A Family Tradition

A USF School of Law education is a tradition for many families, passed down from one generation to the next. Meet six families whose members share a lasting connection to the law school.

Max Gutierrez Jr. ’59  Michael E. Gutierrez Jr. ’86
William F. Gutierrez Jr. ’90  Laurelle M. Gutierrez ’93
Dana Mendelson ’96  Daphna Wohl ’97
Guido Saveri ’50  Lisa Saveri ’83
R. Alexander “Rick” Saveri ’94  Judge Judith Epstein ’77
Mark D. Epstein ’93  Kimberly Cornell Epstein ’93
Joseph A. “Joe” Piasta II ’76  Mary Piasta-Valluzzo ’03
Ed Piasta ’05  Joseph “Joe” Piasta ’10
Martin M. Murphy ’28  Martin D. “Pete” Murphy ’61
Martin Dante “Marty” Murphy ’91
Dear School of Law Family and Community,

As I reflect upon my first year as your dean, I am pleased that the list of actions and initiatives that we “will do” is being supplemented by achievements we “are doing” and actions we “have accomplished.”

The hard work of our students, dedication of our faculty and staff, support from the university, and generosity of our alumni are improving our programs and advancing opportunities for the next generation of USF lawyers. Our commitment to our students is to educate them as ethical, skilled professionals ready to enter the changing practice of law. We have focused on bar passage, law jobs after graduation, increasing our presence in the community—and doing all of this on a cost-effective basis. Here is what we, together, have accomplished:

- Thanks in large part to our new Bar + Plus program, our July 2013 California bar exam pass rate jumped to 75 percent—at a time when other schools’ bar performance dropped. On our way up, we surpassed schools we look to as colleagues and competitors. Not high enough yet, but solid first-year progress.
- Twice the percentage of our graduates have jobs at graduation than they did two years ago. In the past year, our employment rate in jobs requiring a law degree or where it is an advantage increased by 50 percent.
- While our overall U.S. News ranking dropped because it focused on earlier law school performance, we increased on our current 2013 reputation with the bench and bar more than any law school in the nation. We expect our ranking to catch up with our current improved performance next year.
- Our faculty, staff, librarians, and students are doing new things, stretching their resources and sacrificing where necessary. We are very mindful of the costs of legal education and living in San Francisco. As a result, we limited our tuition increase to the lowest it has been in 20 years.

Your help is critical to our continued success. In recent weeks, I have heard presentations our students made to the United Nations on human rights issues, and met with alumni in New York and Washington, D.C. who told me how their USF education—from faculty to law clinics—prepared them for successful and meaningful careers. I have also attended gatherings of alumni-student groups, formed by our faculty in both environmental law and trusts and estates, that provided insights into the day-to-day work of lawyers in these fields and opportunities to make connections to firms and companies who are leading—and hiring—in these areas.

Just as we work to open the doors to the profession for our current students, we are working hard to keep the door open to law school for the next generation. In that regard, we are blessed with the recent gift of the Thomas Martin ’51 family, an endowment of over $8 million for scholarships for students (see p. 26).

The success of USF today is your success. And we can go much farther for our students and the legal profession with your help. Whether you can offer financial support, join our mentor program, hire a student, or attend an event with your fellow alums, your engagement is critical to our path forward.

Best wishes,

John Trasviña
Dean
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Reshaping Criminal Justice
As Alameda County Public Defender, Brendon Woods ’96 is doing more than representing indigent criminal defendants. He’s also making broader policy changes that enhance the community.

Devoted to Legal Ethics
Paul Vapnek ’64 is honored by the California Bar for enhancing professionalism and public confidence in the legal field.

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- Gov. Jerry Brown appoints two alumni to the bench

Closing Argument
Learning to Celebrate You
By Cameron Cloar ’09
US. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and lawyer and lexicographer Bryan A. Garner visited the USF School of Law Jan. 31, speaking about persuading judges and interpreting the law to nearly 800 attendees at two campus events.

Justice Scalia and Garner delivered the keynote address at the 2014 USF Law Review Symposium, Legal Ethics in the 21st Century: Technology, Speech, and Money. During their lively and laughter-filled talk, they shared more than two dozen recommendations for sound legal reasoning, highlights from their book Making Your Case: The Art of Persuading Judges.

"Today’s keynote address on the art of persuading judges and essential communications skills in legal writing and advocacy gives us a window into the minds of two of our profession’s best,” Dean John Trasviña said in his welcome remarks.

Justice Scalia said the book on legal writing is very much related to legal ethics, the symposium’s theme. “The first responsibility we have as lawyers is to be the best lawyer you can be,” he said. Garner added, “This book is about being prepared as an advocate. It’s about professionalism and all that goes into presenting arguments well.”

For more than an hour, the two peppered an eager audience of law students and lawyers with tips on how to win their case, telling them to leave their Hollywood court act at home, treasure simplicity, and avoid big words.

“Your job is to make a complicated case look simple, not to make a simple case look complicated,” Scalia said.

USF students in the audience found discussion engrossing because of its pragmatic advice on how to be an effective legal communicator, said Elif Sonmez 3L, symposium editor for USF Law Review, which sponsored the event.

Justice Scalia and Garner returned to campus that evening to delve deeply into legal canons as they discussed their book Reading Law: The Interpretation of Legal Texts. They took audience questions that were moderated by Assistant Professor Grace Hum, director of USF’s legal writing program, and signed books. The event was co-sponsored by the Litigation Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco and the USF School of Law Center for Law and Ethics.

Attendees, mostly San Francisco lawyers, were kept smiling by the duo who took friendly jabs at the other’s political leanings and made light of Garner’s admitted chagrin when
pronouncing Latin legal terms.

Dan Burkhardt, executive director of the Bar Association of San Francisco, said in his welcoming remarks, “We anticipate that this evening will be both thought-provoking and entertaining. For some of us, some of the ideas may be familiar; for others, tonight may present entirely new ways of approaching constitutional, statutory, and contractual interpretation.”

About 400 students and San Francisco legal professionals attended each event, filling the McLaren Conference Center to capacity.

“Justice Scalia and Garner’s presentation to the Law Review Symposium and book talk to the general community on legal writing and interpretation were memorable, insightful, and educational,” Trasviña said. [USF]
USF Launches New LLM in Taxation at Downtown Campus

The USF School of Law will offer an LLM in Taxation program at the university’s Downtown Campus beginning this fall. The new program will provide students with a firm grounding in the major areas of taxation and prepare them to launch or advance careers in tax law. "Our new LLM in Taxation is the latest in a series of new USF School of Law initiatives to help students and practitioners develop the skills and perspectives to maximize their career opportunities and better serve their communities," said Dean John Trasviña. “Tax law is woven into all aspects of our society, and we’re proud to offer this new program to train lawyers to be experts in the intricacies of tax. While we and other law schools adapt to changes in the profession, our mission remains the same: Promoting excellence in the legal profession, training law students to become problem solvers and leaders in our communities, and demonstrating to young people the importance and value of law careers in our society.”

The new LLM in Taxation, offered with full- and part-time options, will provide students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of tax law and network with established professionals in the field. They will graduate well-prepared for the private practice of tax law, in-house counsel positions, and positions in government agencies and the tax departments of businesses or allied professions.

The program is located at USF’s Downtown Campus, in the heart of San Francisco’s financial district, so that working professionals can easily participate in the program. Up to 12 JD transfer credits may be accepted, allowing the program to be completed in as little as one semester.

The addition of the new LLM in Taxation brings the law school’s LLM offerings to three. USF continues to offer LLM degrees in IP and Technology Law and International Transactions and Comparative Law.

The curriculum for the new LLM in Taxation program is both broad and deep. Courses are taught by USF’s own expert full-time faculty members—including E.L. Wiegand Distinguished Professor in Tax Daniel Lathrope, who is academic director of the program, and Professor Joshua Rosenberg, author of leading treatises in tax law—along with adjunct professors who are experienced tax practitioners. Together, they empower students with a comprehensive understanding of tax laws and the policies on which those laws rest so they are equipped with skills necessary for a career in taxation. Courses range from corporate taxation and real estate taxation, to estate planning and international taxation, and more. [USF]
New Dual Degrees Save Time, Provide Added Expertise

The USF School of Law will offer two new dual degree programs—a JD/Master of Public Affairs (MoPA) and a JD/Master of Arts in Urban Affairs (MUA) beginning in the fall. The programs will allow students to earn both a master’s degree and a law degree in four years rather than five. The new programs are offered jointly with USF College of Arts and Sciences Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and Common Good.

“Today’s and tomorrow’s lawyers must utilize every skill for their clients—corporate, community, or public—and the experience and joint training in this program prepare our students for their roles as problem solvers,” USF School of Law Dean John Trasviña said. “The program leverages our status within a university to offer students comprehensive skills in a new era, provide the expertise of another school, and take off a year’s time and tuition.”

The Master of Public Affairs option prepares students for professional leadership roles in campaign strategy and management, governmental relations and advocacy, public policymaking, community organizing, strategic communications, and journalism. Graduates would be prepared to pursue careers in nonprofits, governmental offices, political entities, and the private sector.

The Master of Arts in Urban Affairs offers coursework in applied urban studies and public policy, direct experience in analyzing policy alternatives, and interactions with community-based organizations, preparing students to work as specialists in analyzing the policy challenges of contemporary urbanism.

“The new dual degree programs are designed for students whose interests and career goals may span multiple disciplines,” Associate Dean Joshua Davis said. “Like our well-established JD/MBA program, these new programs will provide students with the complete law school experience, while giving them additional expertise that can set them apart in the marketplace.”

Both programs combine studies at the law school and College of Arts and Sciences with a range of hands-on experience through externship opportunities with organizations focused on law and public affairs or urban affairs. To receive a dual degree, students must earn at least 84 units in the law school and 36 units in the master’s program.

Course  Supreme Court Seminar

Professor  John Adler

Description  Professor John Adler first offered the course in 2000, knowing that students in his Constitutional Law class recognized that Supreme Court opinions could not be considered fully without thinking about the politics involved in the selection of justices and other external factors. Adler begins the course with a discussion of how process can affect the evolution of doctrine and then moves on to the topic of nomination and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

From there, the focus shifts to decision-making in the Court. Instead of giving students a pre-edited decision of the Court, Adler has them work together as the Court to discuss real cases that have been argued but not yet decided. They must consider all existing materials about the case and develop their own approaches. Students work on each case until the group as a whole agrees upon the basic tenets of an opinion, or several opinions. That process, Adler said, can be challenging for students, yet also energizing and empowering. “It is exciting to see students monitoring themselves and working seriously and passionately toward sensible solutions to the complex and difficult cases facing the Court,” he said.

Related Readings

Inside the Supreme Court: The Institution and Its Procedures by Susan Low Bloch, Vicki C. Jackson, and Thomas G. Krattemaker (West, 2008)

Supplemental readings include articles, book excerpts, and primary sources, including such things as transcripts of selected Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings and the majority and minority reports of the Senate Judiciary Committee.
Alyssa Bussey has worked as an extern for California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye since January, reviewing petitions and opinions and on occasion helping work up a draft opinion. Bussey also serves on the Moot Court Board, has competed twice on the Wagner moot court team, and competed in the Advocate of the Year Competition finals. In addition, she is president of the USF chapter of the Federalist Society and a USF Law Review senior staff member.

Who most influenced your path to law school?
My family, by encouraging me to go to graduate school. Prior to law school I worked for my family’s road construction company and worked on many interesting matters related to human resources, benefits, wage and hour litigation, union contracts, risk management, and more. Late one night I was reading the adoption agreement for our ERISA plan when I realized that I loved it—I loved working with the ERISA attorney, and I loved every law-related part of my job. I immediately registered for the next LSAT. Never mind that it was two weeks later.

Did you dream of being a lawyer as a kid?
I dreamt of being just about everything—veterinarian, surgeon, teacher, and more—but I never specifically thought about becoming an attorney. In retrospect, it may have been a foregone conclusion. In elementary school, we took a field trip to the local police station and the officer held up a big book and said he had to learn all the laws in order to do his job. I thought that sounded like fun and decided I also wanted to be a police officer. Little did I know it really meant that I wanted to be a lawyer.

How do you plan to use your law degree?
I look forward to a career in litigation and appellate work. I am especially interested in employment, labor, and constitutional law. I also hope to volunteer some hours to pro bono work and with USF’s Moot Court Program as an alumni judge.

What is one of your most memorable experiences at USF?
My participation in the Moot Court Program. In 2013 my team won the Robert F. Wagner National Labor and Employment Law Moot Court Competition and second best petitioner brief. This year we returned and advanced to the quarterfinals, ranked sixth. I have (almost entirely) fond memories of spending glorious hours in the library with my teams researching, writing, and editing the briefs.

What is the best way to de-stress as a law student?
I read novels, watch an episode of television, dine with friends, and, in especially egregious instances, clean.

Which class has challenged you the most?
Administrative Law with Professor Honigsberg was the most challenging, and the most rewarding. I loved every minute of his class and the opportunity to really engage with my peers and think critically about the organization and function of the three branches of government, plus all the administrative agencies. Professor Honigsberg is an amazing professor and mentor to students.
New Environmental Law Student and Alumni Society Launches

The USF School of Law has launched the Environmental Law Student and Alumni Society (ELSAS) to bring together alumni, students, and faculty interested in environmental, energy, and natural resources law. Law school alumni are a key resource for connecting students with the practice of environmental law.

“As a member of the faculty, I’m delighted to have a vehicle that easily connects our eager students with experienced practitioners, and that links me to the world of environmental and energy law practice,” Professor Alice Kaswan said. “The ELSAS helps transcend institutional walls and foster USF’s supportive and extended student, faculty, and alumni community.”

The society, formed in fall 2013 through a partnership between the Environmental Law Student and Alumni Society (ELSAS) to bring together alumni, students, and faculty interested in environmental, energy, and natural resources law. Law school alumni are a key resource for connecting students with the practice of environmental law.

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The society’s first event was a November conversation it co-sponsored about the controversial Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The event, “Striking a Balance: The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and the Future of California’s Water,” began with a presentation by Gerald Meral, deputy director of the California Natural Resources Agency, the agency that drafted the BDCP. It continued with Richard Roos-Collins, one of the state’s preeminent water law practitioners and an adjunct professor of Water and Natural Resources Law at USF, posing a series of questions to panelists who represented a range of stakeholders with differing perspectives on the BDCP. Panelists included Kate Poole, senior attorney at Natural Resources Defense Council, Steve Rothert, regional director of the California office of American Rivers, and Ara Azhederian, water policy administrator at the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

“This event was a great opportunity for our members to meet current practitioners in the field and interact with them in a professional setting,” said Michael Hewitt 2L, president of the USF Environmental Law Society. “ELS’ goal is to provide many opportunities like this for our members to create the networks needed to develop their individual career paths.”

For information on joining ELSAS, go to bit.ly/1cShiZA. [USF]
Doris Cheng ’98 Named Director of Intensive Advocacy Program

The appointment of Doris Cheng ’98 as director brings national expertise to USF’s Intensive Advocacy Program (IAP), a two-week summer course that teaches students practical legal skills in litigation and trial techniques and strategies.

Cheng, a partner with San Francisco-based Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Schoenberger and president-elect of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association, is widely recognized for her legal work, including winning one of the largest Northern California general damages verdicts ($3 million) as well as multi-million dollar settlements and verdicts on behalf of disabled persons throughout California. As a student, Cheng participated in IAP and credits it with providing her insight and confidence about trial work as well as connections that led to her job with Walkup.

“This is not an esoteric class, this is a pragmatic class,” Cheng said. “It’s about hitting the ground running when you walk into a courtroom or a law firm. From the time students walk in the door to the time they leave, they are so much better presenters, stronger advocates, and public speakers. I can guarantee that each will be better advocates by the time they finish this course.”

The program features more than 80 hours of lectures, demonstrations, and practice workshops covering the ins and outs of all stages of trial advocacy. Additionally, students conduct a mock jury trial, working in teams of two to try either a civil or criminal case before a judge and jury. Throughout the course, students receive feedback and critique from IAP faculty, made up of dozens of seasoned lawyers and judges from across the nation.

Cheng has been involved with the program since 1999 and also is a frequent guest lecturer and adjunct professor, training lawyers and judges nationally and internationally.

“Doris Cheng teaches litigation to attorneys across the country, so what better person for our students to learn from?” said Dean John Trasvina. “She combines excellence in teaching with excellence as a trial attorney.” [USF]

Faculty Book Offers Glimpse into Lives of the World’s Poorest

A new book by Assistant Professor Thomas Nazario sheds light on the world’s poorest of the poor who are among the more than 1 billion people worldwide who live on a dollar a day or less.

Living on a Dollar a Day: The Lives And Faces of the World’s Poor, shares the personal stories of people Nazario describes as “forgotten.” The book documents their lives and struggles, offering a glimpse through stories and photos into the everyday realities of individuals and families facing extreme poverty.

In making the book, a team including Nazario and Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Renée Byer traveled to four continents, took thousands of photos, conducted numerous interviews, and researched agencies around the world that aim to help the destitute.

The resulting book, Nazario said, is a call to action.

“It’s so easy for us to get into our own very busy lives and the day-to-day things that keep us going and forget about all the people who have almost nothing and who have suffered so much,” said Nazario, who is also founder and president of The Forgotten International, a nonprofit that does poverty alleviation work in several parts of the world. “This book is an effort to remind the world that we have neighbors in this world who really could use some help if we would just get out of our own comfort zones and do it. It doesn’t take a Bill Gates or a multimillionaire to make a difference. We can all be philanthropists. We can all make at least a little difference.” [USF]
**USF SCHOOL OF LAW IN THE NEWS**

“If you’re getting a free service, you’re paying for that service with your data.”

Professor Susan Freiwald in an article in PCWorld about why users of services like Facebook and Gmail should not assume their messages are private.

“No matter what we say in terms of the law being neutral, the U.S. continues to favor applicants fleeing from quote unquote communist-dominated countries. Policywise, the U.S. is trying to support the governments of Central America and Mexico; so politically, the U.S. has that in the back of its mind in asylum adjudications.”

Professor Bill Ong Hing in a Los Angeles Times article about the surge in asylum seekers from Central America.

“We focus on the practical rather than the theoretical. Our students handle problems and do an amazing amount of work with startups.”

Professor Robert Talbot, director of the Entrepreneurial Ventures Legal Services Project, speaking in a PreLaw Magazine article about how to choose a school for intellectual property and technology law.

“Without protections of the Geneva Convention, ‘enemy combatants’ have been cruelly treated, isolated, sensory-deprived, and tortured for over a dozen years.”

Professor Peter Jan Honigsberg writing in the Huffington Post about the origin of the term ‘enemy combatant.’

“The market has overwhelmingly blurred the lines in a way consumers have accepted because search is free and the Internet is largely free. If consumers had to pay, they might get more annoyed. The consumer has been conditioned to acquiesce to anything people in this room can think of to make money. It’s going to be very hard to regulate.”

Professor David Franklyn in an Adweek article about a Federal Trade Commission workshop that Franklyn participated in on how to regulate search engine advertising.

“Philadelphia has always been one of the trouble spots for interrogation. I interviewed Unique Drayton. She described horrible things—being made to sleep on the floor, not being fed, being screamed at and locked in handcuffs. It’s a horrible allegation to have in 2012 or 2013. That sort of physical and psychological coercion passed in the 1930s and ’40s in most other places.”

Professor Richard Leo in an article in the Philadelphia Daily News about interrogation reforms adopted in Philadelphia. A judge suppressed the confession Drayton gave because she had been held in police custody for 41 hours.

“The (legal) profession is undergoing major changes that will continue and we have to train students for a lifetime career. They are the California of tomorrow.”

Dean John Trasvina in a San Francisco Attorney magazine article about the state of law schools.
Professors Dolores Donovan and Suzanne Mounts, both among the first female tenured faculty at the USF School of Law, retired from teaching in December after more than three decades of service each.

Mounts, who began classroom teaching in 1978, said she enjoyed guiding students through the intellectual challenge of criminal law subjects. Mounts taught Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence, topics she said students tend to find accessible and interesting. Yet they are also subjects that often cause emotional reactions and require students to look deeper to understand the legal doctrines involved, she said.

“Thinking about a teaching career in terms of ‘highlights’ doesn’t capture its rewards for me,” Mounts said. “The rewards came much more from the incremental process of exposing students to new ideas, and even more critically, to a new method of analysis. The reward of watching an individual student master the ideas and analytic method was immeasurable.”

One particular student evaluation still resonates with her: “The student said, ‘Professor Mounts has increased my tolerance for ambiguity.’ To me, that defined what my task was.”

For Mounts, teaching courses related to criminal law was a natural fit for her background and interests. Before joining the law school, Mounts worked as a public defender in Contra Costa County, one of only a handful of women in the office at the time. Later she began training students in the law school’s Criminal Law Clinic, then located in the Marin County Public Defender’s Office. Moving into classroom teaching from that experience, she said, was a natural transition.

“Professor Mounts leaves behind a remarkable legacy at the USF School of Law, from founding our still thriving Intensive Advocacy Program to co-directing our first Criminal Law Clinic,” said Dean John Trasvina. “But because of her passion for teaching and unwavering dedication to her students, her legacy reaches beyond the walls of Kendrick Hall to wherever her former students practice law.”

Mounts described a year she spent as a prosecutor in the Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice as playing a pivotal role in her teaching. “I had always been a defense attorney. Now I was a prosecutor, going after violent and/or corrupt law enforcement officials and in one case, a group of Ku Klux Klan members accused of burning crosses at the homes of interracial couples. This role change—from defense attorney to prosecutor—really brought home what I had always taught: the importance of seeing every legal issue from both sides,” she said.

While Mounts is “still figuring out what’s going to happen in retirement,” she is already spending more time with family and friends and also serving on the board of the Mandela High School Law and Public Service Academy in Oakland.

Donovan Continues Legal Advocacy

Meanwhile, Donovan is working on issues related to coastal land use, a topic that differs from her scholarly focus but one that has fascinated her since childhood.

Donovan first joined the faculty in 1975, teaching Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Criminal Practice, and Family Law. After she taught her first comparative law class in 1980, Donovan said she “never looked back.” Since that first class, Donovan specialized in comparative law and, since 1989, also in the legal
systems of developing nations.

“Aside from her significant expertise in international development and comparative law, Dede had the foresight, the energy, and the temerity to trample around the globe to figure out how USF could make a difference,” said former USF School of Law Dean Jeffrey S. Brand. “The results have been remarkable: law schools set up in Cambodia and Haiti, relationships with universities around the world, and exchange programs, among them. It may have been a team effort, but anyone involved would agree that Dede was the mother of the programs and among the first to believe it could all happen.”

Donovan is now serving as a member of the La Jolla Shores Advisory Board, which advises the City of San Diego development services department and planning department on whether proposed land use development and construction projects comply with the municipal code. She also is secretary of La Jolla Shores Association, which represents residents and businesses of the La Jolla Shores District in their interactions with the City of San Diego, tourists, and developers. Additionally, Donovan serves on the board of directors of La Jolla Shores Tomorrow, a nonprofit organization engaged in environmental preservation, promotion of alternative energy solutions, and test litigation relating to land use in violation of the San Diego Municipal Code.

“Preservation of marine habitats and coastal land use has been an interest of mine since my childhood in La Jolla,” Donovan said. “Since then, my work has taken me in a very different direction—into law and human rights and the legal systems of developing nations. I am fortunate now to be able to return to a field that combines my skills with my earlier fascination with the ocean. I am especially lucky to be able to make a contribution to this field at a time when the threats to the ocean and its inhabitants caused by improper land use are, for the first time, clearly understood.” [USF]

Faculty Scholarship & Service


Professor Jeffrey Brand has been working with the Aristede Foundation to develop a new law faculty at the University of the Aristede Foundation. Brand has been consulting with Cambodian partner, the Cambodian Genocide Project, about the curriculum for the new genocide university, research center, and museum, Sleuk Rith, to be built shortly. He is also of counsel in a class action lawsuit in the Southern District of New York alleging that the U.N. and its mission to Haiti are responsible for the cholera outbreak which has killed 8,000 and infected 750,000 to date. Brand gave a presentation in Port-au-Prince, “Health and Human Rights in a Time of Cholera” discussing Haiti’s cholera epidemic and the role of international human rights law.

Professor Susan Freiwald co-authored the article “Reforming Surveillance Law: The Swiss Model” for the Berkeley Technology Law Journal. She gave a presentation for the Internet Society and its San Francisco chapter, in conjunction with CNET, on cyber surveillance, an issue of great importance in the wake of recent revelations about the U.S. government’s controversial surveillance programs. She also led an Oklahoma Law Review symposium panel, Law Enforcement Access to Third Party Records, at the University of Oklahoma. She presented “Is Government Surveillance Harmful?” at the conference “New Frontiers of Privacy Harm.” She was a speaker at the Silicon Flatirons Center and ACLU of Colorado Roundtable at the University of Colorado, Boulder on the topic: “What NSA Surveillance Means for Business and Entrepreneurship.”

Professor Connie de La Vega was a lead counsel (pro hac vice) in People v. Davis urging the Illinois Supreme Court to hold juvenile life sentences unconstitutional. The brief is filed on behalf of eight organizations and addresses the international and treaty standards relevant to this issue. She was also co-counsel in People v. Moffett and People v. Gutierrez, as amici curiae, raising international and treaty law arguments urging the California Supreme Court to hold that juvenile life without parole sentences are unconstitutional. The brief is filed on behalf of five organizations involved in international law and juvenile justice issues. She was lead counsel (pro hac vice) for State of Connecticut v. Santiago and State of Connecticut v. Webb, as amicus curiae, urging the Connecticut Supreme Court to apply the statute abolishing the death penalty retroactively. The brief is filed on behalf of 11 organizations and law professors from Connecticut and Europe and addresses the international standards of retroactivity of ameliorative legislation especially in dealing with the death penalty. She also filed


Professor Bill Ong Hing authored “Immigration Sanctuary Policies: Constitutional and Representative of Good Policing and Good Public Policy” for the U.C. Irvine Law Review. He contributed “Developing a New Mind-Set on Immigration Reform,” a chapter for Constructing Immigrant ‘Illegality’—Critiques, Experiences, and Responses. He participated in the panels “Dealing with Brutal Atrocities,” “The Continuing Immigration Crisis,” and “Cultivating Effective Problem-Solving Practitioners,” hosted by the University of New Mexico and UCLA law schools. He spoke to at the UC Davis School of Law in the discussion “Reinstating Discretion in Deportation.” He was a member of the presentation, “Winning Immigration Reform: What Will It Take and How Will We Do it?” with Congresswoman Judy Chu during the Asian American Center’s Advancing Justice Conference. He spoke on Asian American gangs, at the California Endowment CEO Roundtable on Adversity and Resilience. He organized a panel on immigration law and procedure and delivered the opening lecture, “History of U.S. Immigration Law,” for the National Defense University class (more than 60 military officials from around the world). He also presented “The Effects of the 1965 Act on African Immigration to the United States” at UC Davis.

Professor Peter Jan Honigsberg spoke as founder and director of the Witness to Guantanamo project, “Filming Detainees and Other Voices: The Witness to Guantanamo Project,” at the UCLA Human Rights Archives Symposium. He also addressed the American Society of International Law conference at NYU as a member of a panel addressing “New Perspectives on Human Rights.” He was a featured speaker at Arizona State University presenting on the Witness to Guantanamo project. He wrote the Huffington Post article “The Real Origin of the Term ‘Enemy Combatant.’” His work, “Linguistic Isolation: A New Human Rights Violation Constituting Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment,” was published in the Northwestern University Journal of International Human Rights in January.

Assistant Professor Grace Hum was the moderator for the Q&A session, Justice Scalia and Bryan Garner’s “Reading Law: The Interpretation of Legal Texts,” at the University of San Francisco.

Associate Professor Deborah Hussey Freeland wrote “Speaking Science to Law” for the Georgetown International Environmental Law Review.

Professor Tim Iglesias authored the article “Does Fair Housing Law Apply to ‘Shared Living Situations?’ Or, the Trouble with Roommates,” for the California Real Property Journal of the State Bar of California.

Professor Alice Kaswan authored “EPA’s New Source Proposal: The Category Question” on the Center for Progressive Reform’s blog. She was also a panelist for the University of Virginia School of Law’s symposium, “The Promise and Limits of Presidential Action on Climate Change.” She addressed students at the University of San Diego on "California Cap-and-Trade and the Environmental Justice Lawsuits." She also was a co-contributor to the book Law and Ethics in the Business Environment. Her chapter is titled "Environmental Justice and Environmental Law."


Professor Richard Leo authored “Why Interrogation Contamination Occurs” for the Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law. He was also a co-author on “Predicting Erroneous Convictions,” for the Iowa Law Review. He was awarded the Paul Tappan Award by the Western Society of Criminology for his outstanding contributions to the field of criminology. He was also the recipient of the The President’s Award by the Western Society of Criminology for his contributions to the field of criminology and the positive influence on the current Western Society of Criminology president’s career. He was a contributor to the section “Innocent Defendants: Divergent Case Outcomes and What They Teach Us” for the book Wrongful Conviction and Criminal Justice Reform: Making Justice. Leo was a contributor to the chapter “The Problem of Interrogation-Induced False Confession: Sources of Failure in Prevention and Detection” in the Encyclopedia of Criminology & Criminal Justice. He also contributed the section, “Interrogation-Induced False Confession” in the Encyclopedia of Criminology & Criminal Justice.

Professor Rhonda Magee was a featured speaker at the Introduction to Contemplative Practices in Higher Education in Rhinebeck, N.Y. with her presentation, “Mindfulness and the Pedagogy of Race and Social Justice.” She also conducted several talks, “Mindfulness and Professional Responsibility,” “Mindfulness and Inclusivity in Effective Conflict Management,” and “Effective Lawyering: The Meditative Perspective,” at the Spirit Rock Mediation Center in Woodacre. She was a featured speaker at the University of Virginia School of Law with her talk “Wise Warrior, Peacemaker, Healer of Broken Systems?” on Contemplative Approaches to Law, Lawyering and Social Justice and her talk “Inclusivity, Identity-Safety and Maximum Performance: Notes on Contemplative Approaches to Classrooms that Work for All.”
Professor Richard Leo, who has spent the 2013-2014 academic year as a visiting professor at the UCLA School of Law, will return to the USF School of Law next year as the inaugural holder of the Hamill Family Chair.

As the Hamill Family Chair and Professor of Law and Social Psychology, Leo will continue to teach such courses as Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure while pursuing his influential scholarly work in the areas of false confessions and wrongful convictions. The Hamill Family Chair is made possible by a gift from Stephen Hamill ’78 and his family.

“Richard is one of the most respected and influential scholars on our faculty,” Dean John Trasviña said. “His extensive writing on false confessions and wrongful convictions is valued by both scholars and policymakers.”

Hamill has been one of the law school’s most ardent supporters, enhancing students’ skills training activities through diverse clinics and faculty opportunities. The Hamill family endowed this chair to “support and enhance an extraordinary faculty, to ensure a high quality legal education, and to provide future opportunities and possibilities for others,” Hamill said.

“Richard Leo embodies the vision we had in establishing the Hamill Family Chair,” Hamill said. “He is a renowned and respected legal scholar. His prolific writing and publication, his numerous awards for his writing, teaching, and professional work, including Soros and Guggenheim fellowships, make him the ideal choice.”

Leo will be on sabbatical for the 2014-2015 academic year while serving as a fellow at Stanford University’s Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. This coveted fellowship is the latest in a string of honors he has received, most recently the Crime and Juvenile Delinquency Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for the Study of Social Problems.

“I am thrilled and honored to be chosen as the inaugural holder of the Hamill Family Chair and look forward to returning to USF in the fall,” Leo said. “I am deeply thankful to the Hamill family for their generosity in endowing the chair, and for their continued support of USF. I am also grateful to have such committed and caring colleagues at USF, many of whom have been role models to me; and I remain grateful to the many law students who I have been privileged to teach and learn from in my years at USF. The USF School of Law is an exceptional institution that continues to produce first-rate legal professionals, and I am privileged to be a part of it.”
For many families, a University of San Francisco School of Law education is a tradition passed down through generations. Grandparents, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, nieces and nephews—they share a connection not only to the law but to the school that helped launch successful careers in pursuit of justice. We share with you the stories of these six families, who are illustrative of the dozens of families with multi-generational ties to the USF School of Law.

Does your family have a long history with the USF School of Law? Share your family’s story with us on facebook.com/usflaw.
The patriarch of his family, Max rose from modest beginnings to graduate first in his law school class and again first in his graduate school of law when he obtained his LLM at Georgetown Law Center in Washington, D.C. He quietly served as a role model for many of his schoolmates, and for all six of his children, three of whom followed his footsteps in graduating from USF School of Law. Michael built his general contractor business so that he can devote as much time as he’d like to his family. William is a successful trial lawyer who provides outside general counsel and litigation services to businesses and entrepreneurs throughout all phases of the business lifecycle. And Laurelle has extensive experience in designing and implementing sophisticated intergenerational wealth transfer planning strategies.

Max Gutierrez Jr. ’59  
Retired as a partner of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, LLP after 51 years of practice in San Francisco

“Sharing my USF education and connection with three of my children illuminates for me how we share the same social concerns…. Having served as president of the school, I formed bonds with classmates that continue today at the closest level.”

Michael E. Gutierrez Jr. ’86 (second from left)  
Self-Employed General Contractor in San Bruno

“My law school education seemed to prepare me for everything I’ve encountered since graduating—job site liability, work contracts, remedies for disputes, coaching my kids’ teams, and interacting with parents.”

William F. Gutierrez Jr. ’90 (far right)  
Partner at Gutierrez Marca LLP in San Francisco

“USF sharpened my analytical abilities while developing a strong sense of ethics in the practice of law. My most memorable experiences include Prof. Jeffrey Brand throwing chalk across the room while in a lather about civil procedure, and when Prof. Josh Rosenberg taught tax with dolls!”

Laurelle M. Gutierrez ’93  
Partner at McDermott Will & Emery LLP in Menlo Park

“My USF law education definitely taught me how to think critically and honed my debate skills, which comes in handy at family events. More importantly, I learned that the study and practice of law can be fun.”
The Saveri family shares not only a USF education, but also a commitment to the family firm, San Francisco-based Saveri & Saveri. The firm has more than 50 years of complex, multi-district, and class action experience. Saveri & Saveri specializes in antitrust litigation and has been actively involved in such landmark cases as *Nisley v. Union Carbide and Carbon Corp.* and *Continental Ore Co. v. Union Carbide and Carbon Corp.* Both cases were forerunners of present-day class action litigation and led to the development of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23, as well as some of the more important decisions in the field of antitrust law. Guido, who founded the firm in 1959, has devoted his decades-long practice to antitrust and other corporate and complex litigation. Lisa joined her father at the firm after first beginning her law career at a traditional defense firm; her brother Rick joined directly after finishing law school.

**Guido Saveri ’50**
*Senior Partner at Saveri & Saveri, Inc. in San Francisco*
“I welcome most the respect of the attorneys with whom I deal across the United States, that’s the most important thing. You must have the respect of your opposing counsel but also your co-counsel, and I relish that more than anything.”

**Lisa Saveri ’83**
*Of Counsel at Saveri & Saveri, Inc. in San Francisco*
“USF provided building blocks for a legal career: a solid education in the law; the opportunity to extern in the United States District Court; and the opportunity to publish a law review article on an issue relevant to antitrust price fixing cases.”

**R. Alexander “Rick” Saveri ’94**
*Managing Partner at Saveri & Saveri, Inc. in San Francisco*
“USF gave me a lot of real world applications that you could take into actually practicing law. I enjoyed Professor [J. Thomas] McCarthy enormously, and anything he taught, I took. His teaching style resonated with me—his ability to communicate ideas and concepts in multiple ways.”
The Epsteins share a USF connection and a vision of the importance of community involvement. They have built their careers on a foundation of using their legal skills for the common good—whether they serve on the bench as Judge Epstein does, as a partner focusing on real estate, business, and insurance litigation as Mark does, or leading her own investigative and litigation support firm as Kimberly does.

Now married, Mark and Kimberly met as law students, and the friendships and relationships both they and Judge Epstein formed during law school have endured. The family’s strong affinity with USF has inspired Judge Epstein’s service on USF’s Board of Trustees and the law school’s Board of Counselors and Mark’s decade-long involvement with the USF Inn of Court.

**Judge Judith Epstein ’77**
*Review Judge at the California State Bar Court in San Francisco and Los Angeles*

“My USF education gave me the ability to understand the factual and legal nuances of the myriad issues presented to us as attorneys and judges. It also taught me that there are ethical constants that must be considered at the same time.”

**Mark D. Epstein ’93**
*Partner and Litigation Practice Group Chair at Wendel, Rosen, Black & Dean LLP in Oakland*

“My professors were outstanding, particularly in the core subjects of contracts, civil procedure, torts, evidence, and constitutional law. They challenged us to think critically, and taught these subjects with such breadth and depth that I left confident and well-prepared to start my career as a litigation attorney.”

**Kimberly Cornell Epstein ’93**
*Founder and CEO of Epstein & Associates Litigation Support LLC in Oakland*

“My USF education helped me find what I like most about the law—putting pieces of the puzzle of the case together. This helped me find my niche in complex litigation investigations.”
When the fourth Piasta—the younger Joe—started at USF, he repeatedly was asked “How is it possible that there are more of you Piasta folks?” He took this with a great sense of pride that he was following in his uncle’s and cousins’ footsteps. This close-knit military family provides support and guidance to each other about their legal careers, and relishes their connections to USF and each other.

The elder Joe specializes in civil litigation and trial practice with an emphasis on elder abuse, real estate, business employment, and personal injury litigation; as an adjunct professor at USF, he teaches civil discovery law and civil discovery practice. He retired three years ago from the Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps Reserve. Mary works part time in civil litigation, family law, and issues pertaining to estates and children. Ed is a personal injury attorney focusing on trucking accidents, negligent security, and insurance bad faith cases, in addition to his service in the Georgia Army National Guard. And the younger Joe is on active duty as a military prosecutor and advisor.

Joseph A. “Joe” Piasta II ’76
Litigation Partner at O’Brien, Watters & Davis LLP in Santa Rosa, Adjunct Professor at USF School of Law, and Retired Colonel in the U.S. Army’s Judge Advocate General’s Corps Reserve
“The classes I took from then-‘rookie’ professors Steve Shatz and Robert Talbot prepared me to be very competitive in JAG. They used a lot of videotaping student performances, acting techniques, and working with local police trainees in courtroom work. When I started as a JAG, I soon learned that USF law was ahead of its time and was the only school then using what is now basic trial technology and training.”

Mary Piasta-Valluzzo ’03
Self-employed Attorney in Sonoma/Glen Ellen
“Although USF gave me many memorable experiences, Professor Connie de la Vega’s Frank C. Newman International Human Rights Law Clinic takes the lead. Through that clinic, I was able to research and write advocacy papers for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and ultimately lobby at the Commission for two years in a row.”

Ed Piasta ’05 (far left)
Attorney at Law & Moran in Atlanta, and Major in the Georgia Army National Guard Judge Advocate General’s Corps
“While I obtained a great legal education at USF law school, I believe that the friendships I made during my three years were equally important. I have maintained close relationships with these classmates after graduation and continue to frequently consult with them on legal issues even though we live in different parts of the country.”

Joseph “Joe” Piasta ’10 (second from left)
Active Duty Judge Advocate in the U.S. Army’s Judge Advocate General’s Corps in Fort Stewart, Georgia
“I am most proud of my work trying to verdict violent crimes and sexual assaults. While these cases can be profoundly difficult and complex, I take pride in being able to bring justice for victims and advise commanders to take the appropriate steps through these cases.”
Dana and her daughter, Daphna, not only share the same alma mater, but they even experienced law school together. Dana was just one year ahead of her daughter at USF, having enrolled in law school after raising her children and earning a doctorate. After graduating, they soon realized the new practice Dana was building needed both of their expertise and hard work, given the intertwining of criminal and immigration law.

Together with Daphna’s brother, Dana and Daphna have built a successful legal business that thrives solely on word-of-mouth referral. They are in court nearly every day fighting immigration deportation and criminal matters on behalf of their clients. Dana focuses on criminal and immigration law, while Daphna’s specialty is immigration law.

**Dana Mendelson ’96**  
*Partner at Mendelson and Associates in Daly City*  
“USF focused on the practical, not just the theoretical. And while I was going to law school, I did a two-year internship with the San Francisco Public Defender. By the time I got my license, I was really prepared…. We’re very close, really best friends, so it was really fun going to law school at the same time as Daphna. We’re a very close-knit family, so anything that I do with my family, with my kids, is just sheer fun.”

**Daphna Wohl ’97**  
*Partner at Mendelson and Associates in Daly City*  
“USF did an especially good job teaching us legal research and writing. It taught me to write effectively, and that was something that helped me when I started my own business, because I did all my own research and writing.”
Three generations of proud and successful USF graduates, the Murphys continue to give back to the school in many ways, including by contributing their time and mentorship to fellow alumni. The youngest, Marty, started a firm with his USF classmates, specializing in litigation representing plaintiffs in personal injury and employment claims as well as commercial lease transactions. His firm often hires USF students as externs. He is a class representative for the class of 1991 and also one of the founders of the John Scully Memorial Scholarship and was president of the Board of Governors. The middle generation, Pete, enjoyed a long career in law, and has been very active in the Bay Area’s nonprofit community as a board member and fundraiser for many Catholic organizations. He has been a long-time member of the law school’s Board of Counselors and led the fundraising effort to remodel Kendrick Hall. Martin, the first in the family to attend USF, attended night school while working full time in the insurance business, ultimately becoming president of an insurance company and inspiring his family to follow in his footsteps and pursue legal careers.

Martin M. Murphy ’28
Retired as President of Transamerica Title in San Francisco

Martin D. “Pete” Murphy ’61
Retired. Former Partner of Tobin & Tobin, now Weintraub Tobin, in San Francisco
“My USF law education was fabulous. We had excellent teachers, and I valued the personal attention I received—our class was only about 30 students—and the lasting friendships I built during law school.”

Martin Dante “Marty” Murphy ’91
Partner at Liuzzi, Murphy, Solomon & Aikins, LLP in San Francisco, and President of Murco Management in Fremont
“At my firm, we have been so fortunate to mentor many USF law students through the school’s externship program. We are proud that we have assisted many of the students in finding employment as attorneys in the Bay Area.”
Criminal Justice

Reshaping Criminal Justice

Brendon Woods ’96 is Overhauling Alameda County PD’s Office

Charged with leading the second oldest public defender office in the country, Alameda County Public Defender Brendon Woods ’96 has proved in a short time that he is focused not just on the process of representing indigent criminal defendants, but also on instituting broader policy changes to enhance the community.

Appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Woods took the helm in December 2012. Already, he’s added client services, developed programs to reduce recidivism, and merged justice with technology—no small feat considering that the office spans five branch offices with more than 100 attorneys and handles 4,500 new matters every month. Formerly the office’s diversity and recruitment director and an expert in the California Corrections Realignment Plan, Woods, 42, is the first African American to serve as Alameda County’s chief public defender.

By Leslie Gordon
Born in New York, Woods grew up a military brat, living in Hawaii, South Carolina, Virginia, and California. After graduating from UC Santa Barbara in 1992, Woods headed to USF School of Law. “I don’t think law school came naturally for me,” he recalled. “It was a lot of work. I’d been able to get by in college without a lot of work. I’m not sure I was really prepared for the demands of law school.”

Fortunately, Woods received helpful guidance from USF’s Academic Support Program, designed precisely to help students like Woods meet the rigorous demands of law school. As an alum, he’s remained devoted to giving back to the program.

“Brendon has been a tremendous supporter of ASP by taking time out of his incredibly hectic schedule to attend lunches during the ASP summer program so he can talk with incoming students about why he became a public defender and what his work life is like,” said Carol Wilson, co-director of the Academic Support Program. “His enthusiasm about criminal defense work has been truly inspiring to many students over the years. He has made a serious effort to encourage USF students, particularly students in ASP, to apply for summer internships at the Alameda PD. He always makes sure USF students and graduates have a presence in that office.”

When Woods entered law school, he planned to practice criminal or civil rights law. “If I was going to be fortunate enough to make it through law school, I wanted to contribute and give back to the community and make a difference,” he explained. He soon heard that civil rights attorneys spend less time in the courtroom than criminal lawyers. Having been stopped unfairly by police, as well as having family members who’d been through the criminal system, Woods had come to feel the judicial process wasn’t quite fair. “I thought that my being a very good public defender would help level the playing field,” he said.

After graduation, Woods joined the Alameda County PD’s Office, a prominent public firm first established in 1927 by Earl Warren. As a PD, he defended clients in numerous jury trials, including three death penalty cases resulting in the death penalty not being given. When Woods was named chief Public Defender, he approached the new leadership role with “so many goals,” he recalled. “We’ve always had a good office, but I thought maybe it wasn’t as much on the forefront as it should be. I want us to be more like San Francisco.” Woods and San Francisco Public Defender Jeff Adachi, in whose office Woods’s attorney-wife works, are “good friends,” he noted.

Ambitious Goals

Woods set about establishing a seamless, interdisciplinary approach to defending clients and connecting the office to the community it serves, goals that have been characterized as ambitious. Early in Woods’ tenure, his office received a Bronx Defender Technical Assistance Grant from the Center for Holistic Defense. He’s since established 12 new attorney workgroups. Three of those are dedicated solely to the intake system: one is focused on revamping the process, one on physical elements, such as painting intake rooms and acquiring new chairs, and one on forms, which he discovered hadn’t been updated in 15 years.

Similarly, in an effort to give the public more information and access to public defender services, another one of Woods’s early projects was revamping the office’s website. “Even something as simple as that can make a huge difference,” he noted. “We went from 450 visitors a month to more than 2,500 a month. I also changed the office’s mission statement. The old one was Costco generic; it didn’t inspire confidence.”

Woods also has instituted sweeping initiatives, resulting in his being named by the East Bay Express as the “Most Courageous New Public Official.” Most notably, he rotated the PD’s Office 90 degrees by “going vertical.” Now, cases are managed by a single lawyer as opposed to horizontal representation in which different public defenders handle a case at different stages. He’s also brought in social workers to assist the public defenders. And he’s established a Clean Slate program that seeks to seal certain arrest records and to establish factual findings of innocence. According to Woods, they’ve achieved a 95 percent success rate in the 556 open Clean Slate cases.

Praised by Others

Senior Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson presented Woods with a special commendation in February. In the proclamation, Carson described Woods as “a model of professionalism [and] an innovative and aggressive advocate for his clients.” In addition, Carson said Woods “personally trains and instructs attorneys in the most up-to-date legal developments, brings major technological development to the delivery of defender services, and effectively supports his staff and the role of the department through an era of substantial fiscal demand.” Carson also noted that Woods has been active in the community by serving organizations such as the Judicial Evaluation Committee for the Alameda County Bar Association and the Judicial Council of California’s Criminal Law Advisory Committee.

Assistant PD Aundrea Brown ’92, who supervises the juvenile division, described Woods as a “tenacious, effective and exceptional trial attorney. He’s passionate and strives to seek justice on behalf of those who’ve been mistreated by the systems,” said Brown. “He’s a man of integrity, innovation, and promise.”

As for the future, Woods’ biggest challenge is “getting sleep,” he quipped. “Seriously, I keep going and going and going, and sometimes I need to slow down and evaluate. I need to sit back and look at what I want to do.” [USF]
DEVOTED TO
LEGAL ETHICS

Paul Vapnek ’64 Leaves Legacy of Professionalism

By Leslie Gordon

I

P attorney Paul Vapnek ’64, who devoted more than 40 years to legal ethics, has an improbable reputation. “He could work with anyone, even the most disagreeable people,” said former State Bar lawyer Ellen Peck ’79, who worked with Vapnek in various capacities through the Bar, including the Standing Committee on Professional Responsibility and Conduct. More than being simply respected by his peers, Vapnek is liked by them, she said. “He’s one lawyer about whom no other lawyer or person ever said a bad word. He’s courteous and kind to every person, treating everyone with respect and civility.”

For years, she observed how Vapnek was able to make complex legal concepts understandable and, when working in groups, demonstrated a unique ability to gather consensus. Because of his tireless work advancing ethics in the law in this way, Peck believes that every California lawyer owes some part of their professionalism to him.

For leaving that legacy of more professionally responsible attorneys spanning generations, last year Vapnek was honored with the Harry B. Sondheim Professional Responsibility Award for outstanding long-term contribution to the advancement of attorney professional standards in California. Only the second lawyer to receive the award, which is given every three years by the State Bar, Vapnek is widely considered to have profoundly improved the conduct of California lawyers and enhanced public protection and confidence in the profession. All this and legal ethics wasn’t even his primary practice area.

After graduating in 1951 from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a degree in mechanical engineering, Vapnek worked at General Electric before being drafted at the tail end of the Korean War. Following his military service, he moved from New York to California to work as a sales engineer. Soon after, a friend suggested that he try law school.

From Sales to Law

“USF’s law school at the time was in the Gleeson Library,” Vapnek recalled. “I went there to meet Dean Frank Walsh. I said, ‘Here I am. I’m ready to go.’ I hadn’t taken the LSAT, I didn’t have a transcript handy. I just told him about my background.” Walsh admitted Vapnek to the evening program so he could continue his sales job. Vapnek did so well his first semester that he earned a scholarship for the second. “I had terrific teachers,” said Vapnek, whose two children were born while he was a USF student. “And I still keep in touch with a number of my classmates.”

When he graduated in 1964, Vapnek was nervous about finding a job since he was 10 years older than most other new graduates. USF referred him to U.S. District Judge William Sweigert ’23, who convinced Vapnek that although judicial clerk pay was lower than private practice salaries, he’d have “a better first-year experience clerking than at any law firm in the city.” It was a particularly good match because Sweigert happened to handle most of the court’s intellectual property cases, which was Vapnek’s professional interest.

While clerking, Vapnek met Charlie Townsend, a premiere IP lawyer who later hired him away from the court. Vapnek joined Townsend & Townsend (now Kilpatrick Townsend) as an intellectual property lawyer in 1965. For decades, he litigated patent, trademark, copyright, unfair competition, trade secret, and related antitrust matters. He also handled technology licensing and IP prosecution.

While a new associate at Townsend, Vapnek was asked by a partner to cover for him at a meeting of the Legal Ethics
Committee of the Bar Association of San Francisco. “I found it interesting,” Vapnek said. “I continued attending meetings and joined the committee. The more I went, the more interested I was.” Eventually, Vapnek was named chair of that committee.

Later, an adversary on a case recommended Vapnek to membership in the California State Bar’s prestigious Committee on Professional Responsibility. Before long, Vapnek was chairing that committee as well. In that role, he was instrumental in establishing the State Bar’s Ethics Hotline, and he became the first editor-in-chief of the Compendium on Professional Responsibility. Published long before the Internet, the comprehensive Compendium was a much-needed one-stop resource for attorneys researching California’s professional responsibility standards.

Harry Sondheim, the first recipient of the professional responsibility award and the lawyer for whom it is named, said last year when Vapnek received the honor that he “consistently provided both excellent work product and well thought out guidance” to many professional responsibility committees.

**IP Excellence**

In addition to his work in the professional responsibility arena, Vapnek excelled in his primary practice area: intellectual property. He served as president of the San Francisco Patent and Trademark Law Association and as a member of the Executive Committee of the State Bar’s Intellectual Property Section. He published several articles, including “The Lawyer and Unfair Competition,” “Infringement and Remedies Provisions of the New Copyright Law,” and “Invention Developers: Public and Private Litigation and Legislative Solutions.”

Somehow Vapnek also found time to serve as an adjunct law professor at USF, UC Hastings, and UC Berkeley, teaching both intellectual property law and professional responsibility. In addition, he co-authored the original version of the Rutter Group’s well-regarded practical guide to California professional responsibility. And throughout his career, he served on a number of non-profit boards, including the Legal Aid Society, and as an expert witness in ethics and standard of care cases.

USF Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Joshua Davis, who conducted an MCLE program with Vapnek, described him as “a generous, decent, and nice man.” Davis added, “He’s long been a role model for USF law alumni—and other lawyers—for how to be both effective and ethical as an attorney.”

In the ’70s and ’80s, when State Bar lawyer Peck and many of her female colleagues experienced discrimination in a still predominantly male profession, Vapnek served as “a model for interacting with professional women without any apparent or actual bias whatsoever and for truly providing equal opportunity based upon merit.” And as a teacher, he taught more by example rather than instruction, Peck added. “The best of my professional demeanor is a result of Paul’s mentorship.”

Vapnek retired last year from Kilpatrick Townsend, but continues to maintain what he describes as a modest advisory practice in the professional responsibility field. Colleagues call him a devoted family man. His son is a urologist and his daughter is a San Francisco lawyer for a consulting firm that works to improve justice systems in developing countries. As for hobbies, Vapnek reads, keeps up with the news, and gardens. “But, really,” he said, “my life has been the law.”
USF School of Law Receives $8.3 Million Estate Gift

The USF School of Law has received an estate gift of more than $8 million that will benefit generations of students by providing scholarships.

The $8.365 million gift is from the estate of Thomas J. Martin, who graduated from the law school in 1951. He went on to establish his own law practice, TJ Martin, Inc.

Martin gave the gift to the law school with only one stipulation—that a scholarship fund be established for deserving law students. He left the specifics of how best to use the money to the School of Law, providing the school with flexibility and discretion in determining how the gift will most benefit students.

“At USF we understand that financing your legal education, particularly in a city that trends towards a higher cost of living than most others, is a significant factor in our efforts to attract and enroll the brightest and most diverse class possible,” Guerrero said. “Being able to award our new admits with additional financial assistance through scholarship funds such as the Martin gift will help immensely in our efforts. In fact, any effort to help our aspiring lawyers minimize reliance on educational loans by offering more in terms of scholarship or grant aid, is a good thing.”

The impact on students will be tremendous, said Trasviña, yet the gift’s significance is even broader.

“While the funding is extraordinarily generous, the impact of the gift goes well beyond that,” Trasviña said. “It is a solid and meaningful gesture from a man who graduated more than 60 years ago. In addition to all he did in his own career, he is allowing us to train the future lawyers of California. It’s a remarkable gesture of giving back to the law school that prepared him for his own career.”
Stephen Hamill ’78
Honored as 2013 Alum of the Year

“Steve brings a rare and rich blend of talents that only the wise possess.”
USF President Stephen A. Privett, S.J.

Stephen A. Hamill ’78 was named 2013 Alum of the Year at the USF School of Law’s annual Holiday Luncheon at the Fairmont Hotel on Dec. 4.

Hamill was recognized as an inspiration as a lawyer and engaged community member, and for his and his family’s generosity to the USF School of Law, enhancing students’ skills training activities through diverse clinics and faculty opportunities.

“Steve Hamill is unsurpassed in his devotion, commitment, support, and love for USF—our School of Law and the entire university,” said Dean John Trasviña. “Steve has enabled the School of Law to think bigger and longer term, and he has provided not just good ideas but the encouragement and support to make big things happen. He exemplifies giving back to support the next generation of young lawyers and in that regard is not only Alum of the Year but a model for all.”

Hamill has 20 years of experience in business and real estate law followed by private practice. A native of St. Louis who grew up in the San Fernando Valley, he is now the general manager of California and U.S. Communities, which provides public financing and public purchasing programs to government agencies. In addition to serving as a trustee of the University of San Francisco since 2010, he has been a youth soccer coach and referee for 30 years. He also has served as a member and chair of Concord’s Carondelet High School Board of Directors for six years.
Class Notes

1960
Marshall Berol '60 was interviewed for The Gold Report article “Gissen and Berol’s Gold Stock Tricks and Treats” about his optimistic analysis of the gold market.

1962
Daniel (Mike) Hanlon '62 is president of the Corporate Board of Directors for Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Santa Rosa and is a retired presiding justice for the First District Court of Appeal.

1967
Edward J. Imwinkelried '67, a professor at UC Davis School of Law, authored "Determining Preliminary Facts Under Federal Rule 104" in American Jurisprudence Trials. He also was honored with UC Davis School of Law’s Distinguished Teaching Award in recognition of his history and achievements in the legal field as well as his stellar commitment to his students.

1969
Daniel Foley '69 was interviewed in the Hawaii Bar Journal for his judicial role in promoting same-sex marriage and its future in Hawaii.

1970
Jerome Fishkin '70 of Walnut Creek’s Fishkin & Slatter was honored by California Lawyer magazine with a 2014 California Lawyer Attorney of the Year (CLAY) Award. He was recognized in the legal profession category for his representation of Sergio C. Garcia, an undocumented immigrant, in his groundbreaking, and successful, bid to practice law in California. Fishkin represented him pro bono before the Committee of Bar Examiners and the California Supreme Court.

1971
Sean Dowling '71 retired after 17 years of service as a Nevada County Superior Court judge.

1972
Richard C. Valerian '72 retired after 37 years as a trial attorney for Farmens Insurance. He now works as a mediator with Valerian Mediation in Oakland.

1973
Ralph R. Garcia '73 retired after more than 40 years of practicing law. He was in private practice with John Garcia '76 and retired as a public defender in March 2014.

1975
Marjorie Scardino '75 was elected to Twitter’s eight-member board of directors. She is the board’s first female member. Scardino is the former chief executive officer of Pearson, a London-based education and media company whose properties include Penguin Random House and The Economist. She also served on the board of Nokia.

1976
Patricia A. Burgess '76 joined the board of Impact Austin, a women’s philanthropy organization, while continuing as general counsel to a California-based investment advisory startup.

1977
Dale Brodsky ’77, partner at Beeson, Tayer & Bodine in Oakland, was recently appointed to the Fair Employment and Housing Council.

Howard K.K. Luke ’77 was named 2014 Lawyer of the Year in Non-White Collar Criminal Defense, Best Lawyers in Hawaii. He is also the fellow and current state chair for American College of Trial Lawyers.

“Steve brings a rare and rich blend of talents that only the wise possess,” said USF President Stephen A. Privett, S.J. “Business acumen and strategic thinking coupled with a key sensitivity to the soul of the university, its commitment to challenging students to use their Jesuit education not simply in furtherance of their own careers, but also to the advantage of the weak and defenseless. And these qualities he has consistently displayed over a lifetime of professional service.”

In presenting the award, former Dean and Professor Jeffrey Brand said, “The Hamill family as an anchor of support for the law school is not hyperbole. It’s supported by hard evidence in good and hard times.” Brand described Hamill’s early support for reconstruction of Kendrick Hall and the clinics program, expanding the faculty by becoming one of the first donors in the history of the law school to commit to funding a faculty chair, joining the USF Board of Trustees, and most recently jumpstarting a fellows program to help provide the skills training that modern legal education demands.

“I’m honored, I’m humbled, I’m grateful, and I’m thankful,” Hamill said. “And I believe that working together with a shared hope and a shared inspiration that there is no challenge we cannot meet and overcome in the pursuit of a better future for this law school.”

Emcee and member of the Board of Counselors Molly Lane ’90 shared a moving message sent by Lindsay Hamill Penkower ’05, Hamill’s daughter who was unable to attend the event. “With your honesty, kindness, and positivity, you continue to inspire me every day, as well as those who are lucky enough to have crossed paths with you. We feel so fortunate to have you in our lives and the world is just a better place with you in it,” she wrote.

The event received support from benefactor Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery and sponsors The Arns Law Firm, Hanson Bridgett, Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP, and The Veen Firm, PC. [USF]
1978

Alan J. Lefebvre ’78 is the president of the State Bar of Nevada, having served as a member of the organization’s board of governors for eight years.

Donald Specter ’78 was featured in the Sacramento Bee article “Californians to Watch in 2014: Donald Specter brings evidence-based approach to prison overcrowding.” Specter is director of the nonprofit Prison Law Office.

1979

Lynn Duryee ’79, retired as a Marin County Superior Court judge after 21 years of service. She is now serving as a mediator based in the JAMS San Francisco Resolution Center.

Gary Nadler ’79, a Sonoma County Superior Court judge, was appointed to the Judicial Council of California by California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye. He serves on the Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee, and has served in Court Technology Advisory Committee and the Trial Court Budget Working Group. He is active in legal education, serving on the Civil Law Education Committee for the Center for Judiciary Education and Research and a longtime adjunct faculty member at the USF School of Law.

1980

Gregory J. Dannis ’80, was honored by California Lawyer magazine with a 2014 California Attorney of the Year (CLAY) Award. He was recognized in the education law category for successfully negotiating two significant educational breakthroughs in 2013: an innovative teacher evaluation procedure in San Jose as part of a collective bargaining agreement and a new teacher compensation package in Oakland that avoided a bargaining impasse there for the first time in a decade. Dannis is with Dannis Woliver Kelley of San Francisco.

Ron Dodge ’80 and his wife, Sandy, are semi-retired and farming in Sonoma County. They also volunteer for the Family Justice Center.

1981

Stephen M. Murphy ’81 was named one of Northern California’s top 100 attorneys in 2013 by Super Lawyers magazine.

1983

Andrew August ’83 recently joined the San Francisco office of Browne George Ross LLP. He was previously co-founder and co-managing partner of Pinnacle Law Group, focusing on complex business and real estate litigation, including trials and appeals.

Paul D. Hunt ’83 is an estate planner with offices at Marina Village in Alameda.


Christopher E. Platten ’83 was named one of California’s top 75 labor and employment lawyers by the Daily Journal.

1984

Barbara Isola ’84, assistant district attorney for Plymouth County, Mass., was re-elected to the Quincy School Committee in Quincy, Mass.

Robert C. La Mont ’84 serves as county director in the Philippines for the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative, directing a five-year, $20 million program to pilot court automation.

Sue Rokaw ’84 works as in-house counsel at Deans & Homer.

1985

Sam Phillips ’85 is capital partner at Borton Petrini.

1986

Bette B. Epstein ’86 contributed the section “The Use of Mediation in Addressing Estate Planning Issues and Resolving Trust and Estate Administration Disputes” in the 2014 edition of Best Practices for Structuring Trusts and Estates. The section stresses the importance of preparing all facts before mediation to make the best decisions.

Carol M. Langford ’86 published the fourth edition of her nationally adopted textbook, Legal Ethics in the Practice of Law. She is an adjunct professor at the USF School of Law, and her son will graduate from USF in May.

Pedro Oliveros ’86, a Marin County public defender, was profiled in the Marin Independent Journal.

1987

Howard Cohl ’87 is an adjunct professor at the USC Marshall School of Business where he teaches strategic communication.

John Ter Beek ’87 achieved a unanimous decision from the Michigan Supreme Court on Feb. 6, when he challenged a Wyoming, Mich. ordinance prohibiting medical marijuana use.

Gregory D. Thomas ’87, an arbitrator with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, joined Feldmann-Nagel’s Vail/Avon office.

1988

Gonzalo “Sal” Torres ’88 won his fifth straight four-year term to the city council of Daly City and recently became director of commercial transactions in the Americas for Equinix Inc.

1989

James A. Kowalski Jr. ’89 was named executive director of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, an organization providing legal aid to low-income individuals.


1990

Molly M. Lane ’90, chair of the USF School of Law Board of Counselors, was honored by California Lawyer magazine with a 2014 California Lawyer Attorney of the Year (CLAY) Award. She was recognized in the criminal law category for her team’s eight years and 7,500 hours of pro bono legal and personal time spent to overturn the Texas death sentence of Cathy Henderson, a woman convicted of murder in the death of

Gov. Brown Appoints Two Alumni to Superior Courts

Gov. Jerry Brown appointed two USF School of Law alumni to the bench on Dec. 27: Ursula Jones Dickson ’98 to the Alameda County Superior Court and Stephen P. Acquisto ’94 to the Sacramento County Superior Court.

Dickson and Acquisto join the ranks of approximately 300 other alumni—from the Class of 1916 to today—who are or have been distinguished members of the judiciary across the nation.

Dickson was a deputy district attorney at the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office since 1999. Before earning her law degree from USF, she graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Acquisto was chief deputy legal affairs secretary in the Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. since 2011. He previously served as a supervising deputy attorney general and a deputy attorney general at the California Department of Justice, and was an associate at Mennemeier Glassman and Stroud LLP and Rushford and Bonotto LLP. Acquisto was an adjunct professor at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law. He earned a bachelor of arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara.
an infant she was babysitting. The team’s success also helped advance legal reform through the passage of a Texas law that authorizes retrials if new, relevant scientific evidence becomes available. Lane is with Morgan, Lewis & Bockius of San Francisco.

Leonor Noguez ’90 retired from the San Francisco City Attorney’s Office. Gini Graham Scott ’90 is writer/producer of the film, The Suicide Party, which focuses on suicide, inequality, and poverty.

1991

Kristine Fowler Cirby ’91 was featured in the Legal Monitor Worldwide article “Helping Home of Affordable Legal Advice,” discussing how her nonprofit firm, Family and Children’s Law Center, helps low-income families navigate the legal system. Mary Mahoney ’91 was appointed a judge in the Alameda County and South American operations.

1992

Lisa Hillegas ’92 recently opened a solo law practice based in Ukiah, focusing on family law using collaborative and alternative dispute models and general civil matters. Her practice extends to clients in the Bay Area including Marin, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties.

1993

Steven Kassirer ’93 is pursuing a PhD in counselor education at Syracuse University. He is focusing on mental health and public policy, as well as “humanizing” the legal profession. Amer Moorhead ’93 was appointed senior vice president at software company SAP, overseeing legal support of the SAP’s European, Asian, and South American operations.

1994

Stephen P. Acquisto ’94 was appointed a judge in the Sacramento County Superior Court by Gov. Jerry Brown. Kara (Brown) Cross ’94 is general counsel at the Personal Insurance Federation of California, a Sacramento-based association of the leading property/casualty insurance companies on issues of homeowners, automobile, earthquake, and flood insurance in California.

1995

Eustace de Saint Phalle ’95, leader of the Saint Phalle Trial Team at The Veen Firm in San Francisco, has acquired multiple settlements for his injured clients, has earned an AV-Preaminent rating by Martindale-Hubbell, the top rating for ethical standards and ability, and has been selected for the 2013 Northern California Super Lawyers list for the seventh consecutive year. Jessica Grant ’95, a member of the USF School of Law Board of Governors, was honored by California Lawyer magazine with a 2014 California Lawyer Attorney of the Year (CLAY) Award. She was recognized for her work as the lead attorney in obtaining an $816 million jury verdict on behalf of the State of New Hampshire against ExxonMobil for groundwater contamination. Grant is with Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass of San Francisco. Juliana Guerriero ’95 is a certified specialist in workers’ compensation law with Cantrell, Green, Pekich, Cruz & McCort in Long Beach, and volunteers as chair of a food and wine-tasting fundraiser for the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles.

Ronald Lee Knecht ’95, a columnist for the Nevada Appeal, was re-elected to the board of regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education and again named chairman of the audit committee. Karen Ng ’95 was selected to be a partner in Nixon Peabody’s labor and employment practice and is a member of the employee benefits and executive compensation team. Robert L. Waring ’95 authored SB 1407, carried by California Sen. Mark Leno and enacted on Jan. 1, 2013. The bill was based on Waring’s article “Is the Privacy of Therapy a Secret to Foster Children?,” published in Whittier Journal of Child and Family Advocacy. The article focused on the privacy foster children have in regards to therapy.

1996

Vanessa Hierbaum ’96, partner at Kaye-Moser-Herbaum LLP, was elected president of the Queen’s Bench Bar Association. Charles Kovats ’96, assistant U.S. attorney for Minnesota, served on a subcommittee of the Pentagon’s Defense Legal Policy Board that examined instances where service members are alleged to have committed offenses against civilians in combat zones. He received the Attorney General’s Award for Excellence in Furthering the Interests of U.S. National Security for his service in investigating and prosecuting al-Shabaab operatives. Craig M. Peters ’96 was elected to the American Board of Trial Lawyers. He has practiced personal injury plaintiffs’ litigation since 2009 and joined The Veen Firm in San Francisco in 2011.

1997

Jason Altieri ’97, was honored with a 2014 Corporate Counsel Award from the San Francisco Business Times/Silicon Valley Business Journal. Altieri is general counsel at the online credit lender Lending Club. Elizabeth Brekus ’97 was elected president of the Marin County Bar Association and was elected Mayor Pro Tem of the Ross Town Council. Brekus practices law in Marin County and focuses on civil litigation with an emphasis on real property litigation. Timothy G. Scanlon ’97, partner at Klein, DeNatale, Goldner, Cooper, Rosenlieb and Kimball, LLP received a Martindale-Hubbell AV Rating. His practice focuses on business and commercial litigation, construction litigation, surety and fidelity litigation, and business counseling.

1998

Veronika Briggs Benion ’98 lives in Arizona, where she opened The Christian Law Office. She practices family, juvenile, and personal injury law. Benion has handled at least one case per year on either a pro bono basis or at a greatly reduced rate. Doris Cheng ’98 was a featured speaker for the Bar Association of San Francisco’s Legal Malpractice Section’s event “Avoiding Malpractice: Ten Critical Junctures.” Cheng, a partner with San Francisco-based Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Schoenberger, is the new director of the USF School of Law Intensive Advocacy Program and president-elect of the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association.

1999

Nicole Lim ’99 has been appointed to the 4th District Agricultural Association, Sonoma-Marin Fair Board of Directors by Gov. Jerry Brown. Jenny Tsai ’99 was featured on KTVU news after success with a recent deportation case.

2000

Julia Veit ’00 was a member of Hanson Bridgett’s pro bono committee, is working with a group of attorneys at her firm, including Dennis McQuaid ’70, to get accreditation from the Veterans Administration to provide legal services to veterans referred at San Francisco’s VA Hospital.

2002

William Carlson ’02 joined the Stockton law firm of Herum Crabtree as an associate attorney, focusing on civil and business litigation. Jonathan DeGoooyer ’02, vice-president and associate general counsel for Hewlett-Packard, was presented in December with his second HP Legal Winners Circle Legends Award. This spring, he was honored with a 2014 Corporate Counsel Award from the San Francisco Business Times/Silicon Valley Business Journal for his pro bono work to protect and counsel vulnerable tenants in landlord disputes. DeGoooyer has been a part of the HP pro-bono committee since 2009.
2003
Harry DeCourcy ’03 was elevated to shareholder status in Littler Mendelson P.C.’s Walnut Creek office. Elinor Leary ’03, an attorney in the Saint Phalle Trial Team at The Veen Firm in San Francisco, was selected as a rising star for Northern California by Super Lawyers magazine for the third year in a row.

2004
Leslie Keil ’04 has been promoted to partner at Hanson Bridgett.

2005
Amanda Barden ’05 is director of education at the Institute of Aging. Sergio H. Benavides ’05 earned a certification as a criminal law specialist last year, after more than six years as a public defender in Fresno. He moved back to the Bay Area and opened the Law Office of Sergio H. Benavides in Hayward. Nina Chang ’05 has been promoted from senior associate to vice president of legal affairs and senior counsel at Appcelerator, the mobile enterprise platform company. Kristen Bauer Proschold ’05 was elected partner by Baker & McKenzie LLP, where she represents companies in all stages of tax controversies. She advises companies facing potential tax controversies pre-audit, during the audit and administrative appeals, during alternative dispute resolution proceedings, and in U.S. Tax Court. Earlier this year, Proschold became a certified Public Accountant in California. She also co-authored an 800-page international tax treatise, “US Corporations Doing Business Abroad.”

Bryan L.P. Saalfeld ’05 was promoted to director at Murphy Pearson Bradley & Feeney’s San Francisco office. Saalfeld also was admitted as an English solicitor. Mit Winter ’05 was promoted as a shareholder at the national law firm Polsinelli.

2006
Abe Gupta ’06 was appointed to the Dublin City Council. Jason Fellner ’06 is a partner at Murphy, Pearson, Bradley & Feeney in San Francisco, where he serves private and corporate clients across California. He was selected as a 2014 Northern California Super Lawyer. After graduating from USF, Matthew Pfeffer ’06 worked for the Madera County District Attorney’s Office for more than five years. He now works at the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office.

Loren Schwartz ’06 recently joined Dunn & Panagotacos LLP as senior counsel. Kimberly A. Shields ’06 was promoted to director at Murphy Pearson Bradley & Feeney’s San Francisco office. David Sims ’06 was appointed general counsel and vice president for development at JAMZ Cheerleading & Dance Inc., an organization that provides school cheerleading and dance leadership. Marina Smerling ’06 created Shameless Heart Coaching, a practice in counseling and relationship coaching, and co-founded Wise Heart Lawyering, a consulting firm that offers communication skill building.

2007
John H. Corcoran ’07 was selected as a rising star for Northern California by Super Lawyers magazine.

2008
Jennifer Applegate ’08 became a partner at Parrarnto & Applegate, LLP where she practices family law. Rachel Baldino ’08 teaches legal writing, research, and advocacy at USC’s Gould School of Law. Heather Boshears Robbins ’08 joined Fox, Shjello, Hartley & Babu LLP, a law firm based in San Mateo specializing in estate planning, probate litigation, business and real estate transactions, civil litigation, employment disputes, and bankruptcy. She is a member of the executive committee of the San Mateo County Bar Association’s Estate Planning, Probate and Elder Law Section and serves as co-chair of the Section’s New Attorney Group.

2009
Phillip Babich ’09 scored a victory for clients Coast Dairies & Land Co. and The Trust for Public Land in Save Our Agricultural Land v. the County of Santa Cruz. David Raynor ’09 recently founded Accelerate Legal, Inc., a San Francisco-based business law firm providing strategic legal advice to startups, entrepreneurs, and emerging companies.

2010
Nichelle Holmes ’10, deputy district attorney in Contra Costa County, was named the 2013 Misdemeanor Prosecutor of the Year by the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office.

2011
Giulliana Garcia ’11 is an in-house attorney for Lab126, Amazon’s research and development subsidiary, helping protect the company’s developing technologies.

2012
Thomas Bone ’12 co-authored the Energy Law Journal lead article “State Jurisdiction over Distributed Generators.”

Nora Devine ’12 presented at the Equality Committee on Disability Rights of the Bar Association of San Francisco’s event “Training, Hiring, and Retaining Lawyers with Disabilities.”

Jacob Gelfand ’12 launched Inclusive Strategies, a business coaching company helping small businesses get on their feet.

2013
Brandon A. Clouse ’13 recently joined the California law firm Newmeyer & Dillion as an associate.

In Memoriam
We announce with sadness the passing of:
Hon. Robert E. Carey ’48, November 2013
James Disney ’59, December 2013
Timothy H. Power ’69, August 2013
Michael Joseph Dooney ’72, October 2013
Douglas Holloway ’78, October 2013
Kevin Odell ’91, August 2013
Sexual orientation is part of our identity. Who we love reaches to our most inner core. I first realized as a child that my orientation was different than what was expected. For years I took great efforts to deny it, later I hid it, and until recently I felt compelled to apologize for it. Even after coming out as gay to incredibly supportive parents and family, I genuinely believed that I began each day with a handicap of disappointment. That is, until a brave group of young high school students showed me just how important it is to enjoy and celebrate being you.

Last year, I, along with several colleagues at Nixon Peabody LLP, partnered with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California to protect the rights of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club and its many student members at Sultana High School in Hesperia, Calif. GSAs are organizations in high schools and colleges that provide a safe, supportive space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) and gender non-conforming students. At Sultana, school administrators subjected the GSA to persistent censorship and pervasively discriminated against its LGBTQ and gender non-conforming student members. Statistics show that nine out of 10 LGBTQ students report being bullied at school by their peers because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. In this case, the primary bullies were school officials and teachers—the very adults with an obligation to ensure a supportive educational experience for everyone.

The actions of these adults were deplorable. School administrators unlawfully censored the GSAs promotional flyers and announcements, did not recognize the organization in school materials, and rejected events proposed by the GSA that were designed to educate the school community about homophobia and bullying. Meanwhile, teachers made bigoted remarks about sexual orientation and gender non-conformity to their students in class, referred to a lesbian student nominated for homecoming queen as a “joke,” and told another student on Valentine’s Day that “you’re gay and nobody wants to be with you.” The administration ignored numerous requests by students to investigate these cruelties and, in some instances, refused to do so altogether.

In the end, we achieved important changes that will better the lives of the students, the school, and the entire community. We did so without stepping foot into a courtroom. Through a coalition with several youth advocacy organizations and by harboring the power of international media outlets, including social media, we persuaded the school to immediately stop its disparate treatment of the GSA and discrimination of LGBTQ students. The school district agreed to establish new policies and procedures for making and resolution of complaints about bullying, and to implement related training for faculty and staff. The school and district took significant measures to improve the climate at Sultana High School that now make it a more welcoming place for all students.

Looking back on the experience today, I don’t think most about the creative tools we used or the impressive network we built to succeed. Rather, it was the kids of the Sultana High GSA who had the greatest impact on me. Through it all, they never once apologized for being themselves and they did not waver in their efforts to change the hearts and minds of the adults.

There is little in life that warrants more celebration than being exactly who you are and sharing that with the persons you love and care for most. The students of the Sultana GSA believed in this despite their teachers continuously telling them otherwise. As lawyers, we work tirelessly each day to advocate and provide a powerful voice to our clients. But perhaps some of the most memorable days are those when the clients help us find our own voice. I can now say that holds true for me.

Cameron Cloar ’09 is an associate at Nixon Peabody LLP in San Francisco. Cloar and several attorneys at Nixon Peabody, including Danielle Kleinman ’09, will be awarded the 2014 LGBT Advocacy Award by the ACLU of Southern California in June for their representation of the Sultana High School GSA. Cloar was also the recipient of Nixon Peabody’s 2014 Pro Bono Attorney of the Year Award.
A law school education at University of San Francisco launched the legal career of John Rosenbaum ’94 by providing an introduction to corporate law that proved invaluable and opened multiple career paths.

Inspired to give back, John named the School of Law as a beneficiary of his IRA, simply by completing the beneficiary form his IRA manager provided. With this planned gift, he not only passes important tax savings onto his heirs, but he will also give the gift of a USF law school education. Thank You John!

“I hope my gift can be used in a way that supports students to believe that unlimited opportunities exist, and to pursue the career of their dreams.”

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A Supreme Visit
U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia (right) and his co-author, lawyer and lexicographer Bryan Garner (left), visited the USF School of Law Jan. 31 for a series of discussions and book signings. The pair spoke about interpreting legal texts and the art of persuading judges to hundreds of Bay Area lawyers and judges, as well as USF students, faculty, and staff. Read the story on p. 2.