

# Q<sup>LAW</sup>uadrangle

NOTES FROM MICHIGAN LAW





# COVID<sup>IN THE</sup> QUAD

04



Like most everything in the era of COVID-19, this issue of the *Law Quadrangle* looks a bit different than normal. Circumstances related to the pandemic have required this temporary shift to a 24-page magazine with additional content posted at [quadrangle.law.umich.edu](http://quadrangle.law.umich.edu), including Class Notes, Class Notes profiles, and In Memoriam.

We look forward to delivering a full print issue of the *Law Quadrangle* as soon as circumstances permit. In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, and Go Blue!



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@UMICHLAW

## THE VALIANT

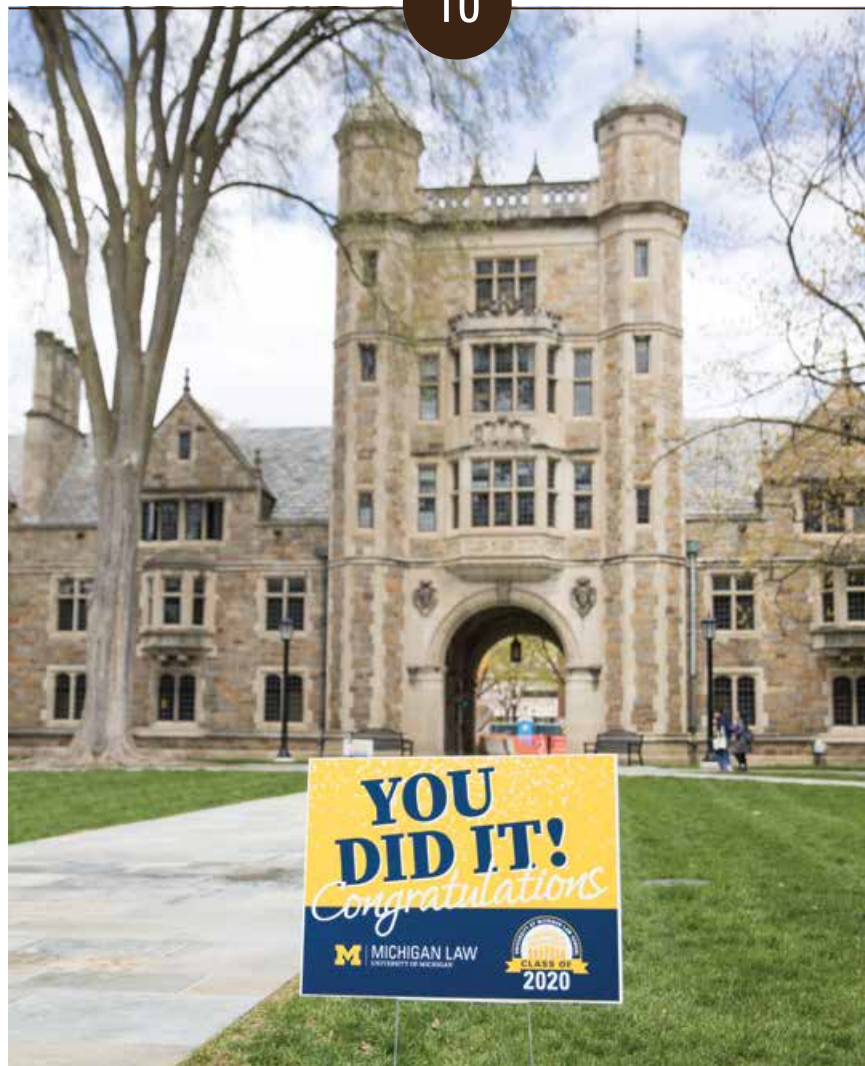
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FEATURE

## GRADUATING TOGETHER, FROM AFAR

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## CLASS NOTES



**Class Notes and In Memoriam are online** for this issue of the *Law Quadrangle*. Visit [quadrangle.law.umich.edu](http://quadrangle.law.umich.edu) to read updates from your classmates, as well as profiles of **Coleen Hilton, '07, Zack James, '17, and Azadeh Shahshahani, '04.**



## \$122,585

Funds raised by **Student Funded Fellowships** in 2020, including from the annual auction—conducted entirely online due to the pandemic—matching funds from Professor Robert Hirshon, '73, and a \$30,000 gift from faculty, staff, and administrators. It was the largest one-year fundraising total in SFF's history.

Since March, **Professor of Law NICHOLAS BAGLEY** has served as special counsel to Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to aid in her response to the COVID-19 crisis. In that role, he drafts executive orders for the governor and offers legal and policy advice on the state's response to the emergency.



The **MICHIGAN INNOCENCE CLINIC** celebrated its 23<sup>rd</sup> successful exoneration when client Kevin Harrington was released after serving more than 17 years for a crime he did not commit. The victory comes after 11 years of work by 27 student-attorneys.

### ADVISORY BOARD ON RACE AND RACISM AT MICHIGAN LAW

Comprised of alumni, faculty, and administrators, and co-led by Professor **Dana Thompson, '99**, and **Ellisen Turner, '02**, the board is charged with examining the effects of race and racism in the Law School community; issuing recommendations about ways to eradicate systemic, institutional racism and discrimination within the Quad; and advising on how to engage issues of race in constructive ways.

# 37

Briefs submitted by the **Workers' Rights Clinic** to the Michigan Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Circuit Courts, including applications for leave, briefs on the merits, reply briefs, and amicus briefs, during the 2019–2020 academic year.



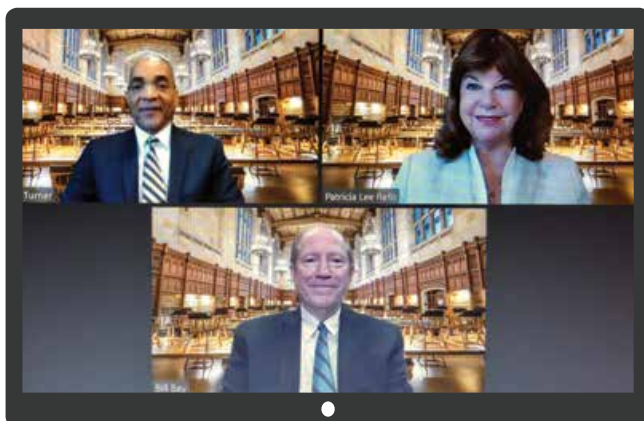
### THREE ALUMNI HEAD TO THE U.S. SUPREME COURT

**Mary Miller, '16**, will serve as a clerk for Justice Samuel Alito during the term beginning October 2020. Previously, she was a clerk for the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

**John Ramer, '17**, joins the chambers of Justice Neil Gorsuch following a Bristow Fellowship at the U.S. Department of Justice in the Office of the Solicitor General. **Sarah Alsaden, '16**, will serve as one of four 2020–2021 Supreme Court Fellows selected by the Supreme Court Fellows Commission, and is assigned to the Federal Judicial Center. She joins the program following a clerkship for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio.

# 310

**Number of incoming 1Ls who hail from  
45 states plus D.C. and Guam.**



**Bill Bay, '78**, **Trish Refo, '83**, and **Reggie Turner, '87**, gathered on Zoom ahead of the American Bar Association annual meeting, held virtually in early August, during which Refo assumed the presidency, Turner assumed the role of president-elect, and Bay completed his 2-year term as chair of the ABA House of Delegates.

## COVID CAPACITY

Every space in the Law Quad has been reassessed to establish new capacity limits for the fall term, based on University guidelines informed by the latest public health information.

### READING ROOM

400  
normal capacity

vs.

61  
COVID capacity

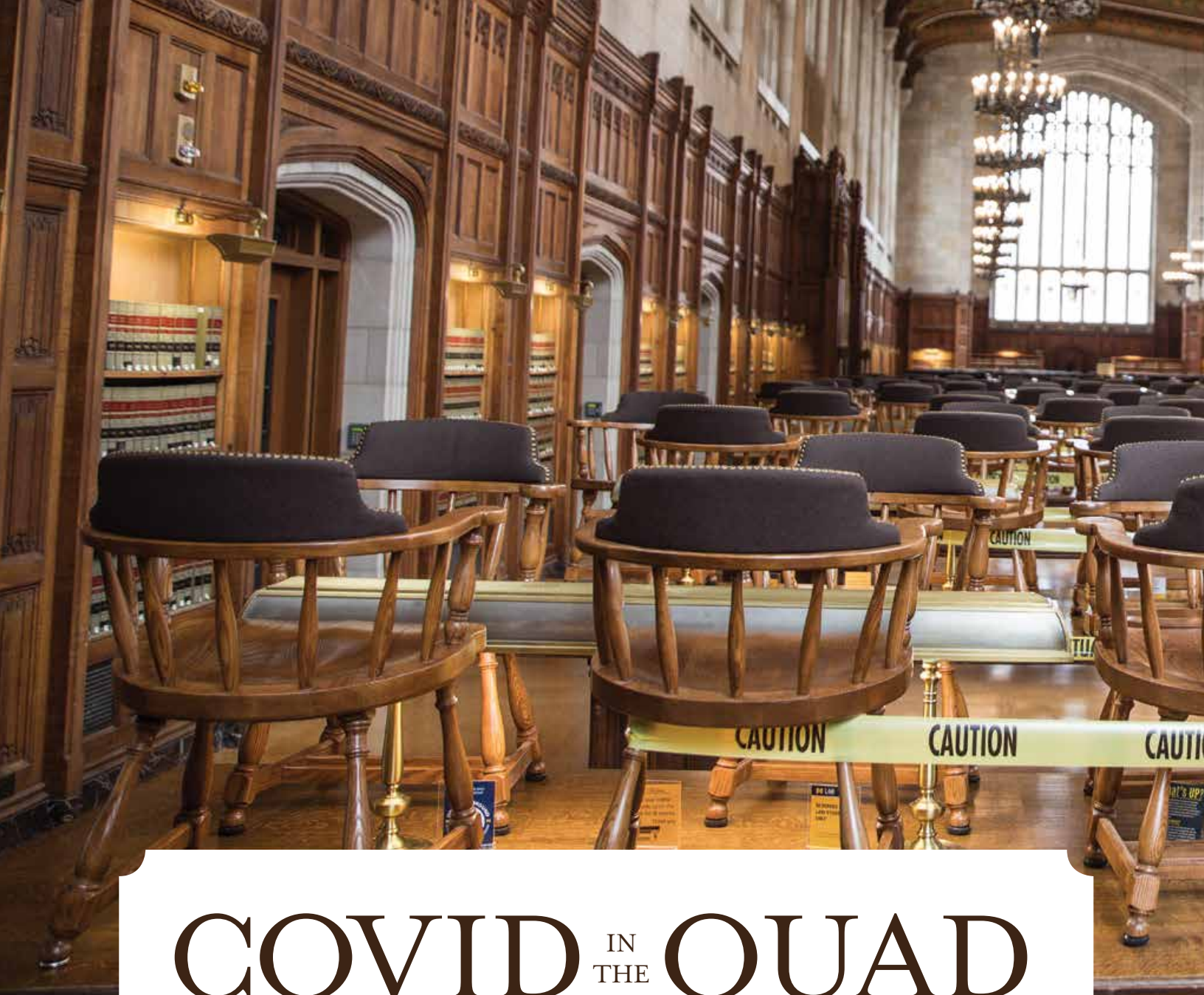
### 220 HUTCHINS HALL

124  
normal capacity

vs.

15  
COVID capacity





# COVID IN THE QUAD

*By James Weir*

ON A THURSDAY MORNING, stacks of *The Michigan Daily* carried a front-page proclamation from the president of the University of Michigan: Effective immediately and in response to the spreading global pandemic, all students, faculty, and staff must wear face masks while on campus, walking on nearby streets, and at all University events until further notice. The announcement came on the heels of an order the previous weekend from the Michigan governor that banned all public gatherings until the escalating public health crisis was resolved.





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It was October 1918, the governor was Albert Sleeper, the U-M president was Harry Hutchins—dean of the Law School from 1895–1910 and namesake of its iconic academic building—and the disease was a flu virus that would go on to kill tens of millions of people worldwide.

More than a century after the flu pandemic, and midway through the winter 2020 term, current U-M President Mark Schlissel issued similar guidance to the University in a community-wide email about COVID-19. At the time, the pandemic had yet to take hold in the United States and was a substantial but still-nascent threat. That would quickly change.



*In response to executive orders issued by the governor in late March, access to the Law Quad was restricted to essential staff only.*

**P**RESIDENT SCHLISSEL'S March 11 message cancelled in-person classes for the remainder of the term, among other policy changes around campus activities and U-M programs abroad, and arrived in inboxes less than 24 hours after Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency and announced the first two confirmed cases in the state (public health officials now believe there were thousands of active cases at the time). Two days later, the University mandated remote final exams, cancelled all commencements, encouraged students in residence halls to move home or off campus if they were able to do so, and advised administrative managers to send all non-essential staff home who could perform their duties remotely.

By the third week of March, life was unrecognizable in the Quad. Various executive orders from Governor Whitmer further restricted University activity and mandated the closure of the Reading Room, Law Library, and all public spaces in the Law School. The state's first stay-at-home order went into effect on March 24 and required Michiganders to remain at home unless their reason for leaving was necessary to sustain or protect life; it also banned all private and public gatherings between those who did not live in the same household. Residents of the Lawyers Club could retrieve take-out meals from the dining hall but otherwise had to remain in their single-occupancy rooms with private facilities. Students living off campus, as well as faculty and non-essential staff, found themselves barred from the Quad.

As March rolled into April, Michigan Law was reborn in remote classrooms, home offices, and makeshift work and study stations spread across the country and overseas. Students, faculty,

building administrators, IT technicians, and members of the administration persevered through extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Within weeks of going remote, skyrocketing case counts and overwhelmed hospital systems revealed the severity of Michigan's outbreak, and metro Detroit became an early epicenter of what has become a public health catastrophe that continues to this day.

Meanwhile, on campus, public spaces were decontaminated and closed with unsettling strips of off-maize caution tape; chairs were roped off and stacked on Reading Room desks; an early April thaw brought sunshine and false spring to Ann Arbor, with temperatures rising into the 70s; and silence descended on the Law Quad for the first time since construction of the Lawyers Club began in 1923.

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**A**LTHOUGH PRESIDENT SCHLISSEL'S March 11 email marked a monumental turning point, operations at the Law School adapted throughout February and March as University and state guidance changed to reflect the latest understanding of the virus, and to comply with executive orders from the governor's office. First, sanitation stations were set up throughout the Quad; then public spaces were altered to encourage and allow for social distancing; and by late March access was limited to essential personnel, effectively mandating that Michigan Law transition to an entirely online experience. Every student, faculty member, and function of the Michigan Law administration was forced to rethink even basic assumptions.



“Reinventing our doctrinal and clinical teaching so it would work in a remote learning environment with students spread throughout the world has been a massive undertaking, and not something we had been planning for. It required monumental effort from our faculty and staff, as well as from our students, who in the midst of dealing with an expanding pandemic managed to make the transition in only a few short days,” says Dean Mark West, Nippon Life Professor of Law. “The situation asked a lot of all involved, but everyone pulled together to stay safe and support one another. It was extremely difficult, especially in the first few weeks. But it was no surprise that the Michigan Law community rose to the occasion.”

The informal Law School COVID-19 response team, formed in February to prepare contingency plans, was by early March meeting daily to consider the many possible outcomes of an outbreak.

“The group was working out of a fourth-floor conference room in Jeffries Hall, and things were developing really quickly. Campuses on the coasts were starting to close, and everything was happening on the fly,” says Michele Frasier Wing, ’98, Michigan Law’s chief operating officer. “One day Dean West came back from a meeting with University officials and said, ‘All of you are too close together, everybody needs to stay six feet apart,’ so we moved to a new conference room where we could social distance and met there daily until it became clear that everybody needed to be working from home.”

Second only to ensuring the health of the Law School community was determining how best to deliver a legal education online. What does it look like to teach constitutional law without the classroom setting for Socratic debate? And how do you run a clinical program without in-person seminars and courtroom experiences? Another question, among many: how does a cold call work in a Zoom classroom?

“Like many of my colleagues, I decided from the very beginning to forgo cold calling on students. Instead, I invited students to sign up before class and opt in to being called on,” says Gil Seinfeld, Robert A. Sullivan Professor of Law and associate dean for academic programming. “For me it was a particularly easy decision because in my capacity as associate dean I was inundated with emails from students relating the incredible challenges that they were confronting. In some cases, students were dealing with financial security issues, food and housing insecurity, and significant mental health challenges; and of course many were managing anxiety about their own health and that of their loved ones. As a teacher, I wanted to do absolutely everything I could to relieve anxiety related to the classroom experience while still delivering something rigorous.”

Law School IT staff convened group and individual training sessions with faculty members to bring them up to speed with

videoconferencing platforms, as well as the many other digital tools that were suddenly integral to delivering lectures and running clinical programs.

“Because I didn’t have access to a whiteboard, I decided to get over my career-long disdain for PowerPoint and prepare slides for my students,” says Seinfeld. “A few weeks in, I asked my students if I should keep using slides when we return to in-person classes, and a cascade of 50 yesses came rolling in on the chat, many in ALL CAPS and littered with exclamation points, so it’s something I’ll carry with me back to the classroom. The people have spoken. And they’ve communicated that my long-held view—that unless you’re showing graphs, charts, and the like, heavy reliance on PowerPoint is a kind of pedagogical malpractice—is perhaps somewhat overstated.”



*Tables and chairs stacked in the Kirkland & Ellis Café, located in Hutchins Hall.*

Students who left Ann Arbor for far-flung time zones woke at all hours to attend live Zoom classes. Working parents delivered lectures while young children careened around the house seeking distraction and stimulation, suddenly home all day from shuttered schools. Members of the Michigan Law community lost family members and loved ones, cared for those sick with COVID-19, and battled the virus themselves. Throughout, faculty and students managed to the best of their ability while delivering and participating in the same rigorous curriculum for which Michigan Law is known.

“I was skeptical at the outset about remote classes, but I pretty universally found it to be a good experience, all things considered. It took a lot of effort behind the scenes from faculty and students trying to learn different ways to make it work,” says Austin Del Priore, ’20. “I think we all got better as the weeks

went on. I was pretty worried about my seminars, but it just took everyone learning the dynamics, and once we all got there, we still had good conversations.”

“Teaching was difficult, largely because of my inability to read the room,” says Seinfeld. “I’d have 75 students in my class every day, but only nine faces on my screen. There’s a lot of non-verbal communication that goes on in a classroom, and in a virtual setting it’s very difficult to assess the ratio of the engaged nodders to the obviously bewildered. It was really challenging for everyone.”

Outside of the classroom, life at Michigan Law came to an abrupt halt. Student groups were forced to end in-person activities and community events were cancelled, postponed, or moved online. With only two weeks of notice, the Student Funded Fellowships auction was reimaged as an entirely remote event.

The annual SFF auction caps off a year of fundraising to support students who take unpaid public interest internships during the summer, and has been a tentpole social event on the Law School calendar since 1977.

“It’s hard to beat Professor Niehoff upping bids in the auction room, but the final 20 minutes of the online countdown were pretty exhilarating as well, as bids went up while the clock ticked down,” says Del Priore. “Friend groups got together over Zoom, and the community was there, just in a different context. Going online, we had a lot more participation from alumni, and Professor Crane organized an extremely generous collective gift from the faculty and administration, so we ended up having the most successful fundraiser in SFF history. I was really proud of the SFF team and the entire Michigan Law community for coming together around a cause we all care about.”



*In classrooms, most chairs have been bagged or removed to ensure in-person participants adhere to proper social distancing guidelines while on campus during the fall 2020 term.*

“The outbreak was sort of on our radar, but we certainly didn’t know the scale and the scope, and over spring break—which was only a week or so before everything on campus was suddenly cancelled—I emailed the dean of students to ask whether this might impact the SFF auction,” says Del Priore, who co-chaired the 2020 SFF auction with Anna Williford, ’20. “It was such a crazy time, with so much news and information packed into every day, even every hour sometimes. In some ways the effort to move the auction online was a blessing because we just put our heads down and got to work and couldn’t dwell on all the uncertainty.”

MICHIGAN LAW’S CLINICAL PROGRAM faced challenges beyond classroom dynamics, as courtrooms closed and in-person advocacy and client meetings were limited by safety concerns and the Governor’s executive orders. As protocols for remote hearings were put in place, clinical faculty and students participated by dialing into hearings and then connecting amongst themselves and with clients over BlueJeans or Zoom in order to communicate during the proceeding.

“Going remote was a shock to the system for faculty and for students, but we very quickly learned how to make it better in a short period of time,” says Associate Dean for Experiential Education Debra Chopp, a clinical professor of law and director of the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic. “In a classroom, you can ask an open-ended question and generate discussion in a way that is much harder on Zoom. You need to plan online engagement in more detail, and use tools like breakout rooms and the polling and chat functions. You can’t rely on rapport the way you can in person. In some ways, things became easier, like supervising a student during a remote hearing, because on a private Zoom I could use facial expressions or hand gestures or quickly send a message over chat, instead of having to subtly whisper or pass a note to them in court.”

Students in the Michigan Innocence Clinic spend a lot of time on the road—looking for and talking to witnesses, meeting with clients in prison, visiting crime scenes, and other investigatory trips—and all of that in-person work came to a standstill with the spread of COVID-19.

“The class component of our clinic involves simulation exercises where we have students do direct and cross examinations from their real cases, which was a challenge, but we were able





*New protocols for the fall 2020 term have been put in place for movement within the Law Quad, including one-way entrances, exits, and stairwells, seen here in the Law Library.*

to navigate how to do those things remotely, and it worked pretty well,” says Dave Moran, ’91, clinical professor of law and co-founder of the Michigan Innocence Clinic. “But the meat-and- potatoes work is outside the classroom investigating cases. While we have continued those efforts with more phone calls and emails, it’s difficult because often we have a critical witness whom we want to go see in person as first contact. They are much more likely to talk if there’s an earnest law student standing on their porch, and we couldn’t do that.”

Day-to-day investigations have become more difficult, but the work continues, and students have shifted their efforts to tasks that can be done remotely, such as submitting FOIA requests and reviewing evidence related to potential client cases. Since the pandemic began, the clinic has filed an emergency petition for clemency and an emergency bond motion for two incarcerated clients who are medically vulnerable (both of which were denied), and is currently considering similar motions for other clients. Under newly established protocols for remote hearings, students and faculty have continued to participate in evidentiary hearings and oral arguments for ongoing cases, and the clinic continues to file motions for relief from judgment on behalf of current clients.

“Teaching and supervising students in the clinics throughout the summer gave us a sense of what works well and what doesn’t,” says Chopp. “We learned to build community over Zoom. Many of us also devoted a fair amount of time to conferences and training to learn how to teach better remotely, and I am optimistic about the fall.”

SINCE THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS EMERGED at the outset of 2020 in Wuhan, China, the United States has become the global epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak. As this issue of the *Law Quadrangle* went to press, the pandemic was worsening after an early summer reprieve; in July alone, the United States recorded almost two million new cases of the virus, more than double the amount of any previous month.

Michigan Law, working within the framework of President Schlissel’s plans for a public health-informed on-campus experience, is offering a mix of in-person and remote classes for the fall term, though all in-person aspects of life in the Quad are subject to evolving public health guidelines as the circumstances of the pandemic change. Months of preparation ensure that staff, faculty, and students are equipped to manage any operating status that may be required.

“We don’t know how much of the term will need to be taught online, how often, and for how long,” says Seinfeld. “But we have organized trainings and worked closely with experts and our IT team, and we have thrown all the wisdom and thought at this problem that we can. There’s no question we are better positioned now than we were when we had to turn into an online law school in the space of five days.”



**ONLINE EXTRA** See more images of the Law School at [quadrangle.law.umich.edu](http://quadrangle.law.umich.edu)



## GRADUATING TOGETHER, FROM AFAR



JURIS DOCTOR

**258**

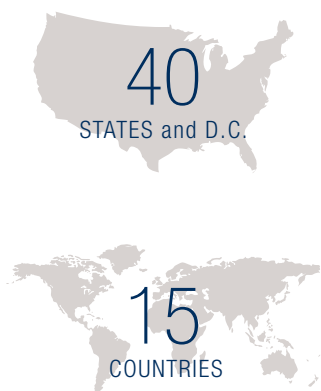
MASTER OF LAWS

**30**

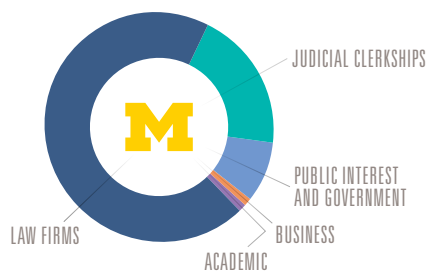
DOCTOR OF THE  
SCIENCE OF LAW

**3**

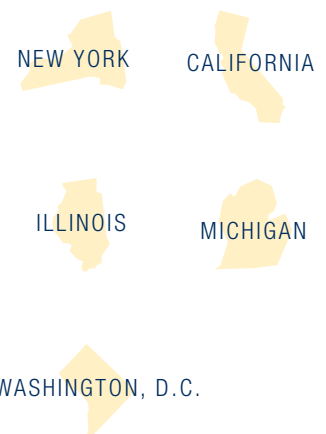
### WHERE ARE THEY FROM?



### JOBS BY SECTOR



### POPULAR JOB MARKETS



### UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS REPRESENTED







Before the pandemic forced Michigan Law to postpone Senior Day, David Louison was chosen by his peers to deliver the student keynote. A month or so into COVID-19 lockdown, as the Law School prepared an online celebration for the

graduating 3Ls, LLMS, and SJDs—an in-person ceremony is planned for 2021—Louison went for a walk to consider what a virtual commencement speech could look like.

“I was just thinking, ‘Am I going to do a speech at all?’ And I realized all bets were off, and I could bring in the other nominees,” says Louison. “We could address the student body as a united front, to show that we are still together, even if things had fallen apart.”

The loss of a traditional Senior Day denied the Class of 2020 a milestone event they had earned through their study, life, and achievement in the Quad.

“I wanted to bring my classmates’ voices in for several reasons: to show unity and to diversify the perspective of the address,” says Louison. “All five of us are different—we had different law school experiences, we were involved in different clubs and activities—so where I might have been shortsighted in a certain area, where I might not think to address a certain group of people at the school, they could bring that perspective. We all lost a lot, so I wanted them to have something too, for themselves and for their friends and families.”

Louison (pictured opposite, center) reached out to Austin Del Priore, Katie Chan, Anna Belkin, and Brenna Twohy (left to right), who were the other keynote nominees voted on by the student body. Despite the demands of finishing law school, with looming finals and deadlines for final papers, the students came together and worked collaboratively on the text, and then filmed their socially distant video segments in an empty Law Quad.

“We had two weeks to do it, so we brainstormed on a video call and worked on the speech, each of us bringing in our own experiences. I’m so happy with the way it turned out,” says Louison. “Our journeys here deserve that we take the time to reflect on the work that got us here, and we can’t let the circumstances distract from our achievements. Nothing can take those efforts away from the Class of 2020.” —JW

## Awards and Honors

Congratulations to the students who received academic awards during the 2019–2020 academic year.

### HENRY M. BATES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

**Brenna Twohy**

### JANE L. MIXER MEMORIAL AWARD

**Casey Farrington**

**Gillian McGann**

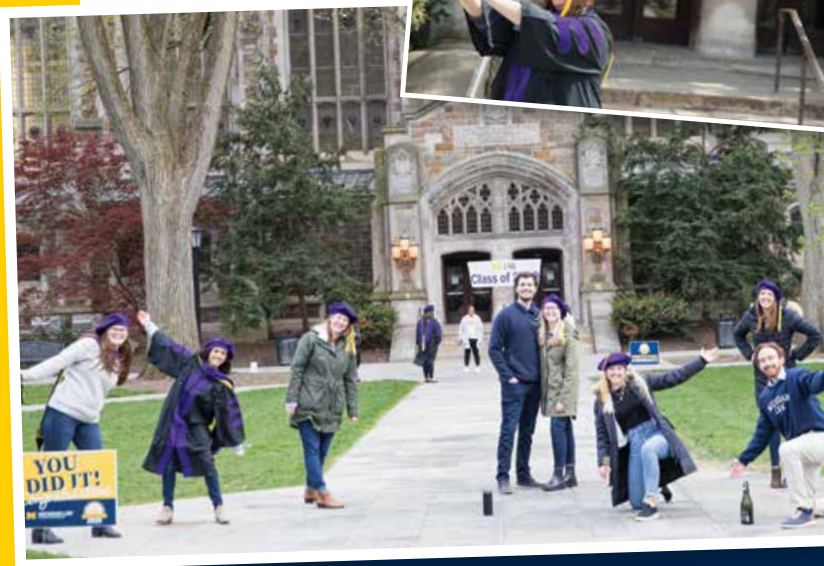
**Alessandra Rosales**

### IRVING STENN JR. AWARD

**Anna Belkin**

**Austin Del Priore**

**Thomas Garrity**



To view the full list of 2020 degree recipients and award winners, memories shared by graduates, messages of congratulations from Michigan Law faculty and staff, and more, visit [classof2020.law.umich.edu](https://classof2020.law.umich.edu)

## New Faculty Appointments

### RESEARCH FACULTY



**Roseanna Sommers** has joined the faculty as an assistant professor of law. As a psychologist, her work is part of a growing interdisciplinary field known as “experimental jurisprudence,” which borrows empirical techniques from the social sciences to clarify core concepts in the law.



**Emily Prifogle**, a legal historian who researches the use and experience of law in rural areas and was Michigan Law’s first faculty fellow, has been named an assistant professor of law.

### EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION FACULTY



**Tim Murphy, ’08**, a specialist in business law and intellectual property law, has been named a clinical assistant professor of law in the Entrepreneurship Clinic.



**Imran Syed, ’11**, who has served as assistant director of the Michigan Innocence Clinic, has joined the faculty as a clinical assistant professor of law.



**Kerry Kornblatt** has joined the Legal Practice Program as a clinical assistant professor of law. Prior to joining the Law School, she taught legal research and writing at Wayne State University School of Law.

### PROFESSORS FROM PRACTICE



**Susan Page** has joined the faculty as a professor from practice, bringing her decades of senior-level experience in the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations to Michigan Law. She also holds a faculty appointment at U-M’s Ford School of Public Policy.



**Caroline Humfress**, director of the University of St Andrews’ Institute of Legal and Constitutional Research, has joined the faculty as a L. Bates Lea Global Professor of Law, a designation for professors who are on a faculty abroad, visit the Law Quad regularly, and enrich the Michigan Law curriculum with a global perspective.





**John Petoskey, '20**, was appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the Michigan Advisory Council on Environmental Justice, a first-of-its-kind initiative in the state that seeks to provide community input on statewide environmental issues.

**ELLEN KATZ, Ralph W. Aigler Professor of Law**, received the 2020 L. Hart Wright Award for Excellence in Teaching. Katz joined the Law School in 1999, and writes and teaches about election law, civil rights remedies, and equal protection.



**THE VALIANT**, a new storytelling event in the vein of The Moth, brought together public interest students to celebrate reasons for pursuing their chosen career path, and featured stories from **Alex Gilewicz**, **Hetali Lodaya** (pictured), **Meredith Reynolds**, and **Brenna Twohy**, all 2020 graduates. The event was conceived by **Lara Finkbeiner, '13**, public interest director in the Office of Career Planning, and was the last public event of the term before COVID-19 ended gatherings in the Quad.



In *Gary B. v. Whitmer*, **EVAN CAMINKER**, dean emeritus and **Branch Rickey Collegiate Professor of Law**, served as co-counsel in a case that argued that children have a constitutional right to a basic minimum education. The suit posited that five schools in the Detroit area were schools “in name only, characterized by slum-like conditions, and lacking the most basic educational opportunities that children elsewhere in Michigan—and throughout the nation—take for granted.” The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit agreed, and ruled 2-1 in favor of the plaintiffs. That decision was vacated after the case became moot when the plaintiffs secured a favorable settlement.

*Read more about Detroit schools in the spring 2017 issue of the Law Quadrangle, found online at [quadrangle.law.umich.edu/spring2017/features/can-detroit-schools-be-saved/](http://quadrangle.law.umich.edu/spring2017/features/can-detroit-schools-be-saved/)*

## Reflecting on Ann Arbor, Estate Lawyer Plans Support for the Next Generation



For George Smrtka, '67, attending Michigan Law was a dream come true. "I applied to two other law schools, but Michigan was the top of the mountain for me. I never thought I could afford it, but the admissions counselor offered a scholarship for half of the tuition and the rest was covered through a loan. I also lived off-campus, washed dishes, and walked up a hill in the snow, both ways," he laughs. "I've always had such an affection for the school because of the opportunity that was given to me—it was an incredible experience, and I got a great education."

Smrtka, an estate lawyer, credits his interest in that area of the law to Alan Polasky, a former estates and trusts professor at Michigan Law who passed away in 1976. Professor Polasky would occasionally invite students and practitioners to his home to talk about the real "nuts and bolts" of estate planning, and those conversations piqued Smrtka's interest in the field and set the foundation for his successful career.

"We learned that working with families was not a 'one size fits all' proposition. We also learned that you needed to be more of a social worker, therapist, friend, and confidant than a great trust drafter and tax mitigator," says Smrtka. "Professor Polasky taught us that a client expects you to find a perfect solution, but that our real job was to advise them on which of their 'myriad bad choices' would be the best remedy! That lesson has been invaluable throughout my career. A large part of my work is to help people feel normal while going through a tough process."

From his first meeting with the admissions counselor, Smrtka was told that he never had an obligation to give back to the school, but he has nonetheless given often throughout the years. "I received a letter telling me that if I gave, the school could continue to help others like they helped me. Boy, did that hit a nerve," he remembers.

Recently, he decided to make a \$50,000 bequest to Michigan Law from his IRA. "Looking at the horizon of assets, it's one of the more tax-efficient ways to give," Smrtka says, drawing from his 52 years of estate planning. "It just made a ton of sense to me that having the charitable inclination to start with, using an IRA is the best and most practical way to remember the school.

"I have so many great memories because somebody had the forethought to put that endowment together that allowed me to get half of my education paid for, and I'm glad I can give back and help future students," Smrtka says. "Ultimately, you learn that it's your school for the time you're there, and then it belongs to the next generation." —CLP



## With Gift to Law School Fund, Alumna Pays It Forward

When it came to choosing law schools, Lacey Sikora, '99, couldn't wait to leave her Atlanta hometown. "I'd never even been in the state of Michigan before, but when I stepped onto the Law Quad for the tour, I just loved it," she recalls. "You walk through the classrooms, and there's just a real sense of history there; it was beautiful and very appealing to me. I thought, 'sign me up.'"

After being accepted to Michigan Law, she had to make some preparations. "It was the first time I had lived outside of the South, so the first thing my mom and I did was buy a parka," she says, laughing.

Sikora took full advantage of all the opportunities that law school had to offer, forming close bonds with her section-mates and taking part in various activities on and off campus. "After my second year in school, I worked at the United States Securities and Exchange Commission, which did not pay summer law clerks at the time. In order to afford this opportunity, I applied for a student funded fellowship at Michigan, which provided me a stipend. This was really pivotal because I ended up working for the commission in Chicago for several years after graduation," she says. It's memories like these that have helped Sikora retain a long-term connection to Michigan Law, and even to co-chair the committee for her 20<sup>th</sup> Reunion in 2019.

Along with her husband, John, a practicing litigation attorney at Latham & Watkins, Sikora has given annually to the Law School. The couple recently decided to increase their philanthropic commitment with a significant gift to the Law School Fund. "My husband and I want to give people the same opportunities we had because we both feel strongly that education can make a huge difference in people's lives," she says.

Currently, in between raising two teenagers, Sikora is a contributing reporter for her local newspaper who often writes about the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed homes in her community of Oak Park, Illinois. But she credits her law school experience with shaping her life's direction. "Michigan Law



was really pivotal in forming who I still am. It's made me a person who is more curious, critical, and thoughtful. One thing that you really learn in law school is to look at things from other perspectives, and not take situations at face value. You really have to delve into it and consider all the sources, all the material, and all the background. And that is something that I continue to use in my day-to-day life," she notes.

"I believe in the power of education and am incredibly grateful for my experiences. Law school is a place that gathers people from so many different backgrounds and affords them a chance to make a great life," says Sikora. —CLP

## Recent Gifts



**James Boucher, BBA '64, JD '67**, has documented a generous bequest to establish scholarships at the Law School and at the Ross School of Business. The James A. Boucher Law Scholarship will provide meaningful support for first-generation law

students and students who began their educational journey at Delta College or community colleges in Michigan or beyond. In 2008, Boucher joined Vestevich, Mallender, DuBois & Dritsas PC in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, after serving for 40 years at NBD Bank/JP Morgan Chase. His work concentrates on estate planning and trust administration, as well as fiduciary litigation and business transactions.



**Sarah and Nader R. Boulos, '94**, made an additional gift of \$100,000 to the Boulos Family Fund in Support of Students. This gift was made in honor of Nader's 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion, where he also served as co-chair of the reunion committee. He is a partner

in the Chicago office of Kirkland & Ellis, where his practice focuses on high-stakes disputes in areas including insurance recovery and commercial, product liability, and environmental litigation. Nader and Sarah live in Winnetka, Illinois, with their daughters Maddie, Charlotte, and Ellie.

**The Elizabeth L. Elting Foundation** made a \$500,000 gift to establish the Michael N. Burlant and Elizabeth L. Elting Scholarship Fund at the Law School, and the Michael N. Burlant and Elizabeth L. Elting Family Scholarship Fund at U-M's College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA). Burlant received his undergraduate degree from LSA in 1982 and his JD from the Law School in 1986.



**Brian S. Dervishi, BA '78, JD '82**, and his wife, **Aileen McGregor**, documented an additional bequest toward the Ahmet and Shpresa Dervishi Fund. He is a shareholder and managing partner of the Miami office of Weissman & Dervishi PA,

and serves on the Law School's Development and Alumni Relations Committee.



**Robert E. Gooding Jr., '69**, and his wife, **Martha**, have documented a \$100,000 bequest to the Law School Fund. Gooding is based outside of Los Angeles, where he is a partner at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, and specializes in complex business

litigation for the financial services and technology sectors.



**Drew Grabel, BA '91, JD '96**, and his family made a gift of \$100,000 to the Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund. Grabel is a partner in the New York office of Kirkland & Ellis, where he specializes in corporate law, with a focus on

private equity investments.



**Richard LeBrun, '01**, and his wife, **Kelly**, made a gift of \$100,000 to establish the Richard LeBrun Scholarship Fund. LeBrun is a managing director and deputy general counsel in the Newport Beach, California, office of global

investment management firm PIMCO, where he is primarily responsible for the firm's alternative funds and transactions.

**Stephen M. Merkel, '84**, and his wife, **Robin Shanus**, made a gift of \$250,000 to establish the Stephen Merkel and Robin Shanus Dean's Discretionary Fund for Student Support. Merkel is a senior executive and the chief legal officer for Cantor Fitzgerald LP and its affiliates, including BGC Partners Inc. and Newmark Group Inc.



## Scholarship Fund Leverages the Power of the Collective



Longtime donors and volunteers **John Nickoll, '60**, and his wife, **Patty**, have made an additional gift of \$1,000,000 to the John F. Nickoll Darrow Scholarship Fund. This scholarship is

given to a very select group of Michigan Law's most accomplished admitted students and can cover as much as full tuition, as well as a stipend.



**Hans Quitmeyer, '79**, and his wife, **Siri**, made a \$62,500 gift in honor of his 40<sup>th</sup> Reunion, supporting the Veterans Legal Clinic Fund and the Law School Fund.

Earlier this year, Quitmeyer retired from his position as senior vice president, general counsel, and corporate secretary at AdvanSix.

**Marnie Seif, '86**, and **William B. Land, MD**, made a gift of \$50,000 to the Fund to Support the Debt Management Program, providing loan repayment assistance to Michigan Law grads. Seif is chief people officer and senior vice president of communications at Analog Devices.



A significant bequest was received from the estate of **Daniel E. Singer, '62**, which established the Daniel England Singer Scholarship Fund. Singer's sisters, **Barbara S. Pratter** and

**Joan S. Schiele**, facilitated the development of this fund in honor of their late brother. Singer was a trust lawyer in St. Louis who supported the Law School with annual gifts during his lifetime. The Singer Scholarship will provide meaningful support in perpetuity for future Michigan Law students.

The Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund exemplifies a timeless adage: A whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. Driven by one visionary leader who inspired additional gifts from alumni and friends of Michigan Law, the fund was created to provide ongoing support for students at the Law School. The founder preferred to remain anonymous but was a member of the Class of 1951, attended Michigan Law using the GI Bill after his time in the Navy, and graduated in the top 10 percent of his class. Now deceased, his gift has inspired others to join the Fund and has set in motion a wave of generosity.

Since the Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund was created, 62 donors have given or pledged more than \$2.7 million to it. Many of their gifts were matched by special incentive programs offered by U-M during its last capital campaign, bringing the Fund total to more than \$3 million. Because this is an endowed fund, it will provide tremendous resources for students in perpetuity, and seven Michigan Law students have already benefited. "Giving to this fund is a significant way to assist students who will add to the Law School's legacy. I felt that giving to students was an important and directly useful way to make a contribution," says Zach Fasman, '72.

Another transformational donor, John Williams, '59, and his wife, Carol, of Leawood, Kansas, gave to Michigan Law on an annual basis for more than 50 years, but when they were ready to significantly increase their level of giving, they were thrilled to contribute to the Victors Scholarship Fund. John passed away in March 2020, but his impact will be felt for years to come.

The Victors Fund allows the Law School to attract and retain top talent from far and wide. "I think it's important that the people who operate in our society as lawyers are from diverse backgrounds, and this scholarship fund helps to address that need," says John Lummis, '82. "In giving to this fund, I wanted to be able to meet the Law School's highest-priority needs, while also leveraging an existing program and coordinating with others."

The story of this scholarship, which has grown into a resource that will benefit generations of future students, is but one example of the many ways Michigan Law alumni come together to make a difference. "It means a lot to contribute alongside others because one person can only do so much," Fasman says. "Giving to a fund like this and supporting students is more significant when more people are involved. It's a great way to give back and pave the way for the next generation." —CLP

## Chris Burtley, '15 Reimagining Supply Chains After Historic Disruption



*By James Weir*

Months before COVID-19 became a global pandemic, Chris Burtley, '15, was called into the first of what would become a series of meetings about a novel coronavirus that was emerging in Wuhan, China, and beginning to threaten global supply chains.

"When a client asked me in January to join calls related to the coronavirus, we thought of it as a small project to keep an eye on, not something that would become the biggest issue we have seen in decades," says Burtley. "It was a surreal experience to watch it go from a legal issue to something that ultimately impacted me and so many others personally."

Two industries at the center of Burtley's practice, automotive and manufacturing, were among the first affected by COVID-19, as lockdowns closed manufacturing facilities and disrupted travel and trade. Burtley focuses on supply chains at the Detroit office of Foley & Lardner LLP, working with clients to understand risk and opportunity related to how their businesses are integrated around the world. He views his role as helping clients make the necessary—and sometimes uncomfortable—changes to address emerging problems, especially now.

"It's been a long time since we had a pandemic or large-scale war that shut down multiple regions simultaneously, and supply chains have thinned out to be very efficient and therefore cheap, but higher risk," says Burtley. "Supply chains are strong in certain areas and very weak in others. The key is being flexible and creative, as the way we have done business for many years is probably not going to be the way business is done going forward."

Burtley sees parallels between his practice and the challenges of the moment, when many of the biggest issues ahead are related to supply chain. "There are huge questions that remain about how we get through this, like how do we produce a vaccine so that we don't have shortages? How do we direct companies to make medically necessary products? What should we do when markets fail? Solving these problems will push our limits and capabilities, but there's a lot of innovation that can come from that too," he says.

Outside of practice, Burtley retains close ties to his hometown of Flint, Michigan, and has been finding ways to use his legal and professional experience to support communities devastated by the pandemic. He recently joined the Greater Flint Coronavirus Taskforce on Racial Inequities, an initiative to study local outcomes and potential solutions related to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on minorities.

"Governor Whitmer created a taskforce on racial disparities across Michigan, and Flint decided to create a similar model that would report to the statewide group to get local input into the kinds of decisions that will be made," says Burtley. "I found myself really wanting to do something, especially after my dad passed away, and I'm honored to serve my community by bringing some of my legal skills to the table and contributing to something meaningful."

Burtley's father, a prominent educator and community leader in Flint, where he served as the first African American superintendent of the public school system, passed away from COVID-19 in April. In his honor, Burtley has established the Dr. Nathel Burtley Leadership and Racial Equity Fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Flint to support Black students, marginalized groups, and local educational programming.

"When I was growing up, my father cared more about people and how I treated my classmates and teachers than he did about my grades, and that's a lesson I took to heart from him and my mom," says Burtley. "No matter what position you have or how far you progress, having that ability to relate to people is everything. And that's something I apply in practice with everyone from administrative assistants to clients to whomever I come across in my life."





## Carla Newell, '85 Riding a Tech Boom in Silicon Valley—Again

*By Chelsea Liddy Pivtorak*

As public interest in consumer genomics has exploded in recent years, Carla Newell, '85, has found herself at the center of the industry's boom as the chief legal officer and chief risk officer at Ancestry, a leading family history and consumer genomics company.

"I became interested in corporate law when I was at Michigan, and I was fortunate enough to start my career in Silicon Valley in the mid '80s, which was an amazing time to be a young lawyer in the technology space," says Newell. "There were only a small number of law firms in Palo Alto at the time, all of which directly worked with the technology industry, and one of them came to on-campus interviews. I gave the recruiter my resume, and as they say, the rest is history."

In the mid-1990s, she left Gray Cary Ware & Friedenrich to help launch Gunderson Dettmer, a technology-focused law firm, before joining a late-stage technology venture capital firm, Technology Crossover Ventures. "I came in as a general partner and joined to help them build out their deal execution and legal compliance function, as well as joining a number of portfolio company boards," she says.

Adding to her experience in law firms and venture capital, Newell took on a senior operating role at Ancestry in 2016, where she currently leads a team of 28 across California, Utah, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. "I had the opportunity to come in and build a top-notch team that specializes in a variety of areas, including privacy, security, regulatory, marketing, licensing, employment, and patent law, which is something I'm very proud of," she says. Newell also heads Ancestry's government affairs division, interacting with federal and state lawmakers on a variety of topics.

Ancestry has been a popular service used by amateur genealogists for decades but has seen even more growth due to its expansion into DNA testing related to ethnicity, origins, and, most recently, health. "Figuring out how to combine the family history research with the growing DNA business was

one of the more interesting challenges that we were facing when I was brought on board," says Newell.

Given the increased public interest in the role of genetics in health, Ancestry has started to give customers a snapshot of their genetic predispositions for a select set of health conditions, including heart disease and certain cancers. "We are looking at advancing technologies into the consumer space at a scale that has never been done before—it's all really cutting edge and what drew me into the company from the beginning," says Newell.

When Ancestry customers submit their sample for DNA testing, they can indicate whether they consent to have their genetic data used for research. This has been useful in a variety of contexts, but especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. The company is collecting survey data on individuals in their database, with more than 600,000 participants to date. "Since we do have the biggest commercial DNA database in the world, we hope to match the survey answers provided on COVID-19 exposure and diagnosis to the participants' DNA and see whether there are genetic markers that suggest that people are more or less at risk, which is pretty exciting," Newell says. She adds that the company is making this data available to researchers at no cost, in the hopes that it will contribute to the development of a vaccine or therapeutic. "We think it's really important for us, as stewards of this incredibly valuable DNA database, to use it for good."

Although based across the country, Newell has retained strong connections to the Law School. She participated in the inaugural Problem Solving Initiative course—a multidisciplinary program between Michigan Law and other U-M graduate programs—by lending her expertise on data privacy as it relates to autonomous vehicles. She also serves on the Development and Alumni Relations Committee and the Distinguished Alumni Award Review Committee, and has established the Newell Family Scholarship Fund to support current Michigan Law students.

## Lawrence García, '95 Moving Detroit's Legal Team in New Directions

*By James Weir*

When the mayor of Detroit asked Lawrence García, '95, to lead the city's legal department, he jumped at the opportunity, knowing it would challenge him professionally and give him a meaningful platform to influence the trajectory of Detroit.

"The law department has always had a lot of bench strength and excellent lawyers, but historically you haven't heard people worried about going up against the office—whether it's in litigation or in business dealings. One of my goals has been to see the office become more respected as an organization of lawyers," says García. "I wanted to see more cases tried, claims and payouts go down, and people's opinion of the law department go up."

In 2017, the year before García became corporation counsel, the Detroit law department tried zero cases—out of around 500 claims resolved that year in state or federal court. In 2019, the department tried seven cases, and before the pandemic intervened, it was on track to try 14 cases in 2020.

"It's important to demonstrate that this office has the ability to articulate a position and stick to it, without caving, and win the case at trial," says García. "The department is 11-0 since I took the job, including one loss that was reversed on appeal. I'm proud of that record."

García, Detroit's first Latino city attorney and the first Latino to serve in the mayor's cabinet, was initially drawn to the law during a philosophy of law class at Duke Law School, where he was auditing a class for credit toward his undergraduate philosophy degree.

"My favorite professor also taught at the law school, so I decided to enroll in the graduate course and remember thinking, 'Boy, if this is what law school is like, then sign me up.' I got to Michigan Law and quickly learned it was not quite that," laughs García. "But my experience in Ann Arbor was great, and all these years later I still have the sense that that was the smartest group of people I have ever been a part of."

After graduating, García clerked in the Saginaw County 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court before entering private practice in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, where he litigated cases primarily related to medical malpractice and insurance defense. He discovered a love for the courtroom early on, and went on to become one of the youngest



lawyers to be admitted to the Michigan chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates in 2015.

García left St. Clair Shores and moved on to similar positions in Lansing, Michigan, and metro Detroit, before starting his own firm, García Law Group, in 2012, which was the first Latino-led firm in Michigan. García expanded the breadth of his practice beyond insurance defense and became more professionally involved with the Latino community, building on his long-standing volunteer work and advocacy in the area, particularly around youth education and mentorship. He also held leadership roles in the Hispanic Bar Association of Michigan.

"I found joy in practicing the way I wanted to practice, and I was able to hire young and talented Latino lawyers who didn't have the same connections in the legal world that many law school graduates do," says García. "We represented a lot of Spanish-speaking clients pro bono or at reduced rates on all types of matters, including divorce and custody work, and even criminal defense. It was very gratifying work, and I had a great time learning new areas of the law."

He adds, "I have always enjoyed growing and learning, and my current role has made me a more well-rounded person, and a better lawyer. I've moved around a lot in my 25-year career, and through those experiences I have learned how to better serve others. Looking forward, there's a lot more law to learn, and a lot more I can provide as an attorney."



As Michigan Law navigates a fall term amidst an ongoing pandemic, one headline from October 28, 1918, seems particularly timeless: "Students Urged to Wear Their Masks." —JW

# Quadrangle

LAW

NOTES FROM MICHIGAN LAW

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
701 SOUTH STATE STREET  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109-3091

## INSIGHTS FROM THE *Quad*

### VIRTUAL FACULTY EVENTS

**October 13**

**Voting Rights and American Democracy**  
with Sam Bagenstos and Ellen Katz

**November 10**

**Criminal Justice Reform** with J.J. Prescott,  
Eve Brensike Primus, and Margo Schlanger

**January 21**

**The Supreme Court in a Polarized America**  
with Leah Litman, Julian Mortenson, and  
Richard Primus

**February 10**

**Debating the Corporate Purpose** with Laura  
Beny, Vikramaditya Khanna, and Gabriel Rauterberg

**March 10**

**America and the World** with Kristina Daugirdas,  
Susan Page, and Steve Ratner

For more information, or to watch recordings  
of past events, visit [lawumi.ch/insights](http://lawumi.ch/insights)



## READ CLASS NOTES AND MORE ONLINE

Additional alumni profiles, Class Notes,  
and In Memoriam are available online.



**Colleen Hilton, '07**

Marketing "Marvelous"  
Streaming Media at  
Amazon Studios



**Zack James, '17**

Rethinking the Farm with  
Autonomous Tractors



**Azadeh Shahshahani, '04**

Protecting Immigrant Rights  
across the U.S. South

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