TO SERVE WITH HONOR:
ALUMNI STEP UP TO MEET LEGAL NEEDS OF VETERANS
Dean Annette Clark ’89 and Seattle U President Stephen Sundborg, S.J. share a greeting as they lead law school faculty and guests to our annual Mass honoring the legal community. Red Mass 2017 will be held on Oct. 2. (Photo by Matt Hagen)
As lawyers and legal educators, we’ve always known that law is a vital and even noble profession. Usually the general public is a bit skeptical of that claim … until this year.

When the White House issued an executive order in late January that banned entry into the United States by travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries, our profession leapt into action. Lawyers rushed to airports to help detained passengers and families. Lawyers built websites to offer legal assistance. Lawyers took the White House to court to challenge the constitutionality of the order.

Here in Sullivan Hall, our faculty eagerly joined not one but two panel discussions to lay out the legal strategies at play and spoke to numerous news outlets about the travel ban. A standing-room-only crowd welcomed Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson to the law school to hear his firsthand account of suing the President. Our Korematsu Center signed on to five separate lawsuits, including Washington’s, with amicus briefs opposing the order.

It’s a Facebook meme, but it’s true: Hug a lawyer. We’re now seen by the public as first responders.

As lawyers, we’re charged with understanding our form of government and safeguarding our Constitution. The citizenry – including our own friends and families – look to us for explanations, and it is our civic obligation as attorneys to help them understand what’s happening in our three branches of government and what is at stake for our country.

I’ve never been prouder of this profession. It is the best of us that we are seeing on display during these difficult times.

But as I said, we’ve always known it to be true that law is a noble profession. Our alumni featured in this issue’s cover story, for example, are working together to advocate for better legal services for veterans in need. These lawyers understand that no one should face poverty or homelessness after serving our country.

We also know it to be true because every summer we see the valuable work done by our Public Interest Law Foundation summer grant recipients. Thanks to a tremendous outpouring of support at this spring’s PILF Spring Event & Auction, our students’ service work will expand. The event raised more than $100,000, enough to support 24 summer grants. My sincere thanks go out to the alumni who helped plan this fun-filled evening, especially event director Brent Williams-Ruth ’01.

Thank you to all of our alumni for the work you do contributing to your communities and safeguarding the rule of law. Our hats are off to you.

Best,

Annette E. Clark ’89
Dean and Professor of Law
LAWYER | SPRING 2017

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TO SERVE WITH HONOR
Law school alumni are working to serve veterans with legal needs and advocate on their behalf in Olympia.

CLINIC AIMS TO PROTECT WORKERS’ RIGHTS
A new clinic allows students to help workers fight wage theft and discrimination.

Cover: Tracy Flood ’99, now an examiner with the U.S. Department of Labor who also serves veterans from her private practice in Kitsap County, reported for duty in the U.S. Navy at the tender age of 17. She’s holding a photo from the 1987 Naval Ball at the Naval Air Station Chase Field in Beaville, Texas, where the base’s youngest and oldest sailors were asked to cut the cake. (Photo by Matt Hagen) Above: Seattle landmarks such as the Space Needle were bathed in red light on Feb. 4 to mark Seattle University’s 125th anniversary. (Photo by Yosef Chaim Kalynko)

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KOREMATSU CENTER FIGHTS RACIAL SLURS IN FEDERAL TRADEMARKS
The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office should be allowed to deny or rescind federal registration of racially disparaging trademarks, according to an amicus brief authored by the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality and supported by multiple affinity bar associations.

“Private acts and expressions of racism can be terrible and damaging, but they take on a wholly different meaning and are particularly corrosive to our ideal of an integrated society when they occur with the sanction of government,” the brief states.

*Lee v. Tam*, the case currently pending at the nation’s highest court, involves an Asian American dance band that named itself by a racial slur as part of an attempt to re-appropriate the term. The outcome of this case will likely affect a different case involving the Washington, D.C. football team whose name is a derogatory term for Native Americans.

Federal law allows denial or cancellation of racially disparaging trademarks under Section 2(a) of the Lanham Act. An earlier ruling in the Federal Circuit found this provision of the Lanham Act unconstitutional as a violation of First Amendment free speech protection. The U.S. Supreme Court must now decide whether to uphold or reverse that Federal Circuit ruling.

The Hispanic National Bar Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the National LGBT Bar Association, and the National Native American Bar Association all joined the Korematsu Center’s amicus brief in favor of reversal.

Professor Robert Chang, executive director of the Korematsu Center, argued that trademarks are commercial speech and, as such, fall within the government’s power to regulate commerce.

A common public misperception is that the band and the football team would no longer be able to use their names if trademark registration is denied. This is not the case, Chang said.

In an essay for SCOTUSBlog, he noted that band leader Simon Tam has been using a racial slur as his band’s name since 2006. “He continued using it even after federal registration was denied. Through his usage, he has successfully established trademark rights and could sue to protect against infringement. The denial of federal registration has not impinged upon his political project of re-appropriation.”

Denial of racially disparaging trademarks is especially important because of the way such trademarks can lead to a return to a segregated marketplace.

The brief discusses a hypothetical restaurant named “Spics Not Welcome,” as posed by Judge Jimmie V. Reyna of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Federal Circuit in his dissent. If such a restaurant served Latino customers, despite its name, it might not run afoul of Title II of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But the name itself “communicates a discriminatory intent as harmful as the fruit produced by discriminatory conduct,” Reyna wrote.

The brief then connects this hypothetical to the gun shops in several states that have posted signs declaring themselves to be “Muslim Free Zone[s]” and Indiana’s Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which would appear to permit businesses to post “Gays Not Allowed” signs. Though nothing prevents these signs from becoming trademarks, the brief argues that the federal government should not support discrimination by conferring benefits to the mark holders through federal registration.

A team of attorneys at Perkins Coie — William Rava, Elvira Castillo, David Perez, Cara Wallace, and Dane Westermeyer — served as pro bono counsel on the brief.

The Korematsu Center previously filed briefs on this issue before the Federal and Fourth Circuits of the United States Court of Appeals. Oral argument at the U.S. Supreme Court took place in January and a decision is expected later this spring.
Congratulations to our winter grads!

We love that our December 2016 graduation ceremony at the Seattle Sheraton was a family affair. Kaha Arte’s extended family formed an impressive support crew. Diani Taylor (pictured here with Darci Byrd) wore a sash made of oyster shells from her family’s business, Taylor Shellfish. And members of the December Class of 2016 prepare to receive their degrees.
Nestora Salgado thanks law school for support

For almost three years, Renton resident Nestora Salgado-García suffered in a Mexican prison while Seattle University School of Law students worked to free her. In October, she returned to say thanks.

“I was able to be released from the government because of the work that you did as my representatives,” she said, speaking through an interpreter at a Social Justice Monday event. “That strength and that community that you built around my case had results.”

Salgado, a dual citizen of the United States and Mexico, was arrested for community service in her home village of Olinalá in the Mexican state of Guerrero. Though Guerrero’s coast is home to the tourist haven of Acapulco, the remote and mountainous interior is plagued by poverty, drug trafficking, and violence.

Guerrero law and the Mexican Constitution guarantee the rights of indigenous communities to form their own security groups. Salgado’s group – created to protect the indigenous people of Olinalá – was officially part of state law enforcement, and had the express approval of Guerrero’s governor.

Salgado told law students that the goal of her community security group was to help people whose pleas for justice were being ignored by the Mexican government. Her voice broke as she described how her people suffer from lack of health care and are traumatized by sexual violence and child trafficking.

“I became an enemy of the state, just because I was trying to help people file reports,” she said.

Salgado was never given due process or allowed a trial on the trumped-up charges against her. Students in the law school’s International Human Rights Clinic, with the guidance of Professor Thomas Antkowiak and co-counsel Alejandra Gonza, successfully petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to demand her release.

“You were my support,” Salgado said. “You were the back-up of my case. That’s how I felt about it and that’s how it was received by other people, even worldwide.”

PILF hits a home run

Our annual Public Interest Law Foundation Spring Event & Auction was bigger and better than ever this year. This grand event, featuring a baseball theme and held at the elegant Marriott Seattle Waterfront, raised more than $100,000 to support our students as they pursue unpaid public interest internships this summer. Professor from Practice John McKay (above) was the keynote speaker. Many thanks to our corporate sponsors and the hundreds of friends and alumni who attended.

Dressing for success

Our Center for Professional Development hosted a hugely popular Pop-Up Shop on Dec. 1, offering students the opportunity to receive work-appropriate clothing for free, along with advice from professional stylist Brianne Trafton. More than 85 students participated, so many that CPD plans to make the Pop-Up Shop an annual event. Many thanks to the law firm of Dorsey & Whitney LLP for supporting the stylish shopping spree.
Student Tarra Simmons wins prestigious Skadden Fellowship

Tarra Simmons, who has dedicated the last four years of her life to protecting the civil rights of people who have served time in prison, is the first law student from Seattle University to receive a Skadden Fellowship. This prestigious program enables dedicated social justice professionals to work on behalf of people who are poor, elderly, disabled, or otherwise deprived of human or civil rights.

After graduation this spring, Simmons will spend the two-year fellowship working with the Public Defender Association (PDA) under Director Lisa Daugaard and Senior Attorney Andrew Kashyap. She’ll provide direct representation and policy advocacy on behalf of people formerly involved with the justice system, particularly on issues of employment, housing, and legal debt.

Simmons works on behalf of this vulnerable population because she, too, was formerly incarcerated. In 2013, she was released from prison after serving 20 months on drug charges. As she struggled to find work again and pay off her legal debts, she realized the need for policy changes to help former inmates re-enter society and keep them from returning to prison.

“I had a vision that one day I would have the skills and resources needed to help my own community find a second chance,” she said.

Once described as “a legal Peace Corps” by The Los Angeles Times, the Skadden Fellowship program was established by the international law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in 1988 in recognition of the dire need for greater funding for graduating law students who wish to devote their professional lives to public interest work.

As a law student, Simmons has taken her powerful advocacy to judicial conferences, the state legislature, and the Washington Supreme Court, sharing her personal story as a way to drive home the need for reform and re-entry assistance.

“Everything I have done up to this point was to achieve this very goal,” Simmons said. “People deserve a second chance. And I won’t stop until we are liberated.”

The Public Defender Association works on diversion programs for low-level criminal offenses, reducing racial disparity in policing, changes in policy that reduce mass incarceration, and assistance for community activists.

“We hold Tarra out as the exemplar of the powerful advocates for justice we aspire to educate and train at our law school,” said Dean Annette Clark ’89. “We are proud and inspired by what she has accomplished in her life and career thus far.”

Join our online law community

We recently launched a new law alumni directory and networking platform that provides the opportunity for law alumni to reconnect with former classmates and use the trusted Seattle University School of Law environment to expand professional networks.

Seattle U Law Connect, at seattleulawconnect.org, connects you, our valued alumni, with:

- **Classmates**: Find Seattle U Law graduates in your area, stay in touch, and build new networks.
- **Faculty**: Reconnect with past professors and engage with our extraordinary faculty.
- **Law school updates**: See the law school news, events, programs, and stories that set Seattle University School of Law apart.

On Seattle U Law Connect, you can search for alumni by class year, region, practice area, or company; direct message other members; and find your law school news all in one place. Sign up is quick and easy—a how-to guide is posted online. We hope to see you on seattleulawconnect.org!
While students in the law school’s Youth Advocacy Clinic focus on juveniles, the occasional clemency case for an older client can provide depth and meaning to their legal education. Robert King was such a client.

The 63-year-old Everett man had been sentenced to life in prison without parole. In 2014, after almost two decades in prison, King wrote to Professor Paul Holland seeking legal assistance. Clinic students worked on his case throughout the 2014-15 academic year and Governor Jay Inslee approved the clemency request in September 2016.

The clinic has handled several clemency cases. Professor Holland sees the work as a perfect complement to the students’ other work representing clients in Juvenile Court.

“We’re seeing people at the beginning and end of their experiences with the criminal justice system, and I think that’s valuable for the students,” he said. “It broadens their perspective and equips them to advocate for clients at all stages of the process.”

Angelina Petrosyan ’15, one of the clinic students, said she was initially daunted by the seriousness of King’s crimes and the work that lay ahead. “But when I met Mr. King, I could tell that the man in front of me wasn’t the man that I had read about in his files,” she said.

Sadly, King passed away from advanced liver cancer a few months after being released from prison.

In 1996, King was convicted in Snohomish County Superior Court of second-degree attempted assault after he reached for a gun when stopped by police in the midst of a robbery. Because it was his third conviction for what the three-strikes law classifies as a “most serious offense,” he was sentenced to life without parole.

While in prison, however, he dedicated himself to living his life fully in accord with his Christian faith. He took responsibility for his actions. He became a role model and leader among inmates, often mentoring younger prisoners who needed guidance as they prepared for their return to society. He served his time with integrity, earning the trust and respect of prison staff.

The law students who worked on King’s case knew that capturing his story in a compelling narrative was crucial to the success of a clemency petition.

“There aren’t any strict and rigid guidelines about what has to be in a clemency petition,” said clinic student Ben Sweeney ’15. “In other motions, you know that if you hit a certain threshold, the facts will play out on your side. This was much more nebulous. We knew we had to get a strong grasp of who he was and let his full character flow through the petition.”

The students looked wherever they could to make the case that Mr. King’s case was “extraordinary,” as is required for the granting of clemency. “Whether the clemency board would see it as extraordinary we didn’t really know, but we got as many people as we could find to support him,” Petrosyan said. “We interviewed his fiancée, his son, his son’s wife, his friends, his pastor.”

Holland found an unexpected ally in Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Roe ’86, who opted not to oppose the petition for clemency. Roe reviewed King’s criminal history, interviewed his family, and visited King in person before making his decision. “I told him, ‘Robert, you were the poster boy for the three-strikes law. But that was then and this is now,’” he said.
The Briefcase law school news

In Memoriam: Anita Steele
Anita Martin Steele, a tenured member of the law school’s founding faculty and the first director of the law library, died Dec. 4, 2016, in Salem, Virginia.

Professor Steele grew up in Florida, studied Romance languages at Radcliffe College, and spent nearly a quarter-century raising her four children on a cattle farm in Virginia. After divorcing her first husband, she received her law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1971 and moved to Seattle to obtain a degree in law library science from the University of Washington.

She joined the faculty of a brand-new law school at the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Washington, and was charged with creating the law library from scratch before the students arrived that fall. Over the years, she was promoted to associate professor and then to professor, while remaining law library director. She married James Beaver, a fellow law professor, and shared more than 20 years with him before his death in 1996. The two are pictured above. Their shared hobbies were reading, classical music, collecting art and Oriental rugs, and traveling. In 1999, Professor Steele retired and returned to live in Virginia to be closer to her children and grandchildren.

GiveBIG 2017
Save the date of Wednesday, May 10, 2017, to GiveBIG to the law school! This city-wide campaign is organized by the Seattle Foundation and is a great opportunity for our investors to stretch their generous gifts even further. GiveBIG helps support our students’ academic experience, and last year our supporters contributed more than $16,300. Please join us on May 10 and support the law school in educating powerful advocates for justice!

Celebrating 30 years
Our Access Admission Program celebrated 30 years of diversifying the legal profession with a grand event in September and the creation of a new scholarship to help ARCies succeed at the bar exam.

The Boerner Lustbader Bar Exam Scholarship Endowed Fund, named for program founders Professors Emeriti Paula Lustbader and David Boerner, will be awarded to Seattle University School of Law graduating students who entered law school through the Access Admission Program. Recipients will be chosen based upon significant financial challenges they are facing during the bar preparation period and life circumstances that put them at risk of not passing the bar exam on their first attempt.

A portion of the gifts raised at the event will be used to fund scholarships beginning this spring. The remainder of the funds were added to the endowment established for the scholarship through a gift of $50,000 from a very generous alumnus and a matching gift from the Great Futures Matching Initiative. The Boerner Lustbader Bar Exam Scholarship Endowed Fund has become a lasting legacy to the inspirational contributions of Professors Emeriti Boerner and Lustbader.

To support the scholarship, please contact our Advancement office at 206-398-4600.
Low Bono Incubator Program helps 11 new attorneys thrive

Eleven graduates of Seattle University School of Law will receive mentorship and financial assistance for one year as they build legal practices to serve moderate-income clients. They are part of the law school’s innovative Low Bono Incubator Program, which launched in 2014.

A low bono practice offers reduced-fee legal services to clients who can’t afford a full-price attorney but also don’t qualify for indigent aid. The Access to Justice Institute developed the incubator program in order to build the next generation of lawyers working to expand access to legal services. The program also features regular CLEs, hosted at the law school, that are free and open to all solo and low-bono attorneys.

Stan Perkins ’85, a successful personal injury attorney, provides funding for the incubator positions and mentorship for the new attorneys.

The 2017 participants offer a wide array of legal services, including intellectual property protection, estate planning, and assistance for veterans.

Katrina Brede ’14 launched POV Legal Services to serve moderate-means artists and other clients who need assistance with intellectual property and entertainment law issues. A former media producer, Brede has a unique understanding of the legal needs of artists, nonprofits, and small businesses.

Abra Conitz ’14 founded Conitz Law PLLC to help clients in eastern King County and other underserved areas with education and family law issues. A former elementary school teacher, Conitz is focused on helping children with special needs receive the educational resources necessary to succeed regardless of family income.

Cindy Zetts ’13 began her solo practice firm, Cynthia Zetts Law PLLC, in Covington, Washington, to provide estate planning, guardianship, probate, and elder law services primarily to low- and moderate-income seniors. Zetts operates a mobile law office, which can be invaluable for elderly clients.

Shane McKinnie ’13 initiated McKinnie Law PLLC to provide criminal law, landlord-tenant, and estate planning services to moderate-means clients. McKinnie, who is a veteran, is particularly focused on making legal services more accessible to veterans.

Lorelei Munroe ’13 and Roxana Florea ’14 teamed up to form Florea Munroe Law, a firm dedicated to providing high-quality legal services to clients by offering full, unbundled, and low bono representation. Their firm specializes in family law, elder law, estate planning, collaborative law, mediation, and probate.

Jessica Lewis ’16 and Elena Yager ’16 started a non-profit law firm, Northwest Advocacy Foundation, to provide legal services to moderate-means clients in the areas of family law and landlord-tenant law. Their dedication to serving low- and moderate-income clients was honored when Eastside Legal Assistance Program named them both fellows in November 2016.

Naomi Strand ’10 recently founded Northwest Community Legal Advocates as a Washington non-profit serving moderate-means clients, after practicing for years with an impressive list of legal services organizations in the Seattle area. Strand works closely with her clients to address their legal issues in a broad range of areas including criminal defense, Social Security disability, immigration, and family law.

Cameron Buhl ’15 and Erin Lecocq ’15 launched Infinitum Legal Counsel, P.S., a non-profit firm based in Pierce County, to provide committed and compassionate advocacy and to make access to justice possible for moderate-means, low-income, and marginalized communities. They offer legal services to clients in the areas of family law, child welfare defense, estate planning, and select employment law and criminal misdemeanor matters.
The nightly news was filled with Civ Pro classics like standing, reviewability, and judicial review. Tens of thousands of people listened to the livestream of oral arguments from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, an activity usually reserved for the most devout of law nerds.

The reason: Newly inaugurated President Donald Trump and his constitutionally problematic travel restrictions on people from seven Muslim-majority countries. Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson was the first state official to challenge Trump’s executive order, launching a dramatic legal narrative that continues to play out in the courts. Our Korematsu Center for Law & Equality filed amicus briefs in several legal challenges, including Washington’s.

Dean Annette Clark ’89 convened a panel of law school faculty to discuss the case and other legal questions that have arisen as a result of President Trump’s policies. Panelists discussed parallels to President Roosevelt’s executive order directing the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, talked about the heroic efforts of lawyers rushing to airports to help people who had been detained, and offered suggestions for those seeking to resist the new administration’s policies.

For a few weeks in early 2017, it seemed like everyone was a law student.

The full video is available at bit.ly/trumpppanel.
### See What Our Panel Experts Said:

**Steven Bender**  
Professor of Law  
Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development

> A lot has been said, in framing opposition against the travel ban, that it’s contrary to our American values and our anti-discrimination history. But our immigration history is racist and exclusionary on grounds many of us today would find abhorrent. We can’t deny that history and it continues today. The Congress and the courts, particularly the Supreme Court, have been complicit in that discriminatory history.

**Lorraine Bannai**  
Professor of Lawyering Skills  
Director, Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality

> While few spoke up against the Japanese American incarceration during World War II, a handful of committed lawyers assisted Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Mitsuye Endo in challenging the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066. They challenged the government orders even when it was unpopular to do so, and against a popular president. As frightening as things are today, it is heartening that we see lawyers now speaking up to uphold the rule of law.

**John McKay**  
Professor from Practice

> The fact is the Immigration and Naturalization Act provides a vast grant of authority to the President of the United States and the executive branch to determine who enters the country. So, unlike the situation in Korematsu and Japanese internment, we’re for the most part talking about people who are outside the country. … An individual who is overseas and is seeking entry into the United States has virtually no constitutional rights to assert in the United States District Court.

**Michael Russo**  
Distinguished Practitioner in Residence

> Across the country, 10,000 lawyers volunteered in the aftermath, to go to airports, to meet with families, to try to get information. It’s not some political protest. It was our profession’s response to what was seen as a crisis of justice and our profession’s commitment to equal justice, to fundamental fairness, to due process. That’s what’s going on - lawyers just trying to do their job.

**Andrew Siegel**  
Associate Professor of Law  
Associate Dean for Planning and Strategic Initiatives

> One of the theories the plaintiffs are forwarding is that under existing constitutional doctrine, no matter how perfunctory the review is supposed to be, how low the standard is supposed to be, this executive order fails that perfunctory constitutional review because the President is not rational, because there are no real reasons for this ban, because it is motivated by something other than reason (animus? spite? delusion?). It’s an extremely hard claim to make in normal circumstances, but every day on Twitter the President makes it a little bit easier.

**Charlotte Garden**  
Associate Professor of Law  
Associate Dean for Planning and Strategic Initiatives

> You might hear people say that it’s un-American to engage in secondary activities, that there’s something wrong with putting pressure on companies, on people, because of their political affiliation or their business decisions. I’m here to tell you that as a matter of history that is not correct. There’s a long national history of just that kind of activism. In recent history you can look to the 2006 Day Without Immigrants, but you can also look back to the civil rights era when consumer boycotts of private businesses … helped to add pressure in the fight against segregation.
Alumni step up to advocate on behalf of military service members

BY CLAUDINE BERMAR
John Varga enlisted in the Army Reserve as a high school senior, completed basic training, and spent most of 2004 driving around Afghanistan with infantry units in search of Taliban insurgents, distributing government-branded soccer balls and school supplies to villagers along the way as part of his job in psychological operations. He came home, finished college, was honorably discharged, went to law school, and became a lawyer.

But he can’t help imagining a chain of events in which things didn’t turn out quite so well.

“If my Army experience had gone just a little differently, it is possible that I could be living a life of VA appointments and treatments, difficulty with housing and employment,” he said. “I could have been blown up, survived, and then developed an opioid addiction” and a whole host of addiction-related problems as a result.

In other words, Varga could have been one of the thousands of veterans in serious need of legal help. Instead of being a lawyer, he could have easily been a client.

Varga, a 2012 graduate of Seattle University School of Law, is among the many law school alumni who make a concerted effort to help veterans as part of their legal practice. And after more than 15 years of conflict in the Middle East, the need for lawyers to assist veterans is significant.

Veterans face the same legal challenges that anyone else does – divorce, criminal charges, drafting a will – but there are unique issues as well. Even though federal law protects service members, deployments overseas can still cause problems with landlords, employers, and creditors. And it often takes legal assistance just to navigate the federal bureaucracy for benefits and health care. Veterans can also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or other service-related injuries that lead to legal problems.

“Any time a significant portion of our service members are involved in a war or armed conflict, the need for veterans services, including legal help, is going to rise,” said Shane McKinnie ’13, a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve and low bono attorney. “Veterans of armed conflict are more likely to need legal help based on injuries sustained in battle, both physical and psychological.”
A 2015 study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs found that legal assistance could solve at least five of the top 10 problems that contribute to homelessness among vets, including eviction/foreclosure, child support issues, driver’s license suspension, outstanding warrants and fines, and discharge status appeals. (A less-than-honorable discharge can shut a veteran out from necessary care and services.)

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, nearly 9 percent of homeless people – almost 50,000 individuals nationwide – are veterans.

“There are very few legal resources available to veterans in Washington,” Varga said. “If Washington attorneys who also happen to be veterans do not advocate for this, or at the very least make the general public aware of legal issues facing veterans, who will?”

The push to draw increased attention to the legal needs of veterans is happening at both the state and national levels. The American Bar Association last year launched the Veterans Legal Services Initiative to assess veterans’ unmet legal needs and advocate for better policies to address the problem.

“Veterans are men and women who risked their lives in defense of our liberty and to protect a just rule of law,” ABA President Linda Klein wrote in the ABA Journal last fall. “These rights and freedoms speak to the core of our profession. It is only appropriate we repay veterans for their sacrifices.”

Back home in Olympia, veterans legal advocates are pushing for passage of legislation that would create an Office of Military and Veteran Legal Assistance within the Attorney General’s Office. John Tymczyszyn ‘12, a Bellevue-based criminal defense attorney and former Navy pilot, said the office would field requests from low-income veterans and match up their cases with volunteer attorneys. A final vote is expected later this spring.

Tymczyszyn and other Seattle U Law alumni founded the Washington State Veterans Bar Association in 2014. The group not only provides camaraderie and networking for lawyers who are veterans, but also strives to help fellow vets get the legal help they need. A coordinator within the Washington Attorney General’s office would provide the assistance needed to make that happen.

As a first-year law student in 2009, John Tymczyszyn was in the first group of former service members to use the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill to pay for education. There were a few glitches in the reimbursement system, so he and fellow vet Shane McKinnie founded a veterans club at Seattle U Law to advocate on behalf of students receiving federal funds for their legal education.

The support they received from each other and the law school had a lasting effect, and that same group evolved into its own minority bar association, the Washington State Veterans Bar Association, the only state-level group in the country for legal professionals who are veterans.

“One of the things we’ve tried to do with the bar association is to form a new unit, a new squadron,” Tymczyszyn said. “All the people you serve with are scattered around the world and you lose touch with them. I think every veteran has had the experience of not staying in touch with the best friends you made in the military.”

Tymczyszyn and McKinnie served together in the U.S. Navy and trained together in Pensacola, Florida. It was just a lucky coincidence – they spotted each other during a campus tour – that they ended up in law school together.

McKinnie said the group helps lawyers connect across practice areas. “There are veterans in the local legal community of all ages and backgrounds, and it is very helpful to get to know one another and share our experiences, both in the military and in our varied legal practices.”
“Our goal is to have each one of our members take at least one case per year, and we have about 100 members – practicing attorneys, judges, law students,” he said. “We could get 100 cases a year accomplished at no cost to the veteran.”

Washington state has seven military bases, 650,000 veterans, 50,000 active duty service members, and 2 million affected family members. “Our state has the sixth largest population of veterans in the country,” Tymczyszyn said. “Veterans issues should be as important here as they are anywhere in the country.”

Attorney Tracy Flood ’99 often has veterans as clients in her private practice in Kitsap County. She served in the U.S. Navy on active duty from 1986-1990 and in the reserves for another four years after that. As part of her dedication to serving veterans, she assisted Kitsap Legal Services with its effort to launch a wills clinic for area veterans, based on an innovative program available to first responders.

“Veterans are like family,” she said. “I handled a divorce for one client in Island County who was a veteran, and then I handled a case for his daughter, and then he referred me to his friends. You build a unique bond with people who have been through similar experiences. You can relate to them because you know how important their military career was to them.”

Flood said Kitsap County hosts “stand downs” as an important way for veterans in need to find vital services, and she participates regularly. Stand downs are events that provide supplies and services to low-income vets, including food, shelter, clothing, health screenings, and benefits counseling. Vets can also receive referrals to other social services, such as lawyers.

“You build a unique bond with people who have been through similar experiences. You can relate to them because you know how important their military career was to them.”

Tracy Flood ’99
Fmr. U.S. Navy and veteran’s advocate
Samantha Adams ’13 works for one of the few regional organizations that serves low-income veterans with legal needs – the Northwest Justice Project’s Veterans Project, which employs three staff attorneys and one Equal Justice Works fellow.

She sees clients who often have multiple issues that interfere with their ability to find housing or employment. The most common civil legal issues are child support modification and arrears waiver requests, driver’s license reinstatement and legal financial obligations from criminal convictions, housing and consumer issues, VA overpayments, access to health care and benefits, and discharge upgrades.

Adams, who is based in Olympia, said the most rewarding part of her job is when she’s able to educate a veteran client about their legal rights in a way that makes them better able to advocate for themselves in the future.

In one case, she represented a Kitsap County man who was fighting a $64,000 bill from the Veterans Administration for overpayment of benefits. It was a complicated case, but Adams successfully got the amount cut in half.

“She worked her butt off,” Adams’s client, Matt Murray, told the Kitsap Sun.

Without legal assistance, low-income veterans may end up relying on state and local services for their basic human needs. Tymczyszyn said part of the reason he advocates on behalf of veterans is to make sure the federal government lives up to its responsibilities.

“The VA disability claim process is supposed to give veterans compensation for the injuries, either mental or physical, that they’ve suffered as a result of service,” he said. “But the VA system is very difficult, if not impossible, for a pro se litigant to navigate. There are so many veterans who are entitled to compensation and it’s the federal government’s responsibility to provide that.”

Many attorneys who served in the military see their legal education as a way to give back to that close-knit community.
As a first-year law student, Jonathan Glover discovered right away how crucial legal skills can be in advocating for veterans services.

Glover served for eight years as a military police officer in the U.S. Army, but sustained back injuries in combat that forced him to find a new career. “I’ve always been intrigued by the law,” he said. “If I didn’t do this work, I’d almost feel like I wasn’t fulfilling my duties to my military family.”

That feeling of family also makes it easier for veteran clients to relate to lawyers who themselves are veterans, said Ariel Hargrave, a former Marine who is now a third-year law student and Seattle U’s representative on the Washington State Veterans Bar Association.

“There’s a general sense among veterans that civilians just don’t get it,” she said. “It creates a sense of comfort when the person helping you can speak the same language.”

Hargrave summed up how many lawyers feel about helping veterans with their legal needs: “You shouldn’t have to fight so hard for your rights after fighting so hard for your country.”

ESD refused to reconsider, so Glover appealed to an administrative law judge. “I did all my research and wrote a 13-page pleading,” he said. “We were on the phone for two hours. Everything came into play – my civil procedure class, my legal writing class, my research skills.” An attorney from the Unemployment Law Project was also on the line as back-up.

The denial was reversed. “Now there’s a record that will allow dislocated disabled people, not just veterans, to attend law school as a viable training benefits option,” he said. “I kicked that door wide open.”
The criminalization of marijuana has been racialized from its earliest days. As the site of the first laws against the recreational use of marijuana, states are best suited to begin to undo this damage but unfortunately, state-by-state legalization has thus far failed to deliver racial justice.

In several recent scholarly pieces, I have tried to situate the role of marijuana legalization in the larger picture of racial justice and criminal justice reform. Here’s what I’ve concluded: Racial minorities disproportionately continue to face serious consequences for marijuana usage, while white entrepreneurs and white users enjoy the early fruits of legalization.

The initial criminalization of marijuana was prompted by derogatory racial stereotypes. In the early 1900s, a lawmaker on the floor of the Texas Senate proclaimed that marijuana made Mexicans “crazy.” In the Deep South, marijuana was blamed for the seduction of white girls by black men, as well as for violent crimes. By the time of the exploitative 1936 film “Reefer Madness,” most states had outlawed marijuana. The federal government soon followed.

Along came the full-fledged War on Drugs in the mid-1980s, which predominantly targeted marijuana use by youth of color. Studies show that white youths use marijuana at the same rates as African American and Latino youth, yet African Americans and Latinos account for most drug arrests in the United States, most of them for simple possession. Families have suffered terribly, and criminal convictions have robbed these young people of their futures.
Mere legalization isn’t enough to repair the past damage to communities of color ravaged by the War on Drugs. Racial profiling, which leads to skewed enforcement of drug laws, continues to leave minority communities vulnerable. That’s because certain vestiges of enforcement survive even the legalization of recreational marijuana – underage drug use, consumption in public places, driving while under the influence, and a black market that continues to exist, given high taxation rates and infrastructure costs of legal sales.

Voter initiatives in Colorado (2012), Washington (2012), Oregon (2014), Alaska (2014), and the District of Columbia (2014) have legalized recreational use of marijuana. In the fall 2016 elections, four more states joined that list — California, Maine, Massachusetts, and Nevada. Given the importance of California as a population and policy center, I took a close look at that state’s Proposition 64 – the Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act.

Proposition 64 goes beyond other state legalization approaches, including Washington’s 2012 measure, to begin to undo, and even to repair, the damage of ongoing structural racism in the criminal justice system and particularly in its War on Drugs. Most profoundly, Proposition 64 avoids leaving minors to the prevailing winds of racial profiling and school-to-prison pipeline enforcement.

While not legalizing use as it did for adults, the measure dramatically reduced penalties for minors. It eliminated incarceration, whether for youth use, sale, or production of marijuana. While not immunized from police contact, California kids can at least avoid serious criminal consequences for marijuana offenses. In contrast, since Colorado legalized recreational marijuana for adults in 2012, its black and Latino youth are being arrested at greater rates for marijuana offenses, while white youth arrest rates declined.

California’s measure allows expungement in an attempt to repair the damage of prior convictions under the old marijuana enforcement regime. Proposition 64 also corrects the potential for racialized injustice that lurked in the state’s earlier decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana. White people found with more than a single ounce of marijuana might be charged with a mere possession offense, a misdemeanor punishable by as little as a $500 fine, but minorities were more often charged with the felony of intending to sell their stash, carrying a maximum three-year sentence. Under Proposition 64, both possession of more than an ounce of marijuana and possessing with intent to sell (without a license) carry the same penalty of six months, a $500 fine, or both, reducing the racial consequences under prior law.

In yet another step toward racial justice, Proposition 64 creates something akin to reparations. It allocates tens of millions of marijuana tax revenue dollars to jobs, mental health care, and other services in communities “disproportionately affected by past federal and state drug policies.” Relatedly, in 2016, voters in Portland, Oregon overwhelmingly approved an initiative to impose a local marijuana sales tax and apply revenues toward small business development, prioritizing those run by women and people of color.

The racial consequences that survive marijuana legalization are no reason to resist legalization in other states and at the federal level. Rather, they are a reminder of the broader ills of our criminal justice system that is fixated on enforcement against minorities. A shift to treat use and addiction as a health issue rather than a crime is a needed step in the long road toward racial justice.

Professor Steven Bender is Seattle University School of Law’s Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development. He developed his paper, The Colors of Cannabis: Race and Marijuana, as an invited participant in the University of California, Davis Law Review’s 2016 symposium, Disjointed Regulation: State Efforts to Legalize Marijuana.

A follow-up paper focusing on California’s Proposition 64 appears in the online version of the UC Davis Law Review at lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu.
Liz Ford, distinguished practitioner in residence at Seattle University School of Law, had been interested in income inequality for a long time, but it was a simple graph – two lines creeping upward together and then splitting apart dramatically like a sideways Y – that inspired her to get law students on board.

The graph shows worker productivity paired with median income over the years. Up until the 1980s, the two lines match up fairly well; wealth was being created but also divided equally. By the time the graph reaches the present day, the lines are wide apart. In other words, workers are producing more than ever before, but getting paid about the same as they were in 1980. Someone is benefitting from all that labor, but it isn’t the workers.

Workers aren’t just missing out on raises to match their productivity, Ford said. There is also an epidemic of wage theft in the United States. A 2008 survey of more than 4,000 low-wage workers conducted by the National Employment Law Project found that more than 1 million employees were underpaid for the work they did in any given week, meaning they were not paid minimum wage or overtime, or given the breaks they are entitled to.

To make matters worse, low-wage workers face significant barriers to accessing legal services for workplace issues like wage theft. According to the 2015 Washington State Civil Legal Needs Study Update, roughly one-third of low-income people experience workplace legal issues. Yet, it is not an area in which workers are seeking or getting legal help.

“We are not going to make it as a society if we don’t have a middle class,” Ford said. “This seemed like a problem that could benefit from the ideas and energy of our students, especially since there isn’t any legal aid organization focused on employment law.”

Lisa Brodoff, director of the Ronald A. Peterson Law Clinic at Seattle University, recognized the power of this idea and in the fall of 2016 launched a Workers’ Rights Clinic as a partnership between Seattle University and the Fair Work Center. “It is squarely within our mission to tackle income inequality, and we could not be more thrilled to work in partnership with the vibrant Seattle workers’ rights community,” she said.

In addition to seminars on campus, students get hands-on experience in employment law in the Fair Work Legal Clinic, a fully integrated law clinic at Fair Work Center, where Ford is also the legal director.
The clinic serves low-wage workers and offers a unique combination of intake and referral services, community outreach, and direct legal representation. Over the course of the semester, students staff community clinics, hold regular office hours for workers seeking legal information, and represent workers in wage claims. The most frequent legal problems Ford and her students see are wrongful termination, wage disputes, harassment, and workplace discrimination.

“We know this work won’t end the problem of income inequality in our society, but we are making a real, meaningful impact in the lives of the workers that the clinic serves,” said Ford. “And, we are training the next generation of employment attorneys, to boot.”

In 2016, the Fair Work Center talked to more than 9,000 workers about their rights at work and helped workers recover $50,000 in unpaid wages.

Law student Tina Scott called the workers’ rights clinical course the highlight of her law school experience. “I loved the combination of reading cases and working with actual clients,” she said. “The blend really brought the material to life in a way that was useful as a student adviser and as a future lawyer.”

Here are just a few of the workers who received assistance from our students:

- A Somali refugee’s job offer as a security guard was rescinded when a routine background check falsely reported past criminal convictions. Students accompanied him to the King County Courthouse and cleared up the case of mistaken identity.

- Another worker injured his back while on the night shift cleaning airplanes at SeaTac Airport. He required a light duty accommodation while he recovered, but couldn’t work a day shift because he had to care for his toddler daughter. His employer demanded that he accept a day job or lose his Workers’ Compensation benefits and his job. Students provided him a letter informing his employer that such actions were unlawful. The employer withdrew its demand and is now working closely with the worker to find a suitable light duty position.

- A woman who became pregnant while working at a manufacturing company was denied a switch to a light duty job, despite her doctor’s advice. Her employer told her that light duty was not available for pregnancy. The worker was left without a job and she suffered a miscarriage. She came to the clinic after exhausting every other possible route and having been turned down by scores of private attorneys. The clinic persuaded the Washington Attorney General to take the case on and file a lawsuit against her employer.
Judged on her own merits

Judith Hightower ’83 brought compassion, instinct to Seattle Municipal Court

One of Judge Judith Hightower’s favorite memories from law school was the time she got a D on her first-year legal writing brief. Sure, the grade was awful, but it’s what happened next that matters.

The issue was whether unwitting possession of an illegal substance could be a valid defense against criminal charges. Precedent said no, but Hightower’s gut instinct said yes. She found a case from Alaska to support her position and built her argument for a “better rule of law.”

“I got a D on my paper because I did not follow precedent and really struggled with whether to stay in law school, that perhaps I really wasn’t cut out for this profession,” she said.

Then the day for oral arguments arrived. Three months pregnant and feeling miserable, Hightower persisted, confident that several months of research into state marijuana laws would support her case.

“After the argument, Professor [Laurel] Oates told me that I should not quit and encouraged me to pursue my legal career,” she said. “Later we learned this was a real case before the state Supreme Court, which had ruled the way I argued. I was vindicated!”

That moment would foreshadow much of Hightower’s career, where her instincts and powerful sense of justice have guided her interactions with colleagues, clients, and defendants in her courtroom. Hightower, a 1983 graduate of the law school, retired last year after serving for 25 years on the Seattle Municipal Court bench. She was the second elected and longest serving African American female judge in the state.

As a public defender straight out of law school, Hightower repeatedly encountered a judiciary that worked in rote, formulaic ways that showed little appreciation for the life circumstances of her clients. As a judge, she worked to change that.

“The courtroom became this revolving door for defendants because their underlying issues were never addressed – education, substance abuse, employment, mental health issues,” she said. “So I would impose conditions that were related to the situation. I didn’t impose fines on people who couldn’t pay. And I wouldn’t give them more jail time than was warranted.”

This approach isn’t nearly as radical now as it was back then. Thanks to Judge Hightower’s efforts, Seattle now has innovative programs like mental health court.
“When I first started, I was a laughingstock. People would say, ‘that judge loves to hug a thug.’ But I ran on a campaign that I would be tough but fair,” she said. If a defendant didn’t comply with her orders, she said, then she got tough.

Hightower grew up in the Seattle projects, the daughter of a homemaker and a sheet metal worker in a devoutly Catholic family. As an undergraduate at the University of Washington, she studied comparative literature and spoke out against apartheid in South Africa.

At every stage in her education, she stayed active in student government and volunteer groups. As a young law student, she and Jesse Wineberry ’82 founded the law school’s first Black Law Student Association. At the time, all law students of color belonged to a group called the Third World Coalition. But a surge in the number of black students admitted meant they had enough to form a separate group aligned with the National Black Law Student Association.

“We just felt we could be more effective if we were tied to a national organization,” she said.

The Seattle U BLSA chapter is still going strong, a point of pride for Hightower.

“Challenges still exist for students of color. Maybe if they didn’t, we wouldn’t have a BLSA,” she said, praising Seattle U Law’s commitment to recruiting students of color.

“Representation is so important in the law. There’s no doubt about it,” she said. “From a person of color’s perspective, they already feel like they aren’t going to be treated justly in the first place. So if they see someone who looks like them, it gives them a sense that maybe I have a chance. Here’s somebody who’s not going to judge me based on the color of my skin but who’s going to hear me and treat me fairly.”
What a school year it’s been so far! We celebrated the 30th anniversary of our nationally renowned Academic Resource Center, recognized the many accomplishments of our alumni, and hosted several events to renew our commitment to racial justice. Here are a few snapshots from campus (and beyond) from the last few months.

Dean Annette Clark ’89 posed for a selfie with 3L Miguel Willis and Sarah Elerson ’12 at the 30th Anniversary celebration of our Academic Resource Center in November.

The Latinx Law Student Association honored Chach Duarte White ’00, Steve Tapia, and Veronica Quiñónez ’11 at the Community Awards reception in March.

Joanna Plichta Boisen ’06, shown here with David Keenan ’08, was one of the honorees at our Seattle Sidebar in November, held at Blueacre Seafood.

Second-year student Derek “Red Arrow” Frank spoke at Seattle University’s Indigenous Peoples’ Day celebration.

Professor Mario Barnes of the University of California Irvine School of Law, our guest as part of the Influential Voices lecture series, hosted a thought-provoking discussion of racialized police violence. He touched on issues of implicit bias, increased consciousness of behavior, and improved training for law enforcement.

Third-year students Julie Pendleton and Melissa Osman recruited new members for Moot Court Board at the student involvement fair.

South Seattle College featured our law library’s traveling exhibit, “Fred T. Korematsu and the Pursuit of Justice,” as part of its Day of Remembrance activities. Through photographs, archival documents, and quotes, the exhibit tells Korematsu’s story of challenging the WW II exclusion and confinement order for Japanese Americans.

LaKeysha Washington ’10 and Erin McIntire ’15 celebrated their awards from the Black Law Student Association with Dean Annette Clark ’89.

Dalton Thacker was one of many students who helped decorate Sullivan Hall’s Christmas tree in December.
Benson Porter gives money a MISSION
Folks in his hometown of Aberdeen, Washington, used to joke that Benson Porter was named after his family’s store, Benson’s Office Supply. The truth is that the name was already in place when his grandfather bought the business in the late 1940s and he never bothered to change it, since Benson just happened to be his middle name. The family name was then passed down from father to son to grandson.

But in many ways, growing up in a family business affected him more than a name ever could.

Porter, who now serves as the president and CEO of BECU, said his dad and grandfather were the kind of small business owners who valued community involvement. Working in the store as a teenager, he developed a fondness for being the little guy.

“Throughout my career, I’ve intentionally chosen to be the disruptor,” he said. “I like the nontraditional business model to offer consumer choice and I believe it strengthens the fabric of the community.”

At BECU, that contrary business model is helping the homegrown credit union thrive.

Formerly known as Boeing Employees Credit Union, BECU recently surpassed 1 million members and is the fourth-largest credit union in the country. Though focused in the Puget Sound region, BECU has members in all 50 states thanks to online banking, as well as new branch offices in Spokane and Charleston, South Carolina.

Porter, a 1992 graduate of the law school, took the helm of BECU in 2012. His deep roots in Washington state (fun fact: he was a high school classmate of Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain) drew him back to the region from Palo Alto, California, where he worked in the state legislature.

Putting himself through law school, he once told a business magazine, was his proudest achievement.

“Classes started at 6 and work ended at 5. It was just enough time to microwave a burrito or a corn dog, get in the car, and drive to Tacoma,” he said. “I took two classes in the evening and the weekends were spent reading cases. You become exceptionally good at time management.”

In addition to time management, he also learned how to be an advocate — how to make an argument and then back it up with solid proof points.

“Yes, I’m the chief executive but I’m also the chief advocate for the organization,” he said “I have to be able to put together a persuasive case for why is BECU the best option for people. It’s the advocacy skills learned in law school that help you put an argument together.”

BECU returned $175 million to its members in 2016. It also offers its highest interest rates on Early Saver accounts; kids earn 6% APR on the first $500 so they learn the value of savings. Staff members volunteer to teach financial literacy in regional high schools. And BECU donated $3.5 million in 2015 to worthy causes suggested by its members.

This “people helping people” approach gets even better when it’s paired with technology, Porter said.

“Our largest branch office right now is that,” he said, pointing to his smartphone. In the same way that technology is changing the traditional practice of law, so is it changing how people manage their money.

Though it might not seem obvious, Porter said his law school education was vital to his success in finance. Learning how to think critically — how to be inquisitive and ask good questions — sets a person up for success in any endeavor.

“What’s been interesting for me is that the technology isn’t the disruptor; it’s just what enables new applications. People have to figure out how you apply those tools to current problems,” he said. “Those are the folks who are in a position to be disruptors because they’re seeing how you apply one thing in the context of another.”

Porter attended night classes at the law school’s campus in Tacoma, commuting from Olympia, where he worked in the state legislature.

Left: Northwest native Benson Porter ’92 loves spending time outdoors. Cycling and boating are his favorite activities.
Munish Bharti ’15 and John Hardie ’15 launched a practice in Seattle focused on helping personal injury victims. They also handle insurance claims and criminal defense cases. As law students, they formed several mock trial and moot court teams.

John Butler ’15 and his wife, Kasey, welcomed their baby boy, Rhys Oberyn Butler, into their lives in 2016. In January 2017, John became the president of the board of the Dispute Resolution Center of King County, where he has volunteered on the board since the beginning of law school. He continues to work in-house at A Place for Mom.

Hannah McDonald ’13 and her husband, Brady, welcomed firstborn Rory Edward McDonald on June 11, 2016. Hannah, Brady, and Rory live in Olympia, Washington.
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1974
Dennis Brennan retired after 40 years of private practice in order to travel, ride his horses, hunt, and possibly finish part of the honey-do list (or not).

1978
Cheri Filion retired after almost 22 years as an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration.

1982
Ann Danieli was sworn in as a Washington State Bar Association governor for District 7N by Justice Steven González in October 2015. She will serve a three-year term.

Theresa Doyle, King County Superior Court judge since 2005, was named 2016 Judge of the Year by the Washington State Association for Justice.

1986
Ellen Mondress and her partners have changed the name of their firm to Mondress Monaco Parr Lockwood PLLC. MMPL advises on the full spectrum of issues relating to retirement, health, and other employee benefit plans.

After almost 30 years in practice focusing on family law, Susan O’Brien was sponsored by Michael Bugni and admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C.

1987
Jennifer Shaw became a program officer with the Open Society Foundations in New York, where she continues to focus on criminal justice reform.

1989
Kany Levine operates the Levine Law Firm, PLLC in Pioneer Square in Seattle. He practices in the areas of criminal defense, civil litigation, and appeals.

1994
Joseph M. Wallin has been elected shareholder at Carney Badley Spellman.

1995
Judy Heit has recently opened her own mediation practice. For 20 years, she worked in the area of insurance defense, most recently with the Law Offices of Sweeney, Heit and Dietzler. She attended the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at Pepperdine University.

Aaron D. Lovaas has joined the Las Vegas office of Newmeyer Dillion LLP as a partner after owning and operating his own successful law firm for the past 12 years. He practices business litigation, business/commercial transactions, entity formation, and corporate governance.

Jessica Eaves Mathews, first editor in chief of Seattle University Law Review (after the journal was renamed), is founder and CEO of Leverage Legal Group, one of the first virtual law firms in the country, which launched as a solo firm in 2008. The firm is based on a flat-fee model and focuses on providing full-service, outside general counsel services for businesses.

1997
Carol Coleman Mitchell was recently appointed director of justice services and special projects in the Pierce County Executive’s Office.

Walter Wall was number 1 in his criminal law course back in 1992. He continues to pursue criminal law as a deputy district attorney. He will run for Mariposa County (California) District Attorney in 2018.

Greg Duff ’94 was named firm-wide chair of Garvey Schubert Barer. He is also an owner and chair of the firm’s national hospitality, travel & tourism practice.

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1998

Melanie K. Curtice joined Perkins Coie’s tax benefits and compensation group as a partner in the firm’s Seattle office.

1999

Tana M. Materi was named director of business department at Carney Badley Spellman, P.S. She focuses her legal practice in the areas of corporate/commercial transactions and mergers and acquisitions.

Eva Tuxbury started A Clean Slate, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation dedicated to vacating Washington convictions on a sliding fee scale.

2000

Rick E. Hansen has joined General Motors Company in Detroit, Michigan, as assistant corporate secretary and lead securities counsel. Prior to joining GM, Rick was assistant corporate secretary and managing counsel, corporate governance, at Chevron Corporation in San Francisco, California.

Devra Sigle Hermosilla is the new director of career services and adjunct professor of law at the University of South Dakota School of Law in Vermillion, South Dakota.

2001

After building her own aviation personal injury law firm for nine years, Alisa Brodkowitz merged her practice with Friedman Rubin. She is thrilled to be a partner there and take on large corporations on behalf of ordinary people.

Sylvia A. Miller moved her law office to West Seattle in 2016. She practices U.S. immigration and naturalization law. She has successfully represented hundreds of immigrants from all over the world.

2002

The King County Council appointed Gregg Hirakawa to a judicial seat on the King County District Court. He was appointed along with fellow alumni Lisa Paglisotti ’92 and Laurel Gibson ’96.

2004

Jennifer Cave joined the Louisville, Kentucky, office of Stites & Harbison, PLLC as a member in the environmental, natural resources, and energy service group.

Regina Paulose recently published “Genocide Denial and Refugees: A Lack of Protection in International Law?” in Denialism and Human Rights (Intersentia 2016). Regina spoke about human trafficking at the Centre for Modern Slavery’s inaugural conference at St. Mary’s, Twickenham, London and about justice efforts in Guatemala at the International Association of Genocide Scholars Conference in Brisbane, Australia.

2006

Joanna Boisen was awarded Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year Award from the Federal Bar Association.

Vanessa J. Firmhaber Oslund was elevated to partner at Bergman Draper Ladenburg, PLLC. She concentrates on representing victims of asbestos exposure, particularly those suffering from mesothelioma. When not in the courtroom or the office, Vanessa spends her time running after her two toddlers, Odette (age 1) and Zelda (age 3).

Julianne Henley has joined Garvey Schubert Barer, counseling clients on trademark, copyright, domain name, Internet, customs, alcohol, and licensing. She has assisted clients ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies with intellectual property portfolio management and brand protection strategies.

Brian J. Sutherland made partner with Buckley Beal, LLP, a boutique top-rated plaintiff’s employment firm. He was also named a Georgia Super Lawyers Rising Star for the second year in a row in 2016. After serving as a staff attorney at the ACLU and a trial attorney at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Brian continues to focus on civil rights matters on behalf of victims of racial and other discrimination.
After five years of practice, Lauren Parris Watts ’11 made partner at Helsell Fetterman LLP. Lauren began with Helsell in May 2009 as the 1L summer associate through the Puget Sound Area Minority Clerkship Program (now LEAD), returned the next year as the 2L summer associate, and started working full-time in September 2011.

Charity Anastasi is the director of law office management assistance at the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA). She moved to Baltimore and joined the MSBA in September 2016. Charity is the chair of the ABA Law Practice Division’s State and Local Bar Outreach Board, on the Law Practice Magazine Board, and a regular contributor to MSBA publications.

Kelly Wood accepted an appointment as a civil litigator in the Washington Attorney General’s new Counsel for Environmental Protection Unit. Most recently, Kelly was an assistant attorney general in the ecology division, where he served as lead attorney for the nuclear waste program.

2007

The Northwest Asian Weekly named John S. Laney a recipient of its “Top Contributor” award for 2016, which recognizes contributions that positively impact the Asian American community in the Northwest.

Kelly Wood

2008

Duncan Butcher has joined Miller Nash Graham and Dunn in Seattle as senior counsel with the business team. Butcher’s work includes entity formation, corporate governance, incentive compensation plans, private placement equity and debt offerings, public company reporting and SEC compliance, and the EB-5 immigrant investor program.

Mishkin Santa joined The Wolf Group as international tax director in the Washington, D.C. area. He also recently graduated from the Texas State Bar Tax Leadership Academy. Mishkin specializes in international tax planning, including cross-border, inbound, outbound, and asset protection for high net worth individuals.

Kris Yoshizawa was promoted to partner at Perkins Coie. Kris is a member of the financial transactions practice in the Seattle office. He represents banks, commercial finance companies, and other financial institutions and borrowers in connection with the negotiation, documentation, and closing of financing transactions.

Jamie Marie Keller-Aschenbach was appointed head of access services at the Hilton C. Buley Library, Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. She will oversee public services and copyright compliance.

After spending the last six years as a federal trial attorney, most recently as an Assistant United States attorney for the Western District of Washington, Jamal Whitehead ’07 joined Schroeter Goldmark and Bender in Seattle where he represents plaintiffs in individual and class action employment cases.

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2009
Lindsay A. Coates has been promoted to partner at Foster Pepper PLLC. Lindsay works in the firm’s municipal government and public finance practices and advises clients on the issuance of municipal bonds, low-income housing tax credits, and general municipal law. Lindsay also serves on the board of directors for Child Care Resources.

2011
Charlene Angeles moved from of counsel to full-time attorney with InVigor Law Group. Charlene focuses on working with businesses and individuals on a variety of practice areas, including contracts, entity formation, dispute resolution and litigation, and corporate governance.

2012
Michael Rose received the 2016 Alumni Emerging Leader Award from University of Alaska Anchorage. He was credited for his service to the UAA debate team, which won the 2005 National Championship, and his early legal success, including winning a $51.3 million verdict in a high-stakes corporate civil action.

2014
Elizabeth Forrest joined the Plano, Texas, office of Siebman, Burg, Phillips and Smith, LLP, as an associate. She represents firm clients in a variety of civil matters with an emphasis on intellectual property claims and business disputes.

2015

Class Notes

In Memoriam

2000
Nicholas Beermann, partner at the Seattle office of Fisher & Phillips LLP, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on July 30, 2016. Nick was a brilliant lawyer who managed any legal issue entrusted to him with great understanding and care for the client. Nick traveled the world and spoke several languages, giving him a multifaceted perspective that he generously shared with others. He packed in many amazing experiences in his all too brief 44 years while father to five children. In school, Nick served on Law Review and Moot Court.
Two law grads receive Seattle U Alumni Awards

Each year the Seattle University Alumni Association hosts the Alumni Awards, honoring six outstanding members of the Seattle University community who embody Jesuit values, demonstrating leadership and service to others. Two law school graduates are included this year.

**CAROLYN RONIS ’03**

Carolyn Ronis is changing the world. For this work, she is the recipient of the 2017 Seattle University Community Service Award.

Carolyn struggled for several years as a single mom of two small children before entering Seattle University. First in her family to graduate from college, she earned a philosophy degree and says she is grateful to the university for the gift of empowerment that put her on the road to self-discovery.

Encouraged by a Seattle U law alumna, she enrolled in the School of Law and worked part-time for the state Attorney General’s office advocating on behalf of abused and neglected children. And she did all of this while caring for her children and her terminally ill mother.

In 2014, Carolyn, now the mother of four, heard about the Chibok girls in Nigeria being kidnapped by the world’s deadliest terror organization, Boko Haram. She felt compelled to act and established the International Coalition for the Eradication of Hunger and Abuse (ICEHA). The organization addresses the plight of children caught in areas devastated by war and extreme poverty and combines sanctuary, critically needed basic services, and programs to diagnose PTSD and administer emotional healing.

Carolyn partnered with elementary school children in Virginia to collect one ton of school supplies which she personally delivered to Northern Nigeria.

A stage four cancer survivor, Carolyn has dedicated herself to improving the lives of others. She reinvests much of her salary as ICEHA’s director toward the future growth of that organization.

**ALEXANDRA KENNEDY ’08**

Alexandra “Ally” Kennedy is the 2017 Outstanding Recent Alumna Award, recognized for her tireless advocacy on behalf of undocumented immigrants and her innovation in creating a national network to support immigration attorneys who are women and mothers.

A 2008 graduate of Seattle University’s School of Law, Ally is the founding partner of Alexandra Kennedy Immigration Law, PLLC. The firm’s goal is to keep families together through the use of the U.S. immigration system. In her practice, she helps victims of violence and domestic violence seek immigration relief and defends clients in immigration court who are facing deportation. Ally has brought cases before the Board of Immigration Appeals and made oral arguments before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. “Being a lawyer is more than a job,” she says. “It is a calling.”

Her passion for immigration justice is only matched by her passion for being a mother. In 2015, Ally founded the national organization AMIGA Lawyers—also known as the Association of Mother Immigration Attorneys—designed to help mothers who are attorneys who needed support while “doing it all.” She has created a virtual community where AMIGA members can discuss all areas of their lives and provide support, uplift and empower one another.

Each week, Ally blogs about how to build better businesses, create winning cases, and live balanced lives. She hosts monthly webinars and travels throughout the country to speak on these topics. In June 2016 she hosted the first conference for women immigration attorneys, called Women, Power and Money.

In 2016, Ally was awarded the national Sam Williamson Mentor Award by the American Immigration Lawyers Association for her work with AMIGA—the youngest recipient ever.
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April 21
CLE: The Current Status of the ACA and Healthcare: Medical and Legal Perspectives

April 25
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April 29 – May 7
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May 12
Baccalaureate Mass & Spring Commencement Reception

May 13
Spring Commencement at KeyArena

May 17
Dean’s Club Recognition Event

June 21 – 23
CLE: Mastering Legal Writing Certificate Program

June 23
CLE: On the Edge of the World - Navigating Environmental and Legal Challenges on the Washington Coast

July 12 – 14
CLE: Intellectual Property Certificate Program

August 9 – 11
CLE: Health Law Certificate Program

August 25 – 26
Western Regional Legal Writing Conference

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