers and educational institutions.

There were 140 attendees, with viewers in Canada, Peru, Puerto Rico and the U.K.

Law Foundation Professor of Law Seth J. Chandler, an economics and health law scholar, moderated the webinar. He discussed how the greater Houston area and Texas could form an epicenter should COVID-19 become a pandemic in the U.S.

"We're in the gray zone between unwarranted optimism and induced panic, and both are mistakes," Chandler said. "Too little preparation and we could find ourselves overwhelmed. People do not always make good decisions under pressure when confronting new woes. Too much worry is also dangerous. Fear has costs. It can hurt the economy and can lead us to disregard other woes."

Chandler pointed to how the spread of the virus could spark immigration concerns, and referenced two statutes that would protect the U.S. - 8 USC 1182 (a)(1)(A)(ii) and 8 USC 1222.

"There are federal laws that do protect the United States against aliens with communicable diseases," Chandler said. "It renders those people inadmissible."

"Then what about people where we don't know they have a communicable disease but they come from a country or embarked in a place where any of certain diseases are prevalent or epidemic? Under this statute 8 USC 1222, these people can be detained until the uncertainty is resolved as to whether they have the disease. That detention seems to be about 14 days for COVID-19. Even if you aren't symptomatic, there is some possibility that you could be detained."

Chandler also discussed federal laws related to quarantines.

"Being a U.S. citizen does not immunize you from the potential for being quarantined," he said. "Section 70.6 of the Code of Federal Regulations are going to set for the circumstances in which U.S. citizens can be quarantined."

Dr. Luis Ostrosky-Zeichner, Vice-Chair in Healthcare Quality and a professor in infectious diseases at the UTHealth McGovern Medical School, served as the second speaker, and addressed epidemiology issues surrounding coronavirus.

“Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are very common in many different species of animals,” Ostrosky-Zeichner said. “It is one of the most common causes of the ‘common cold’ in humans.”

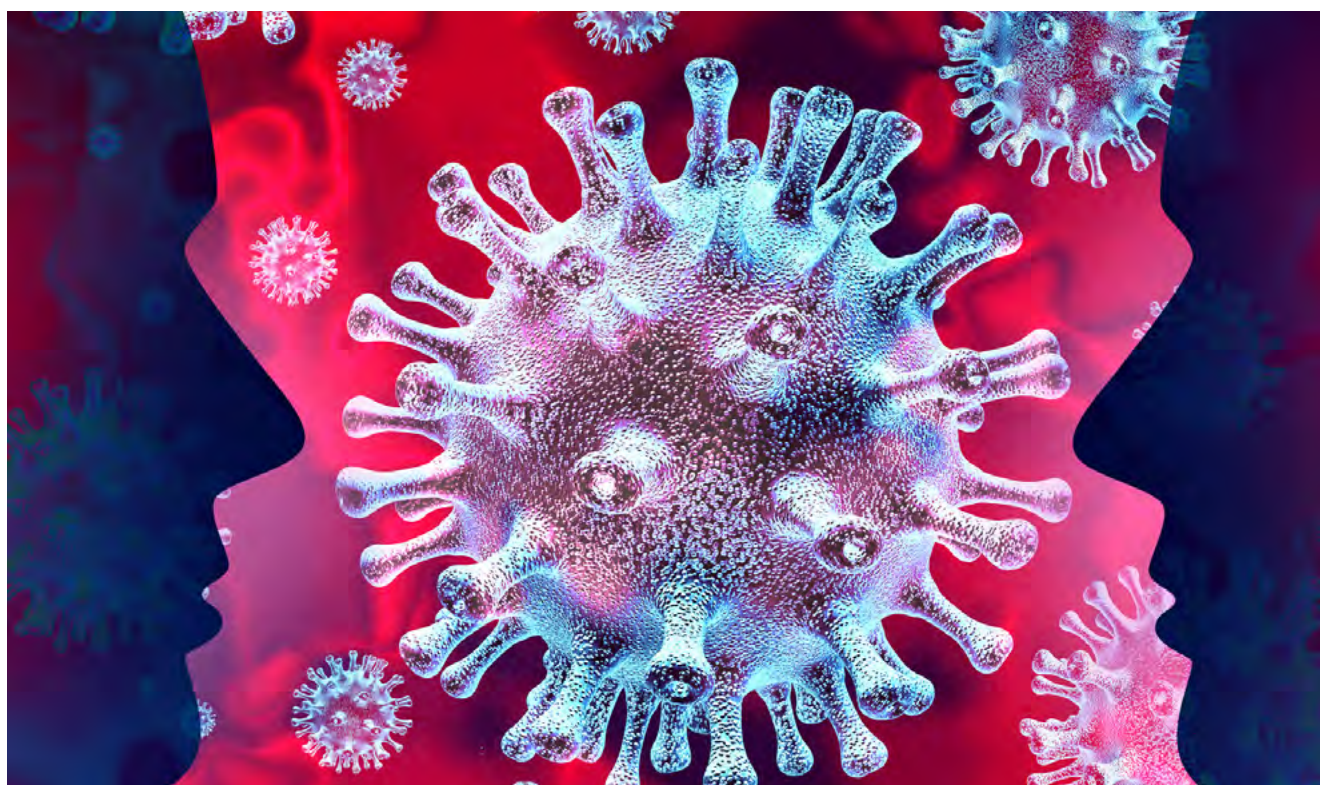
“This iteration of the virus was first detected in Wuhan, China in December. Initial cases had a link to a large ‘wet market’ that suggested an animal-to-person spread. Subsequent cases indicated person-to-person spread, and cases are now being reported in several countries.”

Dr. Umair Shah of the Harris County Public Health Authority discussed the local state of affairs as it pertains to COVID-19.

“This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and Harris County Public Health is monitoring the situation along with local, state, federal and global partners,” Shah said in February. “Harris County has zero confirmed cases of COVID-19.”

“Certain parts of our community have had a lot of rumors and information that’s incorrect. The second part of any outbreak that we usually have to fight is misinformation.”

UHLC’S HEALTH LAW & POLICY INSTITUTE ORGANIZES COVID-19 LEGAL RESOURCES TOOLKIT



The Health Law & Policy Institute launched a COVID-19 Pandemic Legal Resources for Texas page on the University of Houston Law Center website in March.

The Health Law & Policy Institute continues to work closely with the judiciary and the Office of Court Administration to advise on Chapter 81 of the Texas Health & Safety Code, which covers the role of Texas courts during public health emergencies. Updates and new content can be found at www.law.uh.edu/healthlaw/covid-19/.

The initiative was arranged by Research Assistant Professor Leah Fowler.

“We are in challenging times, and each state is working hard to flatten the curve,” Fowler said. “In Texas, key control

measures are found in Chapter 81 of the Texas Health & Safety Code. We are proud to develop resources that help practitioners navigate what is likely an unfamiliar statute.”

The page houses several resources developed for judges and attorneys handling court-ordered management of persons with communicable diseases, including memoranda, training videos, and forms. Importantly, the website also includes the 2020 edition of “Control Measures and Public Health Emergencies: A Texas Bench Book.”

Other features include links to important emergency orders from the Supreme Court of Texas and Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas, as well as important declarations from Gov. Greg Abbott and Commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, Dr. John Hellerstedt.

UHLC ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ALUMNI CELEBRATED AT ALUMNI ANNUAL MEETING



UHLC alumni, administrators and staff met online for a special edition of the 2020 Law Alumni Association Annual Meeting.

University of Houston Law Center graduates from coast to coast joined the 2020 Law Alumni Association Virtual Annual Meeting held in June via Zoom. Among topics discussed were how the Law Center adjusted to the COVID-19 pandemic, and milestones the school reached in the past year.

"I was so excited to see people from all over the country and all over the world attending our virtual annual alumni meeting," said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "The hard work of bringing people together is paying off. The use of technology during the pandemic has brought the UHLC world closer together."

"We appreciate your participation and all of your support over the years," added Associate Dean of Law Alumni and Community Relations Sondra Tennessee. "It means so much to the Law Center and our students."

UHLC OFFERS DIGITAL ENGLISH COURSE FOR FOREIGN LAW STUDENTS

International students admitted to the University of Houston Law Center or prospective law students brushed up on legal language, oral communications and other skills as part of a custom-created online course conducted by the UH Language and Culture Center. The English as an Additional Language Certificate course was held online from June 24 – July 27.

"We were delighted to offer this EAL certificate course to foreign trained lawyers who are preparing to study law in the USA," said Executive Director of Global and Graduate

Programs Karen Jones. "Even those who have done well on the TOEFL, IELTS or other English proficiency exams, benefited greatly from this course. It not only allowed students to improve their English proficiency, but also helped prepare them for legal study at the University of Houston Law Center or anywhere in the country by covering the legal language necessary in the study of U.S. law."

"We appreciate the challenges foreign lawyers encounter with English proficiency and the study of law in the USA. We were happy to offer this resource in a four-week intensive course, available to them this summer fully online."

UHLC GRADUATES DISCUSS HOW TO SUCCEED IN A PANDEMIC DURING INAUGURAL BLACK LAW ALUMNI EVENT



UHLC alumni and administrators recently participated in a networking event hosted by the Black Law Alumni affinity group.

Graduates of the University of Houston Law Center gathered in May for a networking gathering entitled, "Black Law Alumni Virtual Event on Professional Success During Pandemic." The Black Law Alumni organization is a new affinity group that is part of the Law Alumni Association.

Speakers included Sheshe Evans '97, a partner at the HFW law firm, Hon. Jarvis V. Hollingsworth '93, general counsel at Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors and Scott Lemond '94, general counsel of the Harris County Housing Authority.

"We wanted to establish the Black Law Alumni affinity group for networking, to increase engagement and to help open up professional opportunities," said UH Law Alumni Association President Victor Wright '98. "This is a well-needed group because we need to be engaged with each other now more than ever as we are navigating this global pandemic."

The first topic that panelists were asked to discuss was how they adjusted their leadership styles amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Lemond discussed the importance of maintaining email etiquette while interacting with co-workers in a remote environment.

“It’s difficult to maintain relations with your co-workers, to supervise people who are looking for work or guidance,” he said. “One of the things I’ve had to do is think about the way I’m communicating with them especially over email and text messages, or something other than a face-to-face conversation or even a telephone conversation. There is a way to get the point across that something is important without exclamation points and red letters.”

Hollingsworth added the importance of being cognizant of the current environment, and that teammates may be going through personal issues that they have not shared.

“Many people’s lives have been turned upside down, and we need to be compassionate and empathetic,” Hollingsworth said. “It’s good to start an email with ‘good morning’ before launching into a topic.”

Evans discussed how her practice has not changed, but she has had to think outside the box at times to be a versatile advocate for her clients.

“My practice is the same, but I have to be more creative and nimble in the way I service my client’s needs,” she said. “That is foremost in my mind. Some things I may have preferred to do face-to-face, problems that I might have wanted to solve in a different way, I just have to be more creative about it. That is the primary change and challenge so far.”

Among other topics discussed were how to find a mentor while social distancing.

“Identify people who you think you have a connection with, and who you can be of service to,” Evans said. “It’s not just about what they can do for you, but what you can do for them. If you identify those people, reach out via email or call. Everyone wants to help and understand that if you reach out and ask for help you probably are going to get it.”

“You have to stay engaged and be proactive. This is your career and it’s not going to happen without your involvement,” Lemond added.

Hollingsworth also highlighted the importance of keeping an active online presence as organizations adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It can be easy to disappear virtually,” Hollingsworth added. “This is not the time. Firms are still going to measure everyone at the end of this year. I encourage you to stay actively engaged with associates and partners at your firm, even more so now.”

UHLC HOSTS VIRTUAL SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR NEWLY-MINTED ATTORNEYS

Recent University of Houston Law Center graduates were officially welcomed to the legal profession via Zoom video conference in May.

The ceremony included words from Dean Leonard M. Baynes, Associate Dean of Law Alumni and Community Relations Sondra Tennessee and Texas State Bar President Randy Sorrells. The alumni were sworn in by U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas Judge Jeff Brown ’95.

“Many congratulations to our alums who have passed the bar,” Baynes said in his welcoming remarks. “I congratulate you making it this far, and am very proud of your accomplishments. This is such a rite of passage. Entering the legal profession is a noble pursuit that opens up many opportunities.”

Before swearing in the Law Center alumni, Brown quoted former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in his “Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat” speech from May 13, 1940.

“I’m pleased to swear in fellow alumni of the Law Center and welcome them to the bar,” Brown said. “I want to congratulate you – you have graduated from one of our nation’s finest law schools.”

“My piece of advice, especially appropriate in these unusual times that we have, is, ‘I am an optimist. It does not seem much use being anything else.’ We can all strive to be optimistic as well.”

One of the alumni, Fatima Syed said she was appreciative of taking her oath as an attorney under unique circumstances.

“During a time of immense uncertainty, the UHLC Virtual Swearing-In Ceremony left me feeling empowered and uplifted to be joining a profession of advocacy,” she said. “I am grateful for the time and generosity extended by Judge Brown, Mr. Sorrells, and our deans to help us commemorate this milestone.”





UHLC CLASS OF 2020 J.D. AND LL.M. GRADUATES CELEBRATED IN VIDEO

University of Houston Law Center faculty members, administrators, and alumni offered their congratulations in a video released in May to students who recently completed their legal education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of the University of Houston, commencement was postponed indefinitely.

“Graduates, we are proud of you,” said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. “You made it through Hurricane Harvey and now the coronavirus. These are tough situations that will make you stronger and more resilient.”

“We’ve enjoyed teaching you, and we look forward to celebrating your future careers. You’re graduating from a top-tier law school, and you should feel tremendous pride in being a UH Law Center graduate.”

<https://www.law.uh.edu/news/spring2020/0522Graduation.asp>

VIRTUAL TEXAS LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS WEBINAR LED BY UHLC



Representatives from law schools across the state answered questions sent in by prospective law school students in a Zoom panel discussion on Saturday. The event was organized by University of Houston Law Center Assistant Dean for Admissions Pilar Mensah and Assistant Director of Admissions Angela Ambers-Henderson.

The University of Houston Law Center Admissions Office hosted the first-ever Texas Law School Admissions Panel webinar in May. Assistant Director of Admissions Angela Ambers-Henderson facilitated the three-hour long event where panelists addressed how best to navigate the application process amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Panelists included Law Center Assistant Dean for Admissions Pilar Mensah and Ambers-Henderson and the following representatives from other state law schools:

- Baylor School of Law Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Jenny Branson

- South Texas College of Law Houston Assistant Dean of Admissions Alicia Cramer
- St. Mary’s University School of Law Assistant Dean for Admissions Catherine Casiano
- SMU Dedman School of Law Assistant Dean for Admissions Jill Nikirk
- Texas A&M University School of Law Assistant Dean of Admissions & Scholarships Terence Cook
- Texas Tech University School of Law Assistant Dean of Admissions Danielle Saavedra
- Thurgood Marshall School of Law Assistant Director of Financial Aid and Admissions Ken Moore
- University of North Texas Dallas College of Law Assistant Director of Admissions Sheena Brooks
- University of Texas School of Law Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mathiew Le

“The over 300 registrants, which included current applicants, future applicants, and pre-law advisors, submitted over 200 questions prior to the webinar that were addressed by the panelists,” Mensah said. “The webinar was interactive which allowed participants to submit questions via email real time and featured live polls.”

“The event was a huge success as evident by the survey results at the end of the session - 100 percent of the respondents felt that the webinar was helpful.”

UHLC RECOGNIZES STANDOUT STUDENTS AND FACULTY DURING STREAMING EDITION OF 2020 DEAN'S AWARDS



UHLC Dean Leonard M. Baynes, left, and Associate Dean of Law Alumni and Community Relations Sondra Tennessee, right, commended students and faculty who excelled in the past academic year in a Zoom video conference.

University of Houston Law Center students and faculty were recognized for their outstanding achievements in April at the Dean's Awards Ceremony, which took place virtually.

The event was co-hosted by Dean Leonard M. Baynes and Associate Dean of Law Alumni and Community Relations Sondra Tennessee.

"I want to thank everyone who attended our first virtual Dean's Award ceremony," Baynes said. "The events of the past few weeks have precluded us from having this event live in person like we normally do, but we wanted to make sure we honored our students and faculty who have excelled over the course of the past year."

"It's really important for us at this time to not let go of our traditions and the things that we have done before."

Approximately 150 students received recognition for scholarships and awards. LEX Awards recognized students who ranked highest in courses that included Constitutional Law, Contracts, Criminal Law, Procedure, Property, Torts, Lawyering Skills and Strategies, Intro to American Law, Statutory Interpretation & Reasoning.

Four faculty members received the following distinguished accolades:

- 2020 Ethel M. Baker Faculty Award: Leah R. Fowler, Research Director and Research Assistant Professor, Health Law & Policy Institute
- 2020 Order of the Barons Professor of the Year: Dave Fagundes, Baker Botts LLP Professor of Law and Assistant Dean for Faculty Development
- 2020 Student Bar Association Full-Time Professor of the Year: Meredith J. Duncan, the George Butler Research Professor of Law and Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion and Metropolitan Programs

- 2020 Student Bar Association Professor of the Year - Part-Time: Victor B. Flatt, the Dwight Olds Chair in Law & Faculty Co-Director of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Center

"It was very important for us to honor you," Tennessee said. "For our graduating students, you endured Hurricane Harvey and now a pandemic. But we have to work together, and we are a community that continues to support each other. I'm excited to be on the Alumni Relations team so I can continue to work with you after you graduate."

UHLC WEBINAR DETAILS COVID-19 BURDENS AND SOLUTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS



UHLC's Entrepreneurship & Community Development Clinic held a virtual continuing legal education session providing guidance and expertise to local small business owners in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Attorneys, business and employment professionals discussed some of the difficulties faced by local entrepreneurs during the University of Houston Law Center's "COVID-19: Legal Implications for Small Businesses" virtual webinar in April.

"Whether you're an aspiring entrepreneur, an owner of an established business, or an attorney or other professional who serves the small business community, we hope the program provided helpful information when addressing the challenges small businesses face during this public health crisis," said Christopher Heard, Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Entrepreneurship & Community Development Clinic.

Anthony R. Chase, an Associate Professor of Law & Business at the University of Houston Law Center, was one of four panelists. He indicated that the economic impact of COVID-19 will be more devastating to small businesses than Hurricane Harvey.

"I co-chaired a relief fund during Hurricane Harvey as well, and there are major differences," he said. "Harvey had a beginning and an end, which was quite a bit shorter than this. As a result of dramatic flooding shots during Hurricane Harvey being broadcast around the world, the Hurricane Harvey relief fund attracted donations internationally."

“Today the market for donations for the local fund is local and not global. Everybody globally has their own COVID-19 fallout.”

Valerie Maher, the lead economic development specialist for the U.S. Small Business Administration in Houston, provided a number of programs and resources available to small businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Maher said an available financial option for businesses is the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, which was signed into law on March 27.

“Businesses are given two loan choices, and they can pursue both the Economic Injury disaster Loan and Paycheck Protection Program,” Maher said. “The business needs to be in an affected area, which everyone is, and needs to meet size standards as well as other eligibility criteria.”

Koby Wilbanks ’13, a senior associate at Murrah & Killough, PLLC, discussed options for businesses when considering contractual considerations under COVID-19. The primary focus of her presentation was force majeure, defined as unforeseeable circumstances that prevent the fulfillment of a contract.

“Force majeure is generally considered to be an act of God, something outside the party’s control. Some case law states that acts of God are considered natural disasters, and some case law is more broad in definition.”

“What matters is the terms of your contract, because there is no common law force majeure. You only get the defense of force majeure if it is included in your contract and it is defined according to the contract.”

“We hope the program provided helpful information when addressing the challenges small businesses face during this public health crisis.”

Rebecca Baker a partner in the Houston office of Bracewell LLP and chair of the firm’s labor and employment practice group, described the impact that recent legislation will have on small businesses.

“What we witnessed in March was really an unprecedented action by the federal government to pass legislation that for the first time mandates employers provide certain forms of paid leave,” Baker said.

“The really interesting aspect of all of this legislation was it affects only employers with fewer than 500 employees. It’s a very significant change for small employers, particularly those with less than 50 employees.”

JUVENILE ADVOCATES URGE MONITORED RELEASE OF YOUTH OFFENDERS AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC DURING UHLC SEMINAR



A continuing legal education session hosted by the University of Houston Law Center’s Center for Children, Law & Policy informed attorneys of the current challenges youth in detention face because of COVID-19.

Members of the Juvenile Division in the Harris County Public Defender’s Office said current detention conditions are not appropriate for the confinement of youthful offenders amid the spread of the coronavirus.

Their remarks were made at the “Youth Advocacy in COVID-19” event in April presented by the University of Houston Law Center’s Center for Children, Law & Policy via video conference on Zoom.

“It’s really a horrific situation, and the Constitutional rights of young people are definitely being violated,” said Ellen Marrus, director of the Center for Children, Law & Policy and Royce Till Professor of Law. “That means more pressure has to be applied to insure the physical and mental health safety of our youth and the community.”

“As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to develop, the Center for Children, Law & Policy will continue to host more events like this and other CLEs during the summer to help defenders.”

Assistant Public Defender Christopher Sailer shared his thoughts on the issue.

“What we’re really trying to focus on going forward is presenting to judges that the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center by its design and the facts of its operation is not capable of preventing the spread of the illness,” Sailer said. “Any time you have a kid in JDC, they are at risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. That’s why we really want to get every kid possible out of JDC.”

“When our society is essentially on a lockdown, it promotes public health and safety in many ways to get kids out and

COVID RESPONSE

eliminate a potential hotspot of disease. The disease may circulate amongst kids, but staff members will also carry the disease out. It makes more sense to send kids home on electronic monitoring and confinement.”

Steven Halpert, Juvenile Division Chief of the Harris County Public Defender Office, added that an ideal situation for a juvenile’s release is to have solid supervision in place.

“Now that parents or guardians are generally at home in most of our cases, we do have at least one person that can supervise these kids 24 hours a day, which has often been lacking in the past,” he said.

The opening speaker was Mary Ann Scali, executive director of the National Juvenile Defender Center. She detailed how the organization has been supporting the work of frontline juvenile defenders across the country in a number of different ways since the start of the COVID-19 response.

“We have been trying to support state-level responses, juvenile defense responses and community responses,” Scali said. “Almost all of the efforts have really been focused on keeping young people out of the system, like halting low-level arrests. We’re also really focused on the release of young people.”

Scali also provided a landscape of what is happening nationally in terms of the work of juvenile defenders and other advocates for release.

“We have seen a lot of really creative strategies across the country, and some unlikely allies stepping in,” she said. “We have polling data that was conducted by one of our partners showing that the majority of people do support the release of youth.”

“Doctors organizations, mental health providers, and correctional institution leaders, detention facility leaders all really agreeing it’s critically important we get young people out of facilities that cannot comply with CDC recommendations for safety and health right now.”

UHLC’S CHASE CHOSEN TO LEAD REGIONAL RELIEF EFFORTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC



UHLC professor and local businessman Anthony R. Chase will help lead the Houston area’s efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anthony R. Chase, an Associate Professor of Law & Business at the University of Houston Law Center, accepted a role as co-chair of the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund in March. The Fund was established by United Way of Greater Houston and the Greater Houston Community Foundation focuses on a four-county area, including Harris County.

The Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund received endorsements from Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

and Mayor Sylvester Turner. Jamey Rootes, president of the Houston Texans, will also serve as co-chair.

Chase has taught at the Law Center since 1990 and was awarded tenure in 1995. He teaches Contracts, Entrepreneurship, Communications Law and Race & American Law.

“Our primary goal is to make sure the most vulnerable in our community affected by COVID-19 have access to food, health care, shelter and other basic necessities to sustain them in this crisis,” Chase said.

LAW-FOCUSED UNDERGRADS OFFICIALLY WELCOMED AS PRE-LAW PIPELINE PROGRAM SHIFTS ONLINE



Through a virtual format, students in the University of Houston Law Center Pre-Law Pipeline Program are receiving an introduction to law school and the legal profession this summer

Students from across the country were welcomed to the University of Houston Law Center's award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Program in two recent orientation sessions held in June on Zoom. For the first time in the program's six-year history it is being offered online, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am delighted to welcome you to the Pre-Law Pipeline Program," said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "I applaud Kristen Guiseppi, the Director of the Program, for her innovation and hard work in making this happen."

"With the program being moved online, we assure you that you will receive the same high-quality prelaw training that we usually provide, but in this virtual online setting."

"I am so amazed and inspired by our scholars who have shown true grit and resilience during this highly unprecedented time," added Program Director Kristen Guiseppi. "I am equally thrilled to welcome them to our pipeline family."

"Our work now is so much more critical and necessary with all that is happening today, and I am happy that we've made it a priority to continue to offer these services and support to these aspiring lawyers."

In the orientation sessions, students received a greeting from Dean Leonard M. Baynes through video message, an overview of the program's rules and schedule and heard from panelists who previously participated in the Pre-Law Pipeline Program.

Since the Pre-Law Pipeline Program began in 2014, 169 undergraduate students drawn from 56 colleges and universities across 24 states have completed the course. Sixty-one, or about 75 percent, of the program's college graduates have gone on to law school. Pipeline graduates have been awarded more than \$2 million in law school scholarships.

The program has been honored by numerous organizations and publications, including the American Bar Association, the Law School Admission Council, the AccessLex Institute and INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine (HEED Award).

UHLC PRESENTS VIRTUAL GLOBAL ENERGY TRANSITION LAW AND POLICY SYMPOSIUM



Experts in energy law and climate from the U.S., Mexico, the U.K. and France met digitally for the 1st Annual Conference on Global Energy Transition Law and Policy in April. The event is co-presented by the University of Houston Law Center's Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Center and Center for U.S. and Mexican Law. "We are so excited to have our first symposium on the global energy transition sponsored by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship from the European Union,"

said Victor Flatt, the Dwight Olds Chair in Law and the Faculty Director of the Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Center. "Bringing together some of the best minds from around the world is important in figuring out the role of the non-governmental organizations in a transition to a lower carbon energy future."

"In recent years legislators in different countries have been adopting in laws related to energy transition, targeting to protect the environment while promoting renewables energies," added Alfonso López de la Osa Escibano, Director for the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law.

"Society's expression is also playing a critical role. From the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, to the reduction of fossils fuels consumption energy, to the way we seek to optimize efficient energy management consumption or how we address energy poverty for underserved communities. Many are the challenges we face for the years to come. From a comparative law perspective, the situation lies in a legal energy sector considerably fragmented nationally, not only in Mexico and the U.S., but also globally."

López de la Osa Escibano said in addition to these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused

uncertainty and impacted the energy sector dramatically, especially hydrocarbon.

“Can we already see the consequences? With this webinar we analyzed these trends and find answers for the benefit of the energy transition world,” he said.

Aubin Nzaou, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow in Law and Energy Policy at the Law Center said from an international energy law and policy perspective, the current progress on energy transition shows the emergence of an integrative approach.

“All relevant actors sustain the necessity of an integrating pattern including energy, climate, and socio-economic issues,” Nzaou said. “Electrification with renewable power appears to be a fine illustration.”

“In this regard, the pathway of global transformation is now being set, and scholars have a specific role to play in reshaping the energy and climate landscape while analyzing the socio-economic incidences of the energy transition process. We will see if the current global health crisis is a historical moment to be an opportunity or a challenge for the energy transition.”

Baker Hughes Foundation was also a sponsor for the event and is a supporter of the different Center for U.S. and Mexican Law Comparative Law initiatives.

UHLC ALUMNI PANEL PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON NAVIGATING LEGAL EMPLOYMENT AMID A RECESSION

The University of Houston Law Center’s Career Development Office hosted a Zoom discussion in July entitled, “Developing a Career During an Economic Downturn: Advice from Law School Graduates and Veterans of the 2008 Financial Crisis.” The event was geared toward young alumni and current students who face an uncertain job market during the coronavirus pandemic.

Speakers included:

- Tiana J. Sanford ’08, Assistant District Attorney, Montgomery County, Texas
- Jason E. Alvarado ’09, Co-Deputy US Company Secretary and Counsel, BP America, Inc.
- Michael Hofrichter ’10, Support and Implementation Specialist, LegalServer
- Cynthia Mabry ’10, Partner, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
- Christopher McKeon ’10, Partner, Arnold & Saunders LLP.

Mabry began the discussion by explaining how her diligence and persistence paid dividends when seeking legal work as a Law Center student in an economic downturn.

“The struggle as a law student is ‘what do you want to be when you grow up.’ You have been exposed to all these different things, complicated by the fact that there are not as many jobs as before,” Mabry said.

“I didn’t approach it from the aspect of what I felt like the economy allowed me to do or what I needed to achieve personally - the priority was getting a job. I sent over 200 applications and I have a binder full of rejection letters. I was trying to keep myself humble, but also left no stone unturned to get a job.”

Sanford said what made her job search successful was remaining focused on what led her to law school - pursuing a career in public service.

“One of the difficult parts about entering into any organization, institution or culture is that you have to remind yourself of what your goals are and what your purpose is,” Sanford said. “Whatever that goal or mission is - don’t lose sight of that because it’s going to change the track you’re on. For me that goal was public interest and public service.”

Hofrichter advised attendees to not lose sight of how past employment or educational experience can enhance your likelihood of getting hired. He said getting a foot in the door for his first legal job did not necessarily come from having a J.D.

“It wasn’t about my skills as an attorney, but my skills at IT,” Hofrichter said. “In October of 2010 I started working at Houston Volunteer Lawyers as a volunteer. The organization had just had a fire in its server room. I was not getting paid for the legal work I was doing but the IT work I was doing. Your background and having a skillset that can prove your worth to a firm or business can be very helpful.”

McKeon explained how his undergraduate education in mechanical engineering and his work as a part-time patent agent for a law firm as a student made him more marketable. Amid economic uncertainty in his 3L year, he enrolled in the Consumer Law Clinic to prepare himself to become a solo practitioner.

“I needed the most relevant experience I could get,” he said. “I needed to learn how to be an attorney. I was able to do a jury trial. I was able to go to hearings. People were getting evicted and we were fighting the good fight just to keep people in their homes.”

Alvarado advised audience members to broaden their horizons and to demonstrate versatility in addition to their legal knowledge.

“What I have found over my 10 years out of law school is you need a certain amount of technical expertise in your subject matter,” Alvarado said. “But there are broader implications into how you can add value. Some people are great with their grammar and syntax and others excel at facilitating relationships.”

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE TAKES JOB SEARCH ONLINE

The Law Center's Career Development Office has risen to the challenge of supporting students and alumni in their search for employment at a time when opportunities in the legal marketplace are limited as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Internship and post-graduate positions have decreased, changed from direct to virtual environments, and in some cases, been canceled," said Tiffany J. Tucker, assistant dean for Career Development. "Now, more than ever, law students and alumni need career support to help them adapt to the new world of COVID-19, social distancing, remote interviewing, and virtual employment opportunities.

"We are supporting them by conducting employer outreach and delivering innovative virtual career and professional development programming throughout the summer and fall. The Career Development Office's career counseling and employer outreach teams are all attorneys with legal practice and recruiting experience, so our services are tailor-made for our law student, alumni and employers and adapted to the new virtual environment."

The team of career counselors, Tucker, Chandria Jackson, associate director for Career Development, Paul Klinger, assistant director for Career Development, and Anton Montano, assistant director for Career Development, are continuing year-round one-on-one career advising for law students and alumni virtually on topics ranging from identifying and applying to potential employers, interview training, resume and cover letter building, and salary negotiations.

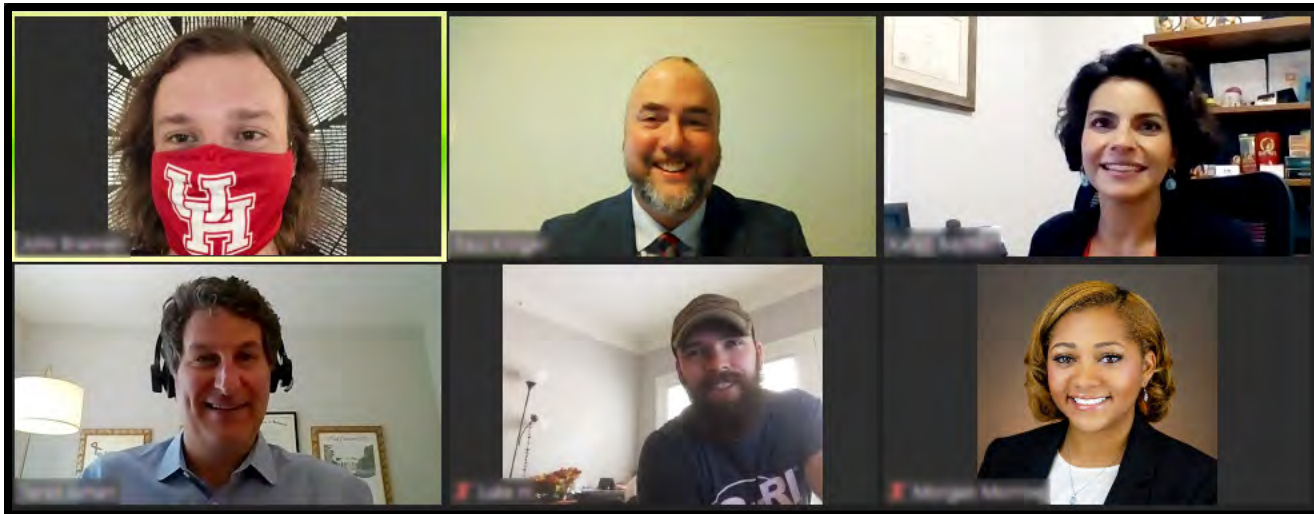
Additionally, Tucker and Anne Elise Doise, employment statistics consultant, provide tailored career support and employment tracking for recent graduates, including graduate resume books (distributed to hundreds of employers at peak hiring times throughout the year) and post-bar bi-weekly graduate jobs digests (highlighting entry-level legal and J.D. advantaged positions most appropriate for recent graduates.)

Career counselors also hosted weekly virtual career chats throughout the summer to discuss relevant career topics, featuring attorney and recruiter panelists, professional development trainings, library and IT resources, as well as networking and mentoring guidance.

Topics included: "Self-Presentation in a Remote Environment: Performance, Fashion and Etiquette Tips for Remote Work Environments, Remote Networking and Video Interviews;" "Employer Perspective: What Law Students Need to Know to Succeed in Today's Legal Market;" "Stress Management in Virtual Work Environments;" and "Recruiter Perspective: Trends in the Houston Legal Market."

The Passport to Success - Professional Development Series also will continue virtually in the fall. Passport to Success is a comprehensive professional and career development program developed by the Career Development Office to achieve its mission of equipping students and graduates with the resources and skills to successfully identify, generate, and navigate professional opportunities. The program consists of four mandatory 1L learning sessions focusing on J.D. career essentials: exposure and access to career options, employers and experience.

The Career Development Office also has conducted targeted outreach to employers to ensure Law Center candidates have access to employment opportunities by assisting employers in identifying and recruiting talented students and alumni to fulfill their employment needs. The employer outreach team of Kourtney James, director of Employer Relations and Development, Bill Powers, director of Internship & Externship Programs, and Jackson surveyed employers to determine any changes to their employment plans and to offer assistance in filling any new positions. Dean Leonard M. Baynes also asked alumni to consider offering part-time or short-term work that could be completed remotely during the summer. Employers have responded positively to this personalized outreach



by continuing to hire Law Center candidates, by posting positions in the Career Development Office's year-round job bank and registering for recruiting programs.

To ensure students and recent graduates have access to all recruiting programs, the CDO programming team, James, Program Manager Kecia Branch, and Program Coordinator Sanchez Steele, developed a virtual Fall 2020 recruiting program schedule, including:

July 28–29: Fall Mock Interview Program: The Career Development Office team and local attorneys assist students in preparing for job interviews.

August 3–7: On Campus Interview Program Session I: Public and private sector employers participate in the largest interview event for second- and third-year law students and LL.M. students.

***September 8:** Small & Midsize Firm Open House: Representatives from local firms with 50 or fewer attorneys speak to students and recent graduates about their practice, area of law, and any available law clerk, summer associate, and attorney positions.

**Date may change to accommodate changes to bar exam dates.*

October 9: On Campus Interview Program Session II: Featuring law firms, corporations, government agencies and public interest organizations.

October 16: J.D. Advantage Career Table Talk: Employers speak to students and recent graduates about their organizations and opportunities for candidates seeking a non-traditional legal career.

The Career Development Office has always hosted networking events throughout the year to help students build relationships with alumni and other attorneys. This year will be no exception, with several programs continuing virtually.

The Upper Level Mentoring Program pairs upper class students with attorneys to aid in the transition to practice. An extension of the mentoring program, Part-Time Partners, addresses the specific needs of part-time students by connecting them with alumni of the Law Center's Part-Time Evening Program.

In a more informal setting, the Career Development Office will host virtual Lunch/Dinner with a Lawyer events during which practicing attorneys meet with students who are interested in their practice area. The office also hosts a Judicial Panel introducing students to judges, law clerks, and judicial interns and explores opportunities with the judiciary.

The final networking event of the fall, "Meet the OCI Employers," will give employers the opportunity to meet members of the 1L class prior to On Campus Interview Program Session III in January when large law firms will be recruiting 1L students. That session will be open to any employers looking to hire more students after the pandemic ends.

"We are confident that Law Center students and alumni who take advantage of all the services the Career Development Office offers will weather the current downturn and succeed in gaining essential legal experience and securing employment for fulfilling J.D. careers with employers seeking top legal talent," Tucker concluded.

44TH ANNUAL LAW GALA & AUCTION

HOST:
STAR
JONES '86



Due to continued COVID-19 concerns,
the Law Center will host this signature event on

Saturday, August 29, 2020

Livestream at 6 pm CDT

Register Here

Complimentary

The Auction for the 44th Annual Law Gala is now OPEN! Take advantage of the early access, preregister to bid and view at your leisure! Happy Bidding!

All proceeds benefit the University of Houston Law Center.

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*As of 7/27/2020

2019 – 2020 UH LAW ALUMNI



ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

William J. Jackson '92

Bill Jackson has one of the most sophisticated and successful environmental litigation and natural resource damages practices in the country. Bill chairs Kelley Drye & Warren, LLP's national Environmental Practice Group and is a member of the firm's Executive Committee. For more than twenty-five years, Bill has represented states, port authorities, railroads and energy-sector clients in many of the largest and most significant contamination cases in the country. Bill is currently serving as litigation counsel for Ohio, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, in addition to numerous water districts and private-sector clients, in dozens of cases across the country related to contamination and natural resource damages arising from perfluorinated compounds, and he is serving as lead for the states and sovereigns in the AFFF Multi-District Litigation in Charleston, South Carolina concerning drinking water contamination from these same chemicals. In recent years, Bill has served as counsel for states and sovereign plaintiffs in a number of record-setting environmental litigation matters, including serving as lead counsel for the State of New Jersey in the Passaic River Litigation and representing the State of Louisiana in the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill case, which resulted in the largest environmental cleanup and recovery in history.

Bill graduated from the University of Houston Law Center in 1992, where he was a member of the Houston Law Review and was awarded the Harold Sellers Scholarship as the top student in his first-year section. Since graduating, he has served the Law Center in many capacities, including serving as the president of the UH Law Alumni Association and as president of the UH Law Foundation Board. For the last six years, Bill chaired the UH Law Building Campaign and has served on the Executive Committee of the University of Houston's "Here, We Go!" billion-dollar capital campaign.

ASSOCIATION AWARDS (44TH LAW GALA)



HONORARY ALUMNUS AWARD

Judge Gregg Costa

Gregg Costa is a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He grew up in Richardson, Texas, and graduated from Dartmouth College. After college, he taught elementary school in the Mississippi Delta town of Sunflower through the Teach for America program. He then attended the University of Texas School of Law where he was editor-in-chief of the Texas Law Review. After law school, he clerked for Judge A. Raymond Randolph on the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and Chief Justice William Rehnquist on the Supreme Court.

He also served as a Bristow Fellow in the Office of Solicitor General. After his time in Washington, he returned home to Texas where he was in private practice and taught federal courts as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center before serving as an Assistant United States Attorney. As an AUSA, he focused on prosecuting white collar crime, which included prosecuting Allen Stanford for orchestrating a multi-billion dollar Ponzi scheme. President Obama appointed Judge Costa to the district court in 2012 and the court of appeals in 2014.

2019 – 2020 UH LAW ALUMNI



FACULTY DISTINCTION AWARD
Professor Douglas K. Moll



JAMES M. ROACH LAW FUND
VOLUNTEER AWARD
Marie McGowan '91



PRIVATE PRACTICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Brian D. Melton '99



PRIVATE PRACTICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Mishell Parreno Taylor '03

ASSOCIATION AWARDS (44TH LAW GALA)

Locke
Lord^{LLP}

LAW GALA & AUCTION AWARD
Locke Lord LLP



CORPORATE SECTOR
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Tana Pool '92



PUBLIC/NON-PROFIT SECTOR
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Carlotta Ramirez '99



RISING STAR AWARD
LaTasha (Tasha) Snipes '09

2019 – 2020 UH LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS

(44TH LAW GALA)



RISING STAR AWARD
David Rusk '14



PRO BONO/COMMUNITY SERVICE
& LEADERSHIP AWARD
James Grace '92



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
AWARD
J. Michael Solar '80



DEAN'S AWARD
William P. Swenson '87



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Warren W. Harris '88



Message from Associate Dean of Alumni & Community Relations **SONDRA TENNESSEE**

Houston Strong is a phrase that we heard after the city experienced devastation due to the destruction of Hurricane Harvey. People came together near and far to support those who were in need. I would like to see that same support for the University of Houston Law Center community. We have more than 16,000 law alumni. I want us to be UHLC Strong and support each other as we go through this pandemic together.

Supporting each other means staying connected to the Law Center to support the current students through mentorship, programming, and other activities that will further their professional development. In addition, you can support your fellow alumni by referring business, serving in roles with the Law Center, and hiring our graduates.

Times like these remind us of how grateful we are for the relationships that we have made over the years. Tap into your UHLC network and let's show that we are UHLC Strong!

Warm regards,

Sondra R. Tennessee

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO STAY CONNECTED,
ENGAGED, AND MAKE AN IMPACT, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Sondra R. Tennessee

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Hope Young

Executive Director of Law Alumni Relations
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Sr. Director of Development
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CARBON CENTER

UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR HESTER CO-DIRECTS NEW
CENTER FOCUSING ON CLEANER ENERGY

Tracy Hester envisions a not too distant future when innovations in the production and use of energy sources will significantly lower carbon emissions, combatting climate change while meeting growing demands for affordable and sustainable energy options.

Hester, an associate instructional professor of law at the University of Houston Law Center, has been working toward that goal since 2018 as a co-founder and co-director of the university's Center for Carbon Management in Energy. The center's research is described as a holistic approach to reducing carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.

"It is an interdisciplinary center that includes an array of specialties from engineering, geology, business, public policy, law; essentially it has a broader range of disciplines than could be brought to bear on the challenges in one place," Hester explained. "In addition, the center is located in the heart of the energy capital of the world. That gives it unique access to expertise and resources in corporate and other public sectors."

"My role is to help set strategic direction for the center, select research projects, and organize activities and programs to build awareness of these issues nationally and on campus." The Center recently entered into sponsorship partnerships with major energy corporations and issued two new seed grants to help develop methane recapture and reuse technologies as well as strategies to encourage the capture, reuse, and permanent storage of carbon dioxide.

Hester has spent much of his career practicing and teaching environmental law. Prior to joining the Law Center faculty in 2013, he practiced for 16 years at Bracewell LLP and led the firm's environmental group in its Houston office.

He is a member of the American College of Environmental Lawyers and the American Law Institute and was elected to the Council of the American Bar Association's Section on Environment, Energy and Resources. He currently serves as chair of the section's Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Ecological Services Committee.



Tracy Hester

In addition to teaching a range of courses on environment, natural resource and climate change law, he originated an innovative environmental practicum that matches students with multiple leading environmental attorneys to work on practical projects and to develop innovative environmental initiatives.

"There has always been strong interest in environmental, energy and climate issues among Law Center students," he said. "It's an area that has always been an important career path for our students and graduates and important generally for the public in assuring a sustainable planet. The fact that the Law Center has a nationally ranked program and a specialized LL.M. has always attracted a lot of students."

While much has been accomplished, Hester said, there is much left to do. In particular, he said, climate change hasn't received the policy attention it needs and still poses enormous challenges to Houston in the short and long term. The recent upheavals due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its roiling disruption of Houston energy markets and consumption – viewed against the strikingly blue skies over the Houston skyline and improved air quality – underscore the paradox.

"Houston has come a long way in improving the quality of our environment," Hester concluded. "But we have a lot to do in charting a course after the pandemic and deciding what environmental, energy, and climate future all of us want to pursue."



SANDRA G. THOMPSON

GOES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

TO SERVE AS FACULTY
ADVISOR FOR HISPANIC LAW
STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson, the Newell H. Blakely Professor of Law and director of the Criminal Justice Institute, helps University of Houston Law Center students understand the finer points of Criminal Law, Evidence, Hot Topics in Criminal Law and Procedure and Criminal Evidence in her courses.

But her dedication to students does not stop in the classroom. Thompson serves as a faculty advisor for the Hispanic Law Students Association, a group at the Law Center that is dedicated to promoting representation of Hispanic people in the legal community.

“Groups like HLSA provide students with a network of students with similar backgrounds who face similar challenges adjusting to law school, and I am proud to support the organization,” she said. “HLSA provides social and educational programming aimed at these students and, more importantly, provides a kind of home away from home.”

Thompson, who has taught at the Law Center since 1990, said she enjoys this additional interaction with students and remains impressed with how students over the years have taken the initiative and managed HLSA in a professional manner.

“My role is to be there when needed,” she said. “A bonus for me is that I get to interact with the officers and keep up with the group’s activities, especially HLSA Week and other events.”

Thompson believes that support from Law Center graduates has been critical to HLSA’s success.

“Alumni attorneys serve as guest speakers, as mentors to students, provide career guidance and support HLSA by purchasing tables for the banquet, which supports critical scholarships for students,” Thompson said.

MEREDITH DUNCAN '93

PROFESSOR DUNCAN SUPPORTS
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AS ASSISTANT
DEAN OF DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, &
METROPOLITAN PROGRAMS AND
COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR



Meredith Duncan, a Professor of Law and a 1993 University of Houston Law Center graduate, believes that to diversify anywhere, including the legal profession, one must be deliberate.

"I know how important diversity, inclusion, and equality are generally and to the legal profession specifically," Duncan said. "The legal profession remains in dire need of diversity. When I graduated from law school more than 30 years ago, the lack of diversity was a huge issue within the legal profession. Sadly, things have not changed as much as many, including me, thought it would by now."

One of the ways Duncan focuses her energy is serving as the faculty advisor for UHLC's Black Law Students Association, a position she has held since joining the Law Center faculty in 1998. She said that BLSA is important to the Law Center and to legal education for several reasons, as many students need the camaraderie and support of an organization where they can gather with people with comparable life experiences.

"Law schools throughout the country experience low numbers of Black student enrollment," Duncan said. "BLSA needs to have a presence at law schools to serve those small number of black students as they navigate their legal education, many being the first in their families to do so."

"It is also important for BLSA to serve as a student-driven organization that can focus on issues of importance to Black students and their communities, including the history of Blacks in the legal profession and the continued fight for civil rights and equality."

There will always be a need for mentors and role models for organizations like BLSA to continue to succeed.

Duncan said exemplars of practicing attorneys who have successfully endured the challenges of law school and are now thriving can serve as a powerful motivator.

"Often coming from backgrounds where they did not see or know of a single lawyer, these students need exposure to people earning a living in the various businesses in which one can utilize a law degree," she said. "They need emotional and professional support from the people who have blazed the trails ahead of them. All affinity organizations at law schools are filled with hard-working, determined, and ambitious people who need mentoring and guidance."

"Our students are so impressive. Alums will find that giving back to students who are facing the challenges of law school is extremely rewarding, time well spent, and much appreciated by the students and the law school."

In addition to Duncan's usual responsibilities of teaching and scholarship, her roles now encompass serving as the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion & Metropolitan Programs. She is also a co-chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

"I work closely with UHLC's award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Program, which seeks to diversify the law school applicant pool by helping to develop well-qualified diverse candidates," Duncan said. "I also try to work closely with the members of BLSA each year to support, encourage, and equip each of them to be successful on whatever path they choose to take within the legal profession."

"Watching students grow, develop, and fulfill their dreams is extraordinarily gratifying for me. I feel privileged every day to work here at the Law Center."



NATALIE DIALA '20

PRE-LAW PIPELINE
PROGRAM AND
UH LAW DEGREE
TAKE DIALA TO TOP
LAW FIRM

In 2016, Natalie Diala was looking for a challenge and thought maybe law school was the best way to put her undergraduate training in communications to use.

After talking to mentors and friends, the University of Miami graduate enrolled in the Pre-Law Pipeline Program at the University of Houston Law Center. The intensive eight-week summer program is designed to increase diversity among law school applicants, introduce them to the rigors of law school, and give them the opportunity to consider a career in law.

"I was still researching and figuring things out," she said later. "I went into the program thinking that it would help me know for sure if law was something that I wanted to pursue. At the end of the program I knew I definitely wanted to be an attorney."

She applied to the Law Center and made the dean's list her first semester. She graduated in May and will start

her law career as a corporate associate at Thompson & Knight LLP.

**"Coming to UH Law
was the best decision
I ever made."**

"The pipeline program helped by preparing me for law school in general which was a great asset," she said. "It also helped to connect me to practicing attorneys who guided me throughout my academic career and into my professional career. Coming to UH Law was the best decision I ever made."

A special moment during her time at the Law Center came when Associate Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor visited and student messages were read to her: "Justice Sotomayor is a constant reminder to me, a first-generation American, that the American Dream is attainable," wrote Diala whose parents emigrated from Nigeria. "Her life is one of the greatest messages that regardless of upbringing, language, culture or family, hard work and integrity will continue to open doors in this country."



STEPHANIE NWEKE

RIISING 3L STEPHANIE NWEKE
REFLECTS ON SCHOLARSHIP AND
PRE-LAW PIPELINE PROGRAM IMPACT

Member of Class of 2021 eyes career in tech to help diversify legal profession

As Stephanie Nweke enters her 3L year at the University of Houston Law Center, she has achieved numerous accomplishments befitting of a seasoned legal professional instead of a law student.

One of her most recent achievements was serving as a speaker a TED talk, entitled, “In a World Full of Passion, Follow Purpose.”

“I spoke about the way our society generally views passion in contrast with purpose, why purpose is more fulfilling than pursuing passion, and how we can shift our mindsets on what it means to live a truly fulfilling life,” Nweke said. “It’s something that I’ve struggled with based on some of my experiences in law school, and wanted to talk about something that felt authentic to who I am in this stage of my life.”

“It’s definitely a nuanced topic and my talk only scratched the surface. But it was an awesome experience. I had some of my good friends in the audience to support me, which helped me be at ease. Plus, I wore a yellow pantsuit, which definitely helped with my confidence.”

During her second year at the Law Center, Nweke was named a Forbes 30 Under 30 Scholar and attended the Forbes Under 30 Summit.

“I was super excited to be selected because many of the people who are on the Forbes 30 under 30 list inspire me,” Nweke said. “I looked up to many of the people who were at the summit like Serena Williams. It was exciting to have the opportunity to interact with people I admire and more about how they are changing the world.”

As an avid reader and writer, Nweke considered law in her long-term career plans, but it was the Law Center’s Pre-Law Pipeline Program and the 3+3 Program at the University of Houston Honors College that helped her ambitions become a reality.

“The Pipeline Program was instrumental in bringing me to where I am right now,” Nweke said. “I always knew that I wanted to go to law school, but the program solidified my plans to get there. I’m going to be the first lawyer in my family. I didn’t have anyone to pick up the phone to call and ask for advice.”

“I had to figure everything out on my own and go after opportunities I found. Nothing was handed to me. The Pipeline Program really gave me the tools and the resources I needed to dive into the deep end and swim towards the goal.”

During her 1L year, Nweke was the recipient of the Gus A. Schill, Jr. Scholarship for Ethics in Representation - a two-year full tuition scholarship.

“The scholarship is an incredible blessing that I’m still in awe of,” she said. “Not having to worry about tuition is an immense understatement. Receiving the scholarship has really given me more room to focus on school and take advantage of the opportunities available to me as a law student. Most importantly, it’s motivated me to help incoming black students take certain steps to be in the best position to receive a scholarship.”

Upon completion of her legal education, Nweke said she is interested in utilizing technology to make the delivery of legal services more efficient, and wants to challenge the legal profession to make strides towards diversity and inclusion. Her ultimate goal is to be a catalyst for change and to provide minority and underrepresented students with greater access to the legal profession. Nweke believes she can make the biggest impact practicing in Silicon Valley at a firm that serves entrepreneurs, technology companies and other start-ups.

“This will give me the opportunity to learn more deeply about the practice of law from a technology and innovation standpoint,” she said. “More importantly, we’re in a crucial time in history where people are finally waking up to the realities of systemic racism and prejudice in this country. Five percent of attorneys in the U.S. are black, and an even smaller percentage are black women with equity in a law firm. I plan to use my voice at the firm to advocate for changes in legal recruiting, which have been shaped in some ways by systemic racism and prejudice.”

“I will take on pro bono work to help real people directly impacted by social issues as well as people trying to start small businesses. I hope to continue mentoring black and brown students, regardless of their career interests. I also plan to continue spending my time outside of work contributing to projects and causes related to empowering the black and African communities.”

CONSTRUCTION COUNTDOWN

FALL 2020



Preliminary digital renderings of the University of Houston Law Center provided by Shepley Bulfinch. John M. O'Quinn Law Building.

Construction of the much anticipated new Law Center building will commence this Fall notwithstanding the absence of an auspicious, ceremonial groundbreaking envisioned for decades. The original Spring ceremonial groundbreaking — complete with speeches and silver shovels — was postponed due to the Pandemic resulting in the campus shutdown and the requirements of social distancing. The \$90 million John M. O’Quinn Law Building will rise nonetheless on the former student parking lot 19B between the current Law Center building complex and University Lofts.

As described by the architectural team from Shepley Bulfinch, the five-story, cantilevered structure with its glass and metallic main entrance and limestone base will face the campus and Houston skyline and serve as a striking icon reflecting the Law Center’s exceptional legal education. The building was designed to meet the personal and educational needs of both faculty and students, but also to provide the versatility and utility needed to serve alumni, the community, judiciary, members of the bar, and other professionals fulfilling its name as a true Law Center.

“After many decades of trying to build a new building, I am delighted that it is happening and will open in the next two years,” said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. “It was a collective effort to make this happen. Extra special thanks go to the excellent leadership from UH administration. President Khator made the new Law Center building a key priority for the University legislative appropriation. Eloise Brice developed the key components of the fundraising plan with specific and measurable goals, and Provost Short for her unyielding support of the Law Center. Many thanks to Bill Jackson, UH Law Alumnus and Chair of the Law Foundation’s Building Committee through his dedication, superb leadership and vision in getting the alumni excited about the building.”

“To all our alumni who stepped up and made a significant investment in the future of the Law Center. You made the dream happen. Lastly, to an amazing UH Law Center senior staff for their incredible hard work and dedication through the many years in seeing this project through to completion: Associate Dean Greg Vetter, Associate Dean Sondra Tennessee, Assistant Dean Carrie Criado, Senior Director of Development Magda Herrera, Executive Director Hope Young, Executive Director MyBao Nguyen, and outstanding dean’s office staff: Luana Gearing and Michelle Spencer. Also many thanks to the Law Center New Building Committee: Professors Johnny Rex Buckles, Barbara Evans, Blake Hudson and Amanda Watson for their perseverance and dedication.”

After 50 years in the bunker-like environment of the current facility, natural light, open spaces, soothing colors and outside views were the paramount vision of the Law

Center community and was conveyed to the architects as the top objectives.

A two-story glass lobby will include a reception desk, access to a large event space, moot courtroom, and a broad staircase leading to second floor classrooms, a student lounge and convenience store. Sitting areas for studying and socializing will be located throughout the building and a coffee bar on the third floor will lead to outdoor terrace with views of the campus and downtown Houston. Faculty offices will extend over two floors while the law library will occupy the three top floors with stacks, various types of seating areas, group study rooms and a reading room on the top floor. There also will be rooms and spaces for IT services, journals, student organizations, the Blakely Advocacy Institute, Career Development, Student Services, Graduate and Global Programs, Admissions and Law Center Leadership.

The building has been touted as “state-of-the-art,” which has taken on greater significance with current reliance on remote teaching, online interviews and virtual visits some of which will no doubt continue and expand into the future. Classrooms will be equipped to allow the Law Center building to be a portal to the world and for faculty to be able to share content remotely as well as within the building. Large event and teaching spaces will allow for simulcasting events throughout the building as well as locations beyond the campus. A dedicated active learning classroom will allow students to collaborate digitally and physically and provide a space for faculty to experiment with new and emerging teaching methods. A media production studio will enable the Law Center to reach out to various communities, including alumni, future students, the city and beyond.

Altogether the 179,000-square foot structure includes a dividable, tiered lecture space, typically two classrooms, that can be converted into a large courtroom, two large classrooms, four medium classrooms, and many other classrooms of various shapes, sizes and functions. The lobby in conjunction with the adjacent event room, the third-floor terrace, and the top floor reading room can accommodate various sized special events.

“I could not have been any happier with the result,” said Bill Jackson ’92, the Law Center’s Building campaign chair. “The involvement of the Foundation Board and the alumni was terrific. President Khator, who has been amazing for the school broadly, put in a tremendous effort. The UH Development team, led by Eloise Dunn Brice and Magda Herrera, was great throughout.”

“The new building is going to transform the law school, and it will benefit the city. Everybody that engaged in the project just felt like it was such a worthy cause, such a good thing to do for the school and for the city.”



Preliminary digital renderings of the University of Houston Law Center provided by Shepley Bulfinch. Lobby.

The Law Center received substantial support for the new building from UH President and System Chancellor Dr. Renu Khator, who made it her No. 1 priority during the 2019 Texas legislative session. Additional meaningful support came from UH Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost Paula Myrick Short, Vice Chancellor of Governmental & Community Relations Jason Smith, and Vice President for University Advancement Eloise Brice. The Law Center also thanks alumni leaders Bill Jackson '92, Jim Grace '92, Victor Wright '98, Cynthia Mabry '10, Richard Whiteley '99, Susan Bickley '84, and Bill Swenson '87, members of the Cornerstone Club as well as the Law Center team of Senior Director of Development Magda Herrera, Executive Director of Law Alumni Relations Hope Young, Associate Dean Greg R. Vetter, Associate Dean of Alumni and Community Relations Sondra Tennessee, and Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing Carrie Anna Criado '95.

CORNERSTONE CLUB

The Cornerstone Club honors a distinguished group of leaders, who fulfill a commitment of \$250,000 or more towards the \$10 million goal for construction of the new Law Center building. The Cornerstone Club will serve as the premier giving society for the building campaign. These gifts serve as the “cornerstone,” providing significant momentum towards building a new learning facility. Cornerstone Club members have the benefit of providing input on facilities design, first rights to naming opportunities, and permanent recognition on a prominent donor wall of honor.

For more information about how you can support the UHLC, contact Magda Herrera, Sr. Director of Development, at mmherrera@uh.edu

CORNERSTONE CLUB AWARD

As part of the alumni awards ceremony, the Cornerstone Club members were also recognized for their pivotal contributions to the new law building.

Stanley L. Blend '67

Thomas F.A. Hetherington '98

William J. Jackson '92

King Family Foundation
(on behalf of Greg '85
and Leigh Ann King '85)

Stephen P. Koch '92

Charles W. Matthews '70

Bill Maynard '73

Commissioner CAPT.
Reginald E. McKamie '86

Jim M. Perdue, Jr. '93

Ezequiel '84 and Livia Reyna

Carol and Jim '82 Roach

Danny Sheena '95

William P. Swenson '87

Brad Tucker '79

Juan F. Vasquez, Jr. '01

Andy Waters '86

William D. “Willie” Wood '84

The Honorable Alvin '67
and Susie Zimmerman



Preliminary digital renderings of the University of Houston Law Center provided by Shepley Bulfinch. Classroom.

GIFT FROM PORTER HEDGES TO BENEFIT NEW UHLC BUILDING



Houston-based Porter Hedges LLP is the first law firm to step forward with a major gift to support the John M. O'Quinn Law Building scheduled for groundbreaking this Fall. In recognition of the gift, the Law Center's Career Development Office will be named the Porter Hedges LLP Career Services Center.

"Porter Hedges is proud to support the UH Law Center and excited to associate our name with the career services center," said Joshua Wolfshohl '02, a partner at the firm. "As a Houston-based firm, we have grown with the city over the last four decades and welcome an opportunity to give back to its premier law school. We join the Law Center by investing in the students who will continue to leave their mark in Texas, across the country, and around the world."

The \$90 million John M. O'Quinn Law Building is designed to enhance the educational experience while also serving as a hub to engage and serve the public in one of the nation's top legal markets.

"I'm delighted that Porter Hedges has made this generous gift to help us build a superior career services center attractive to both employers and students," said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "More importantly, it is an

investment in our students, staff and administration who, along with the broader UH Law community, are working every day to make our school the premier law school in Texas."

Along with firm support, UH Law Center alumni and faculty at Porter Hedges who were instrumental in this gift are Joshua Wolfshohl, Amy Wolfshohl '06, Jackie Moy '01, Corey Brown '96, Ben Rajabi '08, John Higgins '83, Mandy Diaz '06, Mac Marshall '06, Blake Runions '07, John Hawkins '91, Brian Rose '07 and Craig Bergez (adjunct professor).

The Law Center's Career Development Office provides a full range of resources and services to help both students and employers meet their employment goals. The staff guides students and alumni in the use of tools and strategies for successful job searches. The staff also assists employers in identifying and recruiting talented students and alumni to fill their employment needs. The office hosts career panels, networking events, workshops, mock interviews, job fairs, recruitment programs and an electronic job bank.

Founded in 1981, Porter Hedges LLP is a full-service Houston-based law firm with an office in Oklahoma City.

UH ALUMNUS DANNY M. SHEENA GIFTS \$1 MILLION FOR NEW JOHN M. O'QUINN LAW BUILDING

The University of Houston has received a \$1 million gift from alumnus Danny M. Sheena, founder of the Sheena Law Firm, to support construction of the new John M. O'Quinn Law Building, scheduled to be completed in 2022. In recognition of the gift, the planned moot courtroom and dividable classroom space within it will be named the Danny M. Sheena Courtroom; Danny M. Sheena Classroom; and Megan D. Sheena Classroom, named for Sheena's middle daughter who is a current student at the UH Law Center.

Construction of the \$90 million ultramodern John M. O'Quinn Law Building will start this fall. The new building will support a learning environment that expands student resources, enhances faculty recruitment, increases engagement with industry and the community, and affirms that the school is investing in the future of its most significant asset – law students.

"The existing UH Law Center building was built over 50 years ago at a time where no computers or cell phones existed. I remember studying for my final exams in the underground study areas and thinking of the structural components that went into designing the Law Center," said Sheena. "As a UH engineering and Law Center graduate, I am happy that I can be a part of the new UH Law Center state-of-the-art building that will continue to provide students with an excellent legal education."

Sheena graduated from the University of Houston Honors College in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering but was drawn back to campus years later to study law, earning a Juris Doctor degree from the UH Law Center in 1995. He served as associate editor of the *Houston Law Review*, a scholarly legal journal published by Law Center students. Sheena founded the Sheena Law Firm in 2003, offering clients legal expertise in a wide range of practice areas including business litigation, construction law and personal injury.

The Danny M. Sheena Courtroom will have 6,200 square feet of floor space with a seating capacity of 220 people and will provide a key forum where academic peers, prominent judges, lawyers and practitioners from across the country can convene for legal and policy symposia, conferences and social events. The courtroom and dividable classroom space will include state-of-the-art technology and audio-visual systems for courtroom proceedings, lectures, broadcast, and recording.

"We are very proud of the accomplishments of alumni like Danny Sheena who have gone on to have successful careers in law and business. We are also grateful for his vision, belief and support of the Law Center and its future. His gift is transformational and will enhance our efforts to complete an iconic new Law Center building for which we can all be proud," said Leonard M. Baynes, dean of the UH Law Center.

Sheena's connection to the University of Houston is a family tradition. His wife, Shannon, received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in history from UH while his oldest daughter, Lauren, is a 2020 graduate of the UH College of Optometry. Megan just started her second year at the UH Law Center, and his youngest daughter, Hailey, plans to follow in the family's UH footsteps. Danny Sheena credits his parents for instilling in him the importance of education and family values.

"The University of Houston provided my family and me with valuable education, which shaped our lives. We are very proud and blessed to be a part of the Cougar family," said Sheena. "The combination of a UH engineering degree and a UH law degree created countless opportunities in a place that I always considered America's best city. My legal career led me to interact with thousands of diverse clients, each with unique issues that I wanted to help resolve. This interaction led me to better understand the types of businesses that succeed and fail, the types of arguments that win and lose, and the issues that make a difference."

Nearly \$25 million has been raised through private philanthropy to help fund the new building which will be located in the northeast corner of campus between University Lofts and the current law buildings. Funds raised for the building are a part of the "Here, We Go" Campaign, the University of Houston's first major system-wide fundraising campaign in more than 25 years. More than \$1.2 billion has been raised by the System to address key priorities, including scholarships, faculty support and strengthening UH's partnership with Houston. The Campaign will end on August 31, 2020.

"The Sheenas are a true Cougar family and we are very glad to claim them! Their gift will be a lasting investment in the future of the UH Law Center and of Houston," said Eloise Brice, vice president for university advancement. "The support and generosity of successful alumni, like Mr. Sheena, was critical to making the John M. O'Quinn Law Building a reality."

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2020 EVENTS

September 15 | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

DEAN'S DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

Featuring Frank Wu, President, CUNY Queens College

October 6 | 11:30 – 1 pm | Zoom

WOMEN OF THE LAW FALL VIRTUAL EVENT

Featuring Professor Renee Knake Jefferson

October 9

25TH ANNUAL FRANKEL LECTURE

Keynote Speaker: Angela Onwuachi-Willig,
Dean and Professor of Law at Boston University

From "Lynching As Status Quo" To The New Status Quo
A socio-legal discussion of the pattern of police
and quasi-police killings of African Americans

October 28 | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

UHLC STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM KICKOFF

For more information visit: law.uh.edu/mentor

For more information or additional event listings,
please visit: law.uh.edu/calendar

CLE PROGRAMS

FOR

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contact Tanisha Green at
lawalumni@uh.edu