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Early Widener Law Legislation class on U.S. Capitol steps

FEATUREING:

Grit
Hard Work, Patience, and Success in the Law

The Language of Justice
Widener’s Court Interpreter Program

The Mover
Federal Maritime Commissioner William Doyle ’00
Grit
The not-so-surprising correlation between hard work, patience, and success in the law
A message from the dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This time of year is often associated with jewels—diamonds, rubies, and pearls among others. The pearl is the only gem produced by living animals, and it results from a mollusk’s adaptation to the introduction of an outside element grit. While pearls can form naturally, we can also create them by exposing the right subject—a healthy mollusk—to the right external influence. The production of most pearls is a collaborative process.

At Widener Law, we pride ourselves on the teamwork that goes into the formation of a legal professional. And while we know that academic excellence is most important, we also recognize that it is only one part of the formula. In her work on predictors of success, MacArthur Fellow and Genius Grant recipient Dr. Angela Duckworth has found two factors that trump all. One is self-control and the other, grit—the tendency to sustain interest in and effort toward very long-term goals.

In my frequent contact with students and alumni of our law school, I’m often struck by their grit and by their tremendous successes. Where they come from professionally, economically, culturally, and geographically is richly varied, and yet they tend to share several important traits: a determination to push through difficulty, to surmount obstacles, and to grind out the steps necessary to achieving their goals. It is their grit added to their legal training that ultimately yields great value.

In this issue of Widener Law, we highlight just a few students and alumni whose natural abilities, in combination with their legal education, have produced great things. Their achievements are hardly rare in the Widener Law community. Nor should they be surprising. These stories are wonderful reminders of what is possible.

Also in this edition of the magazine, we consider the first five years of our Court Interpreter Program, which provides training and certification to individuals providing interpreter services in the Delaware and Pennsylvania judicial systems. In a world and a profession that have become tremendously complex, it is imperative that we remember one of our most basic principles: that every individual deserves equal access to justice, and that his or her ability to understand our legal system’s processes and proceedings is central to ensuring it.

The first semester of the 2013-2014 school year is at its end. As we near the holiday season, I wish you well and, on behalf of everyone here at Widener Law, thank you for all your support.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Ammons, JD
Associate Provost and Dean

A message from the alumni board president

Dear Friends:

With the holidays upon us, I hope you will take the time to join me in wishing a heartfelt congratulations to Widener Law’s newest bar passers. No doubt we all remember the trepidation of awaiting bar results and the elation of receiving word that we’d passed! In addition I would also like to extend congratulations to our December graduates, and I look forward to seeing all of you at our graduation festivities in May!

At this time of year, with the spirit of giving in our hearts, I encourage all of you to add Widener Law to your list. In addition to making financial contributions as we approach the conclusion of our capital campaign, there are so many ways of getting involved in our community. Please join us for a reception or happy hour in your area (or better yet, maybe help to organize one!), help our young alumni to network and secure employment; be a judge in one of our moot court competitions; or even volunteer as a mentor for a current Widener Law student. Your time and pearls of wisdom do make a significant impact on the lives of our students, who are always grateful. A little bit of our time can forever change their lives.

On behalf of myself and the entire Alumni Association Board, we wish all of you and your families a joyous, prosperous, and happy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Renae B. Axelrod ’91
President, Alumni Association

“Your time and pearls of wisdom do make a significant impact on the lives of our students, who are always grateful. A little bit of our time can forever change their lives.”

“...”

Where has Widener Law taken you? We’d like to feature your story. Write us at law_alumni@mail.widener.edu.
As a society, we like to quantify—everything. Numbers are objective and comparable between entities. But they can be misleading, and their predictive power is often overrated. They do not reflect work ethic, dedication, the determination to succeed, or the willingness to sacrifice. From the beginning, Widener Law alumni have brought these attributes, and much more, to bear on the world of law, forging ahead with profound results.

Judicial Inquiry
Magistrate Judge Susan Schwab ’92
Not long ago, a popular blog listed “15 things overachievers do.” Among them, “They let doors shut all the time.” Hon. Susan Schwab ’92 has let a few doors close behind her. She was an English teacher in Virginia and a carpet sales manager in the southwestern U.S. before entering law school. “I was almost 30 years old before I decided to go to law school,” she said. She entered Widener via the Trial Admissions Program. The year was 1989, and Widener had just opened a new law campus in Harrisburg. Three years later, she was valedictorian at the first Widener Harrisburg commencement. But graduating from a brand new law school meant she and her classmates were an unknown quantity. She came out swinging. “For myself and others, we felt we had to prove ourselves in the legal community,” she said. What followed was a series of successful placements: private practice with prominent central Pennsylvania law firms and a series of public sector positions in the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, the Pennsylvania Treasury Department, and the Democratic Caucus of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

The not-so-surprising correlation between hard work, patience, and success in the law by Todd Lineburger

Opportunity Seized
Brittany Giusini ’14 and Nicolle Vasconez ’14 lead their peers. Justice Randy Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court was unequivocal about Brittany Giusini ’14, his 2013-2014 Wolcott Fellow. “Brittany is one of the brightest and the best Wolcott Fellows I have worked with in my twenty-seven year tenure on the Supreme Court,” he said. This is hardly faint praise. For more than a quarter century, he and his fellow justices have graciously hosted law students at the top of their classes, granting them the opportunity to work as part time law clerks for a justice of the Delaware Supreme Court.

“We suggest that one personal quality is shared by the most prominent leaders in every field: grit.”
–Angela L. Duckworth and Christopher Peterson (see above)

“In the gritty individual approaches achievement as a marathon; his or her advantage is stamina. Whereas disappointment or boredom signals to others that it is time to change trajectory and cut losses, the gritty individual stays the course.”
–MacArthur Genius Award Recipient Angela L. Duckworth and Christopher Peterson in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

In 2012, she was confirmed as United States Magistrate Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Magistrate judge positions, awarded as the result of a merit-based selection process, are highly sought-after, attracting as many as 80 applicants for an opening. Was it the culmination of a lifelong aspiration to be a judge? “I originally didn’t even have aspirations to be a lawyer,” she said. “I was looking for an advanced degree—something that would provide me with more career opportunities.” “I find [my position] intellectually stimulating and professionally rewarding,” she said.

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The competition is fierce. When Giusini heard she had won a spot, “I was honored beyond words,” she said. “I immediately called my family members. They were equally ecstatic. Being one of five students selected. I regard this position as one of the highest honors.”

Perhaps she should not have been surprised. She is third in her class, editor-in-chief of the Delaware Journal of Corporate Law—currently ranked first in the nation for case citations in federal and state court opinions and second for journal citations in Washington & Lee’s annual rankings—and a Widener Merit Scholar.

With a 3.7 GPA at Temple, pre-law coursework, and experience working in the law firm her father, Vincent Giusini ’86, operates in Philadelphia, she was admitted to Widener Law via the Trial Admissions Program (TAP). She accepted the opportunity on the advice of her father, who also entered law school via the program.

“It was a blessing,” she said of TAP. “It gave me a chance to prove myself. I studied every day—every minute—and devoted myself to doing the best I could do.”

Giusini’s strong showing led not only to full admission, but to a scholarship as well. It also gave her an ambition to pursue corporate law. The fact that less than three years ago this was far from assured does not phase her.

“Anyone who sets a goal and doesn’t let a roadblock get in the way can succeed,” she said.

Nicolle Vasconez is not one to hesitate.

“The Bucks County, Pennsylvania, native attended Florida Atlantic University sight unseen. She earned a 3.7 GPA, involved herself in a variety of activities, aimed for law school.

When the opportunity to obtain a spot in Widener Law’s 2013 entering cohort via TAP presented itself, she again jumped in with both feet.

“I graduated college on a Saturday and started law school the following Monday,” she said.

The program, she noted, was not for the faint of heart—“It was intense. I had no idea what I was doing. I literally typed everything Professor Turezyn said.”

Knowing the steep odds, she waited expectantly for her final scores.

I logged on and sat for 25 minutes hitting ‘refresh, refresh,’” she said.

Now a l. A. law student, she has brought the work ethic that was evident both in her undergraduate studies and in her TAP experience to bear on her legal education.

“It prepared me,” she said. “My first day of law school wasn’t really my first day of law school. It was terrifying, but it was great.”

Giusini’s portfolio continues to build. She is the editor-in-chief of the Widener Law Review, where she was voted most outstanding staff member. She has received several certificates of honor and is a Widener Merit Scholar. The secret to her success? Intense study, not surprisingly—“I sit in the back of the library with my earbuds in. I don’t do anything but school”—but also getting involved in the real world of law: something she hopes to continue with a clerkship following graduation.

She has completed the judicial summer term, a judicial externship, and a clinical externship. “The externship program, I think they were absolutely the most beneficial experience in law school,” she said.

“I’ve been with two judges—a state judge and now a federal judge—and spent my summer working in a public defender’s office.” Her law review experience has likewise broadened her horizon. “I’ve learned so much more than you ever would in class, because you’re actually getting hands-on experience. It exposes you to a million areas of law, and that’s great too.”

Timing is Everything

Widener Harrisburg graduates find jobs, and find them in the law, says a new study by Associate Dean Ben Barros.

Barros had his suspicions about traditional employment survey data. Surveys of Widener Law graduates’ employment status after nine months did not square with what he was hearing from the Harrisburg alumni with whom he stayed in touch, at least not in the longer term. So he launched his own data-collection effort. With the help of research assistants and faculty secretaries, he set about finding publicly-verifiable employment data for every 2010 and 2011 Harrisburg campus graduate.

The result is a more complete picture of legal employment among recent Widener Harrisburg graduates. After three years, members of the class of 2010 had attained employment requiring bar passage at a conservatively calculated rate of 84.9%. An additional 6.5% had acquired “JD Advantage” positions. These rates are substantially higher than those reported nine months after the class of 2010 graduated, both nationally and among Widener Law grads.

Barros doesn’t discount the importance of the nine-month-out data: “They provide an important snapshot of graduate employment,” he writes. But he also notes that factors like bar exam timing have an impact on nine-month-out employment figures. “A student who graduates in May might not get bar results until five months after graduation.”

The bottom line is that despite fundamental shifts in the legal employment market, Widener Harrisburg alumni and, most likely, their counterparts from Delaware continue to get jobs in law—jobs that put their degrees to use. It is, however, a slower process than it once was: one that recalls what earlier generations of Widener Law graduates faced and one that requires tenacity, patience, and hard work. It is an environment that favors overachievers.

Metrics that Matter

176 Number of Widener Law alumni who are judges

12.7% Rate at which members of the class of 2012 obtained judicial clerkships. The national average was 8.9%.

92,925 Number of pro bono hours worked by our students in 2013. The class of 2012 contributed 21,925 pro bono hours while at Widener Law. Widener Law has no requirement for pro bono service.

90+ Number of Widener Law alumni serving as President and/or CEO (not including solo practitioners).

$1,036,709 Value of benefits recovered by Widener Veterans Law Clinic students and faculty for their clients last year.

23 Number of countries in which Widener Law alumni practice law. They also practice in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

1st Delaware Journal of Corporate Law’s Washington & Lee ranking for case citations in federal and state court opinions. It ranks second for journal citations and twelfth overall.

2014 Year in which Widener Law alumni will lead both the Delaware Bar Association and Philadelphia bar associations.
“My success: a time-worn, battle-tested respect for the profession; a drive to succeed as a lawyer and do justice as a jurist; a love of writing; common sense; civility toward colleagues, both lawyers and jurists; and aversion to unpreparedness.”

–Hon. Raymond Batten '79

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Hon. Todd A. Hoover '79
Hon. Robert J. Humphreys '76
Hon. Douglas H. Hurd '94
Hon. Joel S. Johnson '91
Hon. Harold U. Johnson Jr. '83
Hon. Hugh A. Jones '90
Hon. John J. Jones Jr. '76
Hon. David H. Judy '94
Hon. Harry J. Karapalides '85
Hon. Linda M. Kassekert '94
Hon. John D. Kessler '94
Hon. Carol S. Klein '90
Col. Ralph H. Kohlmann '87
Hon. William K. Krause '75
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Hon. John J. O'Neill '89
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Hon. Karl H. Peckmann '94
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Hon. Joseph A. Portelli '92
Hon. Mark R. Pyott '88
Hon. James E. Rafferty '77
Hon. Vivian L. Rappoport '93
Hon. Robert J. Reddy '83
Hon. Raymond A. Reddin '78
Hon. Scott T. Reese '99
Hon. Anne E. Reigle '92
Hon. Helen M. Richards '89
Hon. Raymond L. Rodriguez '86
Hon. Jennifer L. Rodgers '96
Hon. Michael J. Rosen '92
Hon. Maurio M. Rosanesan Jr. '75
Hon. Howard P. Rosner '80
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Hon. Peter E. Warshaw Jr. '86
Hon. Mark R. Wasewer '93
Hon. John K. Welch '79
Hon. David R. Workman '89
Hon. Sharon F. Zanotto '00

If we’ve neglected to include your name or that of another alumna/us judge, please let us know by calling 302-477-2172.

“During my legal career, I was most fortunate to have worked for and called upon exceptional mentors. As is often said, we stand upon the shoulders of those who have gone before us. This invaluable wisdom in combination with my passion for the law and hard work greatly contributed to my success in the law.”

–Hon. Anne Covey '84

To find out which judges are pictured here, please visit page 36.
The Civil Rights Act of 1964 has always required courts to provide language interpreter services to people with limited English proficiency, but in 2006 Pennsylvania decided to raise its standards. It was then that the commonwealth moved to require court interpreters to pass exams and become state certified. While Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Judge Ida Chen welcomed the higher standards for professionalism, she was concerned about a lack of programs that would support interpreters as they worked to meet the new requirements. It was on her mind when she entered a meet-and-greet reception at the Alex Bonavitacola Law Library in Philadelphia’s Criminal Justice Center, intent on introducing herself to the guest of honor, Linda L. Ammons.

Ammons had recently assumed the deanship at Widener Law, and Chen had heard she was a public-service-minded leader. The judge approached the dean for a conversation about the changing requirements for court interpreters. “She looked at me and said, ‘What can I do to help you?’” Chen recalled. “I had no idea she was going to be so supportive.”

A collaboration began after that meeting, and it has grown into the school’s Court Interpreter Program, a productive and important operation based out of Widener’s Legal Education Institute on the Delaware campus. The program trains linguists who are new to the courts and prepares them for state certification exams, while it also refines the skills of experienced interpreters. Now six years old, it continues to grow and evolve, adding languages and new approaches to its workshops, which have earned a reputation for quality.

Language barriers prevent millions of non-English-speaking persons from receiving equal access to the judicial system. Five years after Widener Law launched its Court Interpreter Program, the need is as great as ever.

The Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Fairness, on which Chen once served, recognized the Widener program with an award for excellence shortly after it began. Pennsylvania Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille presented the honor to Ammons in Harrisburg. “When a judge asks you to help provide a service that promotes public access to justice, you seize it for the opportunity it is,” Ammons said. “Widener was well situated to take this on, and we’ve built a program that makes a significant contribution to the success of our justice system. It is a point of pride.”

The language of the law

Before she began collaborating with Widener, Chen and Janet Fasy, deputy court administrator in Pennsylvania’s first judicial district, were putting on their own training programs for court interpreters in Philadelphia. Today they still do a bit of that, predominantly focused on ethics, but Chen attends the Widener Law trainings. She also helps by role playing as a judge and bringing actual transcripts along with her as teaching aids.

Fasy had heard complaints from judges about interpreters who didn’t really know what they were doing, and, like everyone involved, she welcomed the higher level of professionalism that would come along with Pennsylvania’s certification requirement. But she knew she was not equipped with the time or budget to do the level of training necessary to make it a success. Sitting down with Widener administrators and explaining what needed to go into training programs was immensely helpful, Fasy said, and those conversations helped the school structure its coursework.

The language of justice
“Widener University, in running this court interpreter program, has ensured equal access to justice for non-native speakers, the deaf, and the hard of hearing.” –Hon. Ida Chen

“We were really happy,” Fasy recalled after an early meeting at the school, where she learned what an interpreter class would look like. “I love collaborating with Widener.”

Interpreters generally start out as bilingual people, but that doesn’t mean they know the language of the courts, or courtroom protocol. Interpreting typically involves speaking in a party’s native language the words spoken in the courtroom as they are being said, so that person can follow along. It can also involve interpreting language after it is said and while the full courtroom is listening, such as being the go-between who interprets an attorney’s English questions for a Spanish-speaking witness and then puts those Spanish answers back into English for everyone to understand. Interpreters also need note-taking skills, and can be called upon to help translate written documents.

“It is really hard,” Fasy said. “You have to have focus, you have to listen very carefully. You have to really understand what is going on. You have to have the skill to turn it around very quickly, and you have to do it all in another language.”

As a former court reporter, she understands the pressure. “You have to know it all in a second, because they’re not waiting for you,” she said.

Taking the initiative

Widener’s first program, offered in the fall of 2008, provided eight weekends of workshops for Spanish-English translators. Since then, the school has expanded to provide workshops on note taking, what it takes to be a court interpreter, how to prepare for state certification exams, and skills-building sessions in a myriad of languages. Khmer (Cambodian), Polish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Haitian Creole have been covered. The program has also worked with American Sign Language interpreters.

Widener workshops have been held on the Delaware and Harrisburg campuses, and in recent years at Philadelphia’s Criminal Justice Center. They have also evolved into shorter weekend workshops, as opposed to a series of workshops over eight weeks, although that model is still available. Nearly 500 people have attended the programs.

“It’s a great community outreach and something we really want to have associated with the Widener name,” said Nicole Ballenger, director of the Legal Education Institute.

Osvaldo Aviles welcomes anything that will boost the number of certified interpreters available in Pennsylvania. As the interpreter program administrator for the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, his entire job is focused on it.

“It is impossible for us to provide the amount of training necessary for all the candidates to get to speed,” Aviles said. “The fact that Widener has taken the initiative to organize these programs has definitely helped.”

Pennsylvania has roughly 1,600 fully-certified court interpreters, with the majority fluent in Spanish or American Sign Language. Philadelphia may have three dozen cases requiring a court interpreter in one day, while other counties may only need two in a week, he said. In Pennsylvania, Aviles said, the greatest concentration of people with limited English proficiency tends to be along the eastern side of the state, along with the southern tier bordering the state of Delaware, Dauphin County in the center, and Erie County and Pittsburgh to the west.

While Aviles’ roster also includes certified interpreters in more obscure languages like Kru, Urdu, Wolof, Gujarati, and Marathi, he still faces shortages that force him to turn to neighboring states and beyond for certified interpreters. Chen said Pennsylvania judges can also admit an uncertified interpreter if they find that person is otherwise qualified. The determination is typically made after engaging in a process like voir dire, she said, where interpreters are quizzed about their experience, expertise, and training.

Delaware has had a certification requirement in place since 1996 for its court interpreters. It requires mandatory orientation training and proficiency testing. Once interpreters gain certification, they have to work to keep it: Aviles said Pennsylvania interpreters have to complete 16 continuing education units every three years. Widener’s program meets that need as well.

A program the Legal Education Institute presented in October offered breakout groups geared toward beginners who were completely new to interpreting, intermediates who needed the extra push to get them through the certification exam process, and advanced interpreters who wanted to sharpen their skills through continuing education. The program ran from 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. over two days at a cost of $250.

“When you are talking about what a skills boost this provides an interpreter, it really is a small investment of time and money,” Ballenger said.

Youngmei Li said she had passed Pennsylvania’s written and simultaneous interpretation exams but was hesitant about taking the consecutive interpretation exam, so she enrolled in Widener’s note-taking classes. Note taking is a fundamental skill with an analytical component that is key to success, she said. The classes helped.

“It gave me all the confidence to go forward,” said Li, who is now fully certified in Pennsylvania for Cantonese interpretation. She also does medical interpreting.

Li likes knowing that her legal work provides a critical service in the exchange of information, particularly when people’s liberties are at stake. “It’s very satisfying,” she said.

“Our goal was to increase the number of qualified interpreters available to the judicial system. That, in turn, ensures due process and equal access to justice for litigants with limited English proficiency.”

–Nicole Ballenger, director of the Widener Legal Education Institute
LINDA L. AMMONS traveled with a select group of law school deans to Israel on a trip sponsored by the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists. Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, and the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The group met with a variety of officials, including U.S. Ambassador Daniel B. Shapiro. In addition, Dean Ammons attended the American Law Institute Annual Meeting and once again taught the Advanced Administrative Law class for the National Judicial College, which honored her for her 24 years of service. In September, Dean Ammons was elected to the WHYY Philadelphia Board of Directors, and in October she received the Pennsylvania Diversity Council’s Multicultural Leadership Award.

DIONNE ANTHON gave a presentation about technology and grading at the 2013 Legal Writing Conference at Duquesne University School of Law. Anthon also spoke about technology and grading at the Capital Area Legal Writing Conference at the American University Washington College of Law.

D. BENJAMIN BARROS was named president of the Association of Law, Property, and Society.

JOHN CAPOWSKI was a panelist at the Poverty Law: Cases, Teaching, and Society.

MICHAEL COZZILLIO gave a presentation about the Negro Leagues and the integration of Major League Baseball at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

JOHN CULHANE presented his paper, Remedies for Physician Negligence in the U.S. at the State of the Law and Emerging Challenges, at the Turkish-American Medical Law and Ethics Symposium in Ankara, Turkey. With ERIN DALY, he co-chaired the symposium Roe After 40: Roe’s Impact on Public Health, where he presented, “Short- and Long-Term Consequences of the Erosion of Informed Consent in the Abortion Context.” He also presented “The New Future of the Civil Union” and a summary of same-sex marriage law at Akron Law School. “The Defense of Marriage Act, Marriage Equality, and the Future of a Movement” at the Other Lifelong Learning Institute; “Marriage Equality at the Bowling Point” at Supreme Court Takes on a Cultural Clash” at Ursinus College. Professor Culhane spoke about the oral arguments in the Prop 8 and DOMA case to students at Villanova Law; was invited to Northwestern Law School, along with MARTY KOTLER and CHRISTOPHER ROBINETTE, to discuss a new book by Professor Marshall Shapo in Chicago. Illinois, and participated in the Washington Post’s panel discussion “State of our Unions: Arguments Have Been Made: Now What?” He presented “A Public Health Approach to School Bullying: Prevention, Populations, and One Definition of Success” at the James E. Bradley School of Law. Redefining Boundaries, Responsibility, and Harm Symposium. He was interviewed by the Associated Press and other news outlets on marriage cases before the Supreme Court and by the Legal Intelligence on relational tort injuries affecting same-sex couples and the related case in Montgomery County. Professor Culhane appeared on Law Journal TV, addressing “Roe v. Wade: 40 Years On” and on the News Works Tonight segment. “Gay Marriage Hearing Set for Tomorrow in Commonwealth Court,” discussing the case against the Montgomery County Register of Wills by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Health. He was also featured in a Chinese version of Voice of America in a segment discussing more restrictive abortion laws being passed at the state level.

ERIN DALY delivered the H. Albert Young Distinguished Lecture in Constitutional Law; “Constitutional Comparisons: Emerging Dignity Rights at Home and Abroad” at Hotel DuPont in Wilmington.


MICHAEL DIMINO spoke at Widener Law’s Supreme Court Media Day, previewing two cases on the court’s docket for the 2013 term, at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute’s Constitutional Law Conclave concerning the Supreme Court’s 2012 and 2013 terms; and at Villanova University concerning recent trends in election law. He participated in a panel on election administration at the Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Meeting in Palm Beach, Florida. He also provided commentary accompanying Professor Tsian Samuk’s address at Widener Harrisburg concerning the Noel Canning case pending before the Supreme Court and on the Citizen Unit decision before the Commonwealth Court Historical Society.

“IT’S A FAIRLY EQUALLY PRINCIPLE OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THAT COUNTY BUREAUCRATS DON’T GET TO DECIDE WHAT STATE LAW MEANS.”

–Associate Professor Michael R. Dimino Sr., on a county register of wills in Pennsylvania deciding to marry gay couples (WHP CBS TV)


JULES EPESTEIN is the new director of the Taishoff Advocacy, Technology and Public Service Institute. He recently taught about eyewitness identification issues for the West Virginia University Forensic Science Initiative; forensics and eyewitness identification courses to federal public defenders and court appointed counsel at a national training in Buffalo, New York; habeas litigation at the Defender Association of Philadelphia and in a federal-court sponsored CLE; eyewitness law to attorneys in Kentucky; and an advanced evidence course for the National Judicial College. He also organized and taught a day-long capital case law training in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and authored an amicus pleading on behalf of the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in the Third Circuit as amicus in a habeas corpus case seeking en banc re-argument. Epstein was quoted in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and other major media outlets regarding the Trayvon Martin slaying trial.

JILL FAMILY moderated “Innovations and Challenges in Immigration Benefits Adjudication: Legislation, Policy and Operations” at the Homeland Security Law Institute in Washington, D.C., and served as a discussion leader at the Emerging Immigration Law Scholars and Teachers Conference in Irvine, California. She was quoted in two papers: Ming Chen’s Discussion of Defense Briefing the Job in Immigration Workers Compensation Claims and Alina Das’s Unshackling Habeas Review: Gains and the Problem in Immigration Detention Cases. She is a policy table member for immigration reform with the Alliance for Citizenship. She is the founding editor of Jotwell.com (The Journal of Things We Like (Lots)) Immigration Law section.

“OPENINGS ARE NOT AVALANCHE.”

–Professor Julius Epstein on the start of the George Zimmerman trial (Wall Street Journal)

STEPHEN FREIDMAN presented an overview of contract law at the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group Boot Camp in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and counseled an amicus curiae requesting that the Supreme Court grant certiorari in Bakoff v. Lloyd’s London.
“No matter how effective you think special committees are, some people genuinely believe the result isn’t fair.”

-Ruby R. Vale Professor of Corporate and Business Law, Lawrence A. Hamermesh on the proposed Dell and Business Law Lawrence A. Hamermesh on the proposed Dell


“From the zoo’s perspective, it’s very bad publicity. You can get hit with an enormous (judgment) from a sympathetic jury.”

--Associate Professor Christopher J. Robbivette on a mother’s lawsuit in a keynote speaker for the Judge Maureen Fitzpatrick Lecture hosted by the Delaware Law & Society Association Conference in Chester, Pennsylvania.

DAVID HOADS lectured at Williams College on “The Law and Policy of Climate Change Denialism.” He presented a plenary session paper, Sustainable Energy Law for a Climate Change Epoch: A Global Imperative, at the 2013 IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, where he also participated in the annual meeting of the editorial board of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law E-journal. He was named the journal’s book review editor.

ALICIA KELLY presented Intergenerational Economics (a new piece in progress) at the Law & Society Association Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. She co-presented “Alimony Reform, Is it Right for PA?” as a keynote speaker for the Delaware County Bar Association, in Media, Pennsylvania. She presented “Sharing Inequality” at the In Search of Equality in Family Law Symposium, hosted by Michigan State University College of Law. Kelly is also serving as chair of the Preliminary Planning Committee that proposed Shifting Foundations in Family Law, a three-day conference to be hosted by the AALS at the Mid-Year meeting in 2015, and she has been nominated to serve on the Conference Planning Committee going forward. She recently gave a presentation about student journaling as blogging at the 2013 Legal Writing Conference at Duquesne University School of Law.


"IUCN Academy of Environmental Law Colloquium at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, where he also participated in the annual meeting of the editorial board of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law E-journal. He was named the journal’s book review editor."

ROBERTA MORINGIELLO, co-chair of the Uniform Code Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Business Law Section, attended a ceremonial bill signing with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett in August for her work on several amendments made to state law, based on changes made to the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) by the American Law Institute. She also served as a panelist on Things My Ethics Professor Didn’t Tell Me: Top Ethical Pitfalls for the Social Media Age, at the American Bar Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California, and has been appointed treasurer of the Business Law Section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association.

MICHAEL SLINGER served in the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) mentoring program. He continued to lead a popular discussion group on topics about the American Civil War at the Rachel Kohl Library in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania.

AMANDA SMITH was appointed director of academic support on the Harrisburg campus. She recently gave a presentation about student journaling as blogging at the 2013 Legal Writing Conference at Duquesne University School of Law.
Within Reach
Campaign Update as of October 31, 2013

With more than 95 percent of necessary funds committed, we are, thanks to you, within reach of our campaign goal.

While we are proud and grateful, the full impact of these efforts has yet to be felt. Our students and the legal community will continue to reap the growing benefits of your generosity, particularly as endowed gifts begin to vest. We look forward to sharing many more success stories.

However, there remains work to be done. The pursuit of excellence will not end with this campaign. It is ongoing, and our ultimate success will depend on your continued investment of time, talent, and treasure in your law school. Thank you again for all you have done and all you will do for Widener Law.

Class of 2013 Contributed Record Gift

Working together and with the Alumni Association, both campuses’ graduating classes contributed the largest class gift in the law school’s history. The Alumni Association generously matched the gift on a four-to-one basis.

Skadden Arps, Ferry Joseph Met Firm Leadership Challenge

Please join us in congratulating alumni at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP and Ferry, Joseph & Pearce, P.A. Led by firm ambassadors Amy Huffman ’07 and Rick Miller ’95, respectively, during the 2012-2013 year, 100 percent of alumni at each firm joined in contributing to the Widener Law Fund.

“All of us here are grateful for the willingness of our alumni at these firms to come together for Widener Law,” said Laurie Grant, assistant vice president for development and alumni engagement. “A 100 percent response from those involved in the firm leadership program is what we strive for.”

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Regina Matozzo ’09
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Jason Powell ’98
Kristopher Starr ’99
Larry Sullivan ’88
Theodore Taccocelli ’88

Skadden, Arps, Slate Meagher & Flom LLP
Danielle Berster ’88
Amy Huffman ’07
Edward Micheletti ’77
Andrew Minissi ’09
Patricia Widdoss ’98

Mutual Fire Foundation Will Fund a Second Law Scholarship for Law Students

The Mutual Fire Foundation will fund an annual scholarship, its second at the law school, the foundation’s president and new National Advisory Council member, Caroline Mazza ’11, said. Providing roughly half the annual cost of a Widener Law education to one student each year, the scholarship will be the latest installment in a long tradition of generous support, provided over more than a decade, by the foundation. In recent years, the foundation has helped fund the law school’s clinical programming, in 2011 naming the public service wing’s Franklin Homeowners Assurance Company Moot Courtroom.

The Mutual Fire Foundation has provided scholarship support for Widener Law students since 2008, including the Honorable James C. Crumlish Scholarship, which is also awarded annually.

The Mutual Fire Foundation will fund a second law scholarship for law students.

Grand Total (as of 10/31/2013)
Funding Goal: $12,000,000

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DEMBRE, GAYLE MATTHEWS. Coercion, not Consent & Dr. Gayle Matthews, 82 U. MICH. L. REV. 1291 (2013).


EDELSTEIN, ANNE & ROBERT R. KEATLING. Keatinge and Conaway on Choice of Business Entity (Thomson West 2013).


Commissioner William Doyle ‘00 talks about a career in the service of transportation, the law, and his country.

One of America’s top transportation officials, Federal Maritime Commissioner William Doyle ‘00, talks about a career in the service of transportation, the law, and his country.

The Mover

Commissioner William Doyle ‘00 knew what he wanted. “It was not a matter so much of ‘if’ but ‘when’ I would go to law school,” he said. Given his profession, it was also a matter of where and how. Fortunately, logistics were his specialty. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised on the south shore in Weymouth, Doyle became an officer in the United States Merchant Marine, an organization he clearly loves and respects and will continue to serve, as an attorney.

He joined the commission at a time of extraordinary change. The explosion of natural gas production in the U.S., coupled with the Panama Canal expansion, “will have a transformative impact on the U.S. energy and transportation landscape,” he said.

Doyle noted that, at the time of his confirmation, the Federal Maritime Commission and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Comprised of five commissioners, the FMC has several administrative law judges, resolving disputes involving international shipping and trade.

Doyle noted that, at the time of his confirmation, the case completion rate for filed complaints was a little over 50 percent, with some cases remaining in limbo for up to seven years.

“I am an expediter by nature,” he said, “and to me, waiting seven years to finalize an order through a federal agency is unacceptable. We are now resolving over 90% of the complaints filed with the commission within two years.”

He joined the commission during summer and winter breaks. His involvement in the Law & Government Institute helped provide the connections he needed between his service and the law.

While in law school, he continued in the Merchant Marine during summer and winter breaks. His involvement in the Law & Government Institute helped provide the connections he needed between his service and the law.

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440 New Graduates Received Degrees

Held at the Capitol Forum in Harrisburg and on the Delaware campus green, the law school’s commencement ceremonies celebrated the achievements of its newest alumni and welcomed them to the profession.

“The best lawyers and, for that matter, the best professionals I’ve witnessed have no distance between their public and private selves. They lead fully integrated lives. They remain as true to their families and their communities as they do to their work.”

Harrisburg campus graduation speaker Douglas J. Steinhardt ’94, pictured with Dean Linda L. Ammons.

“The privilege of being part of this profession requires that you invest in your communities and others... The law is not perfect, for it is made with human hands. However, these powerful, magical, sometimes mystical, symbolic utterances and scribblings can make the difference between poverty and abundance, peace and chaos, life and death.”

Dean Linda L. Ammons, pictured opposite with President James T. Harris III.

Harrisburg campus valedictorian Tricia Lontz

Delaware Campus valedictorian Brian Eng

“Know what you know, know what you don’t know and ask for help, and tell the truth.”

Delaware campus graduation speaker Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer

“Know what you know, know what you don’t know and ask for help, and tell the truth.”

Delaware campus graduation speaker Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer

Professor Larry Barnett, who retired in June, 2013, led the Delaware procession.

Harrisburg Campus valedictorian Tricia Lontz

Professor James Diets (pictured at right), led the Harrisburg procession.
Students and their families joined faculty, staff, and friends at the annual student awards ceremonies on both campuses. Recognizing excellence in scholarship and service, the awards serve as a capstone to years of hard work.

Graduating students gathered at picnics, sponsored by the Office of Development & Alumni Engagement, on both campuses celebrating the class of 2013.

Students gathered at the Office of Development & Alumni Engagement’s Ice Cream Social for 1L students.

Delaware students, including Marta Scuza and Emily Lorenzo (pictured), faculty, and staff kicked off the semester with the SBA’s annual Community Day.

Students participating in the Delaware Civil Law Clinic and the Environmental & Natural Resources Law Clinic were sworn into the limited practice of law in Delaware under Delaware Supreme Court rule 56 by Delaware Supreme Court Justice Randy J. Holland.

Elvira Berry ’09, Olufunke Fagbami ’15, James Saintvil ’15, Tiffany Griffin ’15, and Tamika Crawl-Bey ’08 pose at the 2013 Dean’s Minority and Alumni Networking Reception in Delaware. More than 80 students and alumni attended, hailing from eight states as well as Peru, Turkey, China, and Pakistan.

Students, faculty, staff, and their families celebrated the new academic year at the Dean’s Picnic.

Student Timothy Bishop spoke at the September Environmental Law Center symposium in Harrisburg—Marcellus Shale Development and Pennsylvania: What Lessons for Sustainable Energy—which considered the sustainability implications of Marcellus Shale hydraulic fracturing for gas extraction. The conference/CLE asked what hydraulic fracturing means for an environmentally sustainable America and assessed what we have learned from Pennsylvania’s experience to date.
Leaders Mull the Future at Summit

Widener leadership convened on the Delaware campus in September to hear from industry experts and discuss the present and future of legal education, the legal industry, and Widener Law.

“This is critical,” said Dean Linda Ammons. “We are entering a new era of legal education. Our students need and deserve the state-of-the-art. We, in turn, need the financial support, the community connections, and the expertise of our leadership.”

Attendees included members of the university’s Board of Trustees, Board of Overseers, National Advisory Council, Alumni Association Board, Dean’s Alumni Minority Advisory Committee, and the university’s and law school’s executive staffs.

Top: Attendees at the 2013 Leadership Summit listen to a presentation by Law School Admissions Council President Daniel O. Bernstine.

Middle: Dean Linda Ammons and National Advisory Council member, Kyle Bowser.

Bottom: Professor Larry Hamermesh addresses attendees at the 2013 Leadership Summit.

Cecilia McCormick ’91 and Guy Messick joined hundreds gathered for the annual Philadelphia Alumni Reception, held again this year at Vsie. The reception celebrated the achievements of Philadelphia-area alumni and brought together graduates from both campuses.

Joel Doner ’93 of Eckert Seamans at the Wilmington Leadership Breakfast, where Widener Law alumni in leadership positions in Delaware’s legal community gathered for a conversation with the Dean and other administrators.


Three judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit heard oral arguments in four cases in the Ruby R. Vale Moot Courtroom in October. Following the arguments, they held a roundtable discussion with the audience.

Widener Law and DuPont presented their annual Intellectual Property Symposium & CLE in Wilmington. Topics included lessons from recent Supreme Court decisions, reconciling competing policies in antitrust and IP laws, effective emerging market strategies, and estimating damages in patent and trademark litigation.

Yansheng Yu, China Patent Agent (H.K.) LTD., moderator; Award Winner, of Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP, and Franco Pacifico of Birk & Holmes.

The Delaware Office of Volunteerism honored Widener Law and the Wills For Heroes Program with a 2013 Delaware Governor’s Outstanding Volunteer Award for community service. Widener Law is Delaware’s Wills For Heroes affiliate.

Widener Law Overseer and Visiting Professor Richard Herrmann (left) poses in front of one of his photographic works with Widener University Treasurer Tom Brown. Herrmann’s works appeared with those of the Dean, other faculty and staff, and students at the law school’s An Evening of the Arts on the Delaware campus.

Dean Linda Ammons spoke at the Harrisburg campus celebration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech. “Because of the march and this speech, Dr. King’s words have made a difference in my history and yours,” she said.
1975
BRIAN R. STEINER [has been] elected chairman of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Workers’ Compensation Section.

JAMES S. TUPITZA [of Tupitza & Associates] presented a course: "Presenting Your Case to the Zoning Hearing Board: Variance, Special Exceptions and Appeals."

1976
WILLIAM P. FEUDUO [of the Philadelphia Bar Association] is chairing the Campaign for Qualified Judges.

KENNETH R. GILBERG [has been named] the 2013 Gold Medalist Honoree by Golden Slipper Club and Charities. [He is] a non-profit organization that supports programs and services for the Greater Philadelphia area’s youth, needy, and elderly.

1977
MITCHELL G. CRANE [was elected] chair of the Sussex County, Delaware, Democratic Party and [was appointed] board member and chair of the Delaware Manufactured Home Relocation Authority by Governor Jack Markell.

1978
THOMAS P. COLLINS [has been named] executive vice president of government relations at the Delaware Bankers Association in Dover, Delaware.

1980
JAMES M. MATOUR [was made partner at Dilworth Paxson LLP in the firm’s Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, office. He is part of the firm’s corporate and business practice and co-chair of the bankruptcy group.] Matour concentrates his practice in corporate reorganization, bankruptcy, and commercial workouts.

1981
HON. THOMAS J. SHUSTED JR. [has been appointed] a judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey by Governor Chris Christie.

HON. DONALD STEIN [has been appointed] a judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey by Governor Chris Christie.

1983
JOSEPH J. MCCORARY [of Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell & Lupin, has been named] a Pennsylvania Super Lawyer in the area of government, cities, and municipalities law.

1984
HON. RICHARD AMBRO [was elected judge for the Supreme Court 10th Judicial District in New York.]

1985
TODD BERKEY [partner at Edgar Snyder & Associates in Pittsburgh, has been listed among the 2013 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers. He has also been listed in the 2014 edition of Best Lawyers in America in personal injury litigation, product liability litigation, and insurance law categories.]

1986
JOEL L. FRANK, managing partner and executive committees chairman at Lands’ End, Inc., and executive vice president of the Pilots’ Association for the Bay & River Delaware. Frank is serving as a commissioner on the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission.

ROBERT N. HUW [was unanimously elected editor-in-chief of The Verdict, the official monthly newsletter of the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association.

RAYMOND MCGARR, Montgomery County solicitor, represented the county in Department of Health v. Hanse, the lawsuit determining the fate of same-sex marriage in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

ANTHONY T. VERWEY [partner at Urshel Turner Burke & Frees, was recently honored by the board of commissioners of Chester County with a citation for his service as a member of the Chester County Workforce Investment Board.]

MARK R. WEAVER [is counsel of counsel at Isaac, Brant, Ledman & Tetter, LLC and serves as a part-time magistrate in the Hillard (Ohio) Mayor’s Court, presiding over criminal misdemeanor hearings and trials. He is also a part-time felony-level prosecutor in southern Ohio.]

1987
MARK F. HIMSWORTH [has been listed among the 2013 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers in the area of business litigation.

1988
DEREK R. LAYSER [is a founding shareholder of Layser & Freiwald, PC, has been listed in the Best Lawyers in America 15th Edition under personal injury litigation-plaintiffs.]

THOMAS R. ANAPOL, a shareholder at Anapol Schwartz and Associates in Media, Pennsylvania. He is also a part-time felony-level prosecutor in southern Ohio.

1989
J. WARD GUILDA was elected president of the Philadelphia Bar Association. The Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission.

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1991
THOMAS A. BOULDEN presented "Estate Law Updates" for the Pennsylvania Bar Institute in Philadelphia and Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. He is the highest ranking staff executive in the division, in charge of all court operations. She [is] the highest ranking staff executive in the division, in charge of all court operations.

LISA A. SHEARMAN, of Hamburg, Rubin, Mullin, Maxwell & Lupin, PC, was recently elected to the board of directors of the Legal Clinic for the Disabled.

BRAD S. TABAKIN [was certified as] a member of The Million Dollar Advocates Forum.
1993

MICHAEL P. BONNER, partner at Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, was a panelist at a recent Pennsylvania Bar Institute seminar, “Structuring and Crafting Commercial Loan Documents.” Bonner presented on asset based lending and representations and warranties.

MARY H. BURCHIE, of Bugon Davis Law Offices in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, has been listed among the 2013 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers in the area of family law.

SCOTT B. COOPER spoke at the Personal Injury Postmortem event at the Marriott Hotel in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

CARA S. SERRASS was named a shareholder at Serrattella Schiffman & Brown, based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She concentrates her practice in family law and estate probate.

ROBERT FORRES, of Capital BlueCross, was elected by the Pennsylvania eHealth Initiative as its 2013 board chairman.

SARAH C. VENER, senior deputy attorney general in the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, has joined Post & Schell, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as a principal in the firm’s commercial litigation practice.

1994

MARK T. BRAINARD, chief of staff to former Governor Ruth Ann Minner, was promoted to executive vice president at Delaware Technical Community College.

THEODORE J. KOBUS has been ranked one of the nation’s best lawyers in privacy and data security in the 2013 edition of Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business. He is currently co-leader of BakerHostetler’s privacy and data protection team.

“First Amendment creates tension between the government and the press as part of the constitutional design.”


1995

GAYLE A. BOURDEAU was elected 2013 president of Boston’s Commercial Real Estate Women Network. Chapter. Bourdeau serves as vice president, associate senior underwriting counsel, in Steward National Title Services’ Boston office.

GINA A. PESARESI-JONES was appointed regional attorney for the Social Security Administration’s Office of Disability Adjudication and Review for the Philadelphia region, which includes Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.

FRANK J. PISTELLA was nominated to a three-year appointment to the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System board of directors. Mr. Pistella is a public benefits attorney for Neighborhood Legal Services Association.

TIMOTHY F. RAYNE, a partner at MacElree Harvey, Ltd., has been listed among the 2013 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers in the area of personal injury plaintiff law.

DIANE M. RUBERTON was named first assistant prosecutor in the Atlantic County, New Jersey, Prosecutor’s Office.

1996

SALVATORE ANASTASI of Barley Snyder in Malvern, Pennsylvania, has been nominated to be an American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA) Fellow.

CHRISTIAN V. BADALI was elected to the council of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s family law section.

KIMBERLEE S. HARTMAN joined Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP’s Philadelphia office as an associate in the firm’s business and finance department.

DARIN J. MCMLLENN has been promoted to shareholder in the Philadelphia office of Anderson Kill. Mr. McMullen represents policyholders in the area of insurance recovery. He is also a member of Anderson Kill’s financial services industry and hospitality industry practice groups.

ANGELA E. RODANTE has been selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America 2014 in insurance bad faith law.

1997

HON. ABBY L. ADAMS has been invested as commissioner of the Delaware Court of Common Pleas.

NICHOLAS A. ARACO, co-founder, president, and CEO of AcheiveNext and The CFO Alliance, has joined Drinker Biddle & Reath as director of growth strategies.

JOAN M. BERGSMAN joined Bell, Davis & Pirt, PA based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Her practice concentrates on real estate, financial services, and economic development matters.

THERESA A. HILES joined Petro Cohens Petro Matazzaro in the firm’s workers’ compensation department.

MATTHEW A. SMEYERS has joined Jaffe PLLC, based in Richmond, Virginia, as a strategic alliance partner.

JUSTIN B. WINEBURGH, chair of Conen O’Connor’s media, entertainment, and sports law practice, was recently admitted to the California Bar.

1998

GUIDO BABBRE has joined Deeb, Blum, Murphy, Fridberg and Marks with an associate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Babbre focuses his practice in construction and real estate law, specializing in complex litigation centered on construction related claims.

HON. RAYMOND L. RODRIGUEZ was appointed interim civil court judge by New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. He is the first Hispanic judge elected or appointed from Staten Island.

STEFANIE V. SHIREMAN of Obermayer, Rebmann, Maxwell & Hippel LLP in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was selected for inclusion in 2013 Pennsylvania Rising Stars in personal injury, defense, and medical malpractice.

1999

JASON BANONIS, a shareholder in the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, office of Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin, was elected to the Pennsylvania Defense Institute’s board of directors.

CHRISTOPHER R. FROMM and Christina Hanna Fromm welcomed a son, Christian, in January.

2000

GILBERT F. MCKENIGHT was made a partner at Nelson Levine de Luca & Hamilton. He counsels insurance companies in complex and class action litigation and advises clients on litigation management, dispute resolution, and discovery issues.

STEPHANIE THIMODO has joined the U.S. Department of Labor. Her duties include work around the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and supervising investigators.

2001

WILLIAM J. HIGGINS, district attorney of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, will serve a three-year term on the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s board of governors, representing Blair, Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Mifflin, and Somerset county members.

ZACHARY M. ROBNICH, partner at Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby LLP, has been certified as a specialist in workers’ compensation law by the Pennsylvania Bar Association. Mr. Robnich devotes his practice to defending workers’ compensation matters on behalf of insurance carriers, self-insured entities, and third-party administrators throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

2002

HON. RICHARD L. ALLOWAY was appointed special counsel to the Lieutenant Governor’s campaign committee cycle chairman and has been elected to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education’s board of directors.

GIANCLAUDIO FINZIO has been elected a director at the Bayard law firm in Wilmington, Delaware.

SYLVIA A. MCCULLOUGH, a critical care nurse with Wilmington health care law certificate recipient, recently joined the health care and long-term care group at Burns & Wilkins. Ms. McCullough defends long-term care facilities against negligence, professional malpractice, and general liability claims.

KRISTY N. OLIVIO SALVITTI was elected shareholder of Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin. Ms. Salvitti works in the Cherry Hill, New Jersey, office where she concentrates her practice on workers’ compensation.
Riki R. Redente Stroessl has been named a 2013 Rising Star in Pennsylvania by Super Lawyers magazine. She teaches on the adjunct faculty at Widener Law’s Delaware Campus, volunteers as part of the ITAP program, and continues to practice plaintiffs’ asbestos litigation as well as medical malpractice and other personal injury matters.

Scott W. Reid of Coten O’Connor’s Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, office is the recipient of the Foundation of the National Bar Association, Women Lawyers Division President’s Award.

Samantha J. Wilson, founding associate of Health Law Associates, LLC, presented “Charting the Way: Understanding Your Obligations in the New World of Electronic Recordkeeping,” Auto Selection of Codes through the EMR and the Issues that are Inherent to this Process,” “Avoidance of Cloned Documentation” and “Implementation: Ensuring that it is our Friend, not our Foe” at a Health Care Compliance Association event.

George A. Bikios has been made a partner at K&L Gates in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Mr. Bikios’ litigation and regulatory practice focuses on oil and gas, natural resource development, utility regulation, and public contracts.

Joseph P. Caracolisi of Foreman & Caracolisi, PC, has been named a Pennsylvania Rising Star by Pennsylvania Super Lawyers magazine.

Elizabeth J. King has been appointed to serve as team leader of the J.P. Morgan Trust Company of Delaware in Wilmington.

Christopher J. Strom was elected to Eckert Seamans Clerkin & Mellott, LLC’s membership. Mr. Strom focuses his practice on financial services, real estate, international data privacy, and corporate and business law

2004

Susan E. Barro is running for magistrate district judge in Pennsylvania’s 49-1 District, which comprises approximately one-half of State College Borough.


Jonathan L. Pietrowksi recently started his own criminal defense firm in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

William C. Martson joined the central Pennsylvania firm Aebly & Kardulas, LLP as an associate.

Korah R. Sejdiu has returned to private practice, starting a law firm in Kosovo, and teaches law at the University of Prishtina. He is married and has a son and daughter.

Brian Gondek is counsel to Frankel & Kershienbaum in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, concentrating his practice in the areas of family law and estate planning.

Adam J. Noah has been named senior vice president for congressional relations of the American Bankers Association (ABA). Mr. Noah will lead the ABA’s lobbying efforts with the Senate Republicans Caucus, including senate leadership and banking committee members.

Kevin J. Rieffenstahl has Burns White in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

2005

Carly A. Dawson was promoted to special counsel in Dennis Woliver Kelley’s Long Beach, California, office and is a member of the firm’s labor, employment, and personnel practice group.

Michael P. Donohue joined Smith Kane, LLC in Malvern and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His practice focuses on commercial litigation, commercial bankruptcy, debt counseling, corporate and commercial transactions, and fiduciary litigation.

2006

Rahat N. Babar, of The Bayne Law Group, LLC, in Princeton, New Jersey, has been named a Diverse Attorney of the Year in The Legal Intelligence’s Lawyers on the Fast Track Special Section.

Melissa F. Hagele, an associate at Anapá Schwartz, has been selected to the 2006 Pennsylvania Rising Stars list.

Kevin G. McNaold joined Dech, Blum, Murphy, Fushberg and Markovich. Mr. McDonald focuses his practice in the areas of commercial litigation and bankruptcy and reorganization in state and federal court.

Craig M. Schultz has been accredited to handle claims for benefits before the Board of Veterans Appeals.

2007

Maria E. Bermudez-Harris was honored in The Legal Intelligence’s Lawyers on the Fast Track Special Section and at their awards dinner.

Steven M. Jones joined Begley, Carlín & Mandos LLP in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. Jones will represent clients in civil and criminal litigation matters.

Sarah A. Roberts joined Marshall & Trennecy Werner Coleman & Groggin as an associate in the firm’s casualty department in Wilmington, Delaware. She focuses her practice on toxic torts, product liability, asbestos personal injury litigation, and general negligence matters.

Cpt Stephen J. Romeo, U.S. Army, is currently serving as a judge advocate in Afghanistan.

Leslie Arzt Zirkle was selected to serve as a custody consultant by the York County, Pennsylvania, Court of Common Pleas Family Law Bench. She handles divorce, support, adoption, and name change matters.

2008

Justin Alberto, an associate at the Bayard law firm in Wilmington, Delaware, has been recognized by Super Lawyers magazine as a Delaware Rising Star in bankruptcy, and creditor’s rights.

Marcie M. Satow has joined Kenneth Sheldon Liptak Nowok LLP’s Syracuse, New York, office as special counsel in the firm’s workers’ compensation practice.

Janine L. Hoehnberg has joined Potter Anderson & Corroon LLP as an associate in the firm’s litigation group in Wilmington, Delaware.

2009

Michael L. Bileci was elevated to shareholder at Capellari Scatchard in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. Mr. Bileci practices in workers’ compensation defense and disability matters.

William M. Brennan has joined Rawle & Henderson LLP as an associate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with a concentration in product liability.

Cappt Grant W. Mcowdell and his wife, Karisa Mcowdell ’04, welcomed their daughter Magdalena Rose (“class of 2029”) into the world on March 14, 2013. Captain and Mrs. Mcowdell are currently stationed at Camp Pendleton, California.

Kristin A. Molavougue, an associate at MacElree Harvey, Ltd, has been named to the 2013 Pennsylvania Rising Stars list in the area of family law.

Patrick J. Murphy was awarded the 2013 Straight Ally Hero Award by the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund for his continued commitment to members of the LGBT community.

2010

Christopher G. Gvozdzich, of Gvozdzich Law Offices in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, is a participant in the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Bar Leadership Institute class of 2010-2011.

Andrew G. Mundwiller and The Eagle Law Firm have been named. Winningmost Plaintiff’s Firm by Missouri Lawyers Weekly. Mundwiller is a personal injury lawyer who practices with the firm in St. Louis, Missouri.

Elizabeth A. Powers joined Morris James LLP in Wilmington, Delaware, as an associate in the corporate litigation group. Ms. Powers’ practice focuses on complex, commercial and corporate litigation cases.

Daniel P. Robinson has joined the worker’s compensation department at Capellari Scatchard in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey. Mr. Robinson represents insurance carriers and employers in the defense of workers’ compensation claims at all stages of litigation.

2011

Yulita T. Foster joined Rawle & Henderson as an associate in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ms. Foster will focus her practice in the area of workers’ compensation litigation.

Lawrence R. Rife has joined Sharpe & Sharpe, LLP in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Mr. Rife’s practice focuses on landlord tenant law, commercial law, corporate law, and estate planning, and administration.

Eric G. Siegel has joined McClay, Deutsch, Mullvany & Carpenter, LLP as an associate in Morrisstown, New Jersey. Mr. Siegel will practice in the insurance services and litigation department.
When the federal pursuit of a $250,000 prize on "murders" at the Rue Manor estate in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Mr. Walker will practice in the areas of school and municipal liability and construction accidents litigation offices. Ms. Raful practices in products liability and construction accidents litigation. Ensuring that it is our Friend, not our enemy. Documentation”; and “Implementation: to this Process”; “Avoidance of Cloned EMR and the Issues that are Inherent with the law.”

Four Alumni Join National Advisory Council

JOHN E. SAVOTH ’84, of counsel to Saltz Mongeluzzi Barrett & Bendesky in Philadelphia, is a personal injury lawyer. He focuses on cases involving construction accidents, premises liability, medical malpractice, motor vehicle accidents, dram shop liquor liability, and the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He has won several million-dollar verdicts for his clients. Savoth has been exceptionally active in the profession, serving as the Philadelphia Bar Association’s chancellor (the first Widener Law alumnus to hold the position), vice chancellor and as chair of the Young Lawyers Division and the Board of Governors. He currently serves as the association’s speaker at U.S. naturalization, citizenship ceremonies and as a member of the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention. He is also the hearing committee chairman of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Savoth often lectures lawyers on trial practice and the rules of professional conduct.

CAROLINE B. MAZZA ’13 serves as president of The Mutual Fire Foundation. In keeping the foundation’s focus on education, Mazza strives to continue its legacy of providing scholarships to the leaders of tomorrow. She and the foundation will soon introduce their second annual scholarship for the benefit of Widener Law students. Mazza also represents the Guinan Financial Group in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, as a financial representative, offering a wide array of life insurance and annuity products. As the first National Advisory Council member to have graduated after the year 2000, she succeeds her father, Alexander Bratic, on the council and represents a new generation of leadership at Widener Law. Mazza resides in New Jersey with her husband and one-year-old son. Please see page 18 for additional details about the Mutual Fire Foundation’s new scholarship for Widener Law students.

JOSEPH J. SANTARONE ’85 is a shareholder with Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin, where he serves as the chair of the Public Entity and Civil Rights practice group as well as the School Leaders’ Liability practice group. Based in Marshall Dennehey’s Philadelphia office, Santarone focuses his practice in the defense of police officers, municipalities, school districts, public officials, and both private and public sector employers. He has tried more than 75 jury trials to verdict in federal court in the areas of civil rights and employment litigation; has handled numerous professional liability claims; and has defended matters at administrative, public hearing, and AAA Arbitrations. Additionally, he serves as the supervising attorney for Professional Liability in the firm’s Philadelphia office; has been exceptionally active in the profession, serving as the association’s speaker at U.S. naturalization, citizenship ceremonies and as a member of the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention. He is also the hearing committee chairman of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Savoth often lectures lawyers on trial practice and the rules of professional conduct.

IN MEMORIAM

BARRY F. GUTANTOFF ’77
EDWARD J. LEONARD ’78
DOMINIC J. CENTRELLA ’79
RAYMOND J. HANCOCK ’79
JEFFREY M. MINDELMAN ’80
CARLTON A. WILLS ’81
HARRY J. ACKERMAN ’81
ANTHONY J. CIRRENZI ’81
VINCENT S. ZICCOLELLA ’81
SHARON O. FERDINAND ’81
JACK W. COOPERSMITH ’81
MICHAEL W. NICHOLS ’81

Michael Caruso joined McGuire, Dolan, Mulvanny & Carpenter, LLP as an associate in the Morristown, New Jersey, firm’s construction, fidelity, and surety department.


Gabriela G. Raful has joined Galgani Berger, LLP as an associate in the Philadelphia and Reading offices. Ms. Raful practices in products liability and construction accidents litigation as well as workers’ compensation, personal injury, and disability claims.

Jessica A. Williams, of Health Law Associates, Inc. presented “Charting the Way: Understanding Your Obligations in the New World of Electronic Recording”, “Auto-Selection of Codes through the EMR and the Issues that are Inherent to this Process”, “Avoidance of Cloned Documentation”, and “Implementation: Ensuring that it is our Friend, not our Enemy.”

Julie M. Macombo joined Norris McLaughlin & Marcus in Allentown, Pennsylvania, as an associate in the firm’s business law practice group.

RECONNECT: VISIT OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY WEBSITE lawalumni.widener.edu

We’d like to know where you are and what you’re doing.

Judges from pages eight and nine


On December 6, win two tickets to an upcoming Widener Speaker Series event by identifying the alumnus or alumna judge pictured at facebook.com/widenerlawalumni.


On December 10, join the alumnus judge for lunch at facebook.com/widenerlawalumni.

Page 11, top row, from left: Hon. John E. Saviot ’84, of counsel to Saltz Mongeluzzi Barrett & Bendesky in Philadelphia, is a personal injury lawyer. He focuses on cases involving construction accidents, premises liability, medical malpractice, motor vehicle accidents, dram shop liquor liability, and the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He has won several million-dollar verdicts for his clients. Savoth has been exceptionally active in the profession, serving as the Philadelphia Bar Association’s chancellor (the first Widener Law alumnus to hold the position), vice chancellor and as chair of the Young Lawyers Division and the Board of Governors. He currently serves as the association’s speaker at U.S. naturalization, citizenship ceremonies and as a member of the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention. He is also the hearing committee chairman of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Savoth often lectures lawyers on trial practice and the rules of professional conduct.

ANDREA BETH TINIANOW ’97 is vice president of business development and assistant general counsel for Corporation Service Company, a leading provider of digital brand protection, compliance, and entity management services. Prior to joining CSC, Tinianow was a litigation attorney at Pepper Hamilton LLP in Wilmington and a clerk to William B. Chandle III, the former chancellor of the Delaware Court of Chancery. Tinianow graduated magna cum laude from Widener where she was an editor of the Delaware Journal of Corporate Law and a Widener fellow to the Hon. Randy Holland of the Delaware Supreme Court. Before attending law school, she was a marketing director for Thomson Financial Services. Tinianow received her undergraduate degree in economics from Brown University. She is a director on the board of Delaware First Media which operates WDDE, Delaware’s first National Public Radio station. Ms. Tinianow lives with her husband and three children in Wilmington, Delaware.

Page 12, top row, from left: Hon. Vincent S. Ziccolella ’90, antHony J. crescenzi ’89, micHael w. nicHolls ’03, dominic J. centrella ’79, COMM.

Page 12, bottom row, from left: Hon. Vincent S. Ziccolella ’90, antHony J. crescenzi ’89, micHael w. nicHolls ’03, dominic J. centrella ’79, COMM.