

Q^{LAW}uadrangle

NOTES FROM MICHIGAN LAW



LEARNING AND SERVING

**Clinics Evolve to
Meet Changing
Needs of Students
and the Community**



4

BRIEFS

**10
IN PRACTICE**

JACKSON PAHLKE, '17
CHRISTOPHER WENDT, '98
JENNIFER SCHELLER
NEUMANN, '03



14

COVER STORY

LEARNING AND SERVING IN THE CLINICS

“The Pro Bono Program connects students to what drew them to law school, which is to help people or to serve the community.”

—Amy Sankaran, '01, director of externship and pro bono programs

26



28

PRACTICAL PRO BONO
EXPERIENCES

INTERDISCIPLINARY
IMMIGRANT JUSTICE LAB

CLINIC ALUMNI REFLECT

“The Fiske Fellowship allowed me to pursue my passion for public service, and that freedom to follow my passions has informed my work since.”

—Tara Sarathy, '02
2003 Fiske Fellow

32

FEATURE

FISKE FELLOWSHIP SHAPES CAREERS



34

@UMICHLAW

DEAN ESTABLISHES AI ADVISORY COUNCIL

EXONEREE HELPS FREE WRONGLY CONVICTED CLIENT

BLACK ALUMNI REUNION



44

IMPACT

RON L. OLSON, '66,
AND JANE T. OLSON

CATHERINE FLEMING, '76

CHRISTOPHER D. McCLEARY, '91

JOHN S. YUN, '83

RECENT GIFTS



50

CLASS NOTES

JESSICA JIWON CHOE, '24

THE HON. J. CHRIS LARSON, '99

ELIZABETH MORALES, '20

IN MEMORIAM

64
CLOSING

Top 5

The annual Student Funded Fellowships (SFF) Auction in March featured 198 items. The ones that garnered the highest bids were...

5

An Afternoon at YORK Food and Drink with Professor **Emily Prifogle**

4

“Something Frameable” from Senior Assistant Dean **Sarah Zearfoss, '92**

(The 2025 winner chose an awkward, department store-style photoshoot.)

3

Karaoke Night with Professor **John Pottow**

2

Pool/Hot Tub Party in the Backyard of Professors **Amy Sankaran, '01**, and **Vivek Sankaran, '01**

1

Learn the Four Major Life Skills with Professor **Len Niehoff, '84**

*(One: How to defend yourself.
Two: How to do “flashy things” with knives.
Three: How to make a James Bond martini.
Four: How to eat an oyster.)*

“It’s easy to want to drive one of these cute kei cars. It’s another thing to put your family in them and travel down the highway at 70 mph between a Suburban and an F-150.”

—**Tifani Sadek**, clinical professor of law, co-director of the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic, and director of the Law and Mobility Program, in an NBC News article about the viability of Japanese kei microcars and trucks being built in the United States. In December, President Trump indicated his support for their production.



On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, civil rights activist and freedom fighter **David Dennis Sr., '71**, met with students for a conversation hosted by the Law School and U-M’s Department of African American Studies. Born on a sharecropper’s plantation in Louisiana, Dennis became involved with protests related to segregated buses in the early 1960s and led efforts to register Black voters in Mississippi in the summer of 1964. After law school, he practiced in Lafayette, Louisiana.



Dialogue Across Difference

In February, **the Hon. Chad Readler, '97**, and **the Hon. Stephanie Dawkins Davis**, who were appointed by presidents of different political parties and are colleagues on the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, spoke to students in a discussion moderated by **Nicole Appleberry, '94**, clinical professor of law. “We write opinions, and that can take months and months of drafts and revisions. So if there is tension, we just don’t go on Twitter and type out an opinion, as the rest of the world does,” Readler told the audience. “I really enjoy understanding why people think what they think. We need to be very curious about what each other thinks, even if at the end of the day we’re going to disagree.”



Professor Samuel Bagenstos received the 2025 President’s Award for Public Impact for his demonstrated commitment to public service, significant contributions to society through national and state leadership, and efforts to address the challenges communities face every day. He was nominated by his colleagues, who wrote that his work leading critical government agencies during the pandemic was “instrumental in galvanizing our nationwide response in a time of crisis and ensuring access to medical care among the most vulnerable.” U-M President Domenico Grasso (right) presented the award to Bagenstos at a ceremony in March.



For the first time in its history, the Federalist Society at Michigan Law received top honors. In a field of more than 200 chapters, the students brought home two of the nine awards: the James Madison Award for Chapter of the Year and the George Washington Award for Innovation—for their video series *Courtside*, in which they interview federal judges in various Michigan athletic arenas.

Farewell but Not Goodbye

“If drugs are sold in your community, human beings are likely as well.”

—**Bridgette Carr, '02**,
clinical professor of law,
founding director of the Human
Trafficking Clinic, and co-director
of the AI Law and Policy Clinic,
in the *Detroit News*. She said
approaches to combating human
trafficking still vary by jurisdiction
in Michigan, with some police
and prosecutors disagreeing over
who is a victim and who is part
of a criminal enterprise.



Rebecca Eisenberg, the Robert and Barbara Luciano Professor of Law, received the traditional clapout from members of the Michigan Law faculty after teaching her last class in December. Eisenberg, who joined the faculty in 1984, specializes in patent law and the regulation of biopharmaceutical innovation. She was active in public policy debates concerning the role of intellectual property in biopharmaceutical research, advising the National Institutes of Health and the National Academies of Science.



Faculty held their traditional clapout in honor of **Howard Bromberg** after he taught his last class in April. Bromberg, a clinical professor of law, taught in the Legal Practice Program, and his scholarship ranges from tax and the evolving legal landscape of marijuana law to legal history.

9,000+

Number of Michigan Law alumni who were admitted by **Sarah Zearfoss, '92**, senior assistant dean, out of more than 23,000 total Michigan Law alumni worldwide. Zearfoss announced in spring 2026 that she will retire at the end of the 2026–2027 academic year.



“The advantage of the judicial process—even if the effects of it are long and historic—is that you have the establishment, by a judicial body, of facts. That’s a very precious thing in today’s world.”

—**Síofra O’Leary**, former president of the European Court of Human Rights, shared her experiences on the court and some of the wisdom she gained along the way during a talk at Michigan Law in March. The Q&A event was moderated by **Daniel Halberstam**, the Eric Stein Collegiate Professor of Law and director of the European Legal Studies Program.

BRIEFS





Exonoree and Legendary Dean Address Class of 2026

The May 11 ceremony honoring the Class of 2026 provided a unique twist: The alumna who addressed the graduates was the person who admitted each JD candidate and oversaw the office admitting the LLM candidates.

Senior Assistant Dean Sarah C. Zearfoss, '92, who has led the Office of Admissions since 2001, stressed the importance of crafting a class based on more than metrics. "I will end my career without anyone ever complimenting me on an LSAT score—but I have heard endless praise of the humanity of the people who join us here."

Zearfoss told the graduates that the human qualities that made them click as a class will help them navigate professional practice. She cited her mother's advice about getting along with others: "There is no such thing as a useless friend or a harmless enemy."

Zearfoss said the words go beyond the notion of civility and challenge us to consider the cost of alienating people. "Try to make as many friends as you can, but don't let your healthy reluctance to make enemies be the excuse for not doing what you know to be right."

Ruben Mendoza Piñuelas, a JD candidate, spoke about being the victim of those who chose not to do the right thing. He was wrongfully convicted of conspiracy to commit murder, and he successfully argued his own appeal. "The worst injustice is not as rare as we'd like to believe," he said, pausing to recognize a group of exonerees who attended the ceremony (pictured opposite, top). Among them was George Calicut, whom Piñuelas helped exonerate in March as a student-attorney in the Michigan Innocence Clinic. (Read more on page 37.)

"We are living proof that the law can harm or help," Piñuelas said. "I share my story [so you can] reimagine the possibilities, reimagine what the legal system teaches us justice should look like, and reimagine your roles within that system."



Helping Injured Clients Put the Pieces Back Together

By Allison Torres Burtka

Trial lawyers run in Jackson Pahlke's family. He and his dad, brother, and sister are personal injury lawyers—and Pahlke has even tried cases with all of them.

Pahlke, '17, handles catastrophic injury and wrongful death cases with Connelly Law Offices in Tacoma, Washington. He remembers meeting some of his dad's clients while growing up. "Getting to watch my dad help folks when they were injured and needed help was really motivating, and that's what drew me to it," he says.

When Pahlke first meets a client, something has gone wrong for them—it's often the worst thing that has ever happened to them—and they're looking for a way to put their life back together. "It feels good to give them solid ground to stand on—'Here is a clear roadmap of our options and what litigation and trial will look like'—and give them the knowledge and power to decide what they want to do about this wrong. That's the first part of restoring our clients' dignity," he says.

Going to trial

The best part of the case is telling the client's story, Pahlke says. "I'm always moved by the moment when the client gets on the stand and tells their story to a jury of their peers. They get some of their autonomy back and get to say, 'This is why I'm here.'"

But it's often difficult for clients to share their story, particularly in sexual abuse cases. Pahlke says he has learned a lot about how trauma affects people and how to avoid re-traumatizing them. "Getting them to a place where they can talk about their story and say what happened is a powerful moment for them. It allows them to take some ownership of what happens next. They didn't have that before," he says.

One of his recent clients was injured while walking down the stairs, carrying his child. A rotten stair gave out, and he fell, injuring his lower spine. He was a steelworker, and he kept going to work because he had to provide for his family. The defense hired investigators to secretly follow and film him, to argue that he wasn't injured.

The defense disclosed video of the client carrying long pieces of metal, contending that they were quite heavy and an injured person couldn't lift them. Pahlke and his team took this new evidence and introduced the video before the defense could, explaining that the metal pieces were lighter than 10 pounds.



Jackson Pahlke, '17, comes from a family of personal injury lawyers—and he has tried cases with his father and two siblings.

"It felt empowering to take the truth and present it squarely to the jury," Pahlke says. "And the jury was like, 'Gosh, you're following this guy, and you have no idea what's going on.'"

After each trial, Pahlke reflects on not just the litigation and what was helpful but also on his role in his client's story. "One of the best things about this work is being there for someone who needs and deserves help, and delivering it," he says.

Trying to right wrongs

In plaintiff law, "You are outnumbered by large corporations and insurance companies who have a lot of resources and benefits that you don't have. It makes winning for the person who trusted you to help them even more worthwhile," Pahlke says.

In one case, Pahlke's client was in the back of a truck at a warehouse dock when the driver drove away. "She fell and had significant injuries, and it turned into complex regional pain syndrome, which is a really painful disorder," he says. It left her unable to work.

The jury awarded her \$8.5 million. "They heard her," Pahlke says. "This verdict means she can get the medical care she needs, will have a roof over her head, and won't have to worry about being unemployable." Without this verdict, "it would be really, really hard for her to get through life."

The lawyer representing an injured person may be able to help their future look hopeful, Pahlke says. If they win the case, the client can "turn the chapter on a difficult part of their life and open the next, more hopeful, chapter."

At the Intersection of Immigration and Health Care Workers

By Allison Torres Burtka

Immigrant doctors are vital to the US health care system. Christopher Wendt, '98, points out that 23 percent of physicians in the United States were trained in other countries, according to the American Medical Association (AMA).

For large institutions, managing immigration issues for current and prospective employees can be complicated. "Trying to recruit the best and the brightest, and the most talented, from all over the world triggers a lot of paperwork," says Wendt, who retired from Mayo Clinic recently after nearly 23 years as immigration counsel.

Navigating immigration issues can be difficult for any business. But in medicine, if employers have trouble hiring physicians and other providers trained in other countries, there's a lot at stake. The United States faces a doctor shortage—a shortfall of up to 86,000 physicians by 2036, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges—and immigrant doctors are helping to fill it, Wendt says.

In certain areas of the United States, residents' access to medical care hinges on immigrant doctors, Wendt says. "In farm country in southwestern Minnesota, those physicians play a really huge role in that infrastructure." In 2021, 64 percent of foreign-trained doctors were practicing in underserved areas, per the AMA.

The complexities of the immigration process

In his work, Wendt focused on strategic direction in response to shifting regulations. "Anytime there's a new rule or a policy change regarding immigration, it's part of my job to figure out: How will this impact organizations broadly, how will this affect my client specifically, and how can we prepare?"

Changes in travel restrictions and temporary protected status for people from certain countries have posed challenges. Because temporary protected status was set to expire for some countries, Wendt has advised employees on what their options are, including whether an employer can sponsor them for a work visa so they can maintain legal status.

"For most highly skilled individuals, reasonably certain pathways remain open, but a lot now is dependent upon nationality" and other factors, Wendt says. "There's a lot more moving parts than there used to be with regard to what you have to consider when you're trying to assess: Is this physician

someone that we can hire? And if so, can we get them on board by date X?"

Wendt recently joined the immigration law firm Fragomen as of counsel. "It was a very rewarding career at Mayo Clinic, and I really enjoyed working for the organization's mission," he says. "This moment is a really fascinating time to be an immigration attorney and to have the opportunity to be an expert resource in the health care immigration space."

A new framework for legal aid in Minnesota

In addition to his professional practice, in July 2025, Wendt became the inaugural chair of the Minnesota State Board of Civil Legal Aid (BOCLA), a standalone agency with a robust mandate for grants and for establishing legal aid standards. "It's a rare opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a new state agency," he says.

When Wendt served on the board's predecessor, the Legal Services Advisory Committee, he says, "I realized how much I love that systems work." While handling individual cases is rewarding, it may not "address the systemic issues, and there's a way to do a lot of good at that level as well," he says. He values this systems work in immigration and at BOCLA.

In Minnesota in 2024, Wendt says, "Our legal aid organizations did about 66,000 intakes, and we were able to provide some level of service to only about 61 percent of those intakes. So there's just a huge unmet need." BOCLA aims to improve efficiency without losing sight of these cases' highly personal elements, he says.

Wendt has been involved in pro bono work since law school. At Michigan Law, he participated in a clinic that worked on asylum cases, and he and a classmate represented an asylum seeker from Iran. "Leading this new agency feels like a capstone to a career supporting civil legal aid," Wendt says.

All opinions expressed in the article are personal, and not that of any employer or agency.



Christopher Wendt, '98, spent more than two decades working on immigration issues at Mayo Clinic. He recently became inaugural chair of the Minnesota State Board of Civil Legal Aid.

The Ever-Changing Climate of Environmental Law

By Amy Crawford

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) became the first major environmental legislation passed in the United States when it was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1970. It also represented one of the earliest tangible victories of the nascent environmental movement.

NEPA, which has been called the Magna Carta of federal environmental law, requires agencies to take environmental impact into account when making decisions about projects, legislation, or policy. It is a broad mandate that has affected everything from the design of interstate highways to the permitting of gas pipelines and even the flight paths of military aircraft.

Over the decades, NEPA has been hailed for preventing pollution, preserving landscapes, and keeping drinking water clean. It also has been criticized by politicians who allege that it can hinder efforts to boost the economy, create jobs, or reduce housing and energy prices. Recently, NEPA has been subject to repeated reinterpretations and legislative tweaks as both Democrats and Republicans pursue their own policy goals, and a series of court cases have changed the way the government executes the law.

“That has caused a lot of interesting work for environmental lawyers,” says Jennifer Scheller Neumann, ’03, who has spent nearly her entire career in the field. “Obviously, any time there’s a change in administration, there will be different priorities in terms of what they want to focus on. But recently there has been a lot more flux.”

From section chief to private practice

For Neumann, some of the recent flux has been more personal. In 2004, after a clerkship for a federal appeals court judge, Neumann joined the Environment and Natural Resources Division at the US Department of Justice. She worked her way through the ranks of the division and eventually became chief of the appellate section, a senior role that required encyclopedic knowledge of environmental law and related areas.

“I absolutely loved it,” Neumann says. “The people there were so smart and so giving of their time to develop young attorneys. Becoming chief of the section was incredibly rewarding.”

In the early days of President Donald Trump’s second term, however, Neumann was reassigned to a new unit, which the Department of Justice had created to handle questions related to a particular area of immigration law. With no experience in that area of immigration law, Neumann decided it was time to leave government. In April 2025, she accepted a role as of counsel in the Washington, DC, offices of the Denver-based firm Holland & Hart LLP.

“I thought that I could make better use of my experience in the private sector, representing private clients, and so I decided to make the leap,” she says.

Now, instead of government agencies, Neumann’s clients are energy and mining companies that need to ensure their projects comply with environmental law—even as regulations, enforcement priorities, and interpretations shift.

In some ways, moving from public service to private practice requires new ways of thinking, but Neumann says that her time in government has been an enormous asset in providing clients with the best possible advice on complicated matters of environmental law.

“I have spent 20 years working on cutting-edge environmental law issues, and I bring that experience to the issues my clients are dealing with,” she says. “Plus, I have a lot of contacts who are still in the government, and I know how people in the government approach problems and make decisions, which is particularly helpful to private clients. Regardless of the administration, some things remain the same in terms of how the government operates.”

Recently, Neumann says, she was advising a client on a permitting matter that might have been complicated by a recent decision by the US Supreme Court. The state agency that would issue the permit had developed its own interpretation of the case, relying on a guidance document issued by a federal agency, but Neumann knew that the guidance document was not finalized.



Jennifer Scheller Neumann, '03, recently entered the private sector after 20 years of environmental law practice at the Department of Justice.

"I worked with the client to develop comments to the agency, suggesting that the state attorneys might want to revise and give themselves a little more wiggle room," Neumann says. Someone with less experience in government might have advised the client to accept the state agency's reliance on the guidance document at face value, she notes. "Understanding the process of how those guidance documents are made was critical."

The fallout from *Loper Bright* and other rulings

Indeed, several recent decisions by the Supreme Court have contributed to upheavals in the practical application of environmental law. Among these is *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* (2024), which overruled *Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. NRDC* (1984). Where the latter had given government agencies broad leeway when it came to defining legal terms and creating regulation based on legislation, *Loper Bright* mandated that lower courts use independent judgment when reviewing agencies' regulatory actions. The effect was to newly empower the judiciary, after 40 years of courts deferring to executive agencies.

"That has been a sea change in environmental law and in terms of thinking about how clients go about the permit process, and then also how they defend permitting decisions if they're challenged in court by some outside entity," Neumann says. "That's a big area of concern always, to just make sure we're keeping in mind what the new standard is, and how that can help or hurt the client."

Loper Bright was the sort of landmark decision that comes along only a few times in a generation, but Neumann also flags *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* (2024) among other recent cases that have had a major impact. In *Seven County*, the Supreme Court clarified that courts should give agencies substantial deference in determining what environmental consequences and alternatives to consider under the National Environmental Policy Act. That decision simplifies things for her clients.

On the other hand, in November 2024, the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit declared, in *Marin Audubon Society, et al., v. Federal Aviation Administration, et al.*, that the White House Council on Environmental Quality, an agency long empowered under NEPA, could no longer issue regulations that bind other agencies.

"The Trump administration then instructed all of the various federal agencies to come up with their own NEPA regulations and guidance," Neumann says. "They've tried to coordinate, but there are still differences between the agencies' approaches that will create uncertainty until we see how courts view the new requirements."

For Neumann, however, guiding clients through these twists and turns is part of what makes environmental law such an appealing area of practice.

"There are always new developments from the legal side, and learning about that and keeping abreast of it is intellectually challenging and rewarding. While I'm bringing my past experiences to every new client situation, there's always some new aspect or wrinkle that I'm learning about, and that's what keeps it interesting."





LEARNING AND SERVING

Clinics Evolve to Meet Changing Needs of Students and the Community

BY BOB NEEDHAM

Students from the Law School's Community Enterprise Clinic visit Growing Hope, a nonprofit organization in Ypsilanti, Michigan, that the clinic assists with transactional legal services. Growing Hope operates an urban farm and community kitchen, which provide training and support to local food entrepreneurs. About 80 percent of Michigan Law students gain hands-on experience by taking a clinic.

Student-attorneys Abby Flynn (left) and King Deas stand outside a rundown house at the center of a recent case in the Civil-Criminal Litigation Clinic. The rising 3Ls successfully argued in court for an order that required the house's owner and management company to provide alternative housing to the family that had been living there.



LAST FALL, a single mother and her 12 children were living in a badly run-down house in Ypsilanti, Michigan, with lead paint flaking off the walls, leaking pipes, asbestos, and a basement prone to flooding. Yet their landlord refused to make improvements.

Michigan Law's Civil-Criminal Litigation Clinic took on the family's case, and two student-attorneys, King Deas and Abby Flynn, who were then 2Ls, got to work. They filed a complaint against the owner and the management company of the house, and they sought a temporary restraining order requiring the defendants to provide alternative housing for the family.

That issue went to court, where a prominent landlord attorney opposed the motion. But the students argued and won their case, and the family moved into a hotel under much improved conditions.

"This is a great example of the typically unsexy but vital core legal services that our students deliver," says David Santacrocce, longtime clinic director and clinical professor of law. "It's in the trenches, doing the hard work of keeping people housed."

Deas and Flynn's work on the case earned them an Outstanding Clinic Team Award from the Clinical Legal Education Association. More importantly, the students know the experience will serve them well in their careers.

"We were lawyers that semester, which is not an experience that you can get outside of the clinic," Deas says. "Actually going to the house, collecting evidence, arguing in court. We know how to litigate a case; I think that's invaluable."

"We both came to law school straight from undergrad, so we didn't have a lot of other work experience," Flynn adds. "Now, going into future jobs, I can say that I've stood up in court and argued, I've filed briefs, I've built a relationship with a client. Every aspect of it will be helpful."

THE CLINICAL PHILOSOPHY

The 17 clinics at Michigan Law offer students practical experience while also providing clients with legal help they might not otherwise receive. At the same time, the strength of the program—and its willingness to change with the times—gives Michigan a competitive edge over its peer schools.

“Our purpose is to teach law students how to be excellent lawyers through the high-quality representation of clients,” Debra Chopp, associate dean for experiential education, says. “It’s a dual mission of teaching the students and serving the community.”

Clinics operate in many different areas of law, including advocacy in civil and criminal matters; appeals; administrative and regulatory work; and different forms of transactional law, including entity formation and contracts.

“As a public law school, we exist not only to educate students but to advance the public good. Our legal clinics are one of the most direct and powerful ways we fulfill that mission,” says Chopp, who also is a clinical professor of law and director of the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic.

“The clinics do not compete with the private bar. But that carves out a gigantic space, because there are so many people who cannot access legal services. It gives us the privilege of being able to work with people who would otherwise not have representation.”

TWO Men Win Freedom Many Years After Wrongful Convictions

In March, in two separate cases, the Michigan Innocence Clinic helped free two men who had been wrongfully convicted on murder charges in Detroit. In the first case, a judge vacated the conviction of and dismissed murder charges against George Calicut, providing him the relief he had been seeking for more than 27 years. Calicut had been convicted of murder based on a false confession coerced by a former Detroit police officer whose actions have resulted in a number of exonerations and judgments against the city. (For more on this case, see Page 37.) That same officer and others also falsified witness statements in the case of Roy Blackman (pictured below), who was released 27 years to the day after his wrongful conviction. He had been convicted entirely on false witness testimony with no physical evidence tying him to the case.



CURRENT MICHIGAN LAW CLINICS

1L ADVOCACY CLINIC

First-year students work with clients on investigation, interviewing, legal research and writing, and oral advocacy in guardian ad litem cases—one of just a handful of clinics in the country open to 1Ls.



Detained Immigrants Get Bond Hearing

Reversing 30 years of practice, Immigration and Customs Enforcement decided in summer 2025 that all immigrants facing removal had to be detained—even if they posed no danger to the community or flight risk. In October, the Civil Rights Litigation Initiative filed a habeas corpus petition in federal court on behalf of four men who had been detained during traffic stops and were being held in a private detention facility. All four men had first come to the United States as minors, had strong ties in the community, had no criminal records, and had viable defenses to deportation. In November, a federal judge ruled that the four men were entitled to bond hearings in Immigration Court. Two of the four were granted bond. Pictured above: Student-attorneys Nithya Arun, '26, and Alex Jarecki, '26, pose with a client.

LEARNING REAL-WORLD LAW

“The transition from law student to lawyer is radical,” Santacroce says. “You don’t get this experience in any other class. You’re not a lawyer in any other class. This type of education teaches students how to actually practice law.”

For example, S.R., a local man in his 50s, faced serious challenges. Issues with his physical health, mental health, and immigration had all contributed to him owing \$12,000 to the Internal Revenue Service. The debt prevented him from obtaining US citizenship and paying living expenses.

S.R. worked fairly regularly but mostly on a contract basis, making repayment next to impossible. Living in a friend’s garage, he turned for help to the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, which takes on individual tax cases and also sponsors educational forums for the community.

Richard Cantoral, '24—who chose Michigan Law in part because of its strong clinical program—was S.R.’s student-attorney. After negotiating with the government, Cantoral succeeded in getting the outstanding debt reduced to \$100, enabling S.R. to start getting his life back on track.



Student-attorneys from the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic conduct an outreach session on tax tips in March at Zaman International Hope for Humanity Center, a social-services organization in Inkster, Michigan.

AI LAW AND POLICY CLINIC

With its first semester just concluded, this clinic partners students with courts, community organizations, and legal service providers to harness the power of artificial intelligence and other technologies to tackle critical justice challenges.

CHILD WELFARE APPELLATE CLINIC

Students represent parents facing permanent termination of their parental rights.

“The clinics at Michigan Law teach us how to interact with clients and be of service to them, and they teach the collaborative nature of legal work,” Cantoral says. “Just as important, the clinics do a lot of good work for people who need it.”

Clinic experience has proved very useful for Jacob Abudaram, '23, who works for the ACLU on disability rights. “Joining the Civil Rights Litigation Initiative (CRLI) as a student was really formative for me, giving me a sense of what it’s like to actually be a civil rights lawyer,” he says.

“When I think back to the experiences in law school that I still draw upon, it’s the entirety of my experience in CRLI. Developing relationships, talking about what’s happening in disability rights, and being in the ACLU universe, I draw a lot from what I learned in CRLI—as well as the actual litigation, getting ready for depositions, writing briefs.

“That experience is the foundation of all the work that I get to do now,” Abudaram says. Every semester, he has returned to speak to current CRLI student-attorneys about disability rights.

The benefits of clinical work go beyond learning specific skills. Mira Edmonds, clinical professor of law and director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic, believes “it reminds students why they came to law school. Legal analysis, which is the focus of doctrinal coursework, is rather different from what most of them have done before. It can be a really hard transition,” she says.

“Clinic work is often invigorating for them, to remember that they want to work with clients, that they want to make a difference for people. They realize how much more there is to being a lawyer and practicing law than what they’ve been focusing on in other classes.”



Student-Attorneys Win Settlement Over Car, Conduct Jury Trial

A client of the Veterans Legal Clinic had taken his classic car to a local mechanic who failed to properly attach the fuel line, and the car exploded as the client was driving it home. Students negotiated a settlement that resulted in the client receiving \$11,000, more than the value of the car. Meanwhile, around the same time, two student-attorneys in the clinic conducted a jury trial in a case involving a contract dispute between a veteran and a family member over the deed to a house. After a split decision in court, the clinic—led by a new team of student-attorneys—took the case to the Michigan Court of Appeals.

CIVIL RIGHTS LITIGATION INITIATIVE

Cases address issues such as fair housing, student rights, racial justice, police misconduct, immigrant rights, free speech, women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and more.

CIVIL-CRIMINAL LITIGATION CLINIC

The oldest at Michigan Law, this clinic handles a wide variety of civil cases (including landlord-tenant, consumer fraud, and contract disputes) and criminal cases (ranging from misdemeanor defense to habeas corpus).

Survivors Take a Stand on Trafficking

Students in the Human Trafficking and Immigration Clinic helped a group of survivors draft a submission to a European Union-level independent monitoring body. The document highlights the failure of nations to investigate human trafficking cases as human trafficking rather than acts of abuse by an individual actor.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

The clinics provide several different forms of benefits to the broader public. The Michigan Innocence Clinic, for example, has made national headlines as a result of its work to exonerate people in prison who were wrongfully convicted. While not always as high-profile, all of Michigan Law's clinics provide critical legal assistance to individuals—on countless and varied everyday issues that might otherwise go unresolved.

Clinical Professor of Law Elizabeth Campbell, '11, was part of the second cohort of students in what is now the Human Trafficking and Immigration Clinic. She helped represent two women from West Africa who had been forced to work braiding hair, unpaid, in New Jersey. The student-attorneys helped the clients apply for visas, and they eventually became US citizens.

Campbell's experience in the clinic led her to remain after graduation as a staff attorney and then as a faculty member, and she recently became director of the clinic. "What makes the work so meaningful is when you see people where the systems have dehumanized them, not listened to them, not given them a voice—and you can play a role in helping them to feel heard and seen and, even briefly, empowered—that's the real joy of the work for me," she says.

Clinical Professor of Law Nicole Appleberry, '94—who took a child advocacy clinic while she was a student—is the director of the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic. She says the work of her clinic students makes a huge difference in their clients' lives.



Student-attorneys learn about the work of Zaman International during an outreach visit. The organization aims to advance the lives of marginalized women and children by enabling them to meet essential needs.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CLINIC

Students supply transactional legal services to nonprofit and community-based organizations, social enterprises, and neighborhood-based small businesses.

CRIMINAL APPELLATE PRACTICE CLINIC

Students represent convicted felons on appeal by preparing and filing briefs in the Michigan Court of Appeals, the Michigan Supreme Court, and US District Court.



Student-attorneys from the Community Enterprise Clinic are welcomed to the kitchens at Growing Hope during a client visit in April.

“For some clients, it might mean being able to buy their insulin, having food to eat, making their rent payments. Sometimes it can be a little more ephemeral. Tax debt can be so scary. They don’t know what’s going to happen, and that filters out into the rest of their life. Achieving some kind of resolution is a great weight off of their minds.”

Meanwhile, some clinics primarily focus on organizations, such as businesses and community groups. In the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic, around 30 students each term help their clients—largely current U-M students—with legal aspects of start-up business ventures. Like several of the clinics, they collaborate with other schools and colleges across the university to offer their assistance.

“We’re here to support the University of Michigan entrepreneurial ecosystem,” says Tifani Sadek, a clinical professor of law and co-director of the clinic. “A company comes to us with a great idea. They’re starting to put it together, but they don’t have an entity formed. So we help them figure that out.”

Similarly, each semester, the 16 to 20 students in the Community Enterprise Clinic provide legal services to community groups and neighborhood-based small businesses, primarily in Detroit and other disinvested urban areas. The clinic also hosts workshops to discuss common legal issues, and it publishes a blog, *Community Empowerment Matters*, that addresses legal and policy issues affecting small businesses and nonprofits.

Three Former Youth Offenders Get New Sentences

In 2025, the Juvenile Justice Clinic had three clients resentenced and released after 45 to 50 years in prison. One was 18 and two were 20 years old when they were arrested and convicted of murder, but all are now elderly. All were found to be remorseful and rehabilitated, and to pose no public safety risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND SUSTAINABILITY CLINIC

Students learn to practice environmental law by representing the National Wildlife Federation and similar organizations on issues including water and wildlife resources, public lands, and energy.

FEDERAL APPELLATE LITIGATION CLINIC

Students prepare and file briefs on behalf of criminal defendants and/or habeas petitioners in the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.



Youth Receives Needed Medical Device

Michigan Medicine had prescribed a “Cubby bed”—which combines features for safety, sensory regulation, and better sleep—for a 12-year-old boy who has severe autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. However, Medicaid would not cover the costs of the bed. Student-attorneys in the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic fought the decision in court, and last fall, a judge ordered Medicaid to cover the cost of the device.

“We’re providing needed legal services that are not provided by the private bar in Michigan, or not provided in the amount that’s necessary,” says clinic director Dana Thompson, ’99, who also is a clinical professor of law, director of the Transactional Law Clinics Program, and founding director of the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic. “There are so many small businesses and nonprofits that require legal services, and a lot of times they just go without.”

Another type of community benefit occurs when clinics take on public policy matters. For example, the Environmental Law and

Sustainability Clinic, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2023, has worked for several years with the Water Equals Life coalition to draft language for a water affordability legislative package. The legislation was introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives last fall. Student-attorneys analyzed the issues, crafted model legislation, and advised the coalition.

Denise Poloyac, ’83—who took a clinic as a student—now works as associate director of the National Wildlife Federation’s Great Lakes Regional Center, a founding partner of Water Equals Life. “I don’t know that we could have ever gotten to the point that we are at if it weren’t for the work that the clinic has done,” she says.

Finally, the community benefits of clinic work sometimes extend into professional practice. Andrew VanEgmond, ’17, participated in the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic as a student, and now he’s carrying that work forward. A former teacher, he worked as a student-attorney on several cases representing parents of special-education students, and that led him to establish a pro bono practice at his firm.

“Students may be struggling in school, but the answer is not to exclude them from school,” he says. “I learned how to do those cases at the clinic.” Now, he supervises several Dykema attorneys who represent parents of students with disabilities in due process complaints challenging suspensions and expulsions, in partnership with the Student Advocacy Center of Michigan. (Read about another former student-attorney, Elizabeth Morales, ’20, whose work on a human trafficking pro bono case drew on her clinic experience, on page 57.)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IMMIGRATION CLINIC

The clinic combines direct representation of survivors of human trafficking and their families with developing systemic solutions to reduce vulnerability to exploitation.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS CLINIC

Students perform a variety of work for clients with an international focus on issues including poverty, adequate housing, environmental degradation, and climate change. This is one of just two law school clinics nationwide that focuses on live international transactions.

EVOLVING AND DIFFERENTIATING

While the clinical program has become a cornerstone of most students' Michigan Law experience, one key to its continuing success is a willingness to grow and change along with the needs of students and clients.

The program started in 1969 with a single clinic. Others were added over the years—including the Veterans Legal Clinic, which aids military veterans; the Child Welfare Appellate Clinic, which represents parents facing the termination of their parental rights; and the International Transactions Clinic, where student-attorneys represent clients around the globe.

Some clinics have shifted their focus over time. The 1L clinic, introduced in 2015, initially concentrated on unemployment cases. Today, its students serve as guardians ad litem for children involved in custody matters before Michigan Circuit Court judges.

Meanwhile, transactional work in general has grown in the clinics as more students express interest. In 2022, the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic added a focus on name, image, and likeness issues for student-athletes.

Chopp, the associate dean, says that changes to clinical offerings may result from a faculty member's new idea, or from students showing more or less interest in a particular area. "We look to see what needs in the community we're not serving," she adds.



A student-attorney from the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic speaks to the University of Michigan softball team in 2022, part of the clinic's work with name, image, and likeness (NIL) issues on behalf of college athletes.



Client Testifies Before Congress

One client of the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic's name, image, and likeness program spoke to a US House subcommittee in 2024. Student-athlete Kaitlin (Keke) Tholl (pictured above), a softball catcher and team captain, discussed the need for regulation of NIL—specifically calling out the support of the clinic as pivotal.

JUVENILE JUSTICE CLINIC

Students represent minors charged with violations of the criminal law and status offenses in Michigan trial courts, as well as adults who were sentenced to prison as juveniles in trial and appellate courts.

LOW INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

The clinic helps clients resolve tax issues by offering tax help and representation in tax controversies. In the fall, it will be renamed the Tax and Estate Planning Clinic, reflecting the expansion of its services to more holistically address the financial wellness of its clients.

Clinics by the Numbers



**Number of active
Michigan Law
clinics during the
2025–2026
academic year**



**Founding year of the
first Michigan Law
clinic, now known as
the Civil-Criminal
Litigation Clinic**



Judge T.J. Ackert (left) of the Kent County 17th Circuit Court, Family Division, talks with a team of student-attorneys in the AI Law and Policy Clinic at the clinic's showcase in April. The team partnered with Judge Ackert's court to build an AI tool that helps parents correctly submit parenting time schedules.

The most recent changes to clinics include:

- The former Human Trafficking Clinic explicitly added immigration to its name, reflecting the wider focus of its work.
- The newest addition to the portfolio, the AI Law and Policy Clinic, opened in January. In this clinic, students employ artificial intelligence tools to improve access to justice, streamline legal processes, and find solutions to systemic issues. In the first term, 18 students worked on a variety of projects, such as helping legal aid lawyers analyze leases to identify unlawful provisions.
- Starting in the fall, the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic will become the Tax and Estate Planning Clinic, adding services to help low-income clients secure basic legal protections that can prevent downstream crises for families and communities.

Keeping the clinic offerings current helps them act as a differentiator for Michigan Law. At the same time, the size and stability of the program set Michigan apart from its peer schools.

An unusually high 80 percent of students take a clinic during their time at Michigan Law. In addition, the school is one of just a small handful nationwide that offers a clinic for first-year students.

MICHIGAN INNOCENCE CLINIC

The first exclusively non-DNA innocence clinic in the country, the clinic has won relief in 48 cases on behalf of people who had been wrongfully convicted and served anywhere from a few months to 46 years in prison.

PEDIATRIC ADVOCACY CLINIC

Students collaborate with health care providers and represent low-income families on legal issues connected to child health and well-being, including special education, Medicaid appeals, family law, and low-income housing.

Unlike some schools, which offer clinics that are more like externships, most of Michigan’s are true in-house clinics. “The clients are the clients of the clinic, not of an outside entity,” Chopp says. “The vast majority of our clinics are taught by professional educators. They are people who have the dual mission as part of their professional identity to be excellent teachers and excellent lawyers.”

Santacroce—also a former associate dean for experiential education—has a national perspective as the founder and president of the Center for the Study of Applied Legal Education. He agrees that the clinical program is a differentiator.

“Our high intensity sets us apart. We’re way on the top end of the national scale,” Santacroce says. “We’re also the only top-tier law school to guarantee a clinic to students who want one. The guarantee, the saturation rate, and the first-year experience really make us different.”

Chopp says the clinics “are of great interest to prospective students. And current students love them. The vast majority of the students speak glowingly about their clinic experience. They love the ability to help people, to feel useful, to learn the skills, to do hard things that they were scared to do on day one. Now they feel like they can do it.

“One of the most powerful aspects of clinical legal education at the University of Michigan Law School is that we have this incredibly high-achieving student body,” she says. “When they come to a clinic and dedicate all that intellectual firepower plus their emotional intelligence to the work, they are doing a tremendous service. It is beautiful to watch them help people and learn along the way.”



Federal Appellate Litigation Clinic student-attorneys Katherine Cleary (left) and Sophia Poe appeared in January at the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Cincinnati to argue an appeal in a drug conspiracy case. The court has not yet issued its opinion.



Approximate share of Michigan Law graduates each year with clinic experience



Number of cases in which the Michigan Innocence Clinic has won relief on behalf of people wrongfully convicted



Hours of free legal services provided by student-attorneys in the Law School’s clinics during the 2024–2025 academic year

VETERANS LEGAL CLINIC

Students assist Michigan military veterans in civil litigation matters such as family law, consumer disputes, fraud actions, landlord-tenant cases, employment discrimination, and civil rights claims.

ZELL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLINIC

Students represent and advise start-up business ventures led by University of Michigan students, alumni, and others.

Pro Bono Program Extends Experiential Opportunities

PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE to students who may not be quite ready to commit to an intensive, semester-long clinic experience, the Pro Bono Program offers students a chance to do some meaningful work, develop marketable skills, and maybe begin a lifelong habit of volunteering.

“The Pro Bono Program connects students to what drew them to law school, which is to help people or to serve the community,” says Amy Sankaran, '01, director of externship and pro bono programs.

Since 2009, shortly after Sankaran took over the program, Michigan Law has asked interested students to pledge 50 hours of pro bono work during the course of their JD studies (or 25 hours for LLM students). That number matches the pro bono hours that the American Bar Association asks lawyers to perform annually.

The students' work is supervised by lawyers within the Law School or at the partnering agency. A number of projects operate in conjunction with Legal Services of South Central Michigan or other local legal-aid agencies. The program oversees 20 to 30 projects in a typical year.

The program offers benefits for all involved. Students develop useful skills and valuable experience that they can draw upon in job interviews; individuals get the legal help they need; and supervising attorneys can expand the reach of their pro bono work.

One popular ongoing pro bono program is the Student Rights Project (SRP), which assists K-12 students facing disciplinary action such as expulsion. The Student Advocacy Center refers them to the project, where an interdisciplinary team supports the family and helps the student get reinstated in school.

Brad Gonzalez, '26, was drawn to SRP in part due to challenges his brother encountered in high school. Speaking recently at The Valiant, the annual public-interest storytelling event, Gonzalez called the SRP “a beautiful experience.”

“It's been my home here, and it's been my way to do right by the students in my community,” he said. “SRP is special to me because I get to work with students who are struggling.”

One particular student whom Gonzalez represented after the student got into a fight “was a reminder to me why I came to law school, and that is to support those who are in need,” Gonzalez said. He will now take that spirit into his career, working for the Neighborhood Defender Service in Detroit.

In another long-running effort, the Sentence Commutation Project (SCP), volunteers help prisoners work on their applications to have their sentence commuted. Lila Nazarian, '26, joined SCP to gain experience with clients and because of her belief in the mission, “that everyone deserves a second chance.”

Nazarian has worked directly on several commutation applications and helped supervise other students as a board member and, most recently, president/chair of the board. The experience helped put her on a path to a career in public defense.

“I've learned so much about redemption, forgiveness, and compassion from our clients,” she says. “People are imperfect. But we all do the best we can, and we are all greater than our worst mistake.”

She adds, “The communication skills, organizational experience, and life perspective I've gained will guide me through the rest of my career. Being a great public defender is about learning how to tell your client's story. SCP taught me that most of all.”



Brad Gonzalez, '26, speaks of his pro bono experience with the Student Rights Project during The Valiant, a popular storytelling event.

Cross-Campus Partnerships in the Immigrant Justice Lab

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY to do pro bono work through a class partners Michigan Law students with undergraduates in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) to help young immigrants seeking asylum.

The Immigrant Justice Lab (IJL) grew out of an LSA course on the history of immigration, which inspired students to want to help current immigrants. They worked with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) in Ypsilanti to help research country conditions, an important aspect of applications for asylum.

Eventually the professor, Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, connected with the Law School's Professor Bridgette Carr, '02—at the time, director of the Human Trafficking Clinic. Starting in 2019, the lab began offering a three-credit course—teaming law and undergraduate students to write asylum briefs under the supervision of MIRC attorneys.

“According to our research, this is actually the only class in the country offered in this way, between law students and undergrads,” says Professor Jessica Lefort, who has been the director of the IJL since 2023.

The class meets weekly. Teams of four students—two law students and two undergraduate students—learn about the history of immigration law, legal writing, and asylum law. Then the teams dive into their assigned case.

“By the end, they have produced a polished draft that can span upwards of 60 pages, along with a packet of country conditions sources that are compiled as exhibits,” Lefort says. Although asylum cases tend to move slowly, a number of the lab's applicants—who are typically unaccompanied minors—have been granted asylum.

In addition to the class, the IJL supports independent projects. Lefort oversees grant-funded interns and other volunteers who work on projects for MIRC, the ACLU, and other nonprofit agencies.

“We have students who are doing translations of a college preparedness guide for high school students. We created self-help guides and posters in English and Spanish for people who need immigration assistance but can't afford an attorney,” Lefort says. Other projects include court watching, country conditions research, and updating legal databases.



Clinical Professor Jessica Lefort, director of the Immigrant Justice Lab, speaks to a student team during a class session in November 2025.

One goal of the lab is to provide students with an opportunity to do real work for a community partner outside of a traditional clinical setting. Students develop both legal writing and soft skills—like interacting with supervisors, project management, and client-centered lawyering—which can prove useful in professional settings.

The lab also gets undergraduates interested in law school and gets law students interested in public-interest work. A number of law alumni of the lab are now doing immigration work, while many undergraduate students who took the class are now law students, including two currently at Michigan Law.

Taking the IJL helped Jack Kanarek, '23, settle on immigration work as his professional specialty; he now works as a staff attorney for MIRC. Kanarek's IJL team produced an asylum brief for a teen from Guatemala.

“One thing that drew me to the lab and to immigration generally was learning about other cultures and countries—especially when you're doing asylum work, because so much of those legal arguments are based on what's happening in that country,” Kanarek says.

“The lab gave me a big head start with asylum work,” he adds. “Having wrestled with these arguments, having made a legal brief, was very helpful to hit the ground running.”

Visit immigrantjusticelab.org for more information on the IJL.

The Lingering Influence of Clinical Work

Certainly, the work of the Law School's clinics can leave a profound, sometimes life-altering impact on its clients. It often does the same for the student-attorneys. *Law Quadrangle* recently caught up with a handful of alumni whose work with the clinics was featured in the magazine during their student days. If you would like to share thoughts on your own clinical experience and your memories from your time as a student-attorney, email us at lqngeneral@umich.edu for possible inclusion in an upcoming issue.

CHILD ADVOCACY LAW CLINIC

Danielle (Angeli) Asher, '16



As student-attorneys, Danielle (Angeli) Asher, '16, and her clinic partner, Alanna Farber, '16, represented a woman named Ashley in a custody dispute. The case culminated in a bench trial, where the students successfully argued on behalf of their client. "Throughout my whole career, I will always remember her and her family," Asher said in a spring 2016 *Law Quadrangle* story. "She's the embodiment of what a survivor is."

After graduation, Asher clerked on the US District Court for the Western District of Michigan and then joined the US Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio as an assistant US attorney in the General Crimes Unit through the Attorney General's Honors Program. Today, she is the deputy criminal chief at the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. Before this role, she worked as an assistant US attorney in the Violent and Organized Crime Unit.

"My clinic experience reaffirmed my commitment to justice and desire to pursue a career in government service. During my time in the clinic, I felt I contributed towards achieving justice for our clients, especially for Ashley and her children. To this day, I am proud of the work that we did for her family; it was a true privilege to represent them. My experience representing a domestic violence survivor and the skills that I learned were invaluable to me as a



Danielle (Angeli) Asher, '16 (left), and her clinic partner, Alanna Farber, '16 (right), flank their client, Ashley, after successfully arguing on her behalf in a Washtenaw County court. Farber is an assistant public defender for the State of Delaware.

violent crime prosecutor because I often interacted with crime victims, including victims of domestic violence.

"I have so many fond memories from working with Alanna, my clinic partner. We spent a lot of time in the clinic office preparing for Ashley's trial. Besides the trial itself, my favorite memory was helping Ashley's children change their last name after the judge's ruling. It was a full-circle moment for us, and a welcome fresh start for their family."



Millan Bederu, '20, and her fellow student-attorney Robert Shoemaker, '20, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Shoemaker works in mergers and acquisitions and corporate counsel at Booz Allen.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTIONS CLINIC

Millan Bederu, '20

As a 2L, Millan Bederu, '20, traveled to Ethiopia on behalf of a US-based client of Ethiopian origin who was interested in organizing a fund to invest in Ethiopian companies. Bederu—the daughter of native Ethiopians—wants to work in Ethiopia long term. “Even though I know the country, the trip gave me a different perspective,” she said in a winter 2020 *Law Quadrangle* story.

From 2022 to May 2025, Bederu worked for the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative on international development and human rights work funded by the US Department of State. She currently is a senior researcher and lecturer at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Germany, pursuing research on development and human rights.

“Directly after law school, I worked in the finance practice group at a firm, and it was quite helpful that I had seen a loan agreement and a share purchase agreement and had worked with them in a low-stress environment. But while I did learn a lot in the clinic, I think the networking was most impactful. On that trip as a 2L, we were representing a private client, but I met with a lot of different government entities and saw how investment happens in Ethiopia. And through those conversations, I was able to line up an externship after my clinic. I spent the first semester of my 3L year in Ethiopia working with the Ethiopian Investment Commission. My supervisor from my externship is still a contact of mine, and Professor [David] Guenther continues to be a resource, including bringing together clinic alumni in Washington, DC, a few years ago, which was really helpful in building my network.”

GENERAL CLINIC (NOW THE CIVIL-CRIMINAL LITIGATION CLINIC)

Mary (Watkins) La Montagne, '14

Mary (Watkins) La Montagne, '14, blended professional experience and personal passion as a student-attorney. She was adopting her own thoroughbred, Millie, from Horses’ Haven, a nonprofit in Howell, Michigan, when she realized its contract was very out of date and left concerning gaps. La Montagne and her clinic partner, David Frisof, '14, developed a new contract that would give the organization protective rights over animals that it adopts out. “This contract allows Horses’ Haven to...make sure that [they receive] quality care for [their] entire life,” La Montagne said in a fall 2014 *Law Quadrangle* story.

After graduation, La Montagne worked for the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, DC, until 2021. Among her colleagues was Jeffery Zhang, now an assistant professor at the Law School who uses Millie as a case study in his 1L Contracts class. “She appears in his hypos as the most beautiful horse in the world and thus the subject of many contract disputes,” jokes La Montagne.

Following her time at the Fed, La Montagne was a senior policy adviser in the US Department of Treasury until May 2025. Now, she is head of government affairs, US, at UBS, based in the DC area.

“Millie lived to the ripe old age of 28 (she passed last spring), having lived every last one of those days unequivocally and unapologetically on her terms. She retired from riding at 25 and then spent three years demanding special treatment from barn staff and cavorting around with her girlfriends. She was a great friend and willing athletic partner to me for the 10-plus years we were together. I’m still riding at the same barn where Millie boarded.”



Mary (Watkins) La Montagne, '14, pictured at Horses’ Haven in 2014 with Millie, the thoroughbred whose adoption contract sparked the clinic’s involvement.

MICHIGAN INNOCENCE CLINIC

In spring 2010, *Law Quadrangle's* cover story featured one of the Michigan Innocence Clinic's first exonerations. Dwayne Proviencé was wrongfully convicted in 2001 for a murder on Detroit's northwest side. His conviction was vacated and the charges were ultimately dismissed after it became clear that the police and prosecution had been aware that the murder in question was actually committed by someone else. He was exonerated nine years later. A group of student-attorneys—whom Proviencé called “my angels that were sent to me” in the *Law Quadrangle* story—worked with the clinic's co-founding directors, David Moran, '91, and Bridget McCormack, to free Proviencé. We caught up with a few of the student-attorneys.



Latoya Antonio, '10

Latoya Antonio was a 3L when she was a student-attorney working on Proviencé's case. By combing the streets and freeway ramps of Detroit, she and Judd Grutman, also a 3L, tracked down a key witness who could serve as an alibi for Proviencé. After graduation, building on her study abroad experience in Cambodia as a student, Antonio moved to South Africa and worked with social entrepreneurs. After nearly five years abroad, she returned to the United States and joined Deloitte's human capital practice. Now, she works for Spencer Stuart, based in Atlanta, where she does executive coaching, individual assessment, and leadership development. She also is a licensed financial professional. Her career path is motivated by her desire to be a positive force in people's lives—the same desire that led her to the Innocence Clinic.

“One thing from my time on Dwayne's case that really hits me in the work that I do today is that your commitment—the level of dedication that you bring, your level of professionalism and efficacy—impacts people. I do assessments for succession planning for placements into different roles. And in the back of my mind, I'm thinking that the way I assess this will affect whether or not a person is going to get this job, which is going to have a greater impact on their life, on their family, on the communities that they support. If this is a diverse candidate, it opens up a whole new avenue: a space for other people to be seen and to recognize that they



Latoya Antonio, '10, with Dwayne Proviencé on the day he was exonerated. “Dwayne came to our graduation with his mother,” Antonio says, “and his mother met my mom and gave her a hug and was like, ‘Thank you, because your daughter saved my son's life.’ That moment is burned into my heart—how generations are forever changed because Dwayne was released.”

can then step into that role. So I constantly have this weight of the things that I do having an impact greater than myself. I hope today's students recognize that they have power; they may be students, but they can really impact the lives of other people. So they should lean into these opportunities.”



(left to right) Members of Dwayne Provience's family talk with student-attorneys Nick Cheolas, Maria Jhai, Brett DeGroff, and Robyn Goldberg on the day he was exonerated. Cheolas is an antitrust partner at Wiley Rein in Washington, DC; Goldberg is a staff attorney at A Better Childhood in New York.



Brett DeGroff, '10

As a 3L, Brett DeGroff worked with his fellow 3Ls Nick Cheolas and Robyn Goldberg to uncover a key piece of evidence that had been buried in Provience's file for more than seven years. He also argued motions in court on behalf of his client. Since law school, DeGroff has spent his career going between the Michigan Supreme Court and the State of Michigan Appellate Defender Office (SADO). Following a clerkship on the court, he was an assistant defender at SADO, returned to the Michigan Supreme Court as a senior law clerk, and rejoined the State Appellate Defender Office as managing attorney in 2024.

"Working on Dwayne's case definitely changed the trajectory of my career. I'm a first-generation lawyer, so I didn't know much about the practice of law when I started law school, and I wasn't thinking about being a public defender. Reading cases is one thing; talking face to face with an innocent man who has been convicted of murder is another thing entirely. One thing I learned that I've carried with me into practice is that sometimes the truth is bizarre, but it's always consistent. A couple pieces of false or misleading evidence can form a piece of a picture. But often they won't fit cleanly, or they leave unexplained gaps at the edges. If you can find the gaps, you can pry apart the lies and find the truth underneath. What sticks with me more than anything from my time in the clinic, though, is the skill, patience, and commitment of Professors Moran and McCormack. I've worked with and litigated against a lot of good lawyers over the years since being in the clinic. Still haven't met anyone I would say is a better lawyer."

Maria Jhai, '11

Maria Jhai worked on Provience's case as a summer intern in 2009. She discovered prosecutors' notes that linked a different man to the murder for which Provience was convicted. After graduation, Jhai held two federal clerkships in Detroit and then moved to Los Angeles, where she worked for Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP before joining the US Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, National Security and Criminal Divisions. Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed her to serve as a judge in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in 2025.

"I think the biggest effect Dwayne's case had on me was not so much what I would do in the law but how I would do it. Mistakes and ethical lapses by several folks along the way led to Dwayne's wrongful conviction. Through our work in the clinic, we were able to go back and correct that injustice. Meanwhile, Dwayne lost nine years of freedom. Seeing that up close prepared me to step into important roles, like judge and prosecutor, and to try to do them well and carefully. Every actor in the chain matters: prosecutor, defense attorney, judges. When you remember that, you are more likely to be careful, diligent, and fair. It was amazing to see our diligence and attention to our work translate to Dwayne's freedom; I had never experienced anything close to that kind of responsibility and impact on someone's life. I remember going to the prison with Dave [Moran] to tell Dwayne about the evidence that we had discovered that could help with his exoneration, and all of us waiting outside the day Dwayne was released from custody. I am forever grateful to the clinic for creating a space where I could use my education to do that kind of good."

*Decades
of Careers
Launched by the*

Fiske

By Annie Hagstrom

Fellowship

Robert B. Fiske Jr., '55, HLLD '97, understood that having government service experience early in a professional career can be formative. To make it easier for Michigan Law students to pursue that experience, he endowed the Robert B. Fiske Jr. Fellowship Program for Government Service at Michigan Law in 2001.

Over the last 25 years, the program has annually selected up to four Michigan Law students and graduates, providing a \$10,000 stipend and debt-repayment assistance to cover all educational loans (not just law school loans) for three years. Since the inaugural class of Fiske Fellows, nearly 90 Michigan Law graduates have received fellowships.

Fiske remained deeply connected to the University of Michigan throughout his life, including meeting each new class of fellows and hosting occasional reunions for all Fiske Fellows. He died on December 4, 2025, at the age of 94. *Law Quadrangle* spoke with Fiske Fellows from years past to learn more about the impact the fellowship has had on their careers and pay homage to the profound influence it and Fiske have had. Turn to page 61 to read his obituary.

“Following my clerkship, I was an attorney in the US Department of Justice for nearly 15 years, including time spent in the Federal Programs Branch, as chief of staff of the Office of Legal Policy, on detail to President Obama’s White House Counsel’s Office, and as a consumer fraud prosecutor. In 2017, I went to work at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for more than eight years, leaving in 2025 as deputy general counsel. I am now a senior legal adviser at Democracy Forward, a national nonprofit organization that advances democracy and social progress through litigation, policy and public education, and regulatory engagement.

As a member of the inaugural class of Fiske Fellows, I remain extremely grateful for the financial support the fellowship gave me and to have had Robert Fiske as an example of what a career in law and service can look like.

—**Steven Bressler, '01**, 2002 Fiske Fellow
Senior Legal Adviser, Democracy Forward

“One thing that Mr. Fiske and I have in common is an appreciation for the quote from Rudyard Kipling: ‘For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.’ No quote better encapsulates my experience in federal service.

The financial support I have received through the Fiske Fellowship has aided me in pursuing a path of public service, which has been a calling for me my entire life. Thank you, Mr. Fiske.”

—**Jessica Kraft, '15**, 2018 Fiske Fellow
*Trial Attorney, US Department of Justice
Criminal Division, Tax Section*



I'm remarkably grateful for the Fiske Fellowship's support as I've pursued my career. With it, I began working at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Office of Enforcement, where I remained for nearly nine years. Now, I am an attorney at the Maryland Office of the Attorney General. Through it all, I've obtained stability in life that will allow me to continue doing rewarding public-sector work for years to come."

—Ben Clark, '14, 2016 Fiske Fellow
Attorney, Maryland Office of the Attorney General

"The Fiske Fellowship was formative for me in shaping my career path and making my career in public interest law—and, ultimately, academia—financially possible.

At the start of my fellowship, I worked as a trial attorney in the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section. In 2018, I left the DOJ to work at Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Policy Program and then joined the ACLU of Kansas in 2020, where I went on to serve as legal director. I am now a member of the faculty at the University of Kansas School of Law as an associate professor on the tenure track. Much of my academic scholarship and teaching focuses on things I learned and experienced at the start of my career with the DOJ."

—Sharon Brett, '12, 2013 Fiske Fellow
Associate Professor, University of Kansas School of Law

In summer 2025, fellows gathered with Fiske (center) in Washington, DC, to celebrate 25 years of the fellowship program.

"As the parent of a child with dyslexia, my early legal career in public service laid the foundation for the work I do today as a structured literacy specialist and educational therapist. While I no longer practice law, the Fiske Fellowship has played a critical role in enabling me to pursue my passion for public service.

After law school, I clerked for the now-Senior Judge Stephen H. Glickman on the DC Court of Appeals, served as a government lawyer in the executive branch and as an assistant parliamentarian with the US House of Representatives, and worked in law school administration at Georgetown Law. When my older son was identified as dyslexic, I became deeply curious about why some children struggle to read. That curiosity led me to pursue a master's degree in special education at American University.

The Fiske Fellowship allowed me to pursue my passion for public service, and that freedom to follow my passions has informed my work since."

—Tara Sarathy, '02, 2003 Fiske Fellow
Structured Literacy Interventionist, District Kids

"The Fiske Fellowship has been integral in helping me achieve financial stability in a notoriously overworked and underpaid field. It has made it easier to pursue a less traditional legal career that gives me the opportunity to fight for the ideals I believe in every day. I deeply appreciate Mr. Fiske's recognition of the importance of public service and the impact it can have not just on those of us who do it but also on all those we do it for."

—Katie Teleky, '21, 2021 Fiske Fellow
Deputy Chief of Staff to US Sen. Amy Klobuchar



Dean Sukhatme Establishes AI Advisory Council

The Law School has launched an AI Advisory Council, bringing together alumni and leaders from across the legal profession, the technology sector, and academia. The council reflects Michigan Law's growing engagement with artificial intelligence and its commitment to shaping how the legal profession adapts to rapidly evolving technologies.

The launch of the AI Advisory Council builds on a growing portfolio of AI-related teaching, research, and experiential learning at Michigan Law. Across these efforts, a common theme has emerged: the importance of pairing technological fluency with critical thinking, ethical awareness, and professional judgment. From classroom discussions about how AI risk is framed and governed to library-led initiatives that train students to evaluate AI-generated research, Michigan Law is approaching AI not simply as a tool but as a domain in which lawyers will play a central role in shaping outcomes.

The AI Advisory Council is designed to extend and sharpen this work, bringing industry insight and strategic guidance to help ensure that Michigan Law's approach remains rigorous and responsive to a rapidly changing profession.

"The legal profession is being reshaped in real time by advances in artificial intelligence," says Neel U. Sukhatme, David A. Breach Dean of Law and professor of law. "Our responsibility is to prepare students not only to understand these tools but to use them thoughtfully and ethically in service of clients and the rule of law. The AI Advisory Council brings together an extraordinary group of leaders whose insights will help ensure that Michigan Law remains both forward-looking and grounded in the core values of the profession."

The council convened for its inaugural meeting in March and will continue to meet regularly with Law School leadership, offering guidance on curriculum, programming, and strategic priorities. Members also will engage with students and faculty through events and other initiatives, helping to position Michigan Law as a leading voice in the evolving intersection of law and technology.

"The opportunity is to ensure that lawyers are equipped to use these tools to better serve their clients; the responsibility is to question those same tools, improve them, and understand their limits. That's where this kind of collaboration becomes essential," says Mary E. Snapp, '84, the council's chair and a senior fellow in Microsoft's Corporate External and Legal Affairs division.



In March, several members of the council spoke to students at an event titled "Innovate, Regulate, Accelerate: AI at the Intersection of Law and Entrepreneurship." Pictured (left to right) are Idan Netser, LLM '08, SJD '17; Michael Rubin, '00; Nikki Sokol, '98; and Jerry Kowal, '99. Ashish Prasad (not pictured) moderated the panel.

MICHIGAN LAW AI ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Mary E. Snapp, '84 (Chair), *Microsoft*
- Daniel J. Bergeson, '82, *Bergeson LLP*
- David A. Breach, '94, *Vista Equity Partners*
- Bruce R. Byrd, '92, *Palo Alto Networks*
- David A. Caragliano, '09, *Google*
- Clarissa Cerda, '92, *Pindrop Security*
- Jennifer W. Chaloehtiarana, '97, *Doximity*
- James G. DeVaney, *U-M Center for Academic Innovation*
- Noel K. Egnatios, '06, *DivX LLC*
- Lisa Gevelber, *Google*
- Dennis M. Kennedy, *Dennis Kennedy Advisory Services*
- Jerry S. Kowal, '99, *Stealth AI Startup*
- Daniel W. Linna Jr., '04, *Northwestern Pritzker School of Law*
- John M. Lummis, '82, *Soncy Capital*
- Bridget M. McCormack, *American Arbitration Association*
- Carla S. Newell, '85, *GSR Ventures*
- Idan Netser, LLM '08, SJD '17, *Sidley Austin*
- James D. Peters, '03, *Lawhive*
- Ashish S. Prasad, *Haystack*
- Michael H. Rubin, '00, *Latham & Watkins*
- James P. Shaughnessy, '79, *DocuSign*
- Nikki Sokol, '98, *Meta*
- Robert P. Stefanski Sr., '89, *eLab Ventures*
- Darth Vaughn, *Ford Motor Company*
- Jeremy E. Wenokur, '92, *Lightbox Ventures*
- Daniel A. Zibel, '04, *National Student Legal Defense Network*



Mortenson Elected to ALI

The American Law Institute (ALI) elected Julian Davis Mortenson to membership in January. He joins numerous other Michigan Law professors in the group of judges, lawyers, and academics, which works to modernize and improve the law in the United States.

“I’m honored by the chance to participate in the ALI’s important work,” Mortenson says. “It’s a remarkable assemblage of talent and experience with a venerable history of insight and influence, and I hope to live up to the example set by all those who are already members and everyone who has come before.”

Mortenson, the James G. Phillip Professor of Law, is a legal historian, constitutional litigator, and award-winning teacher who specializes in the constitutional and political history of early America. His casebook, *Constitutional Law: An Integrated Approach*, has been widely adopted and is going into a second edition. His current book project, which is under contract with Harvard University Press, develops a comprehensive account of presidential power at the American founding.

Students Receive Prestigious Post-Graduate Fellowships

Several graduating students and recent alumni have secured fellowships with prominent public interest organizations.



Libby Antonneau received an Equal Justice Works Fellowship to work with Legal Action of Wisconsin to help low-income tenants remedy hazardous housing conditions. She will conduct trainings on tenants’ rights, help establish a rent abatement clinic, and assist renters pursuing affirmative legal action.



Megan Hess will spend two years at the Children’s Law Center (CLC) in Washington, DC, as a Skadden Fellow. Her work will involve expanding the CLC’s medical-legal partnership, Healthy Together, to represent families in public benefits matters. In doing so, she will identify systemic patterns to drive broader advocacy.



Avery Coombe will return to the Center for Reproductive Rights, which works to strengthen legal guarantees to reproductive health care and decision-making, for a two-year fellowship. She worked at the organization as a paralegal when the US Supreme Court issued the *Dobbs* ruling in 2022, which motivated her to attend law school.



Madeline Turk, ’25, currently a clerk at the US Court of Federal Claims, will join the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University, a nonpartisan think tank focused on US energy and environmental policy. Turk, who wants to be a litigator, spent her 2L summer in the Appellate Section of the US Department of Justice, Environmental and Natural Resources Division.



Henry Evans received the Hobbs Natural Resources and Environmental Law Fellowship at the Colorado Attorney General’s Office. During the yearlong fellowship, he will work on projects to protect and improve the quality of Colorado’s land, air, water, and wildlife as part of the office’s Natural Resources and Environment Section.



David Weaver also will join the Institute for Policy Integrity at New York University through a two-year fellowship. Weaver’s path to law school included spending time in the Amazon rainforest, serving in the US Marine Corps, and working on a master’s project on parking regulations. These experiences sharpened his interest in the environment and the law.

Four Takeaways from Four Panels

In recent months, speakers and panelists from within the Law School and elsewhere shared insights on a range of topics. Here are takeaways from just a handful of them.

1. History doesn't answer all the questions about constitutional interpretation.

"[Primus offers] a great unmaking of the constitutional faith in enumerationist constraint...by clearing the theoretical thicket around what we may not need, that is, greater judicial fidelity to enumerationism. [His book] leaves us, as a pathbreaking book really should, with many more questions than answers. You clear the thicket, but we see after the thicket is clear that we have so much more work to do."

—**Maggie Blackhawk**, the Moses H. Grossman Professor of Law at New York University, at "The Oldest Constitutional Question" conference, which convened scholars and judges in February to discuss the 2025 book by Richard Primus, the Theodore J. St. Antoine Collegiate Professor of Law.

2. Local governments probably cannot regulate how ICE operates, but they have some authority to punish individual misdeeds.

"So suppose there's an argument that ICE officials are assaulting people in a way that they are not authorized to do under federal law or are doing illegal searches and seizures. There's nothing wrong, in my view, with states saying that if you violate the federal Constitution, you can be held accountable for compensatory damages."

—**Evan Caminker**, dean emeritus and the Branch Rickey Collegiate Professor of Law, at a panel in March, "What Can Local Governments Do? Local and National Immigration Enforcement," which also included Assistant Professor Paulina Arnold, Assistant Professor Noah Kazis, and Professor Ekow Yankah, associate dean for faculty and research.

3. The US may legally prosecute offenses committed elsewhere—but it may not abduct suspects in those crimes.

"International law says that if a state wants custody of a suspect abroad, it must ask the other state to hand them over, or better yet, the state should conclude an extradition treaty to regularize the process... Indeed, the United States has had a treaty of extradition with Venezuela since 1922. That treaty, however, does not require Venezuela or the United States to extradite its own nationals."

—**Steven Ratner**, the Bruno Simma Collegiate Professor of Law, during "The Attack on Venezuela: Legal Perspectives" in January, which also included Karima Bennouna, '94, the Lewis M. Simes Professor of Law; Kristina Daugirdas, the Francis A. Allen Collegiate Professor of Law; Julian Davis Mortenson, the James G. Phillipp Professor of Law; and Professor Julian Arato—director of the Center for International and Comparative Law and of the Program on Law and the Global Economy—who moderated the discussion.

4. Ethical recruitment in hiring guest workers faces considerable challenges.

"Let's get to prevention. We can't just keep fielding complaints."

—**Laura Germino**, co-founder of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the related Fair Food Program, on the need to prevent abuses of workers from happening rather than address them after the fact. Her group, based in South Florida, found success in stemming unethical practices by partnering with the national employment service in Mexico for hiring guest workers. She spoke at November's Transnational Law Conference, "Forced Labor, Trafficking, and Recruitment: Measuring Progress in the Movement for Equitable Supply Chains," which was organized by Professors Chavi Keeney Nana, Luis C.deBaca, '93, and Bridgette Carr, '02.



Exoneree Helps Free Wrongly Convicted Client

By Bob Needham

Ruben Piñuelas, '26, knows firsthand how the legal system can wrongfully convict someone—and how that same system can sometimes right the wrong.

As a young man in California, he fought and eventually overturned his own false conviction for conspiracy to commit murder. And earlier this year, he played a key role in exonerating someone else from an unjust murder charge.

Inside the legal system

Young Ruben was a bright, engaged student. But he lived in a small, rural town where constructive opportunities for young people were limited. He became involved with gangs and drugs and accumulated a police record.

At 19, he tried to make a new start by working a warehouse job in Los Angeles. Yet police found him with recreational marijuana and wrongly accused him of drug dealing, a charge that resulted in a two-year prison sentence. A prison riot, during which he only defended himself, resulted in an assault charge that extended his sentence by seven years. Two days before he was due to be paroled, he received the most crushing blow: a new charge of conspiracy to commit murder.

The prosecution advanced a theory of conspiracy between two other inmates, but Piñuelas didn't even know them. Yet prosecutors succeeded in painting him as the ringleader, despite a lack of evidence. The new charge set off a long ordeal involving attempts to plant evidence, more trumped-up charges, and offerings of plea deals. "I told my attorney at the time, 'You tell the DA I'm not taking a single day. I didn't do this,'" Piñuelas says now.

In hindsight, Piñuelas believes the charge was payback for his efforts to help other inmates with appeals—his first experience acting as a lawyer of sorts.

Piñuelas was sentenced to 60 years to life. In solitary confinement, he started studying the law in earnest, filing an appeal of his conviction along with numerous habeas corpus petitions.

Eventually, the letter he was waiting for arrived: His conviction was overturned for lack of evidence, and there would not be a retrial. He would soon be a free man.

Finally, a fresh start

Piñuelas worked in construction for a couple of years while trying to rebuild his life—and his psyche. Therapy didn't help, nor did going to college to study psychology.



Exoneree Ruben Piñuelas, '26 (left), was part of the Michigan Innocence Clinic team that secured George Calicut's exoneration in March.

Eventually, he found some common ground listening to the experiences of Holocaust survivors on TV. When he met one survivor in person, she gave him life-changing advice: "It's not what was done to you. It's what you choose to do with it."

Piñuelas recalls, "I felt this huge weight lift off my shoulders. I realized, 'I've got to give the pain purpose.'"

All along, friends and family had been telling Piñuelas he should go to law school. When he spoke at an award ceremony at his college, a professor mentioned an internship at the Loyola Project for the Innocent. A judicial internship followed. He eventually came to see law school as a way to reclaim control of his future.

Michigan Law appealed to him because of the Michigan Innocence Clinic (MIC), the MDefenders program, and professors who are active in criminal justice reform. Piñuelas was initially interested in Big Law, but working with public interest groups at Michigan made his ultimate direction clear.

That work culminated with the MIC-led exoneration in March of George Calicut, a Detroit man who served 27 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. Piñuelas worked on the case and spoke in court at the release. In the immediate aftermath, he says, "for half a moment, the pain stopped. I felt at peace."

Piñuelas is returning to California to advocate for the same communities he comes from at the Los Angeles Public Defender's Office. He also plans to continue working to prevent wrongful convictions, including serving on a commission addressing prosecutorial misconduct. "I will try to make things right," he says. "To bring as much justice as I can."

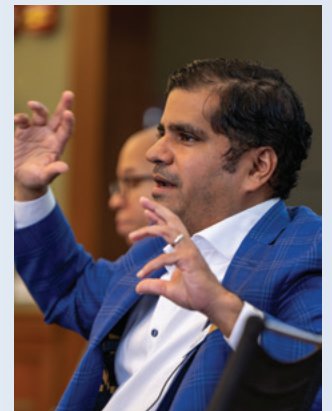


“Then, Now, Always”

Law School community comes together to celebrate the legacy, history, and contributions of Black alumni

More than 100 alumni and their guests returned to Ann Arbor for the Law School’s Black Alumni Reunion in March. The event, which takes place every three years and is open to all alumni and their guests, featured programming about critical issues facing society and the legal profession as well as a welcome reception and other social events. It also coincided with the annual Alden J. “Butch” Carpenter Memorial Scholarship Gala and Preview Weekend for admitted students, which encouraged connection and community building between alumni and the next generation.

The volunteer committees that planned the event developed a diverse set of programming throughout the weekend, including panels that covered the scope and consequences of US presidential policing powers; a discussion of affirmative action, DEI, and the 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* case; and reflections on the Black student experience, moderated by two current students. Alumni also had an opportunity to hear from Dean Neel Sukhatme during an update and Q&A about the state of the Law School.



@ U M I C H L A W



New American Indian Law Workshop Introduces Students to Broad Perspectives and Vanguard Legal Issues

By James Weir

A new American Indian Law Workshop led by Matthew Fletcher, '97, the Harry Burns Hutchins Collegiate Professor of Law, provides students with the opportunity to engage with a wide range of scholars and examine more granular, niche issues relating to American Indian law.



The new American Indian Law Workshop, led by Matthew Fletcher, '97 (left), explores legal trends and active cases at the vanguard of federal Indian law.

Offered for the first time during the winter semester, the weekly workshop is a two-credit course that explores legal trends and active cases that are at the vanguard of federal Indian law. Similar to other workshops at the Law School, such as the Law and Economics Workshop, at each session a different guest lecturer presents a working paper or scholarly project they are working on and then opens the discussion to questions. Students are required to submit written responses after each workshop.

"In a Federal Indian Law or Tribal Law class, you are mostly doing a survey of a lot of different topics in a given subject area, but that's not usually how scholarship works—you really have to do a deep dive into, for example, a given tribe or group of tribes, and you see a lot more detail in a scholarly paper. This workshop gives us a chance to sample some of those ideas," Fletcher says.

Bringing legal scholarship into practice

Jasmine Neosh, '26, a tribal college graduate and member of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, says the workshop was valuable context as she prepares to represent tribes and tribal interests at a boutique law firm in Washington, DC, after graduation.

"The workshop forced me to think of myself and classmates as not just passive students learning complex, higher-level topics but as participants in this burgeoning world of intellectual critique," Neosh says. "Law has not historically been very hospitable to Native Americans, and a lot of the doctrine is hostile to us individually and as a people. So it's important, I think, to find those areas where the law is improving. And Professor Fletcher has been really great for that."

Manuel Lewis, a rising 3L and a first-generation descendant of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona, also says the workshop helped him see his studies in a more concrete way.

"It has recentered an observation that I came to law school with, which is that the law is actively being experienced by real people, and Indian law scholarship centers that in a way that not all scholarship does," says Lewis, who intends to do litigation on behalf of tribal clients after law school. "Indian law is a weird space because it's bifurcated between federal Indian law and tribal law, and then tribes are also sovereign governments, which creates interesting, dynamic legal structures. It's been extremely rewarding to talk to scholars who are pushing the boundaries of what the doctrine means, and to be able to rethink or do something new with the law rather than learn it as a doctrine as it exists in its static nature."

Fletcher says the workshop is indicative of the growth in legal work and advocacy related to Indian and tribal law—as evidenced by the areas of legal inquiry covered in the workshop series.

"Tribal nations are doing a lot more—they have more, they're growing, they have more capacity. In our field, we refer to this era as the self-determination era, as opposed to the assimilation era where Native kids had to go to boarding school and all the land was taken over by the federal government," he says. "We are bringing in legal scholars as well as practitioners, which helps students see how legal scholarship matters in the real world, and how practicing lawyers can employ legal scholarship in the work that they do."

Workshop Speakers Touch on Tribal History, Property Rights



Wenona T. Singel, an associate professor of law at Michigan State University College of Law and the director of the school's Indigenous Law & Policy Center, visited the workshop and spoke about the first chapter of her upcoming book, *The Land Still Holds the Record: Native Life, Law, and Erasure in Michigan*.

Singel is a member of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians who has served as chief appellate judge for two tribal courts in Michigan. As a descendant of Native Michiganders, Singel uses her family's history to explore how federal Indian law has caused intergenerational harm across Native communities in Michigan.

"I started this project because I was searching for my own family history, and my most immediate experience of that kind of trauma was losing my younger sister to adoption when I was four years old," she says. "In addition to that, my mother and all her siblings were removed from their parents and placed into foster care and adoption."

The project reconstructs a more complete history of Native removal in Michigan, drawing on archival records that document removal in detail while simultaneously structuring the erasure of its human consequences. Singel says that the records of major events in the history of Michigan's Indigenous peoples, such as the forced removal of Native communities in the 19th century, elide much of the harm they caused.

"What you see in the archive is the muster roll—a list with the heads of households identified, but children and women are hash marks. These archives are not a reliable source for understanding what happened to those children, what happened to those women, or what happened to people that didn't make it onto those lists," she says. "It tells us about the priority of how the federal government viewed Native people, but the omissions are not incidental—they reveal how the federal government structured its priorities and whose lives it deemed legible.

"We oftentimes think of the law as having an episodic, individual impact in time, in terms of removal or in terms of mandating a child attend boarding school. But what remains largely unacknowledged are the intergenerational consequences for Native families."



Bryan Newland, a former assistant secretary of Indian affairs at the US Department of the Interior who now works at Powers, Pyles, Sutter, and Verville PC in Washington, DC, joined the workshop to present a working paper titled "Trespass? Don't Mind If You Do: The recent trend of courts using equity to excuse trespassing on Indian lands."

"To understand some of the cases in this paper, you have to understand the founding principles of Indian law, and those principles were in service of taking things that didn't belong to people," he says. "In order to justify taking land that belongs to others, you have to come up with principles that diminish their property rights against your property rights."

The concept of the discovery doctrine, which is rooted in 15th century papal decrees that claimed European colonialists had the right to take possession of land from Indigenous peoples in the Americas and surrounding islands, was enshrined into American law in an 1823 Supreme Court ruling, *Johnson v. McIntosh*. It held that established international law gave European nations the right to seize and settle on land in the so-called new world, and that the United States government had inherited that right after the Revolutionary War.

The paper examines a number of recent cases in which federal circuit courts have used equitable exceptions to rule against the property rights of Indian landowners. Newland writes that the rulings represent "a concerning trend of judges applying equitable rules to override federal statutes and diminish Indian property rights."

The paper also proposes actions that tribes and individuals can take to strengthen Indian property rights, as well as suggested congressional action.

"The lack of a trespass statute for Indian law has caused a lot of damage," he says. "So one of the things that we need is a congressional enactment giving Indian tribes and Indian people a federal cause of action to seek enforcement of their property rights in federal court."

Practicing Law During the Pandemic: The Experiences of Michigan Law Alumni

By David L. Chambers, the Wade H. and Dores M. McCree Collegiate Professor Emeritus of Law

The coronavirus pandemic forced the great majority of American lawyers to work from home for more than a year. Some found the experience miserable, but many others found aspects of it so satisfying that by the time offices reopened, their employers had been persuaded to permit them to work from home regularly on at least a part-time basis. What was it about the experiences during the pandemic that led to this major change in attitudes about working from home?

The University of Michigan Law School is the only law school in the United States that annually surveys samples of its graduates about their work, through a project that dates back to 1967. The questionnaires administered in 2022, 2023, and 2024 were expanded to include questions about the impacts of the pandemic. More than 800 full-time practitioners who had been out of law school for 5, 15, 25, 35, or 45 years responded, and more than half the respondents added comments in their own words. Here, in brief summary, is what was learned.

“More time at home, which I welcome. Less time with colleagues and clients, which I regret.” —Class of 1979

Practitioners were asked about the impacts of the pandemic on five aspects of their work on a five-point scale from very positive to very negative. As can be seen in Table 1, for four of the five aspects—productivity, client relationships, work-life balance, and income—more than three-quarters of respondents reported that the impact had been neutral or positive. Indeed, a full 60 percent reported positive impacts on their work and family life. For the fifth aspect, relationships with co-workers, nearly half reported somewhat negative impacts and five percent reported quite negative impacts. But for all five aspects, including relationships with co-workers, no more than five percent reported that the impacts had been quite negative.

These questions were followed by a summary question about the pandemic’s impact on the practitioners’ work experience overall. Forty-five percent said that the overall impact had been somewhat or quite positive, 29 percent said that it had been neutral, 24 percent that it had been somewhat negative, and 2 percent that it had been quite negative. As a whole, men were as likely as women to report positive impacts, graduates with young children as likely as those without, and those in private firms of varying sizes as likely as those in government or in-house counsel offices.

Table 1

What has been the overall impact of the pandemic on your...						
	Productivity	Balance of work and family life	Relations with co-workers	Relations with clients	Income	Work experience overall
Somewhat or quite positive	36%	60%	12%	15%	30%	45%
Neutral or none	42%	20%	36%	65%	62%	29%
Somewhat negative	19%	15%	48%	19%	7%	24%
Quite negative	3%	5%	4%	1%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Michigan Law graduates practicing law full time during the pandemic, surveyed in 2022, 2023, and 2024 (n=819).

Regression analysis revealed that practitioners' views of the pandemic's overall impact on their work turned primarily on the pandemic's impacts on their productivity and on their work-life balance. After taking those two impacts into account, the overall impact correlated only modestly with whatever impacts had been reported for co-worker relationships, client relationships, and income. Productivity and work-family balance were also the two aspects of work about which practitioners most frequently reported positive effects during the pandemic.

"Prior to the pandemic, I didn't think I could work from home. Now, I can't imagine going back 100%."
—Class of 1998

Asked about their expectations regarding working from home in the future, only 17 percent of practitioners planned to work at home no more than they had before the pandemic. The rest all expected to work from home more than before, and more than half of this group expected to work from home much more (see Table 2).

If the experiences of American lawyers in general were similar to those of Michigan's graduates—and there is reason to believe that they were—it appears that the great shift toward working at home was driven overwhelmingly by practitioners'

Table 2

Over the next few years, do you expect to perform more of your work from home than you did prior to the pandemic?	
No	17%
Yes, somewhat more	38%
Yes, much more	45%
Total	100%

Practitioners who were not working from home half time or more prior to the pandemic (n=733).

discovery that they could get at least as much work done at home as at the office and that their quality of life was improved by spending more time at home, even if it was spent working. In the comments added by respondents, not a single person complained that the pandemic had deprived them of the opportunity to commute to and from an office five days a week.

A full report on the impacts of the pandemic on the Michigan graduates is available online at the website of the Law School's Alumni Survey Project. It includes much more on the reasons why some practitioners were negatively affected during the pandemic and is enriched by the insights provided in the written comments of respondents. Visit repository.law.umich.edu/alumni_survey_scholarship to read more.

More Alumni Perspectives

"I am more productive, happier, and healthier as a result of the pandemic forcing my employer to permit full or majority telework for my position." —Class of 2007

"Reduction in commuting time alone saved me three hours per day. That's one more hour of sleep, one hour of exercise, and one more hour of work." —Class of 1977

"Working from home was terrible while my young children were home full time but has been amazing since they went back to school." —Class of 2009

"I do not work as well at home as I do in an office setting. I dislike not having a barrier between work and home." —Class of 2019

"Having kids, I love the flexibility of [working from home]. On a day when I need to pick them up at 5, I can still work a full day and not have to spend time commuting." —Class of 2008

"I embraced the technology that allowed me to work from home, such as cloud sharing of files and Zoom meetings and appearances." —Class of 1989

"I miss having everyone working together in an office." —Class of 1999

"Work-life separation was obliterated during the pandemic by the 'you're now always at the office' approach my firm took." —Class of 2019

"I don't have children or caretaking responsibilities and was very isolated. I am happy to return to in-person work." —Class of 1998

I M P A C T

Ronald L. Olson, '66, and Jane T. Olson: A Lifetime Focused on Democracy and Human Rights

By Annie Hagstrom

For more than six decades, Ron L. Olson, '66, and Jane T. Olson have shared a willingness to say “yes” to opportunity. That instinct carried them from Iowa to Ann Arbor, where the University of Michigan Law School expanded their worldview—first to Oxford, then to Washington, DC, and ultimately to California.

No matter where they traveled, a deep investment in people, ideas, and institutions has defined their lives. Ron and Jane’s commitment to strengthening democracy is a natural extension of this, and they recently made a \$5,000,000 gift to the Law School to establish the Ron and Jane Olson Fund for Democracy, Human Rights, and Civic Dialogue.

A shared journey takes shape

Having grown up in small Iowa towns, Ron and Jane say that living in Ann Arbor and socializing around the Michigan Law campus changed them.

“I’d never been surrounded by so many smart people, whether they were professors or students, from all over the country and several from out of the country,” Ron says. “Plus, the football weekends were always fun.”

Jane adds, “We were also, in a way, introduced to culture while there. There’s so much going on: concerts, lectures, and free events, so we took advantage of them.”

In March 1966, just before Ron’s Law School graduation, Jane gave birth to their first daughter, Kristin. Ron was then awarded a Ford Fellowship, and the family of three moved to Oxford, England, for one year. In 1967, Ron began working in Washington, DC, for the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, and then clerked for Chief Judge David L. Bazelon on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

They had planned to stay in Washington, DC, until Ron received a phone call from his Law School friend Doug Kranwinkle, '65, who had joined the new law firm of Munger, Tolles, Hills & Rickershauser in Los Angeles. At his urging, Ron interviewed at the firm and met all seven of the lawyers, including Charles T. “Charlie” Munger, HLLD, '10, and Rod and Carla Hills.

“Despite a very sparse clientele, the people I met were so interesting that I couldn’t resist coming back to Jane, saying we should try it. She believed in me enough to go along, and we’ve been here since 1968.”



Ron L. Olson, '66, and Jane T. Olson have given generously to the Law School for many years. They recently established the Ron and Jane Olson Fund for Democracy, Human Rights, and Civic Dialogue with a \$5 million gift.

Advocacy in action

As a named partner of what is today known as Munger, Tolles & Olson, Ron built his practice around a combination of litigation and corporate counseling. He helped to start the American Bar Association’s litigation section and became its youngest chair. He also pioneered the use of alternative dispute resolution, leading to the establishment of the ABA section of dispute resolution, which he also chaired. His experiences led to teaching trial advocacy and dispute resolution at professional gatherings around the world.

Around the same time, Jane joined All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, California, where she met Rev. George Regas, a social activist with close connections to ecumenical religious leaders. She was involved in a program focused on the nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, which propelled her into a decades-long dedication to humanitarian work.

“I was so smitten with that experience that I wanted to continue the work,” she says. “I do a lot of speaking to young people at high schools, colleges, and universities, and I always tell students, ‘Pay attention to what comes your way. While you’re busy planning what you want to do, you may get an invitation that could change your life.’”

Jane also has chaired and co-chaired the boards of several international and national humanitarian organizations and taken mission trips to many countries in Africa, the Middle East, Asia,

and Latin America, which are chronicled in her memoir, *World Citizen: Journeys of a Humanitarian* (Greenleaf Book Group Press, 2022).

Outside his practice at Munger, Tolles & Olson, Ron has served as a director of Berkshire Hathaway, Edison International, City National Bank, The Washington Post Company, Provivi, and Andersen Group Inc. He also has served as a director and chair of numerous nonprofits.

A tradition of civic investment

Ron and Jane say they have been blessed by their experiences in life and have a desire to give back to “what helped create those experiences.”

This most recent gift to the Law School brings their lifetime giving to the institution to \$6.7 million, with previous gifts supporting the expansion and renovation of the Law School’s campus, the Law School Fund, and the Center for International and Comparative Law. They also give to Oxford University; each of their undergraduate alma maters; their churches; small-town newspapers in Iowa; and Los Angeles’s largest public radio station, where Ron served as its founding chair.

“We believe in our communities, whether they be the ones we live in now or the ones we grew up in; we have always given to everything that has influenced our lives,” says Ron.

At the start of 2020, the couple began planning their latest gift to the Law School. When Neel Sukhatme, the David A. Breach Dean of Law, joined as the institution’s 19th dean, their gift was finalized. Funds will be used at the dean’s discretion to support research, teaching, and programming that deepens understanding of the law’s role in democracy and advancing human rights and civic dialogue.

“Neel is phenomenal; he’s got energy and an outside perspective, and part of that is based on his own work in advancing democracy,” says Ron. “I’m really excited about working with him because, right now, the fundamentals of democracy—starting with the rule of law—are at risk. We want to do what we can to help.”

Ron and Jane’s recent gift to Michigan Law echoes other philanthropic achievements the couple has pursued together, such as the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles’s Ron Olson Justice Center and the Ron and Jane Olson Institute for Public Democracy at Drake University.

Ron and Jane take immense pride in their Ann Arbor and Michigan Law roots, which they share with their son, Steven Olson, ‘95; their daughter, Amy Duerk, ‘98; and their daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Olson, ‘97. They also have 10 grandchildren. “We’re going to have a lot more lawyers in the family,” says Jane.



Look to Michigan

The Look to Michigan campaign is a comprehensive effort to raise \$225 million to support five areas that are critical to Michigan Law’s success—

- Scholarships, fellowships, and debt management
- Innovation and research, including recruiting and retaining the very best faculty
- Our campus, with significant investment in the Underground Library
- Engagement and partnerships to prepare the next generation of leaders
- The Law School Fund, which holistically supports the Law School’s mission

At Michigan Law, we don’t just teach the law—we shape it. As the world looks to Michigan Law to lead, we look to you.

GIVE NOW

michigan.law.umich.edu/LTM



for what’s next ▶
Look to Michigan

I M P A C T

Catherine “Cathy” Fleming, ’76: Learning and Legacy Building

By Annie Hagstrom

Catherine “Cathy” Fleming, ’76, grew up in Royal Oak Township, Michigan, in the 1950s and ’60s, and found comfort and inspiration in her school teachers and librarians.

In junior high, her teachers organized a field trip to Ann Arbor, which was her first exposure to the University of Michigan campus. “I could sense this hunger for knowledge, and I thought to myself, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice to be in a place like this someday?’ It was so important for us kids to know that places like U-M exist,” she says.

Fleming went on to earn multiple degrees and has worked in the law and library system—and at the intersection of both. She also has made it a point to offer the same sense of support to younger generations that she once received.

As an homage to the opportunities she has had throughout her education and during her career—a career she says Michigan Law made possible—Fleming has long been a committed and loyal donor to her alma mater.

Service through law and libraries

In the early 1970s, Fleming earned her undergraduate degree from Wayne State University and began working in Detroit. She took assignments from a temp agency during the day and worked at a local public library in the evening until she began her legal studies at Michigan Law.

“I thrived in Ann Arbor,” says Fleming. “I found work playing the organ and keyboard for local churches, waitressing in Detroit, and working in the University of Michigan medical library; and I volunteered to usher for the University Musical Society.”

She says she was particularly influenced by the teaching and mentorship of Professors Beverly Pooley, Andrew Watson, and Whitmore Gray, ’57.

After graduating, Fleming applied for the Volunteers in Service to America program, which allowed her to postpone loan repayment for one year and placed her with Lansing Legal Aid. There, she helped establish a senior citizens’ unit through fundraising and contract negotiations with community organizations; after a year in Lansing, she returned to Detroit to work on the Senior Citizens Legal Aid project, which was part of the Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit.



A young Cathy Fleming, ’76 (center, in blue), was inspired by teachers and librarians to pursue higher education and library sciences. Later, she spent two years working at the Library of Congress, which she describes as “a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Fleming was eventually recruited by Michigan Attorney General Frank Kelley as an assistant attorney general in the Civil Rights Division, and later with the Michigan Employment Security Division. She also returned to Wayne State University to earn a graduate degree in library sciences. In 1991, Fleming graduated and left the attorney general’s office to become a branch manager at the North Flint (Michigan) Public Library.

During her two years in Flint, “We moved the library’s location from a shopping center to a public school that was being turned into a community center. Once the relocation was complete, we established an after-school program for kids.”

While at the Flint Library, she learned of an internship in Washington, DC, in the Copyright Division of the Library of Congress. After a competitive application process, she was accepted for the two-year position.

“For an information nerd, that job is best described as feeling like Christmas every day,” she says. “It was perfect for me—a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Paying it forward

Fleming eventually returned to Detroit to be closer to family and found work at Wayne State University Law Library and other public libraries until retirement. During that time, she joined the Alternative Dispute Resolution Section of the Michigan Bar Association and remained active in the law as a volunteer mediator for community agencies. She also is an active, loyal donor to the Law School Fund, Michigan Law’s primary source of discretionary funding.

“Having gone to the Law School is my superpower,” says Fleming. “I’ve been really, really lucky for what the school has done for my life; it opened doors that wouldn’t have opened for me otherwise. To be able to sit in a bank and discuss giving back—through language that had never been discussed in my family before—I have such glee when I put a check in the mailbox.”

Christopher D. McCleary, '91: A Legacy Formed from the Love of Law

By Annie Hagstrom

Christopher D. McCleary, '91, was never pushed by his father, Thomas R. Roberts, '66, toward any one career path. Instead, he was encouraged to discover and pursue what naturally interested him. The freedom to choose, it turned out, enabled McCleary to realize a genuine interest in the law and follow in his father's footsteps as a Michigan Law alumnus.

"My dad never said anything to me about going to law school, but he was delighted when I told him I would be attending Michigan Law, as he did," says McCleary.

Fast forward another three decades: McCleary's daughter, Caroline—who was raised with the same open-ended encouragement—arrived as a 1L at Michigan Law in fall 2025.

"Caroline had pursued the STEM field as an undergraduate, so I never dreamed that she would think of law school," he says. "She surprised me in the same way I seem to have surprised my dad."

Taking a leap

As a double Wolverine, McCleary earned his undergraduate degree from the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. He then worked for two years as a management consultant before returning to Ann Arbor for law school.

"Michigan Law, frankly, changed the way I think," he says. "Being in a smaller environment learning alongside a number of people, who you're going through this intense experience with, really allows you to create strong bonds. It was the most incredible time for me."

McCleary joined a firm in San Francisco after graduation, where he helped establish its intellectual property litigation practice before transitioning to in-house work at Visa International Service Association. In 2015, he joined the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) as general counsel. McCleary had been thinking about a change in career, and he appreciated that the role allowed him to turn his favorite part of his previous work into his entire job, every day—while also working for a cause he believes in.

"Throughout my time as an IP lawyer, then advertising lawyer, then sponsorship lawyer, I was always at the edge of sports law," he says. "I loved that part of my work the most; there is a real power to sport and the sacrifice and accomplishment



Christopher D. McCleary, '91, established a scholarship in honor of his father, Thomas R. Roberts, '66. His father, who served in the US Army and attended the Law School with funding from the GI Bill, is pictured on page 3.

of the people who become elite international Olympic and Paralympic athletes. I felt it was an incredible opportunity that came at the right time in my career."

McCleary worked for the USOPC until his retirement in 2025, and he held leadership positions overseeing the legal, operations, and finance departments. "What I like doing best is helping other people succeed and do great work," he says. "I also believe in bringing people onto your team who are smarter than you and helping them shine."

Paying it forward

Since retiring, McCleary has been teaching at the University of Washington School of Law as an adjunct professor and serving on the board of the Sports Lawyers Association (SLA). He has also remained connected to the Michigan Law community, most recently by honoring his father through a gift to their shared alma mater that established a scholarship in his name.

"I think about what U-M did for my dad, who was a first-generation college graduate and went on to earn a legal degree," says McCleary. "He was a GI Bill student who wanted to advance himself in ways that his family hadn't thought of. I think about the jump he made, and then I think about what the same institution was able to do for me. I couldn't be more grateful. That's why it's gratifying to be able to honor him through this scholarship."

I M P A C T

John S. Yun, '83: Crossing Barriers and Carving a Path for Others

By Annie Hagstrom

John S. Yun, '83, began his journey to Michigan Law in the driver's seat of a San Francisco Bay Area commuter bus. He started with Golden Gate Transit (GGT) in September of 1976, and eventually completed his undergraduate degree at UC Berkeley in 1979. While working at GGT, he joined the Amalgamated Transit Union local, which exposed him to policy and legal advocacy.



John S. Yun, '83, visiting the Alcázar de Segovia in Spain in October 2025.

Yun, a trial lawyer who spent more than two decades with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), says that his education provided him with opportunities not often available to working-class individuals, and he recently established a scholarship for socioeconomically disadvantaged students at Michigan Law.

"I believe college education is the great social pressure relief valve," says Yun. "I want to make it easier for someone like me to get into law school and graduate. It changed my life for the better and, maybe, it can change someone else's life."

Advocacy from the driver's seat

Yun worked for GGT as a bus driver, but he quickly discovered he could contribute more than just driving. GGT is a public entity with a largely unionized workforce, and Yun helped recommend political donations and draft proposed legislation. For about a year, he chaired the Coordinating Council of Bay Area Transit Unions, a committee of local transit union officers who work to develop common transit union strategies.

"After a while, the union's attorney said to me, 'You know, you're practicing law when you do this,'" recalls Yun. "I enjoyed the work, and when he said that, I really started to think about going to law school myself."

When Yun began applying to law schools, Michigan Law caught his attention and became his top choice.

"I looked at the catalog, and I was just amazed at the breadth of courses that were available," he says. "I scored the cost, classes, reputation, and environment across a few law schools, and on the overall total score, Michigan Law kept coming out ahead."

For Yun, admission to the Law School was a significant step toward an education, career, and income level that he didn't previously know was possible.

"As a bus driver, I followed intracity routes used by working-class people to get to the hospital, schools, doctors' appointments, the market, and work—similar people to those who become bus drivers," he says. "But on commuter routes, there's a very real social, economic, and cultural barrier between the person driving the bus and the people riding the bus. I felt that separation, and I didn't know that I would ever cross it. I was finally able to because of law school."

Support for future generations

Yun went on to a career in securities and commercial litigation, including a 24-year stint at the SEC, where he found his greatest fulfillment in trying cases—completing more than 20 in his first 14 years there. But beginning around 2011, Yun says that constitutional challenges to administrative law proceedings, particularly over the appointment and removal of administrative law judges, forced the commission to redo contested cases and significantly curtailed its ability to bring matters to an administrative trial. When COVID-19 arrived, he began looking toward retirement.

In the years since, Yun has reflected on how far he has come from the helm of a public bus, and he recently established the John S. Yun Law Scholarship fund through a planned gift at Michigan Law.

"I want to enable someone like me to make the decision I made—to go from being a bus driver to a lawyer," he says. "Law school isn't easy, financially or otherwise, so I hope to support them through the process with my scholarship."

Recent Gifts



Michael N. Burlant, BA '82, JD '86, and **Elizabeth L. Elting-Burlant** made an additional gift of \$100,000 to the Michael N. Burlant and Elizabeth L. Elting Scholarship Fund.

Jay C. Coppoletta, '03, and **Carey A. Coppoletta** made a gift of \$50,000 to the Victors for Michigan Scholarship Fund. Jay is the chief corporate development and legal officer at PEAK6 Investments LLC.

Kevin M. Costantino, '00, made a gift of \$100,000 to the Law School Fund. He is the co-head of corporate finance, head of Greenhill International, and co-head of mergers and acquisitions in the United States at the investment banking firm Greenhill & Co. He has been with the firm for more than 20 years.

Jessica Gibson Rosen, '01, made a gift of \$50,000 to the Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund. Based in Seattle, she serves as the vice president and associate general counsel at Amazon, one of several leadership positions she has held during her 17 years with the company.

Aidan Synnott, LL.M. '89, and **Elizabeth Grayer** made a gift of \$250,000 to establish the Synnott Grayer Family Scholarship Fund. Aidan is a partner at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, where he has worked for 37 years.

Matthew P. Herrick, '06, made a gift of \$75,000 to the Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund. He is a 25-year veteran of the securities industry and a former corporate attorney. He is the managing director of Herrick Wealth Advisory.



Barbara Jane Irwin, '80, of Winnetka, Illinois, made a gift of \$50,000 in honor of her Class of 1980 Reunion. She split her gift between the Barbara Jane Irwin Family Scholarship Fund and the Michigan Law Class of 1980 Scholarship Fund. Jane is retired from Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc., where she served as senior vice president of administration until 2011. She serves on the boards of S&C Electric Co., the Chicago Botanic Garden, and the American Writers Museum. She also is a member of the Law School's Development and Alumni Relations Committee.

Alex M. Liberman, '89, and **Kathryn L. Johnson, '90,** partnered with **Stephanie Posner** and her children, **Marissa, Drew, Emmy,** and **Katie,** to make a \$100,000 gift to the Law School. The gift established the Ethan Posner Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of **Ethan M. Posner, '89,** who died in February. Ethan was a partner at Covington & Burling LLP, where he developed a practice and expertise in federal investigations related to major pharmaceutical and health care organizations.

James C. Melvin, '90, and **Amy S. Melvin** made a gift of \$100,000 to establish the James and Amy Melvin Family Scholarship Fund. James is the president of the Connable Office in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Aaron A. Ostrovsky, '05, and **Andrea D. Ostrovsky, '05,** made a gift of \$50,000 to the Victors for Michigan Law Scholarship Fund. Aaron is the general counsel at Russell Investments, and Andrea is a partner at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP.

Tyler Page, '00, made a gift of \$146,000 to the Law School Fund. He is the founder and chief executive officer of Cipher Digital Inc., a data center development company that specializes in artificial intelligence and high-performance computing.

Sarah K. Rathke, '01, made a gift of \$100,000 to establish the Sarah Rathke Scholarship Fund. She is a partner in the New York and Cleveland offices of Squire Patton Boggs.

Raj N. Shah, BA '95, JD '97, and **Diane M. Shah BS '97,** made a gift of \$100,000 to establish the Raj N. and Diane M. Shah Scholarship Fund at the Law School and the Niranjani M. & Jayshree M. Shah & Dennis R. & Sue M. Yates Scholarship Fund at U-M's College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Raj is a partner and chair of the Chicago litigation group at DLA Piper.

Arthur H. Siegal, '86, and **Michele A. Siegal, BA '85, MBA '93,** documented a planned gift of \$50,000 to establish the Michele and Arthur Siegal Law Student Support Fund. Arthur is a partner at Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, and Michele is the director of development and alumni relations at U-M's Rackham Graduate School.

Joan P. Snyder, '84, made a gift of \$85,000 to the HBCU Go Blue Law Scholarship Fund in honor of **Rasheeda N. Creighton, '02.** Joan is based in Portland, Oregon.

CLASS NOTES

1963



THOMAS CREEL retired as a litigator from a large New York City firm and has since embarked on a career as an actor. He is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and has appeared on stage, in movies, on TV, and in commercials, including an appearance on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. Creel also is an active neutral arbitrator and mediator at JAMS (formerly known as Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services Inc.), specializing in intellectual property matters.

1964

JOHN E. MOGK is the 2025 recipient of the John W. Reed Michigan Lawyer Legacy Award, named in honor of the late Michigan Law professor. Presented periodically by the State Bar of Michigan, the award honors a law school educator in Michigan whose influence has elevated the quality of legal practice in the state. Mogk is a distinguished service professor of law at Wayne State University; he first joined the faculty in 1968. He also serves as chair of the faculty committee at Wayne State's Levin Center for Legislative Oversight and Democracy.

1969



THE HON. DONALD E. SHELTON, a former Washtenaw County Circuit Court judge, authored the lead article in the December 2025 *Michigan Bar Journal*, "New rules for better science in forensic science, and now AI comes along." Judge Shelton retired in 2024 after 10 years as director of the criminology and criminal justice program at the University of Michigan Dearborn. He continues to teach online at Michigan State University and the University of Arizona. Also, Judge Shelton recently received the Exceptional Achievement Award from the University of Nevada, where he earned his PhD in judicial studies in 2010.

1970

WALTER SUTTON reassumed the chairmanship of the board of trustees of Wiley University, a historically Black university located in Marshall, Texas. Sutton previously served as chairman from 2010 to 2022.

1972



MICHAEL COWAN, following his retirement as general counsel of TPX, a telecommunications services provider, published his debut novel, *John B. Peoples* (Köehler Books, 2026). A character study wrapped in a thriller, its subjects include lawyer-client relations and the limits of legal remedies. He surprised himself by being able

to build a website (michaelcowan.net) with the assistance of one of his daughters, and he now maintains it by himself—part of an invigorating life, even after retirement.

RICHARD N.W. LAMBERT joined Parker & McConkie Personal Injury Lawyers as of counsel in the firm's personal injury and civil rights practice. Lambert served for more than 30 years as an assistant US attorney for the District of Utah, holding senior leadership roles that include criminal chief and senior litigation counsel. He also has served in leadership roles with historical and community organizations, including the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation.

1981

VALERIE JARRETT is a 2026 recipient of the Order of Lincoln, the State of Illinois's highest honor for professional achievement and public service. Jarrett is the CEO and a member of the board of directors of the Obama Foundation and oversaw the development of the Obama Presidential Center, opening in June on Chicago's South Side.

1982



MICHAEL LEVEY received the Milwaukee Bar Association 2025 Pro Bono Publico award. Levey is the national pro bono partner at Quarles & Brady LLP. He also is a business law attorney who advises on business and regulatory issues facing entities in the health care industry, particularly the practices of physicians and dentists. Levey has advanced pro bono partnerships with numerous organizations, including the Wisconsin Equal Justice Fund, where he is a board member and past president.

1983



DONALD DRIPPS, the Warren Distinguished Professor at the University of San Diego School of Law, published *Sentencing Discretion and the Constitution: Due Process of Time* (Oxford University Press, 2026). The book argues that the US Supreme Court's treatment of prosecutorial sentencing power is inconsistent with due process, as prosecutors effectively set sentences by choosing charges while judges must be neutral arbiters.



CLAUDIO VISCO, LL.M., assumed the presidency of the International Bar Association (IBA) for the 2026 calendar year. Visco has held multiple senior positions in the IBA and has been a member of the management board since 2015. He is a senior partner in the Rome office of Lipani Legal & Tax. Read more at michigan.law.umich.edu/claudio-visco.

1985



ARNOLD "ARNIE" BRIER recently became the chief operating officer and chief legal officer at Yardi Systems. Yardi, based in Santa Barbara, California, is a property and asset management software company servicing the apartment and office industries. Brier joined Yardi 14 years ago as general counsel and participated in the company's growth from 2,000 employees to more than 10,000 employees worldwide. He serves on the boards of Yardi and WeWork Inc.

1986



ROBERT S. BICK was included in the *Legal 500* US Elite regional listing in its tier-one category for corporate mergers and acquisitions. He is a shareholder with Williams, Williams, Rattner & Plunkett PC in Birmingham, Michigan. Bick's practice focuses on corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and business transactions.

He also is the co-chair of the firm's corporate practice group.

WYCLIFFE "WYC" GROUSBECK was elected to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's board of trustees for a three-year term. He was the owner of the Boston Celtics from 2002 to 2025 and is an experienced investor, CEO, and founder. Grousbeck began his career as a venture capital investor before leading the acquisition of the Boston Celtics. He also serves as a trustee of giving for the Grousbeck Fazzalari charitable foundation that supports initiatives related to health care, education, and justice.

1988



GABRIEL J. CHIN and three other University of Michigan alumni connected at a recent conference at UC Davis School of Law. Chin, the Edward L. Barrett Jr. Distinguished Professor at UC Davis School of Law, is pictured with (left to right) **CHRISTIANA OCHOA, BA '93**, dean at Indiana University Maurer School of Law; **ANGELA ONWUACHI-WILLIG, '97**, dean at Boston University School of Law; and **MEERA E. DEO, '00**, the Honorable Vaino Spencer Chair at Southwestern Law School.

1989

PAUL EUGENE ESCOBAR recently joined the Rise Group Inc. in Cranston, Rhode Island, as its chief legal officer. The Rise Group is an efficiency and engineering services company. Previously, he was a senior corporate and securities attorney for Hasbro Inc.



JAMES "JIM" STEFFEN, a partner in the Minneapolis office of Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, was appointed leader of the firm's technology practice group. Steffen partners with clients to protect and enhance their brand assets through comprehensive trademark, advertising, and marketing law strategies.

DID YOU GET A NEW JOB OR A PROMOTION? WERE YOU RECOGNIZED WITH AN AWARD?

Share your news with classmates in an upcoming issue of the Law Quadrangle. Email LQNCClassNotes@umich.edu or visit law.umich.edu/classnotes to submit a class note online.

1991



MICHAEL B. STEWART received a 2025 Pro Bono Award from the American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA). He is a partner and co-founder of Fishman Stewart PLLC. Stewart was instrumental in promoting the inaugural World Intellectual Property Day programs throughout the US, working in tandem with the World Intellectual Property

Organization and the US Patent and Trademark Office. He also played a key role in establishing the Public Education Committee within the AIPLA.

1993



BETHANY A. BREETZ, a member at Stites & Harbison PLLC, was named to *Benchmark Litigation's* 2026 list of litigation stars in Kentucky. Her practice focuses on federal and state appellate advocacy as well as complex commercial litigation, including matters involving financial institutions, real estate, and trusts and estate litigation. Breetz

is co-chair of the firm's appellate advocacy group.



JEFFREY SHERMAN, a corporate partner in the Denver office of Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, was appointed to the firm's board. He advises clients through mergers and acquisitions and capital markets transactions, and provides counsel to growing companies related to governance and Securities and Exchange Commission compliance issues.

Sherman previously served as a deputy leader of Faegre Drinker's corporate practice group.

CLASS NOTES

DONICA T. VARNER stepped down from her position as vice president and general counsel of Cornell University in February. She was the first Black person to serve as the university's chief legal officer; she also mentored undergraduates in the Meinig Family National Scholars Program and was an executive sponsor of the Women of Color Colleague Network. Varner previously held leadership roles at Oberlin College, the University of Michigan, and Wayne State University.

1994

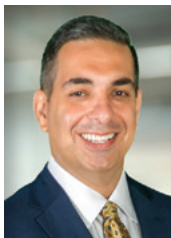


DAVID PLUNKETT, a shareholder with business law firm Williams Williams Rattner & Plunkett PC, was included in the commercial dispute category of *Legal 500's* Elite City Focus regional list for Detroit. Plunkett is a litigator and business lawyer who handles contract disputes, shareholder disputes, land use and zoning, employment law, and real estate matters. He also is an experienced probate litigator, including will and trust disputes.

1996

TODD YOUNG is now chief financial officer (CFO) at Acadia Healthcare. He previously was CFO at Elanco Animal Health Inc., which he joined in 2018 as the company separated from Eli Lilly and Company. Before Elanco, Young served as CFO of Acadia Pharmaceuticals, where he worked on the company's financial processes and commercial pricing strategy.

1997



BRIAN C. BERNHARDT is a member of the 2026 class of Leadership Greensboro, a nine-month program developed by the Chamber of Commerce in Greensboro, North Carolina, that works toward positive change in the region. Bernhardt is a partner in the taxation and wealth planning department of Fox Rothschild LLP.

RICHARD A. BIERSCHBACH has become the 14th president of Wayne State University after serving as the university's interim president since September 2025. Prior to his appointment, he was dean of the Wayne State Law School for eight years. Bierschbach is a scholar and educator with expertise in criminal law and procedure, administrative law and regulation, and corporate governance.

WILLIAM "BILL" QUICK opened a boutique practice, Outside Inside Counsel LLC, to serve family offices with growing portfolios. His experience managing the corporate portfolios of family offices and business enterprises includes issues involving corporate governance, mergers and acquisitions, asset and equity purchases and sales, security law and corporate transparency act compliance, strategic alliances and joint ventures, and operational exigencies.

1998

PAUL BAVIER is now chief legal counsel at Sudo Biosciences, a biopharmaceutical company. He previously served as general counsel, secretary, and chief administrative officer at HilleVax Inc., where he was a founding member of the leadership team and helped guide the company through its initial public offering and clinical development milestones. Bavier also previously served as general counsel at VelosBio Inc., Avedro Inc., and Bidel Inc.

DID YOU GET A NEW JOB OR A PROMOTION? WERE YOU RECOGNIZED WITH AN AWARD?

Share your news with classmates in an upcoming issue of the *Law Quadrangle*. Email LQNCClassNotes@umich.edu or visit law.umich.edu/classnotes to submit a class note online.

BARBARA RUSSELL returned to Littler Mendelson PC as a shareholder in its San Francisco office. She most recently served as the global director of employee relations at a global technology company and previously held senior in-house roles in the aviation and environmental services sectors.



CHRISTOPHER L. WENDT was appointed as inaugural chair of the new Minnesota State Board of Civil Legal Aid by Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Natalie Hudson. Read more about his work on page 11.

2001



JAY HARRINGTON has joined Latitude Legal, a legal talent company, as the leader and founding partner of a new regional corporate office in Detroit. In this role, Harrington will connect former Big Law attorneys and experienced in-house counsel to corporate legal departments and law firms for contract and interim engagements.

MICHAEL SERAFINI was promoted to partner at Mayer Brown. He represents clients in a variety of industries in complex corporate transactions, with a focus on mergers, equity and asset acquisitions, and divestitures and equity investments. Serafini also has experience structuring joint ventures, including for private equity real estate clients.

2002

ANDREA P. CLARK recently joined River Partners, a nonprofit restoring riverways and floodplains, as its senior director of strategy and risk management. Previously, Clark was a partner in the water practice group at Downey Brand LLP in Sacramento, California, where she served as general counsel to a variety of public agencies and advised clients on water rights, floodplain management, and public agency law.

Jessica Jiwon Choe, '24: Connected by the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic

By Annie Hagstrom

Food has always been a source of joy for Jessica Jiwon Choe, '24, especially traditional Korean dishes. The main character of her debut children's book couldn't agree more.

Yuna Choe and the Perfect Bowl of Rice (A Colorful Collection, 2026) is a Korean American picture book written by Choe and illustrated by Celine Kim. In the story, the young protagonist, Yuna, aims to earn perfect grades, have perfect manners, and make the perfect bowl of rice. But when she adds too little water to a pot, she is left with a burnt mess—or so she thinks. Yuna feels like she failed, but her parents help her see that mistakes can lead to unexpected successes, even delicious ones. By burning the rice, Yuna has made nurungji, a traditional Korean snack in its own right.

During her time at Michigan Law, Choe served as a student-attorney in the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic (ZEC). Around the same time, A Colorful Collection (ACC) was a client of the ZEC, through which it earned its nonprofit status and became a publisher.

Their connection with the ZEC brought Choe and ACC together, ultimately sharing *Yuna Choe and the Perfect Bowl of Rice* with young readers.

Bringing her and others' ideas to life

Choe is an associate at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, where she focuses on transactional law in the firm's New York finance group. Her work as a children's book author, however, began at Michigan Law.

"It all came to me in one night," she recalls. "I accidentally burnt a pot of rice, and at first I was sad, but then I thought it could be a great lesson about turning mistakes around—one that I wish I could've read when I was young."

While Choe was plotting out her story on Post-it Notes stuck around her Lawyers Club dorm room, she also was serving as an advanced student-attorney in the ZEC.

The ZEC, created in 2012, is the first clinic of its kind in the United States. The clinic provides no-cost legal services to a significant number of student-led and other startups, including entity formation, intellectual property protection, advice on worker classification issues, advice on various contracts, financing, and deal-making.

"During my first semester with the clinic, I did a lot of work researching patents and helping with NDAs, startup formation, and LLC filings," says Choe. "That work really called to me



Jessica Jiwon Choe, '24, a former student-attorney in the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic, published her debut children's book with help from a former clinic client.

because we were servicing real entrepreneurs on campus and around Michigan, and it meant I could help someone's idea come to life. That's why I chose to participate for two semesters."

Staying up to date with the ZEC beyond graduation, Choe was thrilled to learn that ACC had earned its nonprofit status and become a publisher. From there, she reached out.

Finding the right partnership

ACC promotes storytelling rooted in culture, identity, and lived experience as essential for connection, belonging, and learning. Through inclusive children's literature, ACC creates space for stories that have historically been silenced due to systemic barriers, racial inequities in publishing, and the ongoing rise of book bans.

"A Colorful Collection contacted me after reading through my book and offered to publish it," says Choe. "I was ecstatic."

In South Korea, May 5 is Children's Day (Eorini-nal), a public holiday celebrated annually to honor children and promote their happiness, rights, and well-being. Choe decided to release *Yuna Choe and the Perfect Bowl of Rice* on May 5, 2026.

"This story would never have happened if a million little things didn't go right, and all those things went right because I was at Michigan Law," she says. "I'm super grateful to everyone at A Colorful Collection, the Zell Entrepreneurship Clinic, and all my friends at the Law School who supported me through this. It's just been a really lovely journey."

The Hon. J. Chris Larson, '99: Building a More Inclusive Courthouse

By Allison Torres Burtka

As a Colorado district court judge, the Hon. J. Chris Larson, '99, believes it's important to meet people where they are and to acknowledge them as they see themselves.

In 2024, Larson was appointed to the 20th Judicial District Court in Boulder, Colorado, after more than 20 years with the US Department of Justice. At the US Attorney's Office in Denver, Larson created an internship program for people with intellectual disabilities, such as Down syndrome.

At the District Court, Larson launched a similar program, called the Intellectual Diversity Internship Program. "As a court, we need to serve the entire population of the county that we serve—all incomes, all educational backgrounds, and all abilities," he says.

People with intellectual disabilities often have limited opportunities to participate fully in their communities, Larson says. Providing work opportunities opens the door to "the value and joy that realizing the full potential of an individual's human capacity can bring to an environment."

The interns' contributions go beyond the tasks they complete. Having people in his chambers who process information differently helps Larson and his team communicate better with everyone who comes into the courthouse, he says.

Developing a supportive program

The court's current intern, Sumin Lee, is from Regis University, which has a program for young people with intellectual disabilities. Her projects include making sure that forms are available for members of the public and that Larson's courtroom is ready for the next day—checking all the microphones and prepping minute orders.

Lee says she likes the work and the people she works with. "After I'm done with Regis, I want to be an author that writes about criminal stuff. I want to learn more knowledge about the courthouse and how criminal justice works."

The Regis program provides a trained peer mentor who accompanies the intern and also offers training for people who don't have experience working with people with intellectual disabilities.



The Hon. J. Chris Larson, '99, hired Andrew Regan as the Intellectual Diversity Internship Program's first intern in the fall of 2024.

Larson credits the support of the court administration, clerk of court, Chief Judge Nancy Salomone, '98, and other team members in getting the program off the ground.

"We're all temporarily abled. We don't start from a place of ability, and many of us won't end that way, either. It's really appreciating the fact that we're all—every one of us—on a spectrum, and being willing and able to engage with people where they are."

When building the program, Larson reached out to his civil procedure professor from law school, Kent Syverud, '81, then chancellor and president at Syracuse University, to learn about its InclusiveU program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Inclusion in the courtroom

"Everybody who walks into my courtroom needs to see me as their judicial officer," Larson says. That doesn't mean he's biased, "but it does mean that I'm going to be able to hear whatever argument they've got, and they need to feel welcome in my courtroom however they are able to present."

Larson created inclusivity guidelines that spell out how he speaks to parties and honors people's stated names and pronouns. "It has a lot to do with removing gendered presumptions in how I meet someone for the first time," he says. "As opposed to calling somebody Mr. or Ms., I remove that from the equation altogether, and I'll refer to them as Counselor, Juror, or Litigant Jones."

As Larson models this language, he's found that most litigants do, too, even if he doesn't draw attention to it.

"If a person knows themselves a certain way, if I can reflect back that I am seeing them in the way that they know themselves, that's the most respectful thing that I can do," Larson says.

As a judge in a court of general jurisdiction, Larson says he learns something new every day. Being a judge is "a significant opportunity to make a positive difference in people's lives and to help people who are stuck. They need a decision, and they need to feel heard and move on to whatever the next chapter is."

RYAN DANKS, former director of civil enforcement for the US Department of Justice Antitrust Division, has joined Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP as a partner in its antitrust and competition group. Based in the Washington, DC, office, he also works in the firm’s government and regulatory litigation practice.

2003

NEIL H. DISHMAN was named one of *Lawdragon’s* 500 Leading US Corporate Employment Lawyers for 2026. He is a principal in the Chicago office of Jackson Lewis PC, where his practice focuses on helping employers prevent and resolve employee-related disputes.



JENNIFER SCHELLER NEUMANN joined Holland & Hart LLP as counsel in the firm’s energy, environment, and natural resources group. She previously served in the US Department of Justice’s Environment and Natural Resources Division for 20 years. Read more about Neumann’s practice on page 12.



CHRISTINA DIXON, founder of Aecus Law, a third-party neutral employment investigation firm, received the *Sacramento Business Journal’s* 2025 Fastest Growing Company award and received recognition in the *Journal’s* Women Who Mean Business category. In addition, she was included in the \$1-2 million revenue category for *Entreprising Women’s* 2025 Enterprising Women of the Year event.

2004

THOMAS HUGHES joined Venable LLP as a partner in the firm’s corporate practice group in Chicago. He has spent his legal career advising public and private companies, private equity firms, sovereign funds, family offices, and independent sponsors on complex US and cross-border mergers and acquisitions, leveraged buyouts, and strategic investments.

DOUGLAS PARK published *Starting Startups: Integrate People, Product, and Position for Success* (Advantage Media, 2026). The book provides insight for startup founders related to team performance, market dynamics, and competitive strategy.



AZADEH N. SHAHSHAHANI served as a Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow at Harvard Law School in fall 2025. The fellowship program brings outstanding public interest attorneys to Harvard Law School to counsel students about careers in public service.

2005



ABBEY TRUE HARRIS joined Connell Foley LLP as a partner in the firm’s regulatory affairs and compliance group. She will provide counsel on complex litigation and appellate law, as well as direct a firmwide community engagement program. Previously, Harris worked as chief legal officer and senior vice president of external affairs at Reciprocal Management Corporation.

MICHAEL KHALIL joined Pierson Ferdinand LLP as a partner in the firm’s Washington, DC, corporate department. Khalil practices at the intersection of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, federal securities laws, and the investment management industry. Previously, he was a senior counsel in the Division of Investment Management at the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

ANDREW LIEVENSE, an assistant US attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, was appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals for the First District by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Earlier in his career, Lievens practiced in the litigation department at Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP in Detroit.

BRYAN YOON is now general counsel and chief administrative officer at Alentis Therapeutics AG, a clinical-stage biotechnology company. He has worked with life sciences companies throughout his legal career, most recently as chief operating officer and general counsel at Terns Pharmaceuticals.

2007

STEPHEN KILAR is now director of communications for the City of Ann Arbor. Most recently, Kilar was an associate director of news for the *Arizona Republic*. He also has worked as a reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*, communications director for the ACLU of Arizona, and director of brand management and communications for Arizona State University’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy.

2008



DAVID SILLERS joined the Dallas office of Hilgers PLLC. Sillers represents companies and individuals seeking redress in defamation cases and helps prevent the need for such lawsuits by working with crisis management firms, public relations firms, and counsel for media companies. He joins Hilgers from the Virginia-based Clare Locke LLP.

DID YOU GET A NEW JOB OR A PROMOTION? WERE YOU RECOGNIZED WITH AN AWARD?

Share your news with classmates in an upcoming issue of the *Law Quadrangle*. Email LQNClassNotes@umich.edu or visit law.umich.edu/classnotes to submit a class note online.

CLASS NOTES

JUSTIN WINERMAN joined the Chicago office of Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP as a partner in the financial restructuring and insolvency practice. Previously, Winerman practiced at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom for 17 years, where he advised clients on all aspects of complex corporate restructurings.

2009

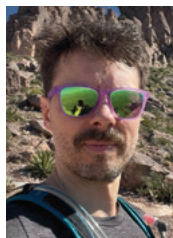
JASON LAFOND was appointed to the Texas Pharmaceutical Initiative Governing Board by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. LaFond is counsel at Scott Douglass & McConnico LLP. Previously, he served as assistant solicitor general and as associate vice president for legal affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

2010

DANIEL A. GROSSMAN joined Clark Hill PLC's Detroit office. Grossman regularly represents clients in federal and state courts in complex litigation matters, including intellectual property litigation, contract disputes, and disputes between shareholders and other business owners.

ZACHARY LEVASSEUR joined Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP in Atlanta as franchise litigation counsel and member of the firm's litigation practice group and franchise and distribution team. His practice focuses on franchise compliance, disclosure, and litigation work.

2011



JESSE KIRCHNER was appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. At the time of his appointment, Kirchner was a senior tax counsel and tribal liaison at the Michigan Department of Treasury's Bureau of Tax Policy. Before that, he clerked at the Michigan Supreme Court for Justices Stephen Markman, Joan Larsen, and Elizabeth Clement.

RAJEEV RAGHAVAN joined Crowell & Moring LLP in its privacy and cybersecurity group. He is a former special counsel to the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, advising on high-profile cyber initiatives, AI strategy and risk, and internal security modernization. Before that, he was an assistant US attorney for the District of Maryland.

2012

JUSTIN BENSON was elected partner at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP. He practices complex litigation and specializes in representing clients in government contracts litigation, including bid protests, False Claims Act investigations, and regulatory disputes. He has successfully argued dispositive motions in venues across the country and has contributed to wins in high-profile product liability cases.

JONATHAN FOMBONNE was appointed Harris County (Texas) attorney. In the role, Fombonne will serve as the chief civil lawyer for the third-largest county in the country, with more than 5 million residents, and will represent the county in litigation, manage contract work, and support child protective services. He previously was the deputy county attorney and first assistant in the Harris County Attorney's Office. Before that, Fombonne was a partner at Kirkland and Ellis LLP, where he specialized in complex commercial litigation.



JOSEPH MICHAELS, a partner in the Chicago office of Sidley Austin LLP, has been named to the 40 Under 40 Class of 2025 by *Crain's Chicago Business*. Michaels represents public and private companies, as well as private capital investors, in a wide variety of merger and acquisition transactions and corporate governance matters.

DID YOU GET A NEW JOB OR A PROMOTION? WERE YOU RECOGNIZED WITH AN AWARD?

Share your news with classmates in an upcoming issue of the *Law Quadrangle*. Email LQNCClassNotes@umich.edu or visit law.umich.edu/classnotes to submit a class note online.

2013

ZACHARY CIULLO co-founded Hayden Ryan & Ciullo LLP, a boutique litigation firm based in Chicago that focuses on commercial disputes. Prior to founding the firm, Ciullo was a litigation partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP.

LARA FINKBEINER joined Democracy Forward as a deputy managing attorney. Previously, she served in several positions at the International Refugee Assistance Project, including as deputy legal director and director of global pro bono.



JENNIFER ROBINS joined Saul Ewing LLP as a counsel in the firm's Washington, DC, office, where she will focus on disputes and compliance issues involving disabilities laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Fair Housing Act. She is a former trial attorney for the Disability Rights Section of the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.



WHITNEY SCHNEIDER-WHITE has been promoted to partner at BakerHostetler LLP in the firm's Washington, DC, office. She focuses her practice on evolving US state and federal privacy legislation, cross-border data protection, emerging technology regulation and compliance, and the intersection of technology and financial services.

Elizabeth Morales, '20: Humanizing the Law through Clinical Work

By Annie Hagstrom

In 2023, as one of the few associates with both a Michigan and Ohio license in the Detroit office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, Elizabeth Morales, '20, was uniquely positioned to work on a significant human trafficking case as a junior lawyer. She also had relevant experience from her time as a student-attorney in Michigan Law's Human Trafficking and Immigration Clinic (HTC).

Following her graduation from U-M's College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Morales worked in Washington, DC, for the US Department of Justice Antitrust Division. There, she came across an article about a human trafficking raid that occurred only a few miles from her parents' home in Southwest Detroit.

"At the time, I was still deciding between law schools, but when I saw that article and learned that Michigan Law had the Human Trafficking Clinic, among others, it was a very easy choice," remembers Morales.



Elizabeth Morales, '20, says her experience with the Human Trafficking and Immigration Clinic was foundational in her work representing a prominent antitrafficking activist after graduation.

The art of translation

Communicating effectively with clients is a primary skill Morales says she learned from Michigan Law's clinical program.

"As a law student, it's easy to get used to talking in legalese—even more so when working at a law firm. Being able to take a story from a client, address their emotional and legal needs, and translate complex legal systems and jargon back to them is essential," says Morales. "Law school teaches you how to understand the law, and clinics help humanize the law."

Following graduation, Morales began working at a firm in Ohio, where she had previously been a summer associate. She returned to Michigan two years later and joined Dykema, which, around the same time, had taken on *State v. Martin*. Morales was the first associate assigned to the case.

The case involved Alexis Martin, a prominent antitrafficking activist and survivor from Ohio. Morales's ability to practice across state borders, alongside her knowledge and experience in the HTC, made her the right fit. "I worked on the case with a partner who leads the white collar and government investigations group," she says. "I spent hundreds of hours working on a pro bono basis."

Coming to a close

At only 15, Martin was arrested for her role in the death of her alleged abuser. She was released in 2020, at the age of 22, after receiving commutation from Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine. The state placed her under parole supervision for a minimum of 14 years, which was equal to the minimum remainder of her initial sentence.

In December 2021, after a parole violation, she was returned to prison to serve the remainder of her sentence. When Martin's case reached Dykema in 2023, the basis of its argument revolved around Ohio's Safe Harbor Law, which is meant to direct child human trafficking victims into supportive services and, in most cases, dismiss the charges against them. The law was instituted during the time of Martin's first arrest but was never afforded to her.

"We came in at the post-conviction stage, so we were working to get Alexis released from prison the second time," says Morales. "We even had the help of a team of student-attorneys from the Human Trafficking Clinic, who were a huge part of the case."

Morales left Dykema the following year and is now working in-house at the City of Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, but she continued to follow the case. In August 2025, Martin was released from prison and is spending a minimum of 18 months living, working, and receiving counseling and services through a recovery center for survivors of sex trafficking and drug addiction.

"When I was at Michigan Law, I never could've imagined how my work in the clinic would lay the groundwork for a life-changing case like this," says Morales. "The same week that Alexis was released, I formally went inactive in Ohio. The timing feels serendipitous."

CLASS NOTES

2015

JAKE BURNE was elected partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP in Denver. He is a member of the finance group in the transactions department and represents private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies in a broad range of domestic and cross-border transactions, including acquisition financings and leveraged buyouts, senior syndicated facilities, asset-based lending, and other secured and unsecured financings.

MICHAEL FIALKOFF was elected partner at Day Pitney LLP in the firm's Parsippany, New Jersey, office. He represents clients in commercial litigation, including consumer class actions, contractual disputes, intellectual property disputes, and disputes under the New Jersey Franchise Practices Act. He also has an active fiduciary and probate litigation practice and represents both fiduciaries and beneficiaries in complex estate matters.



SEAN KILLEEN has been elevated to partner at BakerHostetler LLP in the firm's San Francisco office. He defends major technology companies, retailers, credit unions, law firms, health care providers, insurance companies, private universities, and others in privacy litigation. Prior to joining BakerHostetler, Killeen was a litigation associate at Fenwick & West LLP.

JUSTIN MONTIS was promoted to partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in the firm's Santa Monica, California, office. He is a member of Orrick's mergers and acquisitions and private equity group and its corporate business unit. Montis advises private equity funds and their portfolio companies, as well as other public and private companies, on a broad range of strategic transactions.

KARIMA TAWFIK THOMPSON was named partner at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC. Thompson is based in Buchanan's Washington, DC, office and handles commercial and white collar litigation in the Eastern District of Virginia and the District of Columbia. Her focus is on litigating cross-border disputes, including for foreign corporate clients.

2016

ADRIENNE BOYD was elected partner at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP, where she is a member of the product liability litigation practice in the firm's Denver office. Boyd represents pharmaceutical, medical device, and consumer products companies in mass tort and other complex litigation.

AVI EMANUEL was promoted to partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. He is part of the firm's corporate practice and advises start-up companies in a variety of matters, including entity formation, venture financing, corporate governance, employment matters, and securities law compliance.

MOHSEN GHAZI joined Perkins Coie LLP as a partner in the firm's private client services practice in Chicago. Ghazi previously was a partner in the tax practice of an international firm and was a deputy general counsel at a multifamily office and private capital platform for ultra-high-net-worth individuals.

TIMOTHY SMITH was named partner at Warner Norcross + Judd LLP in Detroit. He is a litigator representing clients in both state and federal courts, and his practice focuses on appeals, supply chain conflicts, contractual disputes, complex commercial litigation, and constitutional litigation.

ELENA VESPOLI was elected partner at Gunderson Dettmer Stough Villeneuve Franklin & Hachigian LLP. She practices in the public companies group in the firm's New York City office.

YUAN XIA was elected partner at Morrison & Foerster LLP. She is a member of the executive compensation and benefits group in the firm's Palo Alto, California, transactions department. Xia's practice focuses on the transactional aspects of a variety of executive compensation matters. She advises emerging companies, venture capital-backed clients, and publicly traded companies.

2017

RASMEET K. CHAHIL has been elevated to partner at Lowenstein Sandler LLP, where she represents clients in commercial litigation, internal investigations, and white collar defense matters. Chahil also has a robust pro bono practice that includes domestic violence and asylum cases.

JACOB RAMBEAU joined the intellectual property litigation practice group at Honigman LLP in the firm's Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, office. Rambeau guides clients through complex intellectual property and commercial litigation, with a focus on patent infringement, the misappropriation of trade secrets, and contract disputes.

DID YOU GET A NEW JOB OR A PROMOTION? WERE YOU RECOGNIZED WITH AN AWARD?

Share your news with classmates in an upcoming issue of the *Law Quadrangle*. Email LQNCClassNotes@umich.edu or visit law.umich.edu/classnotes to submit a class note online.

SACHI SCHURICHT was promoted to partner at Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in the firm's San Francisco office. She is a litigator who represents cryptotechnology and financial technology clients in commercial disputes.

DEEVA SHAH was elevated to partner at Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP. She represents technology companies and professionals in commercial disputes, with a focus on intellectual property, complex contract litigation, and professional liability defense. She also represents artificial intelligence companies in copyright litigation.



TYLER VIVIAN was named partner at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP in the firm’s corporate practice group in Minneapolis. He represents issuers and investment banks in initial public offerings, secondary offerings, registered direct offerings, and high-yield and investment-grade debt offerings. Vivian also represents emerging companies and venture capital funds in private placements of equity and debt securities and governance matters.

2018



CAITLIN DEAN was promoted to principal at Fish & Richardson PC. Her practice focuses on complex intellectual property disputes, with an emphasis on the life sciences and pharmaceutical fields.

ADAM N. ROSENBERG joined Clark Hill PLC as a senior attorney. He provides legal counsel to a wide range of clients, including entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and large global companies. Rosenberg represents clients in federal and state courts in complex litigation matters and advises on compliance, antitrust investigations, and other critical issues. Prior to joining the firm, Rosenberg was a senior associate at ZVMLaw.

2019 and 2020

TREVOR PARKES, '19, and **ELIZABETH GREITER, '20**, celebrated the birth of their daughter in August 2025. Parkes is the counsel and project director of the First Step Act Resource Center for the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Greiter is the lead counsel of health and regulatory research at Abbott (formerly Exact Sciences).

2021

GUUS DUINDAM joined Wilkinson Stekloff LLP as an associate in the firm’s Washington, DC, office after serving as a clerk for US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor; the **HON. RAYMOND KETHLEDGE, '93**, on the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit; and the **HON. JUDITH E. LEVY, '96**, on the US District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan.

2022



CHRISTIANA JOHNSON and **STEPHEN ANDERSEN** were married in September 2025 by fellow 2022 alumnus **ANDREW PARKS**. Johnson and Andersen met when they were both placed in Section K during their 1L year. A number of 2022 graduates attended the wedding, including **AARON GURLEY, HYE-JIN KIM, WARSAME ELMI, TYLER VANDERMOLEN, ALIYA CROCHETIERE, T.J. BUTLER, PARKS**, and **PETER HARDING** (pictured, left to right, with the bride and groom).

JOSEPH KEMP competed on *60 Day Hustle*, a television series in which entrepreneurs compete in a business accelerator challenge. Kemp founded Games that Matter LLC and also is the founder and CEO of JMKemp & Co. LLC, a consultancy for graduate school applicants and startups.

NICHOLAS STAMATES co-authored “The Legacy of the Ken Penders Legal Cases and Possible Copyright Infringement Lingering Over Sega’s Sonic the Hedgehog Series” with Ken Penders, a comic book writer and artist. It will appear in the *Berkeley Journal of Entertainment and Sports Law* later this year.

2025

SCOTT BAYS joined Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP as an associate in the firm’s Denver-based intellectual property practice group.

VANESSA WILSON joined the Fort Wayne, Indiana, office of Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP as an associate in the product liability and mass torts practice group.

I N M E M O R I A M

1950s

Robert D. Winters, '50	10/07/2025
Richard S. Marx, '51	5/12/2025
George R. Ariyoshi, '52	4/19/2026
Richard C. Learman, '52	1/16/2026
George A. Skestos, '52	1/09/2026
Robert A. Johnston, '53	12/11/2025
David R. Frazer, '54	10/16/2025
Ray B. Marglous, '54	11/06/2025
Henry R. Smitter, '54	12/31/2025
James W. Beatty, '55	1/11/2026
Robert B. Fiske, '55	12/04/2025
Howard R. Miller, '55	4/22/2024
Leonard J. Prekel, '55	2/11/2026
Tom C. Willson, '55	7/26/2025
Thomas V. Fischer, '56	10/13/2025
Eugene H. Gilmartin, '56	2/03/2026
Thomas A. Lazaroff, '56	11/16/2024
Roderick D. Hayes, '57	4/11/2024
Jochen A. Frowein, '58	2/08/2026
Joseph A. Gemignani, '58	1/22/2026
James F. Hillis, '58	11/09/2024
David J. Morgan, '58	11/24/2025
James K. Oshiro, '58	10/31/2024
Lawrence G. Becker, '59	6/01/2024
Ronald L. Gainer, '59	1/30/2026
Richard J. Grunawalt, '59	9/22/2025
Ronald J. Linder, '59	6/19/2025

1960s

Robert W. Appleford, '60	9/26/2025
Paul Babitz, '60	10/23/2025
David R. Shaub, '60	12/23/2025
Marvin L. Wilenzik, '60	3/21/2026
Richard E. Young, '60	1/07/2026
Robert B. Creal, '61	12/25/2025
Jerome B. Greenbaum, '61	11/13/2025
James W. Haugh, '61	1/27/2026
Robert A. Holstein, '61	1/13/2026
Edwin J. Stedem, '61	11/08/2025

Joseph P. Baker, '62	1/25/2026
Morrison L. Heth, '62	3/03/2026
Roger E. Legg, '62	2/16/2026
Chris L. McKenney, '62	3/16/2026
Daniel H. Steidl, '62	7/09/2024
Peter A. Titta, '62	12/08/2025
D. Sidney Condit, '63	1/02/2026
Sarah K. Efremoff, '63	11/24/2025
William C. Fried, '63	12/19/2025
William T. Holcomb, '63	10/13/2025
D. Michael Kratchman, '63	10/28/2025
William H. McCarter, '63	1/20/2026
Michael W. Misch, '63	3/21/2026
Walter A. Van Asselt, '63	10/15/2025
Scott F. Zimmerman, '63	1/11/2026
John J. Dood, '64	12/28/2025
William T. Hutton, '64	10/30/2025
Alan P. Miller, '64	11/28/2025
John P. Williams, '64	1/22/2026
Charles E. Clark, '65	12/20/2025
Theodore E. Heimer, '65	4/13/2024
Alan J. Olson, '65	9/06/2025
Patricia K. Park, '65	12/18/2025
Richard E. Whitmer, '65	1/26/2026
John C. Cook, '66	5/24/2025
Henry W. Ewalt, '66	3/05/2026
Paul E. Goodspeed, '66	2/03/2026
James E. Howie, '66	11/14/2025
John A. Onder, '66	1/08/2026
Michael S. Adelman, '67	2/10/2026
Lawrence M. Glazer, '68	11/28/2025
James L. McDonald, '68	10/01/2025
Robert S. Rosemurgy, '68	11/08/2025
Richard F. Carlile, '69	9/23/2025
James M. Cribley, '69	11/26/2024
Charles L. Gagnebin, '69	9/14/2025
John R. Holmes, '69	1/04/2026
Thomas M. O'Leary, '69	12/30/2025
Harold W. Reick, '69	12/29/2025
Stephen Z. Surrudge, '69	3/08/2025

1970s

Stephen C. Ellis, '70	2/12/2024
David E. Everson, '71	11/19/2025
Peter P. Liem, '71	2/15/2026
Gifford D. Smith, '71	2/04/2026
Thomas J. McNaughton, '72	12/08/2025
Jonathan H. Schwartz, '73	5/09/2024
Philip O. Stafford, '73	10/21/2025
C. Mark Stoppels, '73	1/30/2026
Darryl S. Bell, '74	12/26/2025
Robin E. Foor, '74	10/28/2025
Mary R. Barnett, '75	10/03/2025
Gary S. Hardke, '75	1/06/2026
Jeffrey K. Haynes, '75	2/16/2026
Ronald S. Longhofer, '75	3/11/2026
Mark S. Keegan, '77	12/07/2025
Richard W. McHugh, '78	12/24/2025
David T. Wasserman, '78	12/28/2025
Richard H. Gamble, '79	2/04/2026

1980s

Beryl E. Wade, '80	5/26/2025
Ethan M. Posner, '89	2/11/2026

1990s

Todd W. Grant, '91	9/21/2025
Eric N. Hoover, '91	12/21/2024
Kathryn S. Wood, '96	3/20/2026

2010s

Jeremy A. Brave-Heart, '11	11/14/2025
Peter C. Krzywicki, '11	11/21/2025
Michael Periat, '19	1/16/2026

Robert B. Fiske Jr., '55, HLLD '97



Robert B. Fiske Jr., '55, HLLD '97, a renowned federal prosecutor and private practitioner who established the Robert B. Fiske Jr. Fellowship Program for Government Service at Michigan Law, died on December 4, 2025. He was 94.

Fiske believed in the value of government service and endowed the Fiske Fellowship Program in 2001 to encourage recent Law School graduates to pursue positions as government lawyers. The fellowship program pays for both college and law school debt for three years, plus a stipend for living expenses. To date, 84 fellows have been supported by the fellowship. (Read more about the program on page 32.)

"Bob knew that government service is essential to a healthy democracy and a well-functioning legal system," says Neel U. Sukhatme, the David A. Breach Dean of Law and professor of law. "Through the Fiske Fellowship, he has enabled dozens of Michigan Law graduates to pursue that work without financial constraint. His generosity and vision will continue to shape our alumni and strengthen the institutions they serve."

Fiske was born in Brooklyn, New York, and was an alumnus of Pomfret School and Yale University, in addition to Michigan Law. He began his legal career at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP in 1955, where his practice focused on professional liability, securities, products liability, and white collar crime.

His *New York Times* obituary called him "a tenacious young prosecutor [who...] earned a reputation for winning challenging cases against organized crime." In 1960, when he was only 28 years old, he successfully had John Dioguardi, a labor racketeer, sentenced to four years in prison on tax evasion charges after repeated failed convictions against him. In 1977, he secured the conviction of Nicky Barnes, a Harlem drug kingpin who had been known as "Mr. Untouchable" for eluding conviction in four earlier cases. In 1979, Fiske successfully prosecuted Anthony M. Scotto, a powerful and politically connected leader of the longshoremen's union, who was found guilty of extorting payoffs from waterfront businessmen.

While at Davis Polk, Fiske represented the Judicial Council of the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in disciplinary proceedings against a US district judge and served as chairman of a Judicial Commission on Drugs and the Courts appointed by New York State Chief Judge Judith Kaye.

His extensive experience as a government prosecutor also includes service as assistant US attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1957 to 1961 and US attorney for that same district from 1976 to 1980, during which he also served as the chairman of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee of US Attorneys. In 1994, Fiske served as independent counsel in the Whitewater investigation of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

In 2008, Fiske became a member of the Commission for the Review of FBI Security Programs and special adviser to then-Attorney General Andrew Cuomo in an investigation of the New York State Police. He also served on the seven-member Judicial Compensation Commission established by the New York Legislature to determine compensation of New York State judges.

Additionally, Fiske served as a past president of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the Federal Bar Council; chaired the Standing Committee on Federal Judiciary of the American Bar Association and the Planning and Programming Committee of the Judicial Conference of the Second Circuit; and was a fellow of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers.

Beyond his philanthropy, he remained deeply connected to the University of Michigan, serving on U-M President Mary Sue Coleman's Advisory Group and on the Law School's Dean's Advisory Council and Development and Alumni Relations Committee. In addition to his honorary degree from the University, he received the Law School's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011.

"Bob used his quiet demeanor and deep intellect for good. He had a profound impact on the legal profession, and he served with integrity, led with generosity, and elevated others through his kind mentorship and wise counsel," says Mary Buikema, the assistant dean for development and alumni relations at the Law School. "Bob leaves an indelible mark on the world, on Michigan Law, and in the hearts of all who knew him."

Fiske is survived by his wife, Janet; their children, Linda Fiske, Robert Fiske III, and Susan Williams; five grandsons; and one great-grandson.

This obituary draws from that which was published by the New York Times on December 5, 2025.

Jochen Abraham Frowein, LLM '58



Jochen Abraham Frowein, LLM '58, remained engaged with Michigan Law throughout his life. He is pictured at the 2017 European Alumni Reunion in Rome with his son, Georg Frowein, LLM '94; daughter-in-law, Dana Strupova, LLM '94; and two of his grandchildren, Jakob and Isabelle.

Jochen Abraham Frowein, LLM '58, one of Germany's most distinguished experts in public international and constitutional law and a former director of its prominent Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, died on February 8, 2026. He was 91.

"He was the sharpest black-letter lawyer ever, a great talent scout, and a generous mentor of young jurists," says Anne Peters, the institute's current director and an L. Bates Lea Global Professor of Law at Michigan. "His practical and academic work contributed to managing the legal situation of the divided German state and prepared and accompanied the unification in 1989—a lasting legacy."

Frowein joined the Max Planck Institute (MPIL) as a research fellow in 1962, and then held professorships at two universities in Germany before returning to MPIL to serve as its director from 1981 to 2002. In its online tribute, the institute calls him a "founding father" of the *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*—the first scholarly periodical to focus exclusively on the activities of the United Nations in the field of international law—and notes that "the publication remains a cornerstone of the MPIL's academic output today."

Frowein's influence extended far beyond MPIL. From 1973 to 1993, he was a member of the European Commission for Human Rights, including serving for 11 years as its vice president. He also was vice president of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and a member of the Advisory Council on International Law within Germany's Foreign Office. Toward the end of his term as director of the MPIL, Frowein was one of three scholars appointed by the European Union to recommend how EU member states should respond to the establishment of a far-right government in Austria.

"Jochen was a towering figure in public international and comparative constitutional law, especially in the European space," says Daniel Halberstam, the Eric Stein Collegiate Professor of Law and director of Michigan Law's European Legal Studies Program. "On a more personal side, Jochen came to Ann Arbor for his LLM in 1957, and it seems his heart never left the Law Quad. Jochen struck up a lifelong friendship with his mentor, Eric Stein, as well as Eric's wife, Ginny. He also remained an ardent supporter of the Law School and the next generation of scholars, participated regularly in our events in Europe, and hosted a memorable reunion in Heidelberg in 2000."

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lore, and is survived by his companion, Karin Bausch; son, Georg Frowein, LLM '94 (Dana Strupova, LLM '94); daughters Henrike Frowein, LLM '92 (Daniel Benjamin) and Bettina Frowein (Michael Leppert); and four grandchildren.

George R. Ariyoshi, '52

George R. Ariyoshi, '52, the nation's first Asian American state governor, died on April 19, 2026. He was 100.

Ariyoshi rose from a tenement in Honolulu, where he was born in 1926 to Japanese immigrants, to become a powerful force in Hawaiian politics and the state's longest-serving governor.

"Governor Ariyoshi devoted his life to Hawaii with humility, discipline, and an unwavering sense of responsibility to the people he served," said Hawaii's current governor, Josh Green, in a statement. "He led our state during a pivotal moment with quiet strength and integrity, and his legacy as a trailblazer and public servant will endure for generations."

Ariyoshi was first elected to political office in 1954 when he became a member of the territorial house of representatives. After Hawaii achieved statehood in 1959, Ariyoshi served in the state senate and as its majority leader. He was elected lieutenant governor in 1970 and became acting governor in 1973 when Gov. John Burns was incapacitated with terminal cancer.

He successfully ran for governor in 1974 and was reelected in 1978 and 1982. He led Hawaii through a tourism and population boom that strained the state's housing and infrastructure, as well as a recession in the mid-1970s. He was known for promoting tourism while attempting to slow an influx of people moving from other states; he also was known for his efforts to diversify the local economy to become less reliant on tourism alone.

In 1986, Ariyoshi retired from politics—having never lost an election—and returned to the practice of law. He served as director of numerous corporations and nonprofits, was president of the Pacific Basin Development Council, and was chairman of the East-West Center. He also was named to an advisory committee for trade policy by President Clinton. In 1997, he published an autobiography, *With Obligation to All* (University of Hawaii Press).

Ariyoshi graduated from high school in 1944 and joined the US Army Military Intelligence Service during World War II as a Japanese-English interpreter. After the war, he enrolled at the University of Hawaii and transferred to Michigan State University, where he earned a degree in history and political science. He graduated from Michigan Law in 1952 and returned to Honolulu to enter private practice.



Donn Ariyoshi, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green, First Lady Jaime Kanani Green, and Ryozo Ariyoshi (top row, left to right); Gov. George Ariyoshi, '52, and First Lady Jean Ariyoshi (bottom row)

As he later recalled in a 2012 interview with PBS, it was around this time that Ariyoshi discovered that his father, a seaman, had illegally entered the United States by jumping ship in Honolulu. He had never tried to become a US citizen for fear of being caught. But Congress overhauled the country's immigration laws in 1952, and Ariyoshi's first project as a lawyer was to prove that his father had been continuously in the country for decades and was entitled to long-term permanent residency. He succeeded.

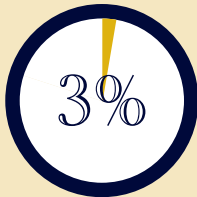
Ariyoshi is survived by his wife, Jean; their three children, Lynn, Ryozo, and Donn; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

This obituary draws on articles published in the New York Times on April 20, 2026, and in the Guardian on April 21, 2026.

CLOSING



Michigan Law graduates in 1972 were among the first to receive credit for their work in the clinical program, including David Richheimer, Charles Silverman, Miriam (Bernstein) Steinberg, Thomas Brown, and Barbara Rom, pictured (left to right) in the 1972 *Codicil* yearbook.



Percentage of students who participated in clinic activities in 1969, according to a contemporaneous article in *Res Gestae*



Percentage of students who take a clinic at Michigan Law today*

*Figure varies slightly for each graduating class.

Student Advocates

Today, the American Bar Association requires all law students to complete at least six credit hours of experiential learning through clinics or other approved means. But when Michigan Law students and members of the faculty first began advocating for credited work with local legal aid organizations, no such requirement existed.

The faculty approved “Clinical Law” on an experimental basis in 1969, offering an eight-week summer course under the direction of Professor J.J. White, ’62, who described himself at the time as a “wholly partial and largely irrational advocate of clinical law.” Soon after, students began lobbying the administration for a permanent for-credit clinical program, sharing testimonials and mounting a public campaign in *Res Gestae*. In February 1970, William A. Irwin, ’70, reflected on his uncredited clinical experience.

“An exposure to clinical law gives the student...something concrete to base a judgment upon. The experience of the course impressed upon me the centrality of procedure, the importance of negotiation and settlement, and the indispensability of complete candor and trust on the part of both attorney and client.”

In fall 1970, the faculty unanimously approved a for-credit clinical program. More than 50 years later, the value students described still rings true. While the program has grown and evolved, its mission remains the same: to train outstanding lawyers while serving those in need.

**The Regents of the
University of Michigan**

Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos
Denise Ilitch, Birmingham
Carl J. Meyers, Dearborn
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Domenico Grasso, *ex officio*

The University of Michigan, including the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Flint campuses as well as Michigan Medicine, as an equal opportunity employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX Office (ECRT), 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388.



Non-alumni readers should address:

Editor
Law Quadrangle
701 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091
Fax: 734.615.4277

Email: For Class Notes – LQNCClassNotes@umich.edu
For other communications – LQNGeneral@umich.edu

If you are a Law School graduate, please send your change of address to:

Law School Development
and Alumni Relations
701 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091
Phone: 734.615.4500
Fax: 734.615.4539
Email: lawaddresschange@umich.edu



The University of Michigan Law School
Volume 69, Number 1
Summer 2026

Copyright © 2026
The Regents of the University of Michigan
All rights reserved.

Law Quadrangle (USPA#144) is issued by
the University of Michigan Law School.
Postage paid at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Publication Office: Law Quadrangle,
University of Michigan Law School,
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091. Published
twice a year.

Postmaster, send address changes to:
Editor, Law Quadrangle
University of Michigan Law School
701 South State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-3091

Chief Communications Officer:
Michelle Rodgers
Managing Editor: Amy Spooner
Editor: James Weir
Class Notes Editor: Annie Hagstrom
Designer: Tish Holbrook
Digital Designer: Alex Lee

Writers: Allison Torres Burtka, David Chambers,
Amy Crawford, Annie Hagstrom, Bob Needham,
Shelley Rodgers, Amy Spooner, James Weir

Photographers: Dustin Johnston, Leisa Thompson
Photography

Printing: Print-Tech Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

Quadrangle

LAW

NOTES FROM MICHIGAN LAW

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

JOIN US

M
LAW

Reunion

ANN ARBOR, SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2026

Michigan Law's 2026 Reunion will celebrate alumni who graduated in years ending in 1 or 6, as well as emeritus alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago.

The weekend will feature class dinners on Friday, a pre-game tailgate before the Wolverines take

on the Iowa Hawkeyes at Michigan Stadium, and other opportunities to reconnect with classmates and the Michigan Law community.

Visit michigan.law.umich.edu/reunion to register and learn more about the event. Registration closes on September 8.