

MERCER LAWYER

DEAN
**Karen J.
Sneddon**

A LIFELONG LOVE
OF EDUCATION AND
TEACHING, **P. 10**





BUILDING UPDATES

Open for all Mercer Law students to enjoy, the renovated student lounge on the first floor is the perfect spot to study, chat after class, or grab a snack. Featuring study rooms, plenty of open space, and inspiring local artwork, the student lounge is one of the best spots in the building.



ROBIN GATTI PHOTOGRAPHY

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Alumni and Friends,

The year of 2023 marks our 150th anniversary. The first class of law students in 1873 numbered 16 students. The curriculum, instructional strategies, and even physical location has changed over the years. As a member of the Mercer Law School community since 2006, I have seen a number of changes. These changes are a result of our commitment to preparing students for the demands of the legal profession. As students' needs change, as the law changes, and as the legal profession changes, we adapt to ensure that law students have transformative experiences that inform their professional journeys for decades to come.

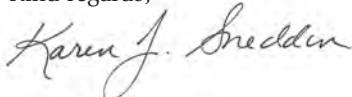
We always critically evaluate our program of education, our student support, and even our building use. We are leveraging the power of technology to promote new learning experiences, such as hosting speakers from across the country using Zoom. We are continuing to implement a comprehensive approach to support student success from law school admission to bar admission, including the development of our group and peer mentoring program in the first year and beyond. In addition, we are partnering with a commercial bar preparation company to build meaningful learning experiences designed to facilitate bar success. Classrooms are critical places of learning, but we know that students benefit from a variety of gathering spaces to foster learning and community. The renovated student lounge has a mix of individual and group settings where students gather to learn and to relax.

We have much to celebrate. Our alums are in a variety of leadership positions as they build their professional careers in private practice, business, government, and higher education. Our advocacy program is receiving national recognition for its dedication, commitment, and creativity. They have earned three national championships in 2022. Our mock trial program is currently ranked as third in the country. We have expanded the number of clinical and externship opportunities. This fall, we launched the Domestic Violence Clinic and the Corporate Counsel Externship for students to gain hands-on experience. Our professors continue to be leaders in the legal academy, speaking at a number of conferences and publishing timely works. They are leading the discussion about professional identity information during law school. We are fortunate to welcome new faculty and staff who are committed to our educational mission and bring their own valuable perspectives to the Law School.

We enjoyed being with alumni and friends in February at our first Law School Alumni Dinner since 2020. We look forward to more gatherings.

You have been and will always be an important part of the Mercer Law School community. Through your support, assistance, and guidance, we can ensure that we continue to respond to the needs of today's students and the demands of the legal profession. You also ensure that we can look forward to 150 more years of terrific Mercer Law students becoming impactful Mercer Lawyers.

Kind regards,



Karen J. Sneddon
Interim Dean and Professor of Law



LEAH YETTER

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SCHOOL OF LAW

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Mercer Law Advocacy Teams have taken home national championships, earned high national rankings, and important wins over the past two years.



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Dean Sneddon's Path to Mercer Law

Interim Dean Karen J. Sneddon brings a lifelong love of education and teaching to her position as Dean of Mercer Law.

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New Faculty Appointments



LEAH YETTER

David Hricik was appointed associate dean for faculty research and development on Oct. 5, 2021. The position supports faculty efforts in teaching, research, and scholarship.

"Professor Hricik is a committed scholar, teacher, and leader," said Dean Karen Sneddon. "I know he will bring a thoughtful approach to the role, and I look forward to working with him to support and amplify the work of our faculty."

Sue Painter-Thorne was appointed associate dean for strategic initiatives, effective July 1, 2022. This position seeks to enhance the law school's reputation and foster involvement with the local and national legal community through outreach projects and programming consistent with the Law School's recently adopted strategic plan.

"Professor Painter-Thorne brings valuable perspectives, ideas, and energy," said Dean Sneddon. "I appreciate her willingness to serve in this important leadership position."

WELCOME NEW SENIOR STAFF

Antonio Squire, director of admissions and financial aid Antonio is a higher education professional, passionate about eliminating barriers such as food insecurity and homelessness to ensure students obtain the education they deserve. Antonio has spoken and led workshops, panels, training, and discussions on financing higher education, leadership as a black male, the PWI experience as a student of color, food insecurity on college campuses, personal branding on social media, and mentorship of black boys. A native North Carolinian, Antonio is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In his spare time, he loves making beard care products, physical exercise, reading, writing, listening to podcasts, finding new adventures in his community, volunteering, and cooking.



LAUREN MAULDON

LaShunda Walker, registrar

LaShunda earned her bachelor's degree in journalism with a concentration in public relations from Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, Georgia. In 2021, she became a proud Mercer bear and graduated with an M.Ed. in higher education leadership. Before joining the Law School, she served as the associate registrar on the main campus of the University, where she worked for more than 16 years. Last year, she served as an adjunct instructor and enjoyed teaching a first-year seminar to incoming students and assisting in their transition to Mercer. LaShunda is committed to fostering students' success and supporting their upward mobility, and is passionate about ensuring the accessibility of a college education to all students.



LEAH YETTER

Andrea Williford, director of alumni programs and engagement Andrea joined Mercer Law School in October, bringing more than 30 years of experience in sales and development experience with for-profit and not-for profit businesses. Most recently she was senior vice president for advancement at Wesleyan College. Currently, Andrea serves on the board of Historic Macon and is past board chair of the Museum of Arts and Sciences and Macon Arts Alliance.



BRANDI VORHEES

Jeannie Zipperer, assistant dean for student affairs

Joining Mercer Law School in August of 2022, Jeannie brings more than 16 years of higher ed experience, most recently as the institutional dean of students with oversight of student disability services at Georgia Military College (GMC). She also ensured compliance with the Cleary Act and Title IX and managed the GMC Code of Conduct and Honor Court proceedings. She's most proud of leading GMC through a flawless decennial review as SACSCOC liaison for which she received a Congressional Commendation from Congressman Jody Hice. Her passion is student success and she's thrilled to be part of the Mercer Bear family.



LEAH YETTER



BLSA Chapter of the Year

Mercer Law School's Black Law Students Association (BLSA) was named 2021-2022 Medium Chapter of the Year at the 51st Southern Regional Convention of the National Black Law Students Association in February 2022. This is the second consecutive year Mercer Law BLSA has been recognized as Chapter of the Year.

"This year, Mercer BLSA set out to continually raise the bar for both excellence at the Law School and outreach in the Macon-Bibb community," said Ashley Ferguson, '22, 2021-2022 president of BLSA. "We upheld the legacy of greatness and even superseded our expectations. Organizing events and executing them successfully is a great feeling – winning Chapter of the Year is the cherry on top."

New Low-Income Tax Clinic Launches

In spring 2022, Mercer Law School launched the Low-Income Tax Law Clinic, which was developed and led by Monica Armstrong-Roudil, associate professor of law. This clinic provides an additional clinical opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience.

In the clinic, students represent low-income taxpayers primarily in controversies with the Internal Revenue Service, including interviewing and counseling clients, conducting factual investigations, determining alternatives for resolving disputes, advocating on the taxpayer's behalf, and negotiating agreements with the IRS.

Corporate Counsel Externship Program Began Fall 2022

The Corporate Counsel Externship Program where students are paired with companies and their in-house legal work launched in the fall of 2022.

"In the last 20 years, the number of legal positions in-house has grown exponentially," said Ben Parrish, '82, who is leading the program. "In-house lawyers play increasingly important roles for companies. We want to make sure our students are aware of those opportunities and are able to develop the skills needed to be successful in that environment."

Parrish practiced as an in-house lawyer for almost his entire career and retired from his position as Tractor Supply general counsel in 2021. He has served on Mercer Law's board of visitors for several years but wanted to find other ways to give back to his alma mater after his retirement. He taught a class on corporate governance in the spring, and discovering an unmet need, he pitched the idea of the Corporate Counsel Externship after hearing about a similar program at another university.

"Many more alumni are now working at in-house counsel offices — much more than in the past, and I have many current students who express interest in doing that for a career," said Timothy Floyd, Tommy Malone Distinguished Chair in Trial Advocacy and director of experiential education at Mercer Law. "So the chance to get real-world experience under the supervision of someone like Ben is really meeting a need that our students have identified."

Thirteen corporations have signed up to work with students in the fall, including Tractor Supply, Home Depot, Aflac, FedEx, Coca-Cola, Atrium Healthcare, Delta Metals, Americold Logistics, and SWM International, Parrish said. The partners range from small, high-growth businesses to large, well-known companies.

Mercer Law continues to secure additional partners for the spring semester. If you or your company are interested in partnering with Mercer Law's Corporate Counsel Externship program, contact Ben Parrish directly: parrish_bf@law.mercer.edu.

Legal Food Frenzy

Mercer University School of Law successfully claimed the Attorney General's Cup and retained its title as champion of the 11th annual Law School Food Frenzy, an intra-state law school competition to help support food banks in Georgia. This is the eighth time that Mercer has won the title.

During the friendly month-long contest against the State's other law schools, Mercer raised \$11,002.09, providing the equivalent of 44,008 meals for hungry kids, seniors, and families through the Middle Georgia Community Food Bank.

"Mercer Law has a rich history of philanthropy and alumni involvement, and that history was on full display during the annual Legal Food Frenzy competition," said Wes Rahn, '22, and 2021-2022 Student Bar Association Legal Food Frenzy chair. "The Middle Georgia community has welcomed countless students, faculty, and staff from Mercer with open arms. I'm grateful that we have the opportunity to show our appreciation by fighting to end hunger in the area."



Students Give Back



LAUREN MAILLON

ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN LAW STUDENTS (AWLS)

The 6th annual Lauren Giddings 5k event hosted by AWLS was a huge success. The event raised over \$16,000 in scholarships and had more than 30 participants including several out-of-town guests. We hope to see this success again in 2023 and look forward to further improving the event for all participants, volunteers, and sponsors.

PHI DELTA PI (PDP)

On April 1, 2022, Phi Delta Phi (PDP) honor society hosted the 41st annual Rehberg Charity Golf Tournament, raising \$4,433.19 to support Freedom Fidos, a non-profit organization which adopts dogs from shelters and trains them to be service animals for veterans, first responders, and children with special needs.

BLACK LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (BLSA)

Dedicated to service, BLSA spent a considerable amount of time and effort to raise money for the Middle Georgia community in the 2021-2022 academic year. In fall 2021, members donated bulk school supplies to benefit students at John R. Lewis Elementary School. BLSA partnered with Georgia Legal Services to host the annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive, raising \$1,200 to help feed 60 families. More than 50 gifts were donated to 15 children at the Methodist Home for Children and Youth.



MERCER OUTLAW

OUTLaw

OUTLaw, Mercer Law School's LGBTQ student alliance, raised more than \$6,000 for Crisis Line and Safe House of Middle Georgia during its annual OUTLaw Charity Drag Show. The November 2022 event was held in downtown Macon. Additionally, \$3,610 was raised from a combined effort by OUTLaw, Hispanic Law Student Association (HLSA), Black Law Students Association (BLSA), Association of Women Law Students (AWLS), and Phi Alpha Delta (PAD).

Law Library Partners in Sustainability

With few exceptions, the Mercer Law Library no longer subscribes to print journals. Each year in the United States, an estimated 640,000 tons of books are sent to the landfill. Nine-tenths of all solid waste in the United States is not recycled and ends up in these landfills, which are among the biggest contributors to soil pollution. Roughly 80% of the items that are buried in landfills could have been recycled.

Katherine Twomey, '23, understood that Mercer Law School's Furman Smith Law Library is not immune from facing the challenges of jettisoned publications. "Seeing the impact that composting had in my own household trash output," says Twomey, "I knew this could be an opportunity for our library to give a new life to our discarded prints."

Twomey reached out to Secondhand Soil, run by Candace Neller-Harper, and proposed that Mercer Law Library collaborate with this local composting service to divert discarded publications. Secondhand Soil provides composting services to Bibb, Houston, and Monroe counties. With a variety of bin sizes and pick-up schedules, Secondhand Soil's goal is simple: to cut the amount of trash that goes to the landfill by creating a resource from that trash. Furthering the cycle of sustainability, Neller-Harper can generate ten pounds of soil for every thirty pounds of compost collected. Customers can then choose to keep or donate to local farms.

Since the collaboration began in September 2021, the Mercer Law Library has diverted over 3,378.94 pounds of organic waste — over one and a half tons — from local landfills.

In Memoriam

MERCER LAW ALUMNI AND FACULTY

Judge W. Homer Drake, '56

Judge Drake became a prominent figure in bankruptcy law and was influential in the passage of the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978, which revolutionized the field. For over half a century, he served as a U.S. bankruptcy judge for the Northern District of Georgia, retiring in 2021. In addition, he founded the Southeastern Bankruptcy Law Institute, which is dedicated to continuing the legal education of attorneys in bankruptcy law.

"Judge Drake treated everybody respectfully, and lawyers just loved appearing in front of him. He might not always rule in their favor, but he treated people with dignity." —Professor Mike Sabbath



ROGER IDEHEN

Judge Clyde L. Reese, '96

Judge Reese was a dedicated member of the Mercer Law School Board of Visitors since 2018 and a strong supporter of Mercer Law School. He established the Judge Clyde Reese Book Award at Mercer Law School in honor of his parents Clyde and Dorothy Reese which the school awards to a deserving minority student to help defray the cost of law books. Prior to his appointment to the Georgia Court of Appeals in 2016, Judge Reese was the commissioner of the Department of Community Health. His legal career in healthcare-related fields and his time at the Department of Community Health allowed him to shine an important spotlight on the challenge of access to healthcare in rural Georgia.

"Mercer Law is grateful for Judge Reese's wisdom, support, and leadership." —Dean Karen J. Sneddon



COURTESY OF MERCER UNIVERSITY

Deryl Dantzler, '70

Deryl Dantzler retired from her faculty position at Mercer Law in 2013, but her legacy lives on in her former trial practice students. In addition to being a professor at Mercer Law for 35 years, Deryl was the founding dean of the National Criminal Defense College (NCDC), providing criminal defense practitioners across the country with experiential, hands-on trial skills training. Her work as an attorney, professor, and founding member of NCDC brought national acclaim for her career and for Mercer Law School.

"Professor Dantzler was an excellent, if not the best, trial practice professor. She was intimidating and her class was no doubt daunting for many attorneys to who graduated from Mercer Law School. But she was insistent on creating, fostering, and growing generations of better litigators who would go on to serve as better advocates for the public." —Rahul Sheth, '12



STEVE SCHRODER

Law Advocacy Teams Earn Unprecedented Success *While Preparing Students for Practice*

By Jennifer Falk

Mercer University School of Law students achieved more success in competition during the last academic year than ever before. For the first time, Mercer Law took home two national championships in the American Bar Association's practical skills competitions. The wins in client counseling and negotiations also marked the first time the law school has won either of the national contests.

That's in addition to more than a dozen other successes in moot court, mock trial and other American Bar Association competitions. Together these wins tied Mercer Law for second place in the national 2021-22 ABA Competitions Championships.

In November, Mercer Law took home another national championship in the Allstar National Mock Trial Bracket Challenge. The law school is now ranked third nationally and is the highest-ranked Georgia law school in the 2022-23 Gavel Rankings for mock trial programs.

"Our advocacy competition success reinforces the high-quality education and experiences that ultimately prepare our students for practice," said Karen Sneddon, interim dean of the School of Law. "These successes show that Mercer Law students receive valuable learning experiences that will inform the professional journey of Mercer lawyers."

"The advocacy program ensures that terrific Mercer Law students become impactful Mercer lawyers."

Mercer's advocacy program provides practical and experiential training that allows law students to hone various skills, including those needed for moot court, mock trial, client counseling, negotiation, and arbitration.

"It allows students to apply the skills and education they've learned in the classroom in as close as we can get to a real-world setting," Director of Advocacy Katie Powers, '09 said. "It allows them to have that practical experience before they represent a client."

Many of the advocacy program's recent innovations and successes stem from the creation of the director of advocacy position in 2021, Sneddon said. Powers, an experienced lawyer and former judge who achieved success in advocacy

competitions as a Mercer Law student, was selected for the new position.

"She has brought those experiences, wisdom, and drive to provide direct supervision and oversight of the advocacy program," Sneddon said.

Powers implemented a strategic plan aimed at improving the advocacy program, which included connecting classroom education with advocacy. This meant, for example, making sure students were taking a course in trial practice around the same time they joined the mock trial team, she said.

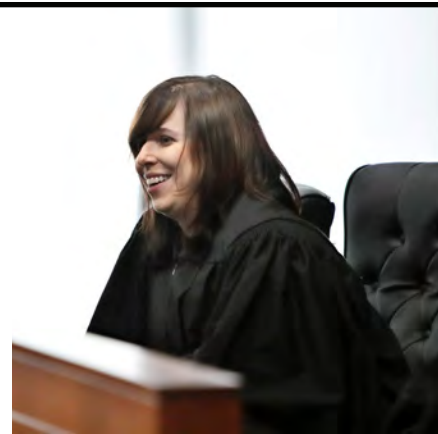
"Every course in law school is about preparing law students to become advocates. But we do have advocacy-focused pathways that include pre-requisites and co-requisites for selection on an advocacy team," Sneddon said. "These courses allow students to refine critical skills."

Powers also built a culture where students aren't satisfied with just advancing in competition but rather using their skills to the best of their ability.

"There are a lot of things that can be taught, but experience is the greatest teacher, so I have made sure to strategically select competitions to maximize our experience," she said.

The advocacy program changes have given more students the opportunity to participate. In addition, students can compete in multiple competitions. During the 2021-22 academic year, 75 students participated in 30 advocacy competitions.

Each competition requires intense practice over the course of several weeks. Depending on the contest, practice could be 50 to 100 hours or more, said Tim Floyd, the Tommy Malone Distinguished Chair in Trial Advocacy and director of experiential education at Mercer Law.



Director of Advocacy Katie Powers, '09

"The principal benefit of this is that students are learning," Floyd said. "They learn the importance of collaboration, and win or lose they come out better prepared to be lawyers."

During practice, students work with Mercer Law alumni who serve as coaches and bring real-world experience and mentorship opportunities. Alumna Zandra Hall drew on her experiences as a student and practitioner when preparing Mercer's client counseling team for its national championship win.

"I learned the most practical knowledge that I could apply later on in my career from my participation on the Mercer Advocacy Council," said Malory-Anne Oliver, who was on the client counseling team that won the national championship.

Oliver, who graduated in 2022, said being on the team taught her the skills needed to make a client feel comfortable while also tackling tough conversations. She learned how to react quickly and effectively in various situations.

"Client counseling was very realistic because you're not going to have every detail going into a client meeting. So, learning how to have those conversations, how to transition a client from one topic to another in a concise period of time, I think that's going to be very beneficial for me going into my future career," she said.

Class of 2022 Mercer Law alumnus Chad Capers, past president of the Mercer Advocacy Council, said the advocacy program changed his career trajectory.

"It has changed how I look at the legal field, my network, and how I am preparing to practice," he said. "Since I'm going into litigation, I'm going to be in a courtroom. Because of Mercer Advocacy Council, I feel a lot more prepared now than I would have if I didn't participate."

Client Counseling National Champions



Brennan Collins, '22



Malory-Anne Oliver, '22

Negotiation Competition National Champions



Michael Downing, '22



Bryce Everett, '22

Students Isiah Chavis, John Flowers, Tessa Sizemore, Ariana Laboy Mena, and Riya Patel won the Allstar National Mock Trial Bracket Challenge on Nov. 13, competing against 65 teams in the country's largest invitational law school mock trial tournament.

The team advanced to nationals after winning the regional competition in October, prevailing over several nationally ranked programs. Mercer faced Harvard in the semifinals of the national competition and conquered UCLA in the finals.

In addition to Mercer Law winning the competition, Flowers received the best advocate award.

"It was such an honor to represent Mercer Law School on the national stage," he said. "I'm incredibly grateful for all the support that the Mercer Advocacy Council receives from the Law School administration, faculty, and alumni. We have a phenomenal director of advocacy and an impressive group of new advocates. I'm very excited to see this program continue to grow and succeed for many years to come."

Powers said the Mercer Law School team showed everyone "a masterclass on trial advocacy, evidence, and persuasion."

"This championship was the perfect marriage of work ethic and leadership. We dedicated well over 100 hours of preparation for the opportunity to hoist a championship trophy," said Chavis,

co-counsel for the Allstar team. "Our coach Katie Powers groomed us into masters of the Federal Rules of Evidence, and trial techniques. The bar may be high, but I'm confident that we will continue the same formula to improve and reach unbelievable heights."

A Lifelong Love of Education *and* Teaching

DEAN KAREN SNEDDON

By Renee Corwine

Karen Sneddon insists she's not interesting — or funny. When asked for personal “fun facts” at panel discussions and getting-to-know-you sessions, she frequently leads with, “I was born in Scotland.” A truth that, even as she points out, is something that happened to her, not something she chose.

“I’m a law professor, and we just aren’t the most riveting people,” she says. “I don’t have a secret life where I’m hiking in the wilderness and making gourmet meals or anything.”

But put the facts in front of a jury of her friends, colleagues, and students, and Sneddon, interim dean at Mercer Law, is guilty of being both thought-provoking and gracious, with a sense of humor that’s equally deadpan and witty.



Born in Stirling, Scotland, Sneddon's parents moved the family to Las Cruces, New Mexico, when she was about five. Her father earned his Ph.D. and post doctorate degree in Scotland and came stateside for more opportunities and career advancement. Sneddon and her siblings inherited their love of education from their parents.

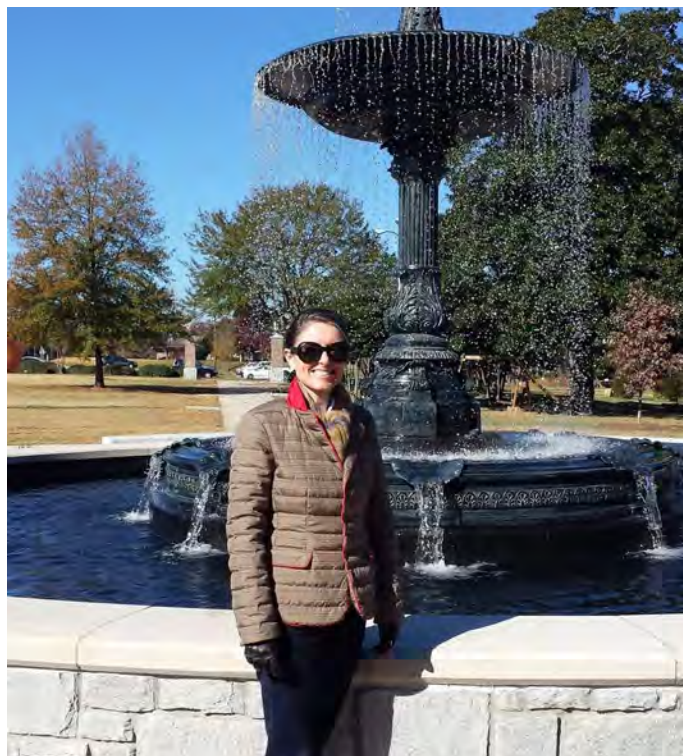
"My father is an analytical chemist; he's an emeritus professor now," Sneddon says. "My parents were both the first people in their family to have gone to college. I'm one of five siblings, and all of my siblings have not only undergraduate degrees, but they have a master's degree or higher."

Sneddon's path to law and academia wasn't exactly clear cut. She credits an off-hand comment from her 10th grade English teacher — "you should go to law school" — for her first interest in law, and her love of Hershey candy bars as fueling an interest in academia, but more on that later.

In college she originally pursued an English degree, then considered art history. Still uncertain about her career path, she took the LSAT and applied to law school "not exactly on a whim." She was accepted to Tulane Law School.

"The first day of law school I came home, and I told my husband, 'I think we've made a big mistake,'" she says. "I had turned down a graduate fellowship in liberal arts. We had taken out huge student loans for me to come to law school, and I just said, 'This is not the place for me. I don't know what I'm doing, and I don't even know what a bluebook is.'"

Her husband Matthew Silverman convinced her to stay. She graduated with a juris doctor, *summa cum laude*, from Tulane in 2002. After taking a summer associate position in 2001 with a firm in New



COURTESY OF KAREN SNEDDON



York, Sneddon and her husband moved there so that she could practice as an associate in the area of trusts and estates.

In the aftermath of 9/11, she had the opportunity to work with families of victims as an estate planner to both settle estates and help with claims to the Victims' Compensation Fund.

"I wasn't there in the immediate aftermath, where my colleagues would have helped with the issuance of death certificates and burials, but there were a lot of settlements of estates that needed to happen," she says.

Sneddon was drawn to estate planning after reading *Pride and Prejudice* as a young girl.

"You know, I thought that father should have done better financial planning," she says with a laugh. "I always wanted to be a writer, too, and one of my other specialties is legal writing. So, estate planning really aligns for them both."

Sneddon viewed her work in New York as a pathway back to academia. She recalls the fond memory of her father and feeling so at home in university classrooms and hallways.

"My father's an academic, so I had always been around that. I remember going to his various universities when I was little, on my days off from school, probably to give my mother a break," she says. "He told me that if I really behaved I could stop by the vending machine to get a Hershey candy bar, which was my favorite growing up."

Finding herself at home once again in higher education, Sneddon became a Forrester Fellow at Tulane in 2004.

"I knew my practice in New York was only for a couple of years," she says. "Then I had my academic fellowship."

And that's when Hurricane Katrina hit.

"I was in the second year of my fellowship in August 2005 when Katrina came. When I interviewed at Mercer that fall, I was displaced from Katrina and living with my husband and my in-laws. My husband had lost his job; I didn't know where my fellowship would go and I was pregnant," she says. Meeting a handful of law professors gave her a new sense of direction. "I met Tony Baldwin and Linda Edwards and Daisy Floyd at a conference, and I just thought, these are good people. If they're at Mercer, Mercer must be a really good place. I interviewed here at the end of January in 2006, was offered the job and accepted right away. I had the baby at the end of April 2006 and six weeks later we moved to Middle Georgia."

Floyd is thankful Sneddon accepted the position.

"I remember meeting Karen when she interviewed at Mercer and being struck by her wonderful combination of qualities, training, and interests that made her such a good fit for the Law School," says Floyd, university professor of law and ethical formation, who served twice as dean. "Her enthusiasm for the teaching, research and service obligations of being a full-time faculty member shone through during her interview, and on top of that, she exhibited a deep commitment to fulfilling those obligations in a student-focused environment. And, of course, those things that we saw in her then have been borne out over and over during her time at Mercer."

Over the years, Sneddon progressed from an associate professor to tenured professor, which led to a full professorship. In her current role as interim dean, Sneddon still enjoys teaching classes.

"I knew I wanted to be an educator when I was, like, six. I got a Strawberry Shortcake chalkboard and I used to line up my dolls and plush animals and run classes. My siblings didn't want to play with me, so I would do the homework and I would grade it. I remember I put things like, 'I'm expecting better from you,' on the papers. But I don't put that now on my students' papers," she says.

In her modern-day classroom, Sneddon hopes her students see her as approachable and prepared.

"I want every minute of class to be productive and focused on learning," she says. "I cultivate a rigorous environment, so my classes aren't easy, but learning isn't easy."

That's exactly what Elliza Guta, '22, appreciates about Sneddon as a teacher.

"Taking a class taught by Dean Sneddon means that you will work harder than you ever have before, and you will learn more than you ever thought possible," says Guta. "I am consistently amazed by her preparedness, professionalism, and passion for the subject matter she teaches. She challenges us to think differently about complex problems, and she pushes us to not just memorize material but to think critically about how the law applies in the real world."

While Sneddon continues to teach in the classroom, in her new role as interim dean, she also advocates for the law school's interests, and, in her words, "helps seize opportunities and turn challenges into opportunities in the way that you would do with client representation."



Floyd expects Sneddon will excel in the role.

“Karen’s passion for the Law School and its mission of preparing students for practice, combined with her teaching and leadership experience, and an understanding of legal education and its current challenges will serve her — and us — very well,” Floyd says. “I think that this unexpected role has come to her at a moment when she is ready. She will bring all of who she is to it and will be able to rise to the many challenges of the role.”

As interim dean, Sneddon plans to focus on community building, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to celebrate 150 years of Mercer Law by recognizing some of its outstanding graduates. She also hopes to continue to cultivate the student-centered learning environment, which she considers a hallmark of the Law School.

“The Law School is deliberately small, and it’s nice to get to know the students and what their hopes and dreams are,” she says. “Former students still keep in touch and send me photos of them getting sworn in. That doesn’t happen at every law school.”

One such former student is Bryan Babcock, ’08, who is a tax lawyer for the Internal Revenue Service since 2009.

“Karen was my legal writing professor when she first came to Mercer,” Babcock says. “I was also her first CALI Award student for her trusts and estate drafting class. She basically launched the career I have today. She also gave me the only two publishing credits I have to date outside my government position, which accomplished a big dream of mine.”

Sneddon herself has no shortage of writing credits. Some of her most notable works include “Moot Court Workbook: Maximizing the Educational Experience and Finding Competition Glory,” with Suzianne Painter-Thorne; “Experiencing Trusts & Estates,” with Deborah Gordon, Carla Spivack, Alison Tait, and Al Brophy; and the forthcoming “Developing Professional Skills: Trusts and Estates,” with Carla Spivack.

A culmination of her expertise and research, she received the Teresa G. Phelps Scholarship Award for Legal Communication, which honors outstanding legal writing scholarship.

“I was thrilled to receive the 2020 Teresa G. Phelps Scholarship Award for Legal Communication for my co-authored article ‘Clause A to Clause Z: Narrative Transportation and the Transactional Reader,’

with Susan M. Chesler. Our continued collaboration is a meaningful part of my career,” she says.

While Sneddon does spend a lot of time working and writing law-related articles, she makes room for the small joys of life, like daily yoga with her cat Marie.

“I am her third favorite person, and there’s only three of us,” she laughs.

A star on student Zoom meetings — “I think they looked forward more to seeing Marie than the class instruction” — the gray tabby requires her own mat for morning yoga and gets upset when Sneddon starts without her.

“I don’t know if she’s trying to save me, or if she’s making fun of me, because she’s rolling around on her mat at the same time I’m trying to get into my mindset for a productive day,” Sneddon says. “But she doesn’t like it when I do yoga without her; she gets in a huff and won’t talk to me all day.”

Sneddon’s husband of 23 years is a part time professor at Gordon State College: “Matthew is funny and down-to-earth; all of the things I’m not.” Their daughter, Isabel, attends Mary Persons High School. The family spends time together making pancakes, homemade pizza, watching “Doctor Who,” and playing board games.

Describing herself as organized, resilient, hard-working, and naturally pessimistic, this modern feminist likes to wear skirts and heels, and her favorite color is pink. She’s got a book where she keeps track of all her new experiences. She enjoys travel, having spent October 2019 as a visiting professor in Budapest, Hungary, and hopes to make it to Japan one day.

But for now, she’ll settle with watching documentaries about Japan and grading papers while she listens to Nirvana radio on Pandora: “That’s my happy place. I came of age in the ’90s.”

And even though the majority of her students weren’t alive in the ’90s, she has no trouble making connections with them. “Sometimes my students say I’m funny, and I tell that to my husband and daughter and they just laugh at me the same way my students do.”

Whether or not her humor hits home, from Guta’s perspective, the impact Sneddon has in the classroom — and on their futures — is clear: “I am a better student, thinker, and lawyer because I had the privilege of learning from and being mentored by Dean Sneddon.”

BRYAN BABCOCK, '08

Where the Good Comes Back

By Renee Corwine

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT GROWING UP IN SELMA, ALABAMA, THAT BRYAN BABCOCK HAS CARRIED WITH HIM THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE.

"My grandfather was one of the few Black men in the county who could vote. My grandmother was a seamstress in a dress shop for the White society-women in town. My father grew up having to make the decision to either go to school that day or go to jail, because going to jail meant he participated in protests for civil rights. The story of Selma is engrained in me. You can't avoid that history when your family participated in it, and also when you tell people where you're from," Babcock says. "Selma is revered because so much good went out, but sadly it never came back to the city. Growing up there I realized that sometimes the good you do in the world doesn't always come back to you."

Since childhood, he's found himself seeking people, places, and organizations where the good comes back, where he feels appreciated and valued. Babcock says he found that at Mercer Law School. "Considering my upbringing in Selma, I have to do right by people, help other people, and put good vibes out in the world," he says. "Mercer is the one place where I got those vibes back over the years. I enjoyed my time and met some great people. I've gotten to meet the younger students when I come back to visit. I've engaged with them and watched them go out in the world and do great things for other people. It's a good feeling to come back year after year and see that I'm appreciated."

Despite his determination to be something when he grew up, his path to law was what he calls "accidental." In high school, he wanted to be a chef, but his favorite English teacher had a few words to say about that.

"She said she was disappointed in my choice, and that it was 'a waste of my talents.' It devastated me, but also made me consider something else," he says. "I didn't know a lot about

college; my parents never finished college and my grandparents never finished high school. I had no visual of what college could be for me."

A conversation with his Spanish teacher led him to the University of Central Florida where he got a degree in Spanish. While there, he took a Constitutional Law class just to broaden his horizons. The professor, a lawyer himself, conducted class in the same manner a law school class is taught.

"I thought if I could do well in his class, maybe I should think about law school. When I did well, I took more of his classes until I decided to apply for law school," Babcock says. "I met an admissions recruiter from Mercer at a job fair. She answered all my questions and was so pleasant and nice; she was invested in me being part of that school. And so, I thought, if I don't get into Mercer, I'm not going to law school."

Babcock says that the same admissions recruiter, Susan Martin, checked in on him the whole time he was at Mercer. "It continued to seal the deal that I belonged here," he says. "It was the best decision."

While at Mercer Law, Babcock balanced challenging courses with full immersion in student life. He credits professor Linda Edwards with opening his eyes to estate planning, and now Interim Dean Karen Sneddon with helping him strive to be the best.

"I had Dean Sneddon in my third year for trusts and estates drafting," he says. "Three assignments in, she made a comment that woke me up: 'You're the first or second student in this class right now.' I said, 'What? I've never been a top dog in anything, much less law school.' I told her right then that I would finish her class at number one. And I did."

Since graduating from Mercer Law in 2008, Babcock hasn't ceased learning. He earned an LLM in tax and certificate in estate planning from Georgetown University in 2009, an LLM in business



LEAH YETTER

transactions from the University of Alabama in 2014, an MBA from Washington State University in 2016, and an LLM in energy and natural resources from the University of Oklahoma in 2019.

He's been employed as a tax lawyer for the Internal Revenue Service in Atlanta since 2009.

But despite all the degrees and big city life, Babcock says he feels like he never really left Mercer behind — and that's a good thing. Some may say tax law seems a bit stodgy for a man who wears bright yellow wing-tip shoes, jewels on his fingers, and Calvin Klein suits.

"I am never accused of being shy. I'm very outspoken and lively, and I thrive on being the most unlawyerly lawyer possible. I have a 21-year-old son, Jace, who I think is definitely sometimes embarrassed by me," he says with a laugh. "I'm the party dad. I throw dinner parties where the bar is stocked. I love to eat and enjoy food — especially butter. I love to travel. I love a good drag show. In fact, I took some of my classmates to their first drag show in Macon. I'm unapologetic about living my life."

Long after his law school days, Babcock is still involved with Mercer Law. Students, faculty, and alumni have multiple

opportunities each year to meet with, speak to, and catch up with this unawyerly lawyer. He's on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, is the class correspondent for his graduating class, planned their 10-year reunion and started two scholarships — the Class of 2008 Scholarship and the Sabat James Kuhl Memorial Book Award.

"Have I ever really left Mercer? I don't think anyone would tell you I've left. My connection to Mercer was never broken.

"You can't think of me as a lawyer without thinking about Mercer; it's not possible," he says. "I'm proud of my experience there. It launched my career in something that makes me really happy. As nerdy as tax law seems, I love my job. There's no doubt I'm where I need to be and I have purpose. Mercer is the reason I have that."

BETSY GRISWOLD, '83

Paving the Way with Determination

By Renee Corwine

IN HER BUSY AND VARIED CAREER, BETSY GRISWOLD HAS SPENT YEARS WORKING OVERSEAS, WITHIN THE AMERICAN BANKING SYSTEM, FOR THE FDIC AND AS IN-HOUSE COUNSEL TO UNITED PARCEL SERVICE (UPS). WHATEVER HER POSITION, THE THREADS THAT RUN ALONGSIDE HER WORKING LIFE ARE SERVICE AND PRO BONO WORK.

“Service is kind of in my DNA,” says the attorney, who briefly flirted with retirement, then couldn’t quite stand the quiet: “After about three months I thought, ‘No, no, no – I need to use my brain to keep helping people solve problems.’” So, she returned to her alma mater during the fall 2021 semester as an adjunct professor teaching business drafting. In March 2022, she accepted a position with the Intercontinental Hotel Group’s (IGH) legal department and serves on the leadership team for the chief procurement officer. “IHG is a great company with a wonderful culture of true hospitality for good,” says Griswold. “It has been such an honor to have another opportunity to serve and shape important outcomes for the organization.”

“We have a law school that’s been in existence almost 150 years. That’s a heritage and a history that we need to make people aware of – a legacy of Mercer Law School producing some of the finest lawyers Georgia has ever seen.”

Giving back to Mercer over the years, she has served on Mercer’s board of visitors and now is involved with fundraising for the Law School’s sesquicentennial in 2023.

Service takes her deep into her community and around the world as well. At Buckhead Church, she’s been part of the 2 to 1 Program, mentoring young couples in the eight weeks leading up to their marriage, and with North Point Ministries, she worked for many years with young people in Estonia, alongside her husband Daryl. (We’ll come back to Daryl in a moment.)

Born and raised in North Carolina, Griswold majored in psychology and political science at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She chose to come to Georgia for law school largely because she wanted to reconnect with her grandmothers, one who lived in Barnesville, the other in south Georgia. “There were a lot of strong women in my family,” she says.

Near the end of her first year at Mercer Law School, Griswold — whose last name was Cross at the time — was thinking about returning to her home state to continue her education. But, like many of her fellow Mercer students, she was lacking much in the way of resources. “We had no money, so we all hung out at people’s porches and houses,” she says.

It was at one of these “hangs” that she met Daryl, and they struck up a conversation. “I said, ‘Hey, what are you doing for the summer?’” She and Daryl have now been married 38 years — it’s kind of a famous Mercer Law School love story.

She wants to pass on to current Law School students what Mercer taught the two of them back then.

“I know we have to teach basic curriculum to give students a foundational base, but we need to teach them practical skills,” she says. “I designed my course to show them what it’s like to be in the real world.” On that front, she has plenty

to share, not only her years spent working with a Fortune 500 company, but the scrappiness and tenacity it sometimes takes to make your way forward.

Her own experience offers a colorful example. As a freshly coined owner of a J.D. degree, but with no employment prospects, she moved to Atlanta with Daryl, who had a job there. All Betsy had was gumption and an interview outfit.

"I had the little blue suit and the floppy bow tie, which we used to wear in the '80s," she says. And she had a stack of printed resumes. Recalling an Atlanta attorney who'd spoken to her property class, she tracked him to his office with no appointment. "I went to 30 Pryor Street and said, 'Is Mr. Johnson in?'" He was, and agreed to see her. "Bless his heart, he was so kind. He sat down and talked to me and took my resume." She figured he was just being polite. "But I'll be darned if two weeks later he called and said, 'We didn't have a job, but I created a job.'" Not much of one, but it was the start she needed.

"I literally knocked on doors," she says. And she encourages current Mercer Law students to do likewise, but also to be flexible. "In my first class, I ask my students, 'What do you want to do?'" she says. "But you have to keep your options open. I became a real estate lawyer, then joined a law firm for a short But most of my career has been in-house."

Sometimes, opportunities appeared that may not have seemed the perfect fit. "I didn't have the requisite experience, but I held up my hand," she says. "If you're smart and work hard and roll up your sleeves, those things are recognized."

In her free time, Griswold loves to cook, and she and Daryl both love France. Before the pandemic, those interests



COURTESY OF BETSY GRISWOLD

came together neatly every April for six years. Betsy and Daryl got to know a family who were establishing a church about an hour outside Paris. "They don't have a lot of resources and time and income to kind of just step away from the day-to-day responsibilities of the church," she says. "So we would take the pastor and the staff and their families, including all their children, on a week's retreat."

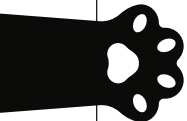
It would take place in a large country house the Griswolds would rent. While the church folks spent their days relaxing and having adventures with their kids, Griswold took to the kitchen with five or six assistants and cooked for everyone. "That's a pretty extraordinary accomplishment, to cook for 40 French people," she proudly admits. Though sometimes she would get polite criticisms ("The French are very funny because they'll say, 'Oh, the baguette yesterday was just a little more crisp than the one today'"), she always had a couple of secret weapons in her repertoire.

"There are two things I cook that they *love*: Brunswick stew and cornbread."



Herding Cats

By Joseph E. Claxton, *Professor Emeritus*



A **very good friend of mine, who served for several years as dean of Mercer Law School, privately likened the job to herding cats. The cats, of course, were the Law School's faculty members (sorry, colleagues).**

Many decades ago, the role of dean was almost a sinecure. In the immortal words of Chad and Jeremy, an early '60s vocal duo now remembered primarily by those of us who are quite long in the tooth, "that was yesterday, and yesterday's gone." Now the role of a dean can seem to be a 24-hour a day set of responsibilities. If the role of a modern dean is demanding and multi-faceted, the role of a person who fills the gap between two "permanent" deans arguably is even more challenging. The interim or acting dean must quickly begin relating to her faculty colleagues as the dean, not just the colleague who occupies the office next door or down the hall, and must exercise the authority of a dean when dealing with the faculty. The individual must find ways to work effectively and honestly with central university officials, and in the process preserve her independence.

The first person to serve in an interim role at Mercer was David Meade Feild, known to almost everyone (including me) as Dean Feild. He had been the official dean of the Law School from 1942-1947, but during much of that time World War II was raging. The Law School was closed from 1942 to September 1945. The first class after the reopening had only eight students. Dean Feild left Mercer for a fine career at the University of Georgia. He eventually returned as the Walter

F. George Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law and was the interim dean for a brief period in 1972. Dean Feild was a good and decent man, with a quick wit and a sharp tongue. Born in 1902, he was much more a man of the nineteenth century than the twentieth.

Professor John O. Cole served as interim dean in 1977-1978, with the official title of dean *pro tempore* (meaning for the time being). His service was tremendously significant because it came during the year of the Law School's transition from the main Mercer campus to the present Coleman Hill location. John insured that the Coleman Hill building would be prepared for the Law School in an appropriate manner. For example, one proposal that he stopped in its tracks was that faculty offices should not be separated by walls, but rather by potted plants! Dean Cole deserves to be remembered as one of the great figures in the history of the Law School, both as an administrator and a teacher.

Professor Glen W. Clark, who had served with distinction in the United States Air Force and retired as a colonel, held the title of acting dean in the 1981-82 academic year. He brought a sense of great purpose to the Law School and was a true man of honor.

Professor Leah Chanin held the title of dean *pro tempore* in 1986-1987. Anyone who knows Leah will not be surprised to know that she displayed extraordinary energy and commitment to the job. Leah was the first woman to fill the role of dean at the Law School, though on an interim basis. She was a true ground-breaker, and not just in her work in the decanal office.



D.C. WELLS

Paw prints

Professor Richard Creswell served as interim dean in 1993-1995, an unprecedented two-year term. Creswell arguably was one of the most important interim deans in the history of the Law School. He worked diligently on vital budgetary planning issues. Perhaps more than most decanal initiatives, much of what he did had to be accomplished quietly and behind closed doors. My personal view, for whatever it is worth, is that Dick never received the credit he deserved for his work.

Professor Michael Sabbath was the next person to serve as interim dean. Mike is one of those individuals who was born to be a legal educator. His core understanding of the nature of the job is made clear in a wonderful law review article that he wrote, *Should You Accept the Position of Interim Dean? Some Observations from Someone Who Did*, 36 *Toledo L. Rev.* 159 (2004). Mike dealt with a multitude of challenges, some predictable and some definitely not. His great secret was that he was committed to the proposition that any dean, permanent or temporary, must be a servant as well as a leader. I am biased, of course, but I believe that Mike fulfilled

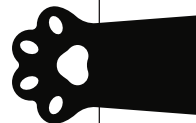
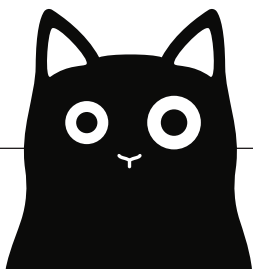
his role as a servant leader extremely well.

The Law School currently has another interim dean, Professor Karen Sneddon. Karen is part of a new generation of faculty leaders. She has an excellent reputation as an academician, and she already has dealt with many of the topics that confront every dean: budget planning, personnel matters, alumni relations, and others. A number of years ago, when Karen was hired by the Law School for a faculty position, she was the last “new hire” for whom I strongly went to bat, and I am very glad that I did!

John Langbein, the Sterling Professor Emeritus at the Yale Law School, gave the following advice to a new Yale dean. The same guidance is appropriate for an interim dean.

A good dean can only modestly improve a school. But a bad dean can cause a great deal of damage very easily.

As a group, the Mercer Law School’s interim deans have improved the Law School, while doing no damage. Those are genuine achievements.



BONNIE CARLSON

Advocate for Domestic Violence Victims

Associate professor Bonnie Carlson's eyes — and ears — were opened to the issue of domestic abuse during freshman year at the University of Virginia. The event was a Take Back the Night meeting in her dorm — a chance for women to discuss openly, but anonymously, their experiences as victims of sexual violence.

"Suddenly I heard a familiar voice," Carlson recalls, "and that kind of shook me — because I couldn't believe that something like that could happen to someone that I *knew*."

The personal awakening set her on the path to be an advocate for domestic violence victims. After earning her J.D. at the George Washington University Law School, she worked as a technical assistance staff attorney with the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence. She was awarded the National Association of Women Lawyers Outstanding Law Graduate Award for her work with domestic violence victims during law school. She also worked as a family law staff attorney, representing victims of domestic violence.

Was the practice ever overwhelming? "Yes," she says with a brief laugh. "One of the first cases that I had was a woman who was stabbed in the face by her father. So it wasn't a classic, intimate partner relationship. I had been sworn into the bar two months earlier," she recalls. "I'm like, 'This is not what I expected. I'm not qualified for this.'"

But she was. She represented other victims of extreme violence,

and just as often, cases of control and intimidation — like the fellow seeking child custody from his ex, who issued frivolous filings simply to make the harassed mother of his children show up repeatedly in court to face him. Because he represented himself, Carlson had to work with the man directly and got a sense of the psychological abuse her client experienced. "I still sometimes walk down the street and think I see him," she says.

When she moved from practice into academia in the fall of 2016, the first class Carlson taught was Legal Research and Writing — a class she'd hated as a student. "I felt it was confusing, and

I wasn't passionate about legal research," she says. But teaching the course herself was different. "I loved it, and I thought, 'If I can enjoy teaching something that I am sort of ambivalent about, maybe I would love teaching something I really care about. That's what led me to the Georgetown Domestic Violence teaching fellowship. I was like, 'Yes, this is absolutely what I want to be doing permanently.'"

In her first year at Mercer, Carlson taught law of lawyering, family law, and a new seminar, poverty and the law. In the fall semester of 2022, she launched and oversees a Domestic Violence Clinic modeled on the one she co-taught at the Georgetown University Law Center. She intends only for six to eight students to be involved, with a preference for third-year students. There is tremendous interest in the program, with six students chosen to participate in the clinic's inaugural year.

"We will spend the fall learning substantive Georgia domestic violence law and some other areas of family law, and learning trial schools and basic client skills: client interviewing, client

“The students want to practice law and are interested in ways to give back to the community. That's something that I've been impressed with here, the philanthropic spirit of the students.”



LEAH VETTER

counseling, how to do a direct examination, how to get an exhibit introduced into evidence, how to make a closing argument,” she says. “They’ll also do some court observation, and then in January they will start taking on clients.”

The clinic is partnering with Crisis Line and Safe House, where students meet clients who want to file for protection or temporary protection orders. Carlson explains, “Students will interview clients, fill out a petition, file it, and then do all of the work on the case: investigation, drafting child documents, figuring out a trial strategy, talking to witnesses, and then either negotiating a settlement or taking the case to trial.”

Born and raised in Arlington, VA, Carlson lived in the D.C. area her whole life until moving to Mercer and Macon in June 2021. (Her family, an eye doctor mom and a retired financial-planner father, plus her brother and his husband, remain there.)

On meeting her first classes at Mercer, “The students want to practice law and are interested in ways to give back to the community,” she says. “That’s something that I’ve been impressed

with here, the philanthropic spirit of the students.”

She’s also enjoyed being in Macon, and doesn’t miss the Beltway traffic of the D.C. area. If she wants to take in some baseball, she’ll go to a Macon Bacon game at Luther Williams Field; she doesn’t miss the strategizing necessary to drive to a Washington Nationals Game, much less the \$40 parking. And she’s enjoyed such other things as the monthly storytelling events at Grant’s Lounge.

At home, she’s neighbors with a chemistry professor from Mercer’s main campus, and they often walk their dogs together. Carlson’s is a beagle-dachshund mix, a rescue named Henry. If she doesn’t miss D.C. traffic, he doesn’t miss the cold winters there. “I’ve had him for six and a half years, and he loves Georgia,” Carlson says. “He loves the weather.”

ISHAQ KUNDAWALA

Real-World Lessons from Practice to Academia

By Steve Murray

Professor Ishaq Kundawala started off wanting to follow in the footsteps of his father, a Texas physician. But instead of medicine, he became attracted to the law.

As a student at Austin College, where he majored in business, the Dallas native chaired its peer judicial board, conducting hearings concerning students accused of academic dishonesty or social violations.

“That experience was formative for me, the leadership role and the importance of it, because our decisions would affect students’ lives, one way or another,” he says. Earning his J.D. at Tulane Law School, he further learned the personal implications of legal decisions when he clerked for a federal bankruptcy judge.

“I got to see the individual aspects of bankruptcy — people suffering, people trying to start over and get a fresh start in life,” he says.

As an associate at the international law firm of Baker Botts LLP, his cases were less personal and largely corporate. He handled the estimation and ultimate resolution of approximately \$1.5 billion of toxic tort related bankruptcy claims against one of the nation’s largest copper producers.

Now the Southeastern Bankruptcy Law Institute and W. Homer Drake Jr. Endowed Chair in Bankruptcy Law, Kundawala has long enjoyed his transition from practice to academia. He got a good taste of his future profession as a law student himself.

“My first class, first semester, was Contracts,” he recalls. “I just loved the way it was taught, I loved the Socratic aspect of it.” The enthusiasm of his professors also made a strong impression. “I saw

the passion that they had when they taught and interacted with the students. I saw how joyful they were and how much they really loved their jobs.” It was at this early point in his first year of law school that Kundawala knew that he wanted to eventually enter academia.

Now, as a professor himself, he takes equal pleasure in interacting with his students. “Seeing the light bulb come on, when they fully understand something — that is the best part of my job,” he says, and quotes an old adage: “‘You teach for free, they pay you to grade.’ That’s very true.”

Kundawala taught for 13 years in Fort Lauderdale FL, at Nova Southeastern University’s Shepard Broad College of Law. There, he created the school’s first-ever consumer bankruptcy externship for students. He launched the same program at Mercer Law last year. It is the first of its kind among Georgia law schools.

“It allows students to represent real clients in real bankruptcy proceedings from start to finish,” he says. “They get hands-on,

practical experience representing clients in bankruptcy court. It’s a twofold benefit: They get practical experience on one hand, and on the other hand, they are helping members of the community that don’t have access to lawyers and to the legal system. The students can start to see the real benefits of pro bono work.

“That’s important to the legal profession. Nobody likes to give away anything for free, but in our profession, as in other professions, you have to give back to the community.”

While at NSU, he met his wife, Joy. No, he never taught her. She graduated the year after he came there to teach. “People always ask me. ‘Was she in one of your classes? Did she get an A?’” he says.

“Seeing the light bulb come on, when they fully understand something — that is the best part of my job.”

“No, she wasn’t. We actually met at an alumni party, and one of my friends introduced us in 2009.” (Joy is an attorney with Cooling & Winter LLC. She currently works from home, handling civil cases in both Georgia and Florida.)

Moving from Fort Lauderdale to Macon has taken some adjustment. Back in Florida, “We would take walks on the beach — we had a boat in our back yard, literally,” he says. “We would take our boat on cruises through the beautiful waterways of Fort Lauderdale, go offshore fishing, or even navigate the Gulf Stream all the way to the Bahamas.” He said that boating really takes your mind away from life’s daily stresses.

In landlocked Middle Georgia, Kundawala, his wife and their daughter Jasmine are developing new interests. They’ve enjoyed Macon itself (“it also has an old town charm that we did not have in Fort Lauderdale and that I did not feel in Dallas”) and strolled through the downtown Christmas lights this year. They’ve enjoyed walking in Amerson River Park and the Ocmulgee Mounds. The city’s hub-of-the-state location also offers access to a lot of other destinations

that they have explored together as a family. They’ve visited Atlanta, the Georgia Aquarium, Savannah, the Blue Ridge Mountains, South Carolina’s low country, and some of the beautiful beaches within a few hours drive from Macon.

At home, they love their dogs: a mini Aussie Doodle, gotten specifically for Jasmine, and a terrier mix, who’s older, diabetic, and partially blind. They also enjoy daily swims in the summer.

When he’s not exploring his new state with family, Kundawala falls back on an old Texas hobby. “I love barbecue. I enjoy smoking my own brisket. I do it Texas style with a pecan rub. I’ve had barbecue from Georgia, and I do like it, but for me, as a Texan, I like brisket a certain way.”

Kundawala and his family are happy and settling into Macon. They look forward to their continued adventures and meeting more Mercerians.

This summer, Ishaq will begin serving as associate dean for academic affairs.



LEAH VETTER

Storytelling Conference

By Pam Wilkins and Sue Painter-Thorne

Why Mercer and why Macon, we asked ourselves when we saw the call for proposals to serve as host institution for the 8th Biennial Applied Legal Storytelling Conference. The conference was originally scheduled to be held in London (yes, *that* London) in Summer 2021, but the COVID-19 pandemic had other plans. Given travel restrictions, lockdowns, and public safety concerns, the conference organizing committee recognized the impossibility of holding the conference overseas and put out a new call for a U.S. host.

We at Mercer wanted to host but we needed to convince conference organizers that we were a good fit. The biennial Applied Legal Storytelling Conference is jointly sponsored by two large national organizations within the legal academy, the Legal Writing Institute and the Clinical Legal Education Association; it focuses broadly on narrative and the law. The biennial conference is a major event with international attendees as well as presenters who have included documentary filmmakers, practicing lawyers, and legal academics. We weren't intimidated by the size and prestige of the conference. Mercer has hosted larger conferences and has a longstanding reputation for leadership in legal writing. Answering *why Mercer* was a cinch. Because of its distance from a major airport, however, *why Macon* seemed a more challenging question.

But, as we talked, the answer became clear. A conference devoted to storytelling should examine which stories law has chosen to tell and which it has not seen or has chosen to ignore. How has law been used as a tool of injustice? Of justice? Shouldn't the Applied Legal Storytelling Conference engage in the urgent work of interrogating the stories of the past that so profoundly inform the present?

Once that theme and lens became clear, we had our answer to *why Macon*. Macon is fertile ground for interrogating the past. Macon's legal legacy includes treaty disputes with the Muskogee Creek Indians in the nineteenth century; redlining in the early twentieth century, the legacy of which continues to this day; issues concerning heirs' property, one of the leading causes of involuntary land loss by Black landowners; and, of course, voting rights issues. Moreover, Macon's museums and historical landmarks offer a unique backdrop in which to conferees could explore these themes. Macon is home to the Tubman Museum, which is the largest museum in the Southeast

devoted to African American art, history, and culture. Across the street from the Tubman Museum is the Douglass Theatre, which served Macon's African American citizens during segregation and hosted prominent artists such as Duke Ellington. Remnants of indigenous culture and history are visible at the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park.

With our *why Mercer and why Macon* settled, we submitted a proposal to host the conference, suggesting a theme of interrogating the past. We were honored and excited to be selected as host, but the pandemic played another card. The conference committee elected to hold the conference online in July 2021, with Mercer as virtual host. Fortunately, however, the committee included our theme of interrogating the past as one dedicated track within a more general conference.

Conference preparation took months and required a plethora of personnel that included professors, administrators, librarians, information technology staff, administrative assistants, the director of alumni programs and engagement, and the marketing and communications director, not to mention several border collies and a terrier-poodle mix. We created forms. We selected a keynote speaker. We built a conference website. We set up Zoom rooms. We recruited sponsors. We coordinated with presenters. We planned raffles for Georgia-themed swag. We worked and worried and worried some more.

Day One of the conference finally arrived. On Wednesday, July 14, participants logged in from as nearby as, well, Macon, and from as far away as Malaysia. Registrants came from England, Australia, Italy, Malaysia, Israel, Canada, and the United States (and probably elsewhere, but we've now lost track!). We had argued with the conference committee chair about why the program required a time zone conversion guide. Now we understood. As the proceedings began, we watched as the attendance numbers at the opening plenary climbed. Owing in part to our marketing and in part to the online format, the conference enjoyed record attendance.

The opening plenary and keynote proved the record attendance was well justified. Professor Loretta Ross delivered an electrifying keynote focused on "cancel" and "call out" culture. Ross has been a women's and international human rights activist for more than forty years, with much of her work based in Atlanta. She has worked to combat hate groups like the KKK;

Macon

Why Mercer? Why Macon?

**Macon is fertile ground for
interrogating the past.**

served as national coordinator for the Atlanta-based SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective; founded the National Center for Human Rights Education, also based in Atlanta; and currently teaches at Smith College.

Ross's "call out" culture keynote raised timely questions: how do we have productive conversations across differences? How can we effectively address offenses without dehumanizing the offender or allowing assaults to our own or another's dignity? In her keynote (as elsewhere), Ross explained that rather than calling people out or canceling them, we should call them in. A "call in" is like a call out, but done with love, respect, and a recognition of the humanity of the other. The late Reverend C.T. Vivian was one of Ross's mentors in her anti-racism work with Klan members, and he once told her that "when you ask people to give up hate, you have to be there for them when they do."

Conference attendees raved about the keynote address. One emailed: "[T]hat keynote speaker was *outstanding*. It was like going to church, and I mean that in the best of ways." Another tweeted: "Just saw @LorettaJRoss at #AppLS2021 and it was pure [fire emoji] and compassion and generosity of spirit. Check out her work and become a better person." For many of us who attended, Ross's talk was transformative.

The keynote set a high bar for the rest of the conference presentations. Happily, the presentations easily cleared that bar. The topics for the more than sixty presentations ranged from storytelling in bar exam appeals, to foreshadowing techniques in

appellate advocacy, to narrative techniques in transactional work, to trauma-informed approaches to telling clients' stories. Moreover, we (Mercer) weren't *just* hosts; five Mercer faculty members also served as presenters or panel moderators. To give a virtual conference more of a community-feel, we provided virtual lounges for networking and conversation; we hosted a book club featuring *While Justice Sleeps*, authored by Georgia native Stacey Abrams. Who says there's no such thing as multi-tasking?

After three simultaneously stimulating and exhausting days, the Eighth Biennial Applied Legal Storytelling closed with a final reception. By tradition, the Applied Legal Storytelling Conference closes with a series of toasts. Although the reception was held online, the power of Zoom created a feeling of community between attendees to discuss the highlights of the conference and deliver those toasts. Indeed, an entire series of toasts were devoted to Mercer's hosting: the conference enjoyed its largest registration numbers ever (aided, no doubt, by the online format); conference sponsorships were similarly high; and the technology never failed. In fact, some referred to the conference as the smoothest online conference they had ever attended.

We at Mercer were delighted by the conference and proud of ourselves. By Friday afternoon, we were also ready for a nap. By the next week, however, we were dreaming about future conferences and additional opportunities for Mercer to lead and facilitate regional and national conversations about law as a tool for interrogating the past and ensuring a more just future. Stay tuned.

Emma Duke, '23

PROBLEM SOLVING IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY

Rome, Georgia, native and Berry College graduate Emma Duke believed she was destined to study animal science until she discovered her true passion within the legal field.

What initially led to you wanting to attend law school and have a career in the legal field?

I had a personal situation that required my going to court and testifying to be in a safe and healthy place as a freshman. I found respite in the law, and I got the shelter I sought. This allowed me to see how the power of the law can change lives. That day in the courtroom, an assistant district attorney happened to hear me advocate for myself, and she ended up running into my mom in a grocery store a couple of months later. She told her that I had a great courtroom presence and that if I'd ever want an internship to reach out. I later accepted a job with the Victim-Witness Assistance Program within the DA's office and worked there during college and loved it. This job affirmed that the law was something I should pursue. My love for the energy, pace and legal arguments in the courtroom prompted me to apply to law school. I knew that I could receive a specialized skill set that would help me solve real-world problems.

Why did you choose Mercer Law?

I looked at, toured, and applied to many schools and pursued many different options. There were a couple of things that I was looking for that I found in Mercer. I thrive in a small-class environment where I know the professors, and the professors know me. I was looking for a similar thing in law school. As soon as I toured Mercer, I could see it here. I wanted the faculty and staff to know my name and what I want to do when I graduate and help me get there, which is why Mercer was the law school for me.

How would you characterize your Mercer Law experience?

It's deeply challenging and just as deeply rewarding. It's so cool because I feel like I'm training to be the person and lawyer I want to be. That's exciting because, in high school and college, I feel like it is not connected directly to your future, unlike law school. Mercer allowed me to gain practical experience, and that's why I have pursued opportunities like mock trial and the first-year closing argument competition. These are opportunities for me to get up on my feet in the courtroom and make an argument or respond to objections or make closing arguments. Having those opportunities has increased my confidence. So I'm thankful for these opportunities and how they have deeply enriched my Mercer Law experience.

What would you say to prospective students interested in law school?

You have to choose the law school right for you. It doesn't matter if the law school is right for little Susie or little Bob down the street; it matters that the law school is right for you. If you're looking for a law school that has intentionally small classes, professors that know you by your name and interests, and a student body that will challenge you but also celebrate you, then Mercer Law would be a great place.



CHRISTOPHER IAN SMITH

Selected Publications

Scott C. Titshaw

Professor of Law

INHERITING CITIZENSHIP, 58 Stan. J. Int'l L. 1 (2022).

Pamela A. Wilkins

Associate Professor of Law & Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

STORIES THAT KILL: MASCULINITY AND CAPITAL PROSECUTORS' CLOSING ARGUMENTS, 71 Cleveland State L. Rev. ___ (forthcoming 2023).

CIB | Writing Matters

Back to Basics: Writing About Case Law in Briefs and Motions

Covering the value of cases to legal students in critical for legal writers.
This installment of "Writing Matters" reminds you of the basic principles
of writing about case law.

BY DAVID HRICIK AND KAREN J. SNEDDON



68 | GEORGIA LAW JOURNAL

David Hricik

Professor of Law & Associate Dean for Faculty Research & Development

AND

Karen J. Sneddon

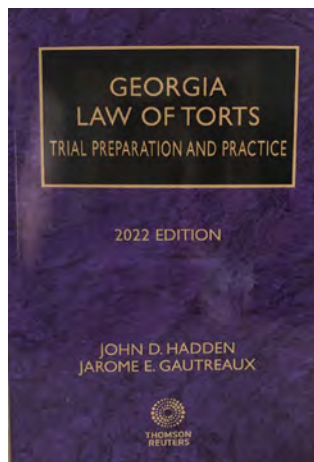
Interim Dean & Professor of Law

BACK TO BASICS: WRITING ABOUT CASE LAW IN BRIEFS AND MOTIONS, 28 GA B.J. 1 (Aug. 2022); TAKE A MEMO TO THE FILE, 28 GA B.J. 2 (Oct. 2022); FIVE TIPS FOR WRITING SUCCESS AS A NEW LAWYER OR LAW STUDENT CLERK, 27 NO. 6 GA B.J. 68 (June 2022); TOP TEN TIPS FOR CLEARER LEGAL WRITING, 27 NO. 5 GA B.J. 62 (April 2022).

Karen J. Sneddon

Interim Dean & Professor of Law

SQUARE PEGS AND ROUND HOLES: DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION AND THE LAW SCHOOL CLASSROOM, 48 Mitchell Hamline L. Rev. 1095 (2022); DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL SKILLS: TRUSTS AND ESTATES (Karen J. Sneddon & Carla Spivack) (West 2022); THE POWER OF A GOOD STORY: HOW NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES CAN MAKE TRANSACTIONAL DOCUMENTS MORE PERSUASIVE, 22 NEV. L.J. 649 (Susan M. Chesler & Karen J. Sneddon) (2022); HUMANIZING TRANSACTIONAL DOCUMENTS: WHY AND HOW TRANSACTIONAL DRAFTERS SHOULD USE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES, 23 Transactions: The Tenn. J. of Bus. Law 222 (Susan M. Chesler & Karen J. Sneddon) (2022).



Jarome E. Gautreaux

Adjunct Professor of Law

GEORGIA LAW OF TORTS, TRIAL PREPARATION AND PRACTICE, Thomson Reuters (2022).

Gary J. Simson

Macon Chair in Law & Associate Professor of Philosophy

RESCUING ROE, 24 N.Y.U. Journal of Legislation and Public Policy 313-376 (Gary J. Simson & Rosalind S. Simson) (2022).

BOARD OF VISITORS FACULTY AWARDS

The Mercer Law School Board of Visitors created – and funded – two faculty awards to recognize and further incentivize the outstanding academic work and commitment of our faculty.



ROGER IDENBERG

The Board of Visitors Award for Excellence in Scholarship Award was awarded to Prof. Stephen Johnson in October 2022 for his article, *From Protecting Water Quality to Protecting States' Rights: Fifty Years of Supreme Court Clean Water Act Statutory Interpretation*, 74 SMU L. REV. 359 (2021).



LEAN VETTER

The Board of Visitors Excellence in Teaching Award was awarded to Prof. Patrick Longan in October 2022. Nominations were received from the Class of 2017. "Professor Longan embodies all of the qualities set forth in the award criteria," says Tom Reiman, '74. "He imparts competence in subject matters taught, inspires and motivates students, and has a lasting educational influence."

Selected Speeches and Presentations

Billie Jo Kaufman

Law Library Director & Professor of Law

"Law Libraries in Georgia & Legal Deserts," Rural Law Students Association, Mercer Law School, 2022.

"Why We Continue to Say Yes," Federal Depository Library Program, 2022.

Moderator, "The Evolving Roles of Law Librarians as Education Specialists," American Forum on Law Libraries, 2022.

Tim Floyd

Tommy Malone Distinguished Chair in Trial Advocacy & Director of Experiential Education

"Cultivating Professional Identity in Remote Externships: Overcoming the Challenges and Embracing the Opportunities," (with Daisy Hurst Floyd and Kendall Kerew) Externships 11 National Conference, Los Angeles, October 2022.

"Ethical Supervision in Today's Working Environments," Pathways to the Profession VII, Georgia Association of Legal Externships, September 2022.

Scott Titshaw

Professor of Law

"Possible Effects of Dobbs & Some Children's Citizenship Issues," Certified Amicable Divorce Professional Training, 2022.

David Hricik

Professor of Law & Associate Dean for Faculty Research & Development

"Ethics in Intellectual Property Practice," University of Texas School of Law Advanced Patent Law Seminar, October 20, 2022.

"Ethical Issues in Intellectual Property Practice," Springposium Annual Meeting for the Georgia Arts & Entertainment Section, 2022.

"Ethical Issues for Patent Practitioners," Practicing Law Institute, April 29, 2022.

Moderator, Atlanta IP Inn of Court, April 20, 2022.

Latisha Nixon-Jones

Assistant Professor of Law

Presented at the Southeastern Association of Law School Conference and was co-moderator on a session titled "Beating the Odds" during the Aspiring Law Teachers Workshop.

Karen J. Sneddon

Interim Dean & Professor of Law

"Top Ten Ideas for the Transactional Drafter's New and Improved Guidebook," (with Professor Sue Chesler) Legal Writing Institute Biennial Conference, Washington DC, July 20, 2022.

"Confronting New and Old Identifies: A Discussion Group on Law and Literature," Southeastern Association of Law Schools 2022 Annual Conference, Miramar Beach, FL, July 31, 2022.

"Happily Ever After: Narrative and Wills," Critical Trusts & Estates Conference, 2022.

Honors, Awards, and Activities

Latisha Nixon-Jones

Assistant Professor of Law

Selected to attend the FEMA Higher Education Symposium and present on her work creating disaster legal clinics after named disasters.

David Hricik

Professor of Law & Associate Dean for Faculty Research & Development

Panel Member, Former Clerks of the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit Clerks for the Atlanta IP Inn of Court, April 20, 2022.

Cathren Page

Tenured Associate Professor of Law

Chaired the New Member Committee for the Legal Writing Institute (LWI) and served as an

organizer, facilitator, and mentor for the LWI Speed Mentoring session at the LWI Biennial Conference.

Invited to attend and participated in the Taos Toolbox Writing Workshop with special guest George R.R. Martin.

Listed as Editor-in-Chief of presentation from the Dean of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, "Truth or Consequences: Post-Truth and the Rule of Law."

Served as an advisor, judge and workshop presenter for the Once Upon a Law Applied Legal Storytelling competition in Malaysia.

Brian Kammer

Director of Mercer Law Habeas Project

On April 19, 2022, the Georgia Supreme

Court reversed the denial of habeas relief for Project client Gregory Davenport. Habeas Project students drafted the Appellant's Brief and communicated with Mr. Davenport both telephonically and in person at Hays State Prison during their representation. Mr. Davenport actively participated in strategizing how to litigate his case. In its opinion, the Supreme Court held that the trial and habeas court erred in failing to find that Mr. Davenport's aggravated assault charge merged into the primary armed robbery count and therefore had to be vacated. The Attorney General, representing the Warden, conceded the error. As a result of the students' advocacy, Mr. Davenport, who has already served 8 years in prison, will have 20 years subtracted from his 45-year sentence.

ClassNotes

Share your personal and professional news with Mercer Law. Submit Class Notes to news@law.mercer.edu

Class notes reported from April 2021-October 2022.

1968

James W. Hurt was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Cordele Circuit.

1972

William Halladay Adams, Arthur Elliott Barrow, Jr., and Emory C. Teel III, were recognized by the Florida Bar on June 24, 2022 for being a member for 50 years. Recognition includes members who are in good standing and are 50-year members of The Florida Bar or whose cumulative legal practice with The Florida Bar and one or more United States jurisdiction(s) totals 50 years, as of January 1, 2022.

David F. Sipple, was included in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 in the area of admiralty and maritime law. Sipple is a partner in the HunterMaclean Savannah office and practices in the areas of admiralty law and insurance law.

1975

Ronald Arthur Lowry was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Cobb Circuit Post 2.

Michael D. McRae was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Tallapoosa Circuit Post 1.

1976

Randall A. Jordan, was included in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 in the area of railroad law. He is a partner in HunterMaclean's litigation practice group in St. Simons Island.

1977

J. Lynn Rainey and John D. Vaughan III announced the formation of Rainey & Vaughan LLC, a law firm based in Cobb County. The father-son legal team focuses on business law, contract negotiation, ethics, government law and representation of Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Georgia. Rainey serves as outside counsel to and on the Management Committee of Gas South LLC, one of the largest natural gas marketing companies in the southeastern United States. He is the leading expert in the formation and representation of CIDs in Georgia as he currently represents 21 CIDs in Barrow,

Clayton, Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall and Newton counties. Rainey also serves as general counsel to the Cobb County Board of Ethics. Rainey previously served as a chief assistant district attorney in the Alcovy Judicial Circuit, as the chief assistant solicitor of Cobb County and worked in private practice for most of his career.

1979

David C. Will was appointed to the Certificate of Need Appeals Panel by Gov. Brian P. Kemp.

1981

Richard Gerakitis received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 22nd Annual Justice Robert Benham Awards for Community Service on March 19. The award is the highest recognition given by the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism for demonstrating an extraordinarily long and distinguished commitment to volunteer participation in the community throughout one's legal career. Gerakitis is a partner in Troutman Pepper's labor and employment practice group in Atlanta.

1982

Curtis S. Jenkins was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Towaliga Circuit.

1983

Luanne Clarke received the 2021 Distinguished Service Award from the Workers' Compensation Section of the State Bar of Georgia for professionalism, service and commitment throughout her career. Clarke is a partner at Moore, Clarke, Duvall & Rodgers.

Lamonte E. Scott was recognized as Trusted Attorney by Continental Who's Who for his dedication to clients and excellence in the field of law.

1984

The Hon. Ben W. Studdard III retired from the Henry County State Court after more than two decades, including serving as the court's chief judge.

MERCER LAWYERS LEAD STATE BAR OF GEORGIA

Sally Akins, '90 – State Bar President 2022-2023

Sally Akins was installed as the 2022-2023 president of the State Bar of Georgia at the Annual State Bar Meeting in June 2022.

When asked what led her to a career in law, Sally says she never wanted to be anything other than a lawyer because "lawyers are problem solvers and — at their best — instruments for positive change." Throughout her legal career, Sally has embodied the professionalism and service of a lawyer. Sally is a neutral at Miles Mediation & Arbitration and of counsel at Ellis Painter in Savannah.

"We are grateful for Sally's contributions to the legal profession and the State Bar of Georgia," said Dean Karen J. Sneddon, "We fully support her as she serves as president of the State Bar of Georgia."

Ron Daniels '12 – President, Young Lawyers Division 2022-2023

Ron Daniels was installed as the 2022-2023 president of the Young Lawyers Division at the Annual State Bar Meeting June 2022.

When asked what led him to a career in Law, Ron replied, "I like helping people and solving more problems than I can make." This passion for serving others has carried him throughout his career. Daniels owns and operates his firm, Daniels Taylor Law LLC in Eastman, which he founded four years after his graduation from law school. In the past decade, Ron has been highly involved in the legal community, including the State Bar and currently serves as a board member for the Mercer Law Alumni Association.

"Ron exhibits the kind of service to the community and legal profession that all young lawyers aspire to be," says Dean Karen Sneddon. "His ongoing commitment to his community indicates that Daniels is a rising leader in the legal profession."

COURTESY OF MILES MEDIATION & ARBITRATION



ASHLEY G. STOLLAR



2022 COMMENCEMENT

May 14, 2022

J.D. Graduates: **120**

J.D./MBA Graduates: **3**

Graduates with an Advanced
Legal Writing, Research and
Drafting Certificate: **42**

George Waldo Woodruff
Award of Excellence:

Elliza Guta

Commencement Speaker:

**The Hon. Verda M. Colvin,
Georgia Supreme Court**

Reynold J. Kosek Excellence
in Teaching Award:

James P. Fleissner



CHRISTOPHER IAN SMITH AND LEAH YETTER



ClassNotes

1986

Henry G. “Chip” Bachara, was included in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 in the areas of construction law and construction litigation, which he has received consecutively since 2009. He was also included as a member of *Florida Trend’s* Legal Elite and *Florida Super Lawyers* in 2022. Bachara rotated off the Judicial Nominating Commission (JNC) for Florida’s Fourth Judicial Circuit after 11 years. During his tenure, which included two terms as chair, the JNC interviewed nearly 500 judicial candidates and helped to appoint 33 judges. In September 2022, Bachara and his colleagues at Bachara Construction Law Group in Jacksonville celebrated the firm’s 15th anniversary.

Charles E. Cox, Jr. was inducted as a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers at its annual meeting in Chicago.

Sandra H. Taylor was re-elected chair of the Board of Juvenile Justice for a second two-year term. The board establishes the general policies of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

J. Henry Walker IV was elected to membership in the prestigious American Law Institute (ALI) in June 2021, and was the only Georgian elected in 2021. He serves as chair and CEO of Kilpatrick Townsend and Stockton LLP in Atlanta.

1987

Anton F. Mertens joined the immigration and global mobility practice group at Arnall Golden Gregory in Atlanta.

1988

Jay D. Mitchell received the 2021 *Atlanta Business Chronicle* Corporate Counsel Award for small legal departments honoring top attorneys in Georgia practicing in corporations, associations and other private-sector organizations and nonprofits. *James Magazine* also gave him the distinction of Most Influential Attorney Award in 2021 for having a discernible impact on policy, politics and the practice of law. Mitchell is general counsel of Jackson Healthcare, which assisted organizations in finding needed staffing during the pandemic.

Chas Reynolds, was appointed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to serve on the state’s Judicial Nominating Commission. The commission reviews and recommends judicial candidates to the Governor for appointment to the bench.

Kimberley Slayton White, was sworn in as a member of the Court of Appeals of Virginia on July 1, 2022. White was previously a partner in a large law firm, an elected Commonwealth’s Attorney, and the Chief Circuit Court Judge for the 10th Circuit in Virginia. She is the first lawyer from Halifax County Virginia to serve on an appellate court since 1895.

1989

Anita Wallace Thomas was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia’s Board of Governors representing the Atlanta Circuit Post 39. Wallace Thomas is a partner at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP in Atlanta.

1990

Sally B. Akins was installed as State Bar of Georgia’s president-elect at its annual meeting in June 2021.

Garrett N. Barket was appointed a magistrate/child support hearing officer for the State of Florida Fourth Judicial Circuit.

Michael P. Boggs, was installed as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia on July 18, 2022. Chief Justice Boggs was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia on Dec. 7, 2016 by Gov. Nathan Deal and previously served as Presiding Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. In August 2022, Chief Justice Boggs was named an inaugural member of the Council on Criminal Justice’s Veterans Justice Commission. The Commission, chaired by former U.S. Defense Secretary and U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel, is a national, nonpartisan group of experts working to raise awareness of the unique challenges facing veterans and to build consensus for evidence-based changes that enhance safety, health and justice.

J. Jeffrey Deery, was selected as 2022 Florida Super Lawyers in Business Litigation. Deery was also named *Best Lawyer* in Commercial Litigation, Litigation - Banking and Finance. Deery is a shareholder with the firm Winderweede, Haines, Ward & Woodman in Winter Park, Florida.

The Hon. John F. Kennedy was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Macon Circuit Post 1.

David W. Long-Daniels joined Squire Patton Boggs LLP as a partner practicing labor and employment law in Atlanta.

1991

Thomas R. Burnside, III was re-elected to serve on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Georgia. Burnside will continue to serve

in the Post 3 seat from the Augusta Circuit.

Frank R. McKay was re-appointed to the State Board of Worker’s Compensation by Gov. Brian P. Kemp.

1992

Charles N. Faaborg joined the Southwestern Circuit District Attorney’s Office serving Sumter, Lee, Webster, Macon, Schley and Stewart counties.

D. Kent Shelton, was promoted on Sept. 1, 2021 to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve JAG Corps.

1993

The Hon. Victoria F. Darrisaw was elected one of five new directors of AB&T by its shareholders at its annual meeting in May 2021, expanding the board of directors from 12 to 17. Judge Darrisaw was named by the Georgia Supreme Court as a member of the state’s judicial qualifications commission, which is tasked with weighing ethics complaints from the public against judges. She currently serves as a member of the Mercer Law School Alumni Association Board.

Donna Stanaland Hix was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for Chattahoochee Circuit Post 4.

Angelia Morie Nystrom, was installed as the 41st Chair of the Tennessee Bar Foundation, at its annual membership meeting in July 2022. Nystrom was first elected to the board in 2015, as an east Tennessee trustee and has served as secretary. She currently serves as the executive director of specialty programs for Institutional Advancement for the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture and is responsible for the organization’s planned giving program, real estate acquisition and development.

1994

Rebecca Liles Grist was elected to the State Bar of Georgia’s Board of Governors as a representative for the Macon Circuit Post 3.

1995

Kimberly Wilkerson Higginbotham was elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Northern Circuit Post 1.

1996

Christian Hardigree, was named regional chancellor of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus starting July 1, 2022. Hardigree previously served as the founding dean of the School of Hospitality at

Metropolitan State University (MSU) of Denver.

James B. Manley, Jr. was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor’s consideration.

1997

The Hon. Shondeana Crews Morris was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor’s consideration.

Jennifer L. Scoliard was named senior vice president, deputy general counsel – litigation for Cenlar FSB. Scoliard handles significant and complex litigation matters, manages the in-house litigation team, oversees management of Cenlar’s corporate litigation nationwide and advises the company on litigation and compliance with U.S. bankruptcy law.

1998

Neil A. Halvorson was recognized by the Macon Bar Association with the 2021 William A. Bootle Professionalism Award for his dedication to the District Attorney’s Office and the professionalism he exhibits to everyone he encounters through his work.

Paula K. Hendrix was appointed an associate judge for the Liberty County Magistrate Court effective July 1, 2021. Hendrix served as a staff attorney for the Atlantic Judicial Circuit’s superior court judges, as well as law librarian for the Liberty County Law Library, for 15 years. Hendrix also helped establish the circuit’s first alternative dispute resolution program in 2008 and recently served as a staff attorney for the Liberty County Probate Court.

Renee L’Eplattenier received Society for Human Resource Management certification (SHRM-CP) from Kennesaw State University and joined Fisher Phillips LLP, one of the country’s preeminent labor and employment firms. Having previously overseen human resources and employment law matters at her own business in Atlanta, her work at Fisher Phillips combines her legal background and extensive experience in people management. L’Eplattenier’s focus is on 50-state handbook compliance matters and multi-state employment materials. She is also a new volunteer with CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children.

Jonathan J. Tuggle was honored in the 2022 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* as a leading lawyer in family law.

ClassNotes

1999

Sherry Culves, joined the education law group with Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP as a partner in Atlanta. Culves practices in the areas of education law, employment law, disability and special education, as well as general litigation. She represents numerous school districts ranging from large urban systems to small, rural school districts.

James M. Freeman was elected to the Bibb County Board of Education representing District 6. Freeman began serving on Jan. 1, 2021, and was appointed chairman of the personnel services committee.

Jeffrey R. Harris was named to Georgia Super Lawyers' Top 100 list, making him a five-time Top 100 honoree. A founding partner at Harris Lowry Manton LLP in Atlanta and Savannah, Harris was also recognized as a 2022 Georgia Super Lawyer in the personal injury general: plaintiff category.

William Dixon James was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Stone Mountain Circuit Post 2.

Kirby D. Oberdorfer will succeed the retiring director of Jacksonville, Florida's Office of Ethics, Compliance and Oversight on Oct. 1, 2021. Oberdorfer has been deputy director since 2015.

Bryan Ramos was nominated for selection to The Outstanding Filipinos in America Awards (TOFA) for 2021 to be held during Filipino American History Month in October at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Ramos serves as executive secretary of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association, an executive board member of the Filipino Young Leaders Program, Southeastern regional director for the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project, a board member of Asian Americans Advancing Justice in Atlanta and Georgia's Council on Substance Abuse, and general counsel to the National Federation of Filipino American Associations. He was also instrumental in establishing and coordinating a Filipino Legal Defense Fund, which may be accessed through the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C.

2000

The Hon. Charles E. Evans was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor's consideration.

Kristina Goodwin Connell was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor's consideration.

Deneen Dodson Tavares was appointed an administrative appeals judge in the Department of Health and Human Services on its Medicare Appeals Council in Washington, D.C., in March 2020.

2001

The Hon. Stephanie D. Burton was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Oconee Circuit Post 2.

Trent Coggins, graduated from the University of Alabama in spring 2022 with an LL.M. After retiring from the active practice of law, Trent is now teaching business law at Valdosta State University.

Julia Hall Magda was recognized by the Macon Bar Association with the 2021 Lawyer of the Year Award for her work in the Macon community and her dedication to the practice of law.

2002

Tomieka R. Daniel was promoted from managing attorney to deputy director of the Georgia Legal Services Program in Macon.

Bradley M. Harmon, was included in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 in the area of litigation – construction. Harmon was also recognized as a 2022 Georgia Super Lawyer in business litigation. Harmon is managing partner of HunterMaclean in Savannah and leads the management committee, which guides firm strategy, sets long-term vision and directs firm operations.

George Greer joined Greer Wealth Advisors of Raymond James in Macon in January 2021. In addition to his bar card, Greer now holds the following certifications: SIE, Series 7 and Series 66.

Mike Lavender, was named associate dean at the Mike Cottrell College of Business at the University of North Georgia.

2003

Barret S. Albritton joined Chartwell Law in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as a partner representing businesses in a wide variety of legal matters. Albritton continues the firm's growth by expanding its operations in Tennessee.

R. Scott Christopher joined Sterling Seacrest Partners, an insurance brokerage and consulting firm in Atlanta, as a client advisor.

Christopher was previously with Slappey & Sadd.

Julie R. Comer joined Stites & Harbison PLLC in Atlanta as an attorney in its intellectual property and technology service group. Her practice focuses on business law and litigation, intellectual property, product liability, professional liability, construction, insurance defense, and estate and probate matters.

Thomas Smoll was named chief executive officer for Educational Health Center of Wyoming, a federally qualified health center system in Cheyenne and Casper, and the Albany Community Health Clinic in Laramie.

Joseph C. Sumner, Jr. was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Dublin Circuit.

2004

Joseph W. "Joel" Brown joined the Heart of Florida Legal Aid Society as executive director.

Bryce A. Johnson was elected District Attorney of the Tifton Judicial Circuit in November 2020. The Tifton Circuit covers Irwin, Tift, Turner and Worth counties.

Brandon L. Peak announced the opening of a new practice, Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP, which will handle significant wrongful death, personal injury, False Claims Act, class action and business torts cases. Peak recently won a record-setting verdict of \$280 million, believed to be the largest verdict in U.S. history awarded in a contested trucking case. Peak has successfully litigated trucking, personal injury and class action cases in courts throughout the nation and has personally been involved in cases with verdicts and settlements exceeding \$1 billion. In June 2021, he re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Chattahoochee Circuit Post 2.

Brooke C. Peak, joined the new firm Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP as marketing director.

Bonnie S. Timms joined Cook & James LLP in Roswell.

2005

The Hon. Elizabeth Emery Coolidge was inducted as the 24th president of the Rotary Club of Savannah Sunrise. Coolidge was elected state court judge for Chatham County in 2020.

Lisa M. Harris was named responsible conduct of research officer for the Southwest Division of CommonSpirit Health, the largest nonprofit hospital system in the U.S. She oversees conflicts of interest, export control, research

credentialing, regulatory research compliance education, and research policy and procedure for Arizona and Nevada.

Nicholas J. Laybourn, was included in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023 in the area of litigation – construction and commercial litigation. Laybourn is the head of HunterMaclean's litigation practice group in Savannah.

2006

Ann-Patton Hornthal, has been selected by her peers for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2023. Hornthal is a shareholder of Roberts & Stevens in Asheville, North Carolina.

Jed D. Manton was named a 2022 Georgia Super Lawyer in the personal injury general: plaintiff category for his exceptional work advocating on behalf of his clients. Manton is a founding partner at Harris Lowry Manton LLP in Atlanta and Savannah.

Vernon M. Strickland was one of The Georgia Institute of Technology's Black Alumni Organization's 60 for 60 honorees, recognizing former Georgia Tech student-athletes as part of its 60-year celebration. Strickland currently serves on the Mercer University School of Law's Board of Visitors.

2007

Ivy N. Cadle was sworn in as the secretary of the State Bar of Georgia. Cadle previously represented the Macon Circuit on the Board of Governors, and he was elected to also serve on the Executive Committee of the State Bar. As secretary, Cadle will continue to serve on the executive committee of the State Bar of Georgia. Cadle is a shareholder at Baker Donelson in Macon.

Kathryn (Katie) E. Ray married Jim Conrad on June 19, 2021, in Cashiers, North Carolina. Ray serves as associate general counsel for Brasfield & Gorrie LLC and lives in Atlanta.

Haynesworth Maier Studstill was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor's consideration.

2008

Soo J. Hong was appointed to the Judicial Nominating Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. The commission recommends judicial candidates for the governor's consideration.

Michael Memberg was named as partner at Hickcox, Robertson and Stunda in Atlanta. Memberg defends employers/insurers in workers' compensation claims in Georgia and Florida.



Homecoming Alumni Tailgate November 12, 2022



LAUREN MALDON AND MAGGIE REMER

ClassNotes

Patrick Mincey accepted an invitation to join IR Global, a leading international organization ranked as a “Band-1” global legal network by Chambers and Partners. Mincey serves as IR Global’s exclusive U.S. advisors for White Collar Crime for North Carolina, along with his partner, Stephen Bell. Mincey was recognized by *Business North Carolina* magazine as part of the magazine’s Legal Elite program, a list of the state’s top lawyers in business-related categories. Mincey is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in the Wilmington, North Carolina office and practices criminal law and litigation. He chairs the White Collar, Government Investigations & Special Matters Group at the firm.

2009

Elizabeth Garner was promoted to partner at national litigation firm Troutman Pepper. Garner is a partner in the firm’s finance practice group in Atlanta.

Michael E. Mayo was listed as a 2021 On the Rise Attorney by *Daily Report*, which recognizes the top 20 attorneys under the age of 40. In May 2021, his wife Dana, big sister Julia and big brother Boston welcomed Demi Knox Mayo.

Kathryn L. Powers was re-elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors as representative for the Clayton Circuit Post 1.

Wendell Frank White Jr. accepted a position on House Armed Services Committee as a professional staff member after working on defense policy on Capitol Hill for more than eight years. A graduate of Mercer Law, Yeshiva University’s Cardozo School of Law and the United States Army War College, he will support the readiness subcommittee with a portfolio that includes army operations and maintenance, operational energy, and military privatized housing. White also graduated from Johns Hopkins University with his Master of Business Administration in May 2021.

2010

Meredith Chilausky, joined Campbell Law School as assistant director of Academic Support and Bar Success effective Sept. 20, 2022.

Charles V. Crowe, IV was named a 2021 Super Lawyer in the area of family law.

Ashley Deadwyler-Heuman was sworn in as Forsyth’s new municipal court judge on June 21, 2021.

The Hon. Amanda N. Heath was appointed to the Augusta Judicial Circuit Superior Court by Gov. Brian Kemp. Judge Heath was previously a juvenile court judge in the same circuit. Heath was elected to the State Bar of Georgia’s Board of Governors as representative for the Augusta Circuit Post 1.

Erika L. Opitz moved up to equity shareholder at Chamberlain Hrdlicka in its Atlanta office. Opitz is a member of the corporate, securities and finance practice group and often serves as a client’s outside general counsel. She assists clients with corporate governance, commercial contracts, mergers and acquisitions and privately held securities matters.

2011

Catherine Bell Mitchell was named partner in the real estate department of Fox Rothschild LLP in its Charlotte, North Carolina, office.

C. Adam Owenby announced the birth of his son, Jasper, in July 2021. Owenby joined Zoom Video Communications in August 2021 as government contractor compliance counsel.

Christopher A. Steele joined MendenFreiman LLP as a partner in its estate planning, tax, estate administration, and business law practice areas in Atlanta. He serves as a trusted adviser to individuals, families and business owners. While income, gift and estate tax planning are a large part of his practice, Steele also advises clients concerning both the tax and non-tax considerations of their planning.

L. Blade Thompson was selected to the Super Lawyers 2021 Rising Star list.

2012

Danielle Brewer, was appointed as Judge on the Twelfth Judicial Circuit by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in May 2022. Previously, Brewer served as a Judge on the DeSoto County Court since her appointment by Governor Rick Scott in 2016.

J. Daniel Cole was named a partner at Parks, Chesin & Walbert P.C. in Atlanta in January 2021, specializing in employment law and business litigation.

Ronald E. Daniels was sworn in as president-elect of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia at its annual meeting in June 2021.

Norbert D. “Bert” Hummell, IV was elected to the State Bar of Georgia’s Advisory Committee on Legislation (ACL), liaison to the newly established Business Court Committee, and

to the Disciplinary Review Board for 2021-2022. Hummell serves on the Bar’s Finance Committee and was also elected vice-chair of the Bench and Bar Committee and to the Executive Committee. He is the immediate past-president of the State Bar’s Young Lawyer’s Division. Hummell joined Williams Elleby, practicing personal injury law.

J. Ross Hutchison joined Stites & Harbison PLLC as partner in the firm’s Nashville office, focusing on litigation and transactional matters within the construction industry.

Courtney L. Patrick and husband, Matt, welcomed their son, Matthew David Patrick Jr., in May 2021.

2013

Ashley Akins, joined the education law group with Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP as an associate in Atlanta. Akins represents school districts in the areas of education law and workers’ compensation defense litigation.

Joseph M. Colwell announced the opening of a new practice, Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP, which will handle significant wrongful death, personal injury, False Claims Act/whistleblower, class action and business torts cases. Colwell has successfully litigated cases in courts throughout the nation, and he has personally been involved in cases with verdicts and settlements exceeding \$183 million.

Jeffrey Daniel, joined the education law group with Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP as an associate in Atlanta. Daniel focuses on litigation, Title IX investigations, and regulatory compliance issues unique to the education industry.

John W. Harris joined Campbell & Brannon LLC as a closing attorney in Atlanta.

Patrick G. McKenzie was named partner at Morris Manning & Martin LLP in the firm’s corporate technology practice, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, private equity transactions, venture capital financing, emerging companies, commercial finance and corporate governance.

Hallee C. Moore was named partner at Morris, Manning & Martin LLP in the firm’s corporate technology practice, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, finance transactions, private equity, venture capital, strategic investments and general corporate matters.

B. Patrick O’Grady joined the newly-established Richmond, Virginia, branch office of the law firm Thomas, Thomas & Hafer, headquartered in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. O’Grady, who practices general liability law,

was previously with Harman Claytor Corrigan & Wellman.

2014

S. Jake Carroll was elected vice-chair and chair-elect of the Construction Section of the Atlanta Bar Association starting June 1, 2021, until May 31, 2022. Carroll is an associate at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP in Atlanta.

Christopher B. McDaniel announced the opening of a new firm, Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP, which will handle significant wrongful death, personal injury, False Claims Act, class action and business torts cases. McDaniel has successfully litigated trucking, personal injury and product liability cases in courts throughout the nation and was a member of the trial team that recently won a record-setting verdict of \$280 million, believed to be the largest verdict in U.S. history awarded in a contested trucking case.

Adam M. Miller was promoted to senior associate at GrayRobinson P.A. in Orlando. Miller focuses on property insurance defense, personal injury defense and litigation.

Gracie Jackson Paulson joined Robert & Stevens in Asheville, North Carolina, as an associate focusing on property law, serving both buyers and sellers in commercial and residential transactions.

Peter D. Rehm joined the international tax practice of Chamberlain Hrdlicka in Atlanta as an associate.

2015

Kindall Elizabeth Browning married Tyler Rickle on April 24, 2021, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Elizabeth Lambert Cox joined the law firm of Gregory, Doyle, Calhoun and Rogers LLC in Marietta, as part of its trust and estates, taxation, business transactions and corporate groups.

Megan Beardsley Glimmerveen and husband, Thomas A. Glimmerveen, announced the birth of their daughter, Annabelle Blake, in March 2021.

Zandra V. Hall, ’15, joined Americold as corporate counsel for employment and labor in Atlanta. Hall was previously with Mohawk Industries in Calhoun.

Nigel Phiri established the Law Office of Nigel Phiri Esquire LLC in Atlanta, focusing on personal injury. Phiri was most recently with Morgan & Morgan.

Liz Phrampus, joined the education law group with Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP as counsel in Atlanta. Phrampus focuses her practice on workers' compensation litigation.

2016

Pardis Bakheshi married Nima Fathi on Oct. 17, 2021, at Lombardi House in Los Angeles. Bakheshi's and Fathi's families are from the same small town in Iran, although they only met in Los Angeles in 2020. Bakheshi serves as a staff attorney at the Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers Inc.

A. Michael Barnes, joined HunterMaclean as an associate in the firm's Corporate Practice Group in Savannah. His practice focuses on advising clients on a broad array of corporate and business legal matters, including capitalization and financing, selection and formation of business entities, debt and equity financing arrangements, private securities offerings, mergers and acquisitions, divestitures and reorganization, venture capital and private equity transactions, and joint ventures and strategic alliances.

Brittany Spornhauer Bennett and Andrew T. Bennett, '18, announced that Bennett Law & Mediation Services LLC was named "Best of Georgia" for 2020 in the Business Law category.

Tyler Bishop, joined Baker Donelson's Intellectual Property Group in Atlanta as an associate.

Sharon E. Hastings married Christopher Chamberlain on April 18, 2021, in Pasadena, Maryland.

Steven L. Jones joined Taylor English Duma LLP as an of counsel, focusing on planning, zoning and other real estate-related law.

Virginia C. Josey, was installed as co-editor of *The YLD Review*, the newsletter of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia, on June 3.

B. Patrick Kane left his job in government contract bids to pursue a career in music. He released a self-titled debut EP under his stage name "Rambler Kane."

Dana Marie Nicolazzi married Jimmy Shawn Johnson on Dec. 4, 2021, in Candler, North Carolina. Nicolazzi is a staff attorney at the Southern States Police Benevolent Associations Inc. in McDonough.

Ashley Brooke Pitts joined the Atlanta office of Witherite Law Group in July. Pitts was recently with Kenneth S. Nugent PC in Macon.

Georgios Tarasidis, joined Gerace & Associates as an associate attorney in criminal defense in Hartford, Connecticut. Georgios was

admitted to the practice of law in the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

Em Wright, was appointed as a visiting assistant professor in the University of Oregon School of Law's top-ranked legal research and writing program.

2017

Brian J. Apli was appointed municipal public defender for the city of West Point.

Adelyn Bargeron Boleman and Brock Boleman welcomed their son, Henry Clay, into the world in August 2021.

E. Kayla Chiang Chen and husband, Fernando, welcomed their daughter, Flora Piper, in Oct. 2021. Chen is an associate at Drew Eckl & Farnham in Atlanta.

William E. Collins, Jr. and his wife, Ginger, announced the birth of their daughter, Ellis Jane, in June 2021, weighing 6 lbs., 3.8 oz. Collins joined the law firm Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak and Stewart PC in February 2020.

Ian A. McIntyre, and wife, Jordan Morris McIntyre, '19, announced the birth of their son, Chase Daniel McIntyre, in April 2022. Ian is an associate with Butler, Quinn & Hochman, PLLC in Charlotte, North Carolina. Jordan is an assistant district attorney in Cabarrus County, North Carolina.

2018

Andrew T. Bennett and Brittany Spornhauer Bennett, '16, announced that Bennett Law & Mediation Services LLC was named "Best of Georgia" for 2020 in the Business Law category.

William Lovett Bennett graduated with a Master of Laws in taxation (LL.M.) from New York University Law School. Bennett is an associate at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP in New York, New York.

Courtney Michelle Britt married Kevin Duncan on May 2, 2021, in Dahlonaga. Britt is an assistant public defender in Macon-Bibb County.

Veronica Rogusky Cox, was installed as secretary of the Young Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar of Georgia on June 3 during the organization's Annual Meeting at Amelia Island, Florida. Cox is a trial attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Atlanta District Office.

Diantha V. Ellis, was selected as the 2022 recipient of the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Excellence in Advising Award at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC).

Ellis is an associate professor of business administration at ABAC.

Jessica B. Haygood and husband Erik announced the birth of their son, Barrett Lewis Haygood, born in May 2021 at 6 lbs. and 13.7 oz., 18.75 in. long.

Abriana B. Horton joined Chamberlain Hrdlicka as an associate. Horton joins the nationally recognized tax controversy and litigation practice in its Atlanta office.

Sara L. Jones joined the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for Pulaski County in Waynesville, Missouri. Jones was a judicial clerk for the superior court in Anchorage, Alaska.

Jess A. Lill was promoted to managing attorney of The Manely Firm P.C.'s Savannah office. Lill practices international and domestic family law.

Rasheed D. Merrell joined the Fulton County Public Defenders' Office as an assistant public defender.

Lauren Bridgers Meyers joined Crowell & Moring LLP as recruiting and human resources coordinator.

Anna Grace Mills married Brent Vandergriff on July 18, 2021, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Mills is an associate attorney with Bowers and Gibson in LaFayette.

Brandon D. Sartin joined Stites & Harbison PLLC in Atlanta as an attorney. Sartin's practice concentrates on commercial litigation, including professional liability defense of attorneys, accountants and corporate directors and officers across Georgia State Courts and before various professional licensing boards.

Lauren Raquelle Wilmer married Evan Atkinson at Ashton Gardens in Atlanta on Oct. 18, 2021. Wilmer is a staff attorney at the Professional Association of Georgia Educators.

2019

Michael C. Berthiaume joined the Dallas office of Norton Rose Fulbright in the Financial Restructuring and Insolvency Group after completing a clerkship with the Hon. Mark X. Mullin of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas.

Leesa M. Guarnotta joined the commercial litigation practice of Burr Forman LLP in its Atlanta office.

Caitlin Wise Harris joined Tisinger Vance PC as associate attorney practicing commercial litigation, residential/commercial real estate, estate planning, probate and general regulatory compliance.

CLASS OF 2022 *Final Honors*

Summa Cum Laude

Michael LaRue Downing, Jr.
Elliza Guta
Anna Mae Kersey
Olivia Kristen Spradley

Magna Cum Laude

Douglas E. Comin
Russel Braden Copeland
Ashley Brooke Mallon
Ashton Cole Porter
Sara N. Snowden
Ben Tillman Tuten
Wesley N. Watts
D. Garrett White

Cum Laude

Danielle Georgiana Adams
Emma Nelson Aguilar
Morli Bimal Amin
Jacob Barlar
Anna Marie Celani-Washington
Emma Kristine Clark
Jacob M. Coley
Brennan Harris Collins
Elizabeth Tate Crymes
Alison Elizabeth Drake
Bubba Dunn
Austin Jared Eiseman
Thomas Elijah Francis
Seth Timothy Golden
Rafael Alejandro Guarin
Avery Hart Hayes
Elizabeth Newman McBride
John Edward McGraw
Hailey Tyler Morton
Avery Brooke Nail
Forbes Claybourne Ouzts
David Edward Penland
Sarah Meghan Pittman
Auline Middleton Ponder
Wes Parker Rahn
Shreya H. Shah
Joshua A. Slovin
Hanna L. Tinsley
Miles A. Voss
Jake R. Wilkes
Jacob Colby Wilson

ClassNotes

Meagan Hurley, was named to the Innocence Network's Amicus Curiae Committee.

Hurley was admitted to practice in her third jurisdiction, South Carolina in October 2022. She is serves as the accountability counsel for the Georgia Innocence Project. She represents Georgians convicted of crimes they did not commit, specializing in cases involving official misconduct.

Molly Elizabeth Lustig, married Dr. Brent Troy on Aug. 6, 2022 in Atlanta. Lustig is currently an attorney at Kneupper & Covey in Atlanta.

Jordan Morris McIntyre, and husband, Ian A. McIntyre, '17, announced the birth of their son, Chase Daniel McIntyre, in April 2022. Jordan is an assistant district attorney in Cabarrus County, North Carolina. Ian is an associate with Butler, Quinn & Hochman, PLLC in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Michele A. Milkey joined Mabry & McClelland LLP in Atlanta as an associate attorney practicing civil defense focused on construction law, personal injury defense, insurance coverage and premises liability.

Kaitlyn Marie Ruhl-Pirone married Austin J. Pirone on Friday, Nov. 13, 2020, at Hightower Falls in Cedartown. Ruhl-Pirone is with the Law Office of Patricia King in Canton.

Caroline L. Scalf joined the Atlanta office of Copeland, Stair, Kingma & Lovell as an associate in their health care and general liability practice groups in July 2021. Prior to joining CSKL, Scalf clerked for two years with Justice Verda Colvin while she served at Bibb County Superior Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals.

Conley J. Scott, III joined the Atlanta office of Ogletree Deakins as an ERISA compliance associate working on all things employee benefits-related. Conley also started his own business, Scott's Right Way Solutions

LLC, where he handles personal real estate closings and tax matters.

Georgios K. Tarasidis joined the Law Offices of Pat Brown as an associate attorney practicing criminal defense in Avon, Connecticut.

2020

Lyra G. Foster joined national litigation firm Hawkins Parnell & Young to protect the reputation and careers of her clients. Foster is one of the first openly transgender lawyers at a major law firm. With a passion for justice and equality, she provides pro bono legal services focused on criminal justice, LGBTQ and human rights. Foster also helped found a legal nonprofit while still in law school.

Zan Jones joined Conley Griggs Partin LLP as an associate attorney in January 2022 focusing on catastrophic personal injury and complex civil litigation matters handling a variety of legal issues including wrongful death, automobile accidents, products liability and premises liability.

Samuel Lyon, joined Swift, Currie, McGhee, & Hiers, LLP, as an associate practicing first- and third-party insurance defense for national insurers. Lyon was also named to serve the Georgia Bar Association Young Lawyer's Division as a co-chair of the community service projects committee.

Teresa Pardiñas joined Worth Jarrell in Atlanta as an associate attorney practicing labor and employment law.

Brittney A. Sizemore joined the coverage and commercial litigation team of Swift, Currie, McGhee and Hiers LLP as an associate. Sizemore was recently with Moore Ingram Johnson and Steele LLP.

2021

Daniel I. Higgins joined Capovilla & Williams Law Firm in Atlanta, representing current and former military personnel.

Caroline G. Powell married Carl Thomas Craven in Macon on Sept. 3, 2021.

IN MEMORY

1940s

Thomas H. Morton, '49, of Molena, Dec. 19, 2021

1950s

William Everill, '53, of Jacksonville, Florida, Jan. 1, 2022

Bonnie C. Buice, '57, of Milledgeville, Sept. 3, 2021

Antonio F. Doganiero, '58, of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, July 9, 2021

1960s

Jerome Kaplan, '61, of Macon, Jan. 26, 2022

John T. Bowden, '64, of Maitland, Florida, July 31, 2021

John W. Broadfoot, '65, of Amarillo, Texas, Oct. 28, 2022

Allen Byron Gilbert, '65, of Augusta, Sept. 27, 2022

Laurence Schenck, '66, of Dublin, Dec. 29, 2021

John Lunsford Tracy, III, '66, of Albany, Dec. 31, 2021

F. Marion Cummings, '67, of Canton, June 30, 2021

Selmer A. Davidson, '67, of Albert Lea, Minnesota, Feb. 21, 2021

George Frame, '67, of Henderson, Nevada, Jan. 9, 2022

James R. Tucker, '67, of Macon, July 25, 2022

Joel Cash Williams, Jr., '67, of Savannah, Feb. 14, 2022

Benjamin Franklin Wren, III, '67, of Martin S. Jackel, '68, of Vista, California

Leonard O. Fletcher, Jr., '69, of Augusta, Sept. 13, 2022

Benjamin M. Garland, '69, of Macon, April 10, 2022

1970s

James J. Hall, '70, of Hawkinsville, Aug. 8, 2022

Jeanne D. Harrison, '70, of Augusta, Aug. 3, 2022

Hugh B. McNatt, '72, of Vidalia, June 1, 2021

The Honorable Mary Alice Buckner, '73, of Columbus, Sept. 10, 2021

Lorin D. Butler, '73, of Evans, July 20, 2022

James E. Boyers, '75, of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Nov. 28, 2021

Edwin M. Hart, '75, of Huntsville, Alabama, Dec. 26, 2021

Willis N. Moore, '75, of Dawsonville, Aug. 26, 2021

Gilbert J. Murrah, '75, of Bainbridge, May 3, 2022

Richard Even Nettum, '75, of Americus, May 1, 2021

David B. Weber, '76, of Augusta, Feb. 11, 2022

Millard L. Biloon, '78, of Savannah, Apr. 6, 2021

1980s

Michael N. Annis, '80, of Grovetown, Nov. 28, 2022

Jon Branan, '80, of Athens, Jan. 27, 2022

Miller Robinson, '80, of Columbus, July 1, 2021

Eugene Hatcher, '81, of Macon, Feb. 3, 2022

Mable Vivian Booker, '82, of Washington, Oct. 22, 2021

Sherrod G. Patterson, '82, of Decatur, Aug. 8, 2021

Jack E. Bowen, '84, of Longwood, Florida, Oct. 6, 2021

George F. Murphy, '86, of Valparaiso, Florida, May 26, 2021

Walter Millsaps, '87, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, June 27, 2021

Wadyce F. Jenkins, '88, of Townsend, July 11, 2021

Allison Hayes, '88, of Albany, Aug. 25, 2021

1990s

Ramsey Thompson Way, Jr., '90, of Hawkinsville, Apr. 30, 2021

Wanda Johnson, '92, of Forsyth, Feb. 7, 2022

Douglas L. Kirkland, '93, of Ocala, Florida, June 28, 2021

James D. Hill, '94, of Aylett, Virginia, July 24, 2021

Anne S. Weiner, '94, of Tampa, Florida, Aug. 15, 2022

Richard Crawford Foster, '95, of Marietta, Apr. 6, 2021

David Lee Crosswell, '96, of Reedville, Virginia, Oct. 18, 2022

Susan Lambert Scott, '97, of Austin, Texas, Jan. 12, 2021

2000s

Susan Ware Belson, '04, of Valdosta, Nov. 4, 2022

John Trotter, '04, of Fayetteville, July 3, 2021

Michael Sayegh, '07, of Simpsonville, South Carolina, Nov. 21, 2021

Carlos Trivino, '09, of Marietta, March 3, 2022

2010s

Michael Kenny Stone, '17, of Atlanta, Sept. 17, 2021

Aliayah J. Baath, '18, of Marietta, July 27, 2021

2020s

Robert Poydasheff, '21, of Atlanta, March 3, 2022

Joanna K. Smith, '21, of Macon, Aug. 9, 2022

Reported through October 2022.

PAYING IT FORWARD

Mercer Law School is fortunate to have committed and generous alumni who support the school annually with gifts to the annual fund, scholarships, special projects, and the endowment. Each gift helps us provide a student-centered experience with a range of meaningful learning opportunities from orientation to graduation.

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