Ripple Effect
Clinics give grads more stroke in job market
Thanks to the support of our alumni and President Renu Khator of the University of Houston, we are moving ahead with several key initiatives that promise to reinforce our national standing and define our Law Center for many years to come.

One of the most significant faculty recruitment efforts in the history of the Law Center continues to yield outstanding results. During my tenure as dean, we have added a dozen new faculty members who were highly recruited by Top Tier law schools. These outstanding professors of law bring remarkable credentials, expertise and energy to our campus, and we are a better school for adding them to our ranks. As we look to the future, we also salute four luminaries who served the Law Center with distinction for many decades: Sidney Buchanan, Stephen Huber, Tom Newhouse and Irene Merker Rosenberg. All four are now honored as professors emeriti of the Law Center.

The prospects for a major new building on our campus are growing brighter. The University of Houston has launched a feasibility study of our much-anticipated new building that would be added near the newly opened Calhoun Lofts for graduate students housing. Financed by a combination of tuition-backed bonds and private contributions, the new building would allow us to expand programs such as the clinical operations that are outlined in this issue of Briefcase.

We have made the strategic decision to limit the size of our incoming classes to increase the quality of the educational experience at the Law Center and further build the prestige of a Law Center degree. At the same time, the UH Board of Regents has raised our tuition to bring the Law Center more in line with our peer schools and maintain our resources despite cutbacks in state support for higher education.

Our J.D. and LL.M. programs continue to attract a record number of applicants, and each incoming class during my tenure as dean has set a record for academic achievement. At the same time, the Law Center remains one of the most diverse campuses in the nation, with minorities accounting for more than 28 percent of our newest incoming class.

After the national economy faltered in 2009, many schools found it necessary to scale back on multiple fronts. Our Law Center is in a much more favorable position, and I believe we are entering an unparalleled period of achievement that will witness great successes for our school and our students. Our alumni are playing key roles in elevating the excellence of the Law Center, and they are gaining something important in return: a great return on the investment in their law degree from a truly superior school.

Dean Raymond T. Nimmer,
Dean and Leonard H. Childs Professor of Law
Law Center specialty programs recognized

The school’s health law and intellectual property programs have long been recognized among the Top 10 in the nation, currently ranking 2nd and 7th respectively in the annual poll compiled by U.S. News & World Report magazine. With the addition of the Law Center’s clinical training program, the school is now one of only eight public law schools with three or more nationally recognized programs. The Law Center’s flagship publication, the Houston Law Review, moved up eight spots to No. 42 among more than 1,500 legal journals published worldwide in rankings compiled by Washington & Lee University. The Law Center is the only Texas school cited as a leader in public interest law among the nation’s 200 law schools by The National Jurist. The school ranked 44th based on student involvement, curriculum and financial factors. In a new ranking compiled by the editors of the Super Lawyers list, the Law Center ranks No. 34 nationally for the number of alums included in the annual compilation of the nation’s leading lawyers. And the school ranks No. 37 nationally for the number of first-year associates working at the best U.S. firms. New rankings from U.S. News & World Report are due in April 2010.

H-GAC Grant is Good News for Ike Victims

Hurricane Ike spared the Law Center, but other parts of the region were not so lucky. In recognition of legal problems that continue to plague victims of the massive storm, the Houston-Galveston Area Council recently awarded the Center for Consumer Law a $404,000 grant to expand its program of helping victims of Hurricane Ike deal with unresolved legal issues. “This grant will support our ongoing efforts to provide storm victims with the legal assistance they need, from basic information and counseling, to the filing of lawsuits,” said Associate Dean Richard Alderman, who directs the center. The H-GAC grant is the largest ever received by the Center for Consumer Law, surpassing the $356,000 Cy Pries award from Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott that Alderman used to establish the highly successful Texas Consumer Complaint Center.

Experts explore hot-button issue: Should government be secular or religious?

Two eminent constitutional law experts took another look at a continuing hot-button issue in a panel discussion of “Evolution, Intelligent Design and Religion in the Schools” sponsored by the Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League-Southwest Region. Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the University of California Irvine School of Law, and U.S. District Judge John E. Jones of the Middle District of Pennsylvania, agreed the country may see a major change in interpretation of the “establishment clause” of the Constitution. The pendulum, they said, may be swinging toward more religion in government programs, education and other areas such as symbols on the courthouse square. The expert’s consensus: this is a serious constitutional issue and the latest chapter in a continuing debate about whether government should be secular or religious.

Four retirees leave lasting legacy

The Law Center bid a fond farewell to four faculty mainstays who retired after decades of teaching, counseling, molding and inspiring young lawyers. Professors Sidney Buchanan, Stephen K. Huber, Thomas Newhouse and Irene Merker Rosenberg are now recognized as professors emeriti of the Law Center and are honored with a Faculty Legacy Fund that fuels scholarships for deserving students. For more information about the fund, contact briefcase@uh.edu.
State Bar Honors
Law Center quintet

Special awards are among the highlights of the annual meeting of the State Bar of Texas — and the SBOT gathering in Dallas put the spotlight on five members of the Law Center community. Professor David Dow earned the SBOT’s Civil Rights Award for his work with the Texas Innocence Network and his defense of more than 100 inmates on Death Row. The late Professor Joe Vail, who founded the Law Center’s Immigration Law Clinic in 1999, received the Texas Young Lawyers Association Outstanding Mentor Award. Vail, who died in 2008, previously earned the SBOT’s Pro Bono Award, the American Immigration Lawyers Association’s Elmer Fried Excellence in Teaching Award, and the National Immigration Project’s Carol King Award. Two members of the Class of 2009 — Micaela Natalie Alfaro and LaTasha Mabry — earned Women & Minority Scholarships from the SBOT Intellectual Property Law Section. Richard “Racehorse” Haynes ’56 was named the “Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer” by the Texas Bar Foundation.

Frankel Lecture

The 14th Annual Houston Law Review Frankel Lecture examined the history, health and welfare of the 25th Amendment, which defines when and how a vice-president may succeed to the presidency and has been invoked six times since its ratification in 1967. Previous transitions of power — including the swearing in of Lyndon B. Johnson hours after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy — proved smooth and orderly even though the exact process had not been constitutionally defined. Keynote speaker at the Frankel Lecture was Akhil Reed Amar, the Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale Law School. Commentators included John D. Feerick, the Sidney C. Norris Chair of Law in Public Service at Fordham University School of Law; and Joel K. Goldstein, the Vincent C. Immel Professor of Law at Saint Louis University School of Law. Previously, the Frankel Lecture had explored the “culture clash” between lawyers and managers in the corporate world, with keynoter Professor Geoffrey C. Hazard of the University of California Hastings College of Law. He was joined by commentators Stephen V. Arbogast of the University of Houston C. T. Bauer College of Business; and Edward B. Rock, professor and co-director of the Institute for Law & Economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Judge traces life from Holocaust to World Court

Thomas Buergenthal, legal scholar, Holocaust survivor and United States judge on the International Court of Justice in The Hague, discussed his life and career in a Law Center presentation with Alan Crain of the World Affairs Council of Houston. The two explored how Buergenthal’s boyhood experience in Nazi death camps affected his beliefs and world view. The visit was co-hosted by the Law Center and the Holocaust Museum of Houston.

Artwork colors student life

Student life got a little bit brighter, at least in the Commons and first floor hallway, with the addition of a much-needed splash of color in the form of paintings by Katherine Houston. The local artist paints her vibrant acrylics on sheets of Plexiglas, creating from the back while viewing from the front.

Blakely crowns undisputed national moot court champ

Even while a true NCAA football champion remains elusive, the debate on the nation’s top moot court team has been silenced by a National Moot Court Championship devised and hosted by the Blakely Advocacy Institute. A total of 16 teams earn their way to the exclusive competition by achieving outstanding results in the nation’s top moot court tournaments. These “best of the best” then convene at the Law Center to battle for the coveted title of National Moot Court Champion. The University of Detroit Mercy won the first title, and the January 2010 tournament trophy went to a team from John Marshall Law School.
When Dean Ray Nimmer sought an edge to improve the Law Center’s ability to compete with other Tier One law schools for top students, he turned to a longtime friend for suggestions.

“He asked this old dinosaur for ideas about how to take the Law Center to the ultimate level of excellence,” said Don Riddle ’66, one of the school’s most successful alumni. Riddle knew the academic standing and top-notch faculty were already in place. To reach the next level would require a simple solution: money. The renowned trial lawyer didn’t waste time in putting his concept into action.

“I sent out a notice to friends and suggested we all pitch in,” Riddle says, “and before I could turn off my computer, I had enough e-mails to fund two scholarships.” The Law Center’s first three-year, full-ride awards — the Prestige Scholarships — were born.

“It was a spur of the moment thought to wrest high-achieving applicants from the University of Texas or Harvard or some other exotic place,” Riddle says. “These Prestige Scholarships give us the chance to get superior students we might otherwise not have attained.”

It didn’t take long for other alums to step forward. Dean Nimmer approached Jeff Dodd ’79 with a similar proposal, and Dodd encouraged a small group of colleagues at Andrews Kurth to support a third scholarship. “I think it’s a tremendous law school,” says Dodd, who has taught at the Law Center and co-authored a book with Dean Nimmer. “But as a public law school it perhaps doesn’t shine as much as some of the other schools. So, anything we can do to attract good candidates is important.”

Riddle noted with satisfaction that each of the first year’s winners said the scholarship was a deciding factor in choosing the Law Center over other options. “We definitely feel like we pirated students from other institutions,” he said.

Winners were chosen from the entire pool of Law Center applicants. There is no separate application or interview, and the awards of Prestige Scholarships are not based on need. Jamie West, assistant dean for admissions, said criteria include LSAT scores, GPA, non-academic activities and other background information and, to a great extent, the personal statement submitted with the student’s school application. “We’re looking for an outstanding personal statement of their purpose in going to law school, their goals and basically who they are,” West said.

She noted that the first three winners of Prestige Scholarships — Robert W. Lundell Jr., Laura K. Tu and Daphne Wang — are graduates of the University of Texas.

In addition to covering tuition and fees, Riddle suggested the program include a mentoring component in which donors would be available to advise students and introduce them to the legal community.

Riddle’s group — dubbed the 1947 Prestige Scholarship Founders in observance of the year the school opened — and the Andrews Kurth donors made a three-year funding commitment. But both Riddle and Dodd are confident others will step up in years ahead to expand the program.

“I’m certainly hoping there will be others who come from younger graduating classes than I who have their own coterie of friends and classmates to fund scholarships in the future,” Riddle said. “I hope to see 10 or more funded in the years to come. It’s clear that the level of competency of our students would grow along with these scholarships.” •
Laura Tu

**Age:** 24  
**Hometown:** Houston  
**Education:**  
B.S. Biochemistry, University of Texas; M.P.H., University of Texas School of Public Health  
**Interests:** Health law, Public Interest or Intellectual Property

Laura Tu spent her early college days peering into Petri dishes and vaguely seeing a future in medicine. As a child of Vietnamese immigrants who was raised in a one-bedroom apartment, she knew only too well about the plight of the poor and wanted to help – and becoming a doctor seemed the logical path. But she came to realize there were many ways to help the community that didn’t involve a regimen of heavy science and hours in the lab. She gravitated toward public health and eventually was drawn to dual J.D./M.P.H. degrees. “The possibility of fusing the two fields together thrilled me,” she wrote in her Law Center application. “Coming from a science background of absolutes, the world of law was a breath of fresh air filled with nuances and uncertainties.”


**Age:** 23  
**Hometown:** Houston  
**Education:**  
B.A. Government, University of Texas  
**Interests:** Considering energy law

Robert Lundell was a bit uncertain about what he wanted to do in life, and searched for academic and career goals that met his diverse interests. He liked the outdoors and cared about the planet, perhaps a college major in wildlife biology or environmental science. But political science proved a lot more interesting and he gravitated toward public policy and, eventually, law. It was an unpaid internship with a freshman state representative and a stint at the Capitol that really jumpstarted an appetite for education and sealed the deal for a career in the law. His hands-on work in the Legislature and with constituents lead to a revelation that “public policy is not a discreet academic discipline: it is a synthesis of economics, philosophy, history and so much more.” He feels his newfound thirst for knowledge, combined with his political experience, has “galvanized” his pursuit of a legal career.

Daphne Wang

**Age:** 21  
**Hometown:** Sugar Land  
**Education:**  
B.A. Business Foundations, University of Texas  
**Interests:** Uncertain

Lessons learned watching her parents’ hard work and determination in starting and building a successful business have served Daphne Wang well on her path to a law career. She remembers their resolve in learning the ins and outs of a new enterprise through trial and error and the long, exhausting hours working in a small dry cleaning shop without air conditioning during Houston summers. And she also remembers missing out on some childhood experiences and teenage fun because she was working at the shop or at home caring for two and then three younger siblings while her parents worked. The life lessons might be summed up in single words – responsibility, patience, willpower and ambition – or phrases such as social skills, level-headed, attention to detail and work ethic – all of which will serve her well in law school and beyond. “I have developed into a strong, independent woman with the help of an even stronger foundation from my experiences growing up,” she wrote in her application to the Law Center.
Law Center students gain practical experience in six key areas of the law – and a valuable mark of distinction in the legal job market.
Navigating the twists and turns of immigration law with its alphabet soup of federal agencies, rules and regulations can be daunting for any experienced attorney. To Law Center students, the maelstrom of immigration law provides an unparalleled learning opportunity that allows them to “help people who need help the most,” in the words of Diana Velardo ’01, who serves as a supervising attorney along with Janet Beck. The clinic’s new director, Assoc. Prof. Geoffrey A. Hoffman, brings a strong background in a range of immigration-related matters. In March 2010, Hoffman served as co-counsel on an Immigration Clinic case that reached the U.S. Supreme Court (see story on p. 24), and he wants to see more Law Center students working cases through the federal courts.

The clinic’s cases can be complex and heartbreaking, ranging from asylum applications and child issues to domestic violence, crime and human trafficking. In cooperation with community service organizations, clinic students also give presentations and participate in two immigration workshops named in honor of the clinic founder, the late Prof. Joseph A. Vail. The need is great. In the area of human trafficking alone, the State Department estimates one-third of all incidents – as many as 18,000 a year – occur in Texas. Velardo questions that number, calling it absurdly low. The Immigration Clinic is the Law Center’s largest, with as many as 20 students per semester, and the most popular, likely because many students are descendants of immigrants. The two-hour a week classroom component of the four-unit clinic concentrates on teaching advocacy skills and substantive law that students will require to represent clients before federal agencies and judges. Students are responsible for handling cases from initial interviews through the conclusion, including trial, if needed.

“She would break down in tears because there were very difficult things she had to explain to me in detail. And it was hard for her, especially talking about them with a man.”

Those heart-rending interviews made Jessica and her case anything but impersonal for Garza. A single mother of two young daughters, Jessica (not her real name) had been eking out a living waiting tables in her small town. She was told “good money” could be found in el Norte and elected to join 20 others on an exhausting three-week trek through Guatemala and Mexico, eventually crossing the Rio Grande on a makeshift float. The trafficker’s price was $7,000, a fortune that was to be paid when she earned that “good money” waiting tables in America. The journey from El Salvador was grueling, but her life in Houston’s east side made the trip seem like a picnic. Her dream of a better life was replaced by a brutal reality: Jessica was held as a sex slave, with the owners of an East End cantina forcing her to hustle drinks, dance with drunks and prostitute herself night after night. After deducting money for rent, food, “fines,” and other expenses, the bar owners gave her $40 on Sundays. The $7,000 debt was never meant to be paid in full, and escape was out of the question. “I didn’t want to be there,” she says in a whisper through an interpreter, “but they told me if I tried to run away they would do something to my daughters.” Twisting and untwisting a tissue, Jessica’s red-rimmed eyes give way to tears as she adds haltingly, “My family … would pay.”
Jessica’s ordeal ended with a raid on the cantina by federal agents. Facing deportation, she turned to the Law Center for help – and managed to get her dream back on track, thanks to the work of Garza and others in the Immigration Clinic. That’s what the Law Center’s Clinical Training program is all about – a “win win” situation that benefits clients and students.

In legal education, the issue of practical vs. theoretical has been open to debate, and even contention, for years. But the practical side, and clinical training in particular, has gained added importance recently as the economic downturn forced large and small law firms to look for new associates who could immediately put theory into practice.

Janet Heppard, director of clinical education at the Law Center, speaks of the “changing flavor” of the law and what employers are looking for – and how it influences what students need to learn. The traditional system of young associates learning the basics of lawyering in the first few years on the job is fading, she says. “Law firms want students coming in ready to practice because they want them generating income from the beginning, especially when these associates are starting at six-figure salaries,” she says. While Heppard credits the Law Center with giving all of its students a superior education, she speaks with a sense of pride (as a former clinical student herself, Class of ’93) when she notes that students with clinical experience have a leg up in the job market. “Students who come from the clinics have an extra set of skills that even those who clerked at law firms don’t get. Real, down-to-earth lawyer skills,” she says.

Practical skills at the Law Center are earned in six clinical programs: Civil, Criminal, Consumer, Immigration, Transactional, and Mediation/Externships. Clients range from undocumented immigrants and refugees seeking asylum to small business owners, non-profit organizations and victims of domestic violence and consumer fraud. Under the supervision of clinical faculty, students handle all aspects of cases from initial interviews to representing clients in court. By the end of a semester they have handled files, dealt with practicing lawyers, drafted legal correspondence and motions, taken depositions, negotiated leases or settlements and met numerous deadlines. “They’ve gotten over that initial learning curve of how to practice law,” Heppard says. “I’ve had attorneys come up to my students at the courthouse and say, ‘How do I file this pleading?’”

“The cases are theirs to handle,” she adds, “but we’re there, we’re in the background. But for the most part, we want them to be taking control of the case. It makes them realize that I can go out there and I can practice law.” After all, that’s why they went to law school in the first place.” Heppard notes that the clinical operations represent a win-win arrangement. “We benefit the community because there are so many people out there who can’t afford an attorney, and we benefit the students.

Civil Practice Clinic

The Civil Practice Clinic recently earned headlines when a Law Center team prompted the recusal of a juvenile court judge after he made prejudicial comments during a child custody hearing. The judge said he believed the 50-something grandparents seeking custody were too old to raise two young boys. When the Law Center team sought a recusal, the judge was so enraged by the motion that Supervising Attorney Barbara Stalder thought she was going to be hauled off to a holding cell. No such scene ensued, and the case was assigned to a different judge. “They were excellent, excellent students,” Stalder says of the two who graduated this year. “And, they are going to make excellent lawyers.” She cites them typical of students who put in the extra time and effort to work in the clinical program. Director Janet Heppard says, in general, students handle the types of cases they might encounter in their first five years of practice, ranging from bankruptcy, divorce and adoption to estate planning and probate. “It’s very challenging for students,” Stalder says. She cites how experience covers everything from dealing with files, clients, confidentiality, ethics and a myriad of other issues, in addition to testing (if not forging) the ability to think ahead and formulate strategies. The four-unit course also has a classroom component that meets two hours each week. Stalder, a veteran of the Immigration Clinic as a member of the class of ’03, is a big proponent of clinical training. “It provides an avenue for students to learn the total package of practicing law,” she says. “It’s an opportunity for students to have probably one of the most valuable experiences of their lifetime.”
Robert Goss LL.M. ’08 credits his training in the Consumer Law Clinic and the lessons learned from his supervising attorney, Professor Richard McElvaney, for convincing him to expand his fledgling practice into the areas of landlord/tenant and property law. He gained practical experience working on a complex contract-for-deed case and a landlord/tenant dispute in which a threat to seize an entire apartment complex convinced the owner to settle his client’s relatively small claim. Cases like these underscore the need for practical legal education, Goss says. “These people have no money and have a desperate need for help. Rick taught us not only what you need to do to help a client, but also to win the case.” McElvaney says an average semester will see the clinic’s four students handle about 50 cases, ranging from property disputes and even bankruptcy to alleged scams from small-time con artists. All but a tiny percentage are settled out of court. “But we have gone from initial interviews all the way to jury trial,” he says. The four-credit clinic has a two-hour, weekly classroom component that provides an overview of consumer issues. McElvaney, a legal aid attorney before coming to the Law Center, is naturally a big supporter of helping the community through practical legal education. “I’m surprised about how many people attend a law school and all they do in most of their courses is read the appellate court decisions. They don’t get the practical skills. And here we have so many ways to give them those skills,” he says. Including, of course, the Consumer Law Clinic.

Because they learn about the practical side of the law,” she says.

A third benefit, Heppard says, involves the way that students also learn something about themselves. “We try to get students thinking about the balance in their life, their goal. Reflecting on how they’re doing as a lawyer. Reflecting on what they see in the court, the lawyers they see, their behavior. They take that back and think about it when they go out to practice,” she says.

That introspection can swing both ways, but Heppard sees that too as a plus. “We have some students who come in to see what the practice of law can be. Eventually, they might decide that this is not how they want to actually practice law, and how they may want to use their law degree to do something else. That’s a success for us, because we believe it is important to like what you do as a lawyer,” Heppard says.

The exposure to real lawyering is demanding and the time commitment is similar to having a job while attending school as a full-time student, Heppard says. Applicants for the 50 or so slots that are offered each semester are interviewed to confirm particular interests and to insure that each student understands what they are getting into. A four-credit hour clinic can total up to a combined 200 hours for classroom and clinical work, and Heppard says it can be hard to pass that investment in time, effort and emotion on to another student if a case is not resolved by the end of a semester. Many students are committed enough to their assignments that they elect to sign up for a second round of clinical work to allow them to finish a case. But the award for perseverance goes to the Law Center graduate who passed the bar – and returned to shepherd the case through trial.

With so many positives, why is there sometimes a reticence toward clinical training? ABA accreditation standards require law schools to “offer substantial opportunities for live-client or other real-life practice experiences … designed to encourage reflection by students on their experiences and on the values and responsibilities of the legal profession.” Yet, a frequently cited 2007 Carnegie report found law schools in general fall short in teaching students how to become lawyers and urged a major revamping of curriculum to better integrate “formal knowledge” with “practical experience.”

“I think we’re in a new phase,” says Susan Westerberg Prager, executive director and CEO of the Association of American Law Schools. “There is more foment about and interest in the curriculum than at any time since I entered teaching in 1972. What we are seeing is a true clinical movement, but not just simulated situations that are designed to give students lawyer skills, not just live clients, but a conscious effort to think about the skills that a person needs to represent clients.”

These skills are exactly what law firms are looking for, says James G. Leipold, executive director of the Washington-based National Association for Law Placement. “What employers are really looking for are new associates who have the skills of mid-level associates,” he says with a laugh. “In this economy they are looking for someone who can come up to speed quickly.” In addition to solid writing and advocacy skills, law firms are looking for a mastery of business skills, law firm economics, and exposure to the business world and “work” in general, he says. “Law students need
Talia Jarvis, 2L, entered law school fairly certain about one thing: she did not want a future in criminal law or litigation. “Of course it backfired on me and I absolutely love it,” she says after a summer externship working on a capital murder case at the Harris County District Attorney’s office. “I just thought it wasn’t for me. I thought it would be hard for me to deal with crime victims and murderers. But I felt that I should at least check it out, and actually I found it very inspiring working on behalf of the public.” Her “inspiration” started when she shadowed her supervising prosecutor on visits to a crime scene and the jailhouse for an interview with a defendant. That “real world” exposure to career possibilities is a key benefit of the Criminal Practice and Judicial Externship/Internship program, says the director, Assistant Clinical Professor Erma Bonadero. “It offers students the opportunity to work at a select number of approved off-campus placements, such as governmental agencies, public interest entities, and with state and federal judges,” she says. “Students are given the opportunity to refine educational goals and test their career options.” The criminal clinic is taught by state District Judge Belinda Hill and meets for two hours a week, exploring the ethics, process and logistics of pursuing a case. Jarvis spent the second half of her summer interning for U.S. District Judge David Hittner at the federal courthouse where she attended the bond hearing for accused Ponzi scammer R. Allen Stanford on her first day of work. She is still somewhat surprised by how her experiences have expanded her legal horizons. “I really, really didn’t expect I’d feel about the federal courthouse where she attended the bond hearing for accused Ponzi scammer R. Allen Stanford on her first day of work. She is still somewhat surprised by how her experiences have expanded her legal horizons. “I really, really didn’t expect I’d feel about...”}

While all of the Law Center’s clinics fill rapidly each semester, the Immigration Clinic is the largest and most popular – possibly because of the constant influx of immigrants in Houston, and the fact that many Law Center students are first-or second-generation Americans and have a personal interest in the field.

“The importance of the clinic as a model for law school learning cannot be overstated,” says the clinic’s new director, Associate Professor Geoffrey A. Hoffman. “Due to the range of cases our clinic handles, from asylum to naturalization to self-petitions based on domestic violence to federal court matters, the students get a wide range of experience in a variety of cases before they ever leave law school.”

Diana Velardo is the crime victims coordinator and a supervisory attorney in the Immigration Clinic. She brings her unremitting energy and bubbly personality to cases, like Jessica’s, that would test anyone’s spirit. Velardo’s students deal in domestic violence, human trafficking and victims of other crimes. Her credo: “How can we help this person?” The answer generally involves maneuvering them through the alphabet maze of ICE, CIS, CBP and other government acronyms. “Even though we have come up with a system, it can be frustrating when you are trying to help the people who need it the most, and you are...”

To approach clients as clients and law as a business proposition. The more clinical experience the better; the more exposure to clients, the more exposure to the real legal world, the better,” he says. Leipold agrees with Prager that law schools are paying attention. “We’re in a period of change and evolution,” he says. “Law schools are realizing the more practice-ready their graduates are, the more valuable they are in the marketplace.”

“Most employers want the person who can think their way through whatever problem lands on their desk,” Prager says. “So I think there will continue to be a premium on those who can analyze a problem. But as time goes on we will see those who have had experience will have more of an opportunity to land that first job and a significant advantage if they worked in a specialized field.”

Professor Emeritus Thomas Newhouse, who mentored students in the Law Center’s civil practice and mediation clinics for more than 20 years, says the combination of the theoretical and practical gets to the essence of legal education. “The primary mission of law school is to train men and women to serve clients in resolving disputes, and that requires both the mastery of substance and mastery of skills,” he says. Clinical training helps students “develop those lawyering skills – taking what they’ve learned about the law off the shelf and mixing it up with people.”

The economy and changing needs of law firms are seen as factors in breaking down the often tense dichotomy between thought and action in legal education. The general belief is that clinical professors usually come up short in compensation, tenure, importance within the curriculum and faculty pecking order. In the past, some felt clinical programs with their low student to instructor ratio drained funding and simply weren’t worth the expense. Newhouse says any contention, real or perceived, may stem from the general fact that “clinical professors don’t write theory for law review articles, the meat of traditional law school scholarship, and some clinical professors think tenured professors have their heads in the clouds.” The Law Center, he points out, has both types of professors teaching in its clinics. And he and Heppard agree there has been strong support for the program over the years from the administration and faculty. “Regardless of someone’s perspective … there has been an appreciation that the demands are very great,” Prager says, “because there is so much more one-on-one with the students and much more time involved with cases. There has always been a tremendous respect for those who do it.”
the one who needs a lawyer,” says the 2001 Law Center graduate. “Our job is to make it manageable so it doesn’t become unmanageable. We serve as a model to the rest of the country,” she says, adding that anyone with a question about U-Visas or T-Visas or any of the other federal permits or paperwork typically turns to the clinic for answers. A typical week can see her office field questions from churches, community organizations, and law enforcement coalitions.

Velardo says her students grow and evolve as they find their own niche and comfort level. “Some fear the court; others like the paperwork, while others love litigation. Some feel this is the best experience they have had in law school; others decide they don’t want to be a lawyer,” she says. All told, however, the semester spent in the clinic is a learning process during which students develop confidence and expertise. “It’s nice to see them coming together and blooming,” Velardo says. “And the immigration judges pretty much know that if the clinic is going to bring them a case, it will be a properly prepared case.”

Mediation Clinic

The Mediation program has started a new partnership with the Blakely Advocacy Institute, making the 40-hour mediation training course available to all Law Center students under the direction of Assistant Professor Tasha Willis. The training is designed to provide students with the skills and credentials needed to serve as a court-appointed mediator. Students will then be eligible to register for the mediation externship and serve in Harris County Justice Courts, as well as for the Better Business Bureau. “Even if the majority of students never serve as a mediator, having been through the basic training will allow them to better serve their clients when representing them in mediation,” Willis says. “In addition, the communication skills utilized in the mediation process will help them be better advocates overall.” Clinic students are given the opportunity to mediate a wide range of cases, including consumer issues, landlord/tenant disputes and breach of contract cases. Professor Emeritus Thomas Newhouse, longtime head of the mediation clinic, says the training helps students by “taking what they’ve learned about the law off the shelf and mixing it up with people.” Law Center students are observed by a faculty member and given periodic feedback, and the Mediation Clinic has a classroom component to provide students with further mediation training, case scheduling into courts and the BBB, and case discussions. “We look forward to expanding our alternative dispute resolution program to include more competitions and greater opportunity for international mediation externships,” adds Willis, who came to the Law Center in the summer from the Frank Evan’s Center for Conflict Resolution at South Texas College of Law.

Velardo says the range of emotions witnessed and shared in the clinic – from hope to misery to despair to triumph — can’t help but have an effect on students. She estimates four of every five students who “graduate” from the clinic go on to practice immigration law. “Students say they have to go to the big firms to make money, but the first pro bono case they take will be human trafficking or asylum. That experience can change everything,” she adds.

One such alumnus is Aurelio Garza, the Law Center student who helped “Jessica” restore a measure of humanity to her world. Garza credits his work at the clinic and his intense interaction with his client, Jessica, for giving him the confidence to start his own practice after earning his J.D.

And speaking of Jessica… consider this closing snapshot of the immigrant and her new life in Houston…

Dressed in a striped black top and denim slacks with her auburn hair pulled back into a tight bun, Jessica is headed to work. She is a quality control inspector at a small clothing factory and earns $277 a week, a huge improvement over the $40 she was given at the cantina and the $15 she earned at a restaurant in El Salvador. She is 27 and, with the help of Law Center students, plans to apply for permanent status. “I want to stay here,” she says softly. “I want my daughters to grow up here.” •
When the chilling photographs from Abu Ghraib prison were first leaked to the news media, Jordan Paust immediately saw them as something more than compelling evidence of soldiers abusing their charges in Iraq. Instinctively, the long-time professor of international law knew the portfolio of pictures might haunt this generation in the same way that photographs of the My Lai massacre had done nearly 40 years earlier. He felt a distinct sense of déjà vu – but instead of bodies of men, women and children in Vietnam, the cover of TIME magazine now displayed a hooded detainee in Baghdad, struggling to balance on a box with electrical wires attached to both hands.

Paust was a young Army JAG officer in 1969 when the horrors of the My Lai massacre began trickling out, and he recalls how the disturbing news from Vietnam made him question how and why people commit atrocities. As a lawyer in uniform, he also questioned what the military could do about it. “I had always been aware of the need to promote human dignity,” he says, “but especially in that time of atrocities and war.” When Lt. William Calley was tried by a military tribunal, Paust was stunned by the testimony about the brutality and callousness of the bloodbath in a small Vietnamese hamlet. “I struggled with that, personally, as a captain training people how not to violate the laws of war,” Paust says.

After his military service ended in 1973, and a subsequent two years in an advanced degree program at Yale Law School, Paust joined the Law Center as an associate professor of international law. He now holds the Mike and Teresa Baker Law Center Professorship, and is widely known for his relentless questioning of
the Bush Administration’s conduct during the so-called “war on terror.” In journal articles, online postings and a critically acclaimed book, he continues to espouse a firm belief that high-level officials of the U.S. government should be prosecuted for war crimes. In his view, these future trials would play an important role in reinforcing how the “rule of law” does not recognize international boundaries. “There is a sense among some that anything is acceptable if it is not being openly done in the United States. It seems that as long as it is being done ‘over there,’ it’s acceptable. To me, that view misses the point of international law,” he says, sitting comfortably behind an antique desk piled high with books and papers in his Law Center office.

“We’re at a serious crossroads,” he cautions. “President Obama says it’s time to move forward, but the domestic impact of doing that could be disastrous. Are we a nation committed to the rule of law? And if not, how can we teach that it’s not OK to break the law at home or abroad?” he asks. In his view, the path is clear. “There should be public sanctions,” he declares flatly. Despite the President’s vow to “look forward,” and the subsequent reversal of plans to release additional photos of Abu Ghraib abuses, Paust says that Attorney General Eric Holder’s statement that “no one is above the law” may point toward future legal action. He says he was encouraged by the release of so-called “torture memos” that the previous administration used to justify various forms of unlawful interrogation. “Should politicians be off the hook? Should a former vice-president be figuratively led off in chains?” he asks rhetorically. “I say, ‘Why not?’ There is an unavoidable obligation of our elected officials – including our President – to execute terms of treaties, including the Geneva Conventions,” he says. Other countries now appear ready to pursue legal actions, with Spain and others indicating a willingness to exercise their universal jurisdiction and possibly file criminal charges against high-ranking U.S. officials. Within the small circle of international law experts, there is increasing talk about possible civil suits and disbarment proceedings. “This issue won’t go away,” Paust predicts. “It will keep us busy for a year at least. Or a decade. Or a generation.”

Paust is a prolific writer who has published more than 165 articles, essays, book chapters and a recent book at Cambridge University Press, Beyond the Law – The Bush Administration’s Unlawful Responses in the “War” on Terror. He is among the most cited international law professors in the United States and has appeared on panels and international committees throughout the world. In recent years he has carved an online niche as a regular contributor to Jurist, an electronic news service hosted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Even a cursory review of his recent postings will emphasize the clarity of his stance: he firmly believes former President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Department of Justice attorney John Yoo and others are reasonably accused of complicity in war crimes by skirting the laws of war, or facilitating crimes by others. It is his view that the abuses of Abu Ghraib accrued not from a few bad apples, but from “serial criminality.” Approval of enhanced interrogation techniques cascaded down from the highest levels of government, and should be viewed as elements of what John Yoo has admitted was a common, unifying plan devised by an inner circle of the Bush Administration. “In a sense, the Bush Administration has kept me very busy,” he says ruefully, “and I can only hope the Obama Administration doesn’t keep me as busy.”

Paust has been outspoken on U.S. policy at least since the Nixon Administration when he published an article in the University of Texas Law Review that questioned his commander in chief’s decision not to prosecute military personnel after they left service. When the Iranian hostage crisis colored the Carter Administration, Paust questioned the use of food as a weapon, calling it “highly problematic” and pointing out in the media that it hurt the poorest of the poor. The news stories prompted a prominent local political figure to contact Dean George Hardy at the Law Center and demand that Paust be fired. If not, the alumnus threatened to withhold all future donations to the school. Paust offered to resign, but Dean Hardy checked the list of the school’s contributors – and discovered that the self-professed “big supporter” had contributed only $100. “The dean never said another word,” Paust says with a chuckle.
Paust remains a lightning rod for comments from all sides of the political spectrum, and he concedes others may not be as passionate about the laws of war and human rights as he is – especially in a world that lives under constant threat of terrorism. “I suppose a lot of people would take the Obama approach of just moving on. But you can’t do that and remain a nation of laws,” he says in his trademark matter-of-fact tone. Paust says it is unprecedented for a high-ranking U.S. government official to be prosecuted for international crimes, although many foreign leaders have been prosecuted in foreign and international tribunals. Moreover, it is unprecedented for a sitting president to approve them – which he believes Bush did. “I understand there is a political will not to prosecute,” he says. But if new information emerges, the pendulum may change direction – and Paust believes high-level officials ultimately would be convicted.

Regardless of the criticism aimed in his direction, Paust feels compelled to pursue his course of legal reasoning that is firmly grounded in axioms of international law. “As a professor, I feel a commitment to speak out. There simply is no reason not to,” he says. And as part of his commitment, he is upfront about his viewpoints during classroom discussions where students mull the potential applications of international law. Openness and transparency – the ideals of any rule of law – are the characteristics he strives for as a teacher.

Forty years ago, when Paust and other U.S. Army attorneys practiced “preventive lawyering” by making sure everyone understood and observed the boundaries of war in the wake of My Lai, Paust says the former Commandant of the Judge Advocate General’s School (and future Law Center colleague) John Jay Douglass told them their job in prosecuting alleged war crimes was to assure that “military justice is just.” Paust feels a duty to pursue that goal today by holding accountable those who may have lost sight of American ideals and possibly crossed over – in the words of former Vice President Cheney – to “the dark side.” •
Class of 1964
J. Fred Hofheinz has been named to the board of directors of Lucas Energy, Inc.

Class of 1967
Elizabeth B. Godwin has been reappointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board.

Class of 1968
Ronald M. Gaswirth, [photo 1] who specializes in Employment and Labor law in the Dallas office of Gardere Wynne Sewell LLP, has been named in Texas Monthly’s 2008 list of Texas Super Lawyers.

Class of 1971
Carol E. Dinkins, [2] a partner in the Houston office of Vinson & Elkins LLP, joined the newly formed UH Energy Advisory Board that brings together global industry leaders for strategic planning and coordination.

Class of 1972
Ward N. Adkins has joined the law firm of Burleson Cooke LLP.

Class of 1973
Charles J. Jacobus has been added to Savoy Energy Corp.’s Board of Directors.

Class of 1974
Stephen N. Mueller has been appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the Prepaid Higher Education Tuition Board.

Class of 1976
Lance K. Bruun has been appointed by Texas Gov. Rick Perry to the Recreational Boating Safety Advisory Panel.

Class of 1977
Richard Rafes [3] was inaugurated as president of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg WV.

Ann Ryan Robertson (LL.M. ’05) received the Texas Women of Excellence in Law 2008 award.

Class of 1978
William Andrews, [4] shareholder with Andrews Myers Coulter & Hayes, has been elected treasurer for the 2009-2010 Governing Council of the Construction Law Section of the State Bar of Texas.

Mark Langdale has been nominated for election to the Board of Directors for TRT Holdings.

Class of 1979
Louis M. Stoler has joined Winstead PC as a partner in the Finance and Banking group.

Class of 1980
Bruce Tough [5] was elected chairman of the South Montgomery County The Woodlands Chamber of Commerce.

Class of 1981
Cameron Vann has been named Public Interest Lawyer of the Year by the Travis County Women Lawyers’ Association in Austin.

Class of 1982
Barbara J. Barron received the Texas Women of Excellence in Law 2008 award.

Mary A. Garcia has been named the 2009 recipient of the Assistant Attorney General of the Year Award.

Class of 1984
Mark W. Coffin joined Seyfarth Shaw’s Corporate Practice Group in the firm’s Houston office.

Charles S. Parrish has been promoted to executive vice president, general counsel and secretary with Tesoro Corporation.

Class of 1985
John Bradley, Williamson County district attorney, received the Prosecutor of the Year Award at the Annual Criminal & Civil Law Update, a yearly conference organized by the Texas District and County Attorneys Association (TDCAA).
Class of 1986
Barron Bogatto [6] of the Houston office of Jackson Walker LLP has been chosen by his peers as one of the Best Lawyers in America 2010.

Catherine Greaves, who specializes in health care law in the Austin office of Thompson & Knight LLP, has been listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2009.

Ricky A. Raven, [7] a partner in the Houston office of Thompson & Knight LLP, has been listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2010.

William E. Turcotte has been named Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Noble Corporation.

Class of 1987
William Cross [8] has been appointed as the first Honourable Dick and Ruth Bell Chair for the Study of Canadian Parliamentary Democracy at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Renuka V. Jain is an associate with Khorrani Pollard & Abir LLP.

Monica A. Oathout has been named president of the International Alliance of Law Firms 2009-2010.

Bonnie S. Stein, a partner at Curtin & Heefner LLP, has been named one of the top 50 female attorneys in Pennsylvania by Law & Politics Media, publishers of Pennsylvania Super Lawyers. Stein, who co-chairs the firm’s litigation section, has consistently been named a Pennsylvania “Super Lawyer” since 2005, and was also named to the Top 50 list in 2008.

Class of 1989
Nancy Hamilton [9] of the Houston office of Jackson Walker LLP has been chosen by her peers as one of the Best Lawyers in America 2010.

Class of 1990
Mark Comuzzie is a new partner in the Wealth Planning practice group of Jackson Walker LLP in its San Antonio office.

Marvin P. Isgur has been elected the Chief Bankruptcy Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Lisa Lepow Turboff of McGlinchey Stafford has been listed in The Best Lawyers in America 2009.

Roderick B. Williams has joined K & L Gates as a partner in the Austin office.

Class of 1991
R. Scott Downing [10] of the Dallas office of McCurley Orsinger McCurley Nelson & Downing LLP has been recognized by his peers as one of the country’s top Family Law attorneys in the 2010 edition of The Best Lawyers in America.

Michael S. Nuenke has joined Allied World Assurance Company as the Executive Vice President of U.S. Operations.

Pauline E. Higgins received the Texas Women of Excellence in Law 2008 award.

Class of 1992

Class of 1993

Wade T. Howard has joined the Gardere Wynne Sewell Houston office as a partner in the firm’s litigation group.

Steven S. Hwang [13] has been named senior counsel of Group 1 Automotive and will oversee all litigation activities within the company’s legal department. Group 1 is an automobile retailer with operations in the United States and United Kingdom.

Sylvia Ann Mayer received the Texas Women of Excellence in Law 2008 award.

Class of 1994
Gary Cacciatore, VP of Regulatory Affairs and Associate Chief Regulatory Counsel for Cardinal Health Inc., received the 2009 UH College of Pharmacy Clinical Sciences & Administration Department’s Friends of Pharmacy Award. Cacciatore has taught Pharmacy Law as an adjunct faculty member for several years.

Pauline E. Higgins received the Texas Women of Excellence in Law 2008 award.

Mike Nasi [14] of the Austin office of Jackson Walker LLP has joined the firm’s litigation group.
Walker LLP has been chosen by his peers as one of the Best Lawyers in America 2010.

David P. Whittlesey has joined Andrews Kurth LLP as a partner in the Austin office.

Class of 1995
Louis E. Buatt has taken the position of Assistant Secretary of the Office of Coastal Restoration and Management in the State of Louisiana.

Loan Huynh [15] has been named partner with the Minneapolis-based firm of Fredrikson & Byron, specializing in immigration.

Hal Katz [16] of Brown McCarroll has been selected to serve on the Austin Arts Commission through July 2012.

Serge A. Lomako has become the first and only Texas-based attorney to be certified as a Russian Foreign Legal Consultant by the Texas Supreme Court.

Class of 1996
Aashish Y. Desai [17] of Mower, Carreon & Desai, LLP in Irvine, CA., graced the September cover of Los Angeles Lawyer magazine for his article concerning class action counsel on precertification settlements.

John J. Fraser, Jr. has joined the faculty of the School of Medicine of The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston as Professor of Preventive Medicine & Community Health and program director of the general preventive medicine and occupational medicine residencies.

David C. Pate has been named president and CEO of St. Luke's Hospital in Boise, Idaho.

Lydia Protopapas, [18] a partner in the Houston office of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, has been honored by Turnarounds and Workouts magazine as one of its “Outstanding Young Restructuring Lawyers – 2009.” She is the only attorney from Texas among the 12 selected for this recognition.

Steve Ramon was named a 2009 San Antonio Business Journal “40 Under 40” rising star. The award honors young people in San Antonio who are making a difference in the business world and the community.

Class of 1997

Anthony F. Matheny has been named partner in the Houston office of Greenberg Traurig, specializing in intellectual property and antitrust litigation.

Kari S. Robinson [19] is a new partner in the Houston office of McGlinchey Stafford PLLC focusing on consumer finance litigation.

Class of 1998
Jared D. Cuthbertson has joined the Washington, D.C. office of Blank Rome LLP as an associate in the Commercial Litigation group.

Farah P. Bhatti has been promoted to partner at McDermott Will & Emory.

Cheryl Camin [20] joined the Dallas office of Winstead PC as a shareholder and will practice in the Corporate Securities/Mergers and Acquisitions group as well as the firm’s Health Care industry group. She also received a Presidential Citation from Dallas Bar Association (DBA) President Christina Melton Crain at the DBA’s annual meeting. Camin received the award for her significant role in coordinating a recent DBA Rule of Law seminar, the first and only one of its kind in Texas.

Class of 1999
Claude B. Anello has joined the Adams and Reese Houston office as Special Counsel in the Transactions Practice Group.

Atlantis H. Langowski has joined the law firm of Emard Danoff Port Tamulski & Paetzold.

Michael G. Locklar is a new partner in the Intellectual Property practice group of Jackson Walker LLP in its Houston office.

Craig R. Martin has been named partner in the Wilmington, DE, office of Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge.

Derrick Mitchell has been re-appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to the State Securities Board.

Barclay Nicholson has been named partner with Fulbright & Jaworski, LLP.

M. Katherine Strahan has been named partner at Andrews Kurth LLP.

Class of 2000
Jimmy F. Chester has joined the law firm of Cowles & Thompson as a shareholder.

Sherrie L. Faubion has joined the law firm of Burleson Cooke LLP.

Jennifer H. Rogers is a new partner in the Real Estate practice group of Jackson Walker LLP in its Austin office.

Class of 2003
Andrew M. Miller has joined the Washington, D.C. office of Blank Rome LLP as an associate in the Commercial Litigation group.

Class of 2006
John K. Barnes has joined Morgan, Lewis & Bockius in the Washington D.C. office.
Sarah P. Snook has been elected secretary of the El Paso Women’s Bar Association for the 2008-09 term.

Emily Herbster has joined the Houston office of Winstead PC and will practice in the Commercial Litigation section.

Vishal H. Patel has joined the Dallas office of Thompson & Knight LLP and will work in the Intellectual Property group.

Jesus J. Castillon has joined the Houston office of Baker & Hostetler LLP as an associate.

Christopher T. James has joined the Houston office of Baker & Hostetler LLP as an associate.

Morgan A. Tarlton has joined the Houston office of Baker & Hostetler LLP as an associate.

John M. O’Quinn 1941-2009

The legal profession lost a giant the morning of Oct. 29, and the Law Center lost one of its own — an alumnus, benefactor and friend. John M. O’Quinn ’67 was killed when he lost control of his vehicle on a rain-slickened roadway and struck a tree.

In announcing his death to the Law Center community, Dean Raymond T. Nimmer called him “one of the true patriarchs of the University of Houston Law Center and a defining member of the national and international trial bars.” He went on, “I had the privilege of knowing John for decades — and he was one of those rare “larger than life” lawyers who instantly commanded attention and respect in any gathering.”

O’Quinn, 68, gained his reputation through a series of high-profile, and high-dollar, class action lawsuits that earned him billions over the years. He was known to be obsessive in his preparation and a fierce advocate for his clients, both large and small.

His generosity to the Law Center is recognized in the library bearing his name, along with an endowed chair — the A.L. O’Quinn Chair in Environmental Law — named in honor of his father.

O’Quinn also was a benefactor of the University of Houston in general and many charities and institutions, including the Harris County Children’s Assessment Center, the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drugs, and various Texas Medical Center entities.

He was a frequent speaker at the Law Center, where he was always eager to share his expertise with the next generation of attorneys.

O’Quinn was raised in West University Place where his father operated a small garage. He attended Rice University as an engineering major before enrolling in the law school and finding his true calling. “From minute one of day one of class one, I felt like a duck who’d gone to water,” he told the Houston Chronicle for a lengthy profile in 1998.

“I knew this is where I should be.”

IN MEMORIAM

Eugene J. Pitman ’50
Joseph A. Porto ’51
Bettye Lambert ’54
Gordon Gray ’58
Edward H. Schwab ’58
Edward T. Minor ’60
Enrique Pena ’62
William Ruff Ahders ’68
Simon Philp ’69
Russell Austin ’70
Russell H. McMains ’71
John E. Neslage ’72
Joy S. Burgum ’73
Robert J. Sussman ’74
Randolph Quale McManus ’75
David Joseph Stone ’75
Mariamil Pinson ’76
Jonna Lea Short ’76
Alfred James Ratcliffe ’78
John Paul Ventura ’78
Joan Farmer ’85
Tonya Anne Morse ’88
Ann Dinsmore Forman ’91
Celia Figueroa ’94
Robert Wayne Ohnesorge ’96
Paul L. Crist LL.M. ’96
Richard R. Loya ’01
Betty Bradley LL.M. ’06
Joseph Anthony Vail, Professor
The Law Center welcomes four newcomers who bring a wealth of expertise, experience and enthusiasm in fields ranging from criminal, consumer and intellectual property law to information technology. Here’s a brief introduction to those new faces in the hall.

**NEW FACES**

**Adam M. Gershowitz**

“I strive for a balance of Socratic dialogue, lecture, and classroom discussion in my classes. I think it’s important for students to not only learn the legal rules but to think hard about why the rules are designed the way they are and how they might be shaped better.”

Adam M. Gershowitz comes to the Law Center after a distinguished tenure at the South Texas College of Law where students on successive years honored him with the Best New Professor Award, All Faculty Advising Award and All Faculty Teaching Award. Prior to joining the South Texas faculty in 2005, Gershowitz worked as a litigation associate with Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C., and clerked for Judge Robert B. King of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Charleston, W.Va. He earned his J.D. from the University of Texas in 1989 and a master’s with a tech- nology concentration in 1998 from the University of Delaware in 1998. Gershowitz has published numerous articles in leading law journals with his latest, Prosecutorial Shaming, in the University of California Davis Law Review. At the Law Center, Gershowitz will teach courses ranging from Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure to Constitutional Law. At home, he formerly enjoyed reading the classics, but with a young son, now searches for deeper meaning in Curious George.

**Sapna Kumar**

“I look forward to returning home to Houston. I hope to show UH students that patent law is not just a specialized area of practice, but one that connects to a wide range of legal fields, from antitrust to administrative law.”

Sapna Kumar joins the Law Center’s Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law faculty after completing a clerkship with Judge Kenneth F. Ripple of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago. She came to the attention of the Law Center in 2008 when she won the IPIL Sponsored Scholarship Grant for Federal Appellate Court Clerks. Kumar previously served as a faculty fellow at the Duke University School of Law/Duke Center for Genome Ethics Law & Policy and as an adjunct professor at her alma mater, the University of Chicago Law School. Prior to earning her J.D. in 2003, Kumar graduated from the University of Texas in 1999 with a B.S. in mathematics and a B.A. in Philosophy. When she isn’t hefting law books, Kumar enjoys singing on her backpack and getting back to nature. You might hear her singing along the trail as she has performed with various choirs over the years and is looking for a new one in Houston.

**J. Scott Smith**

“The Law Center is a Tier One school and deserves top notch information technology systems and support for the students, faculty, and staff. I plan to provide the highest level of support possible to enable the Law Center to achieve its strategic missions.”

J. Scott Smith joins the Law Center as assistant dean for information technology with the mission to improve and build the IT infrastructure to reinforce the school’s top-tier position. And he has the technical savvy and experience to more than meet that challenge. Prior to coming to the Law Center, Smith was information technology manager for the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, providing support for more than 250 faculty members and staff in 13 separate locations. Smith received his B.S. in political science from the University of Houston in 1989 and a master’s with a technology concentration in human resources development from the University of Texas-Tyler in 2007.

**David M. Tiede**

“During tough economic times, when many Texas consumers are left to fend for themselves, our students can help to level the playing field.”

David M. Tiede is the new director of the Texas Consumer Complaint Center, succeeding the late founding director, John Ventura. Tiede is well-grounded in the area of consumer law having worked most recently as a deputy attorney general in the Consumer Law Section for the State of California in San Diego. During his nearly 13-year tenure at the AG’s office, Tiede handled a wide variety of cases in administrative, state and federal courts from filing through trial and appeal, including discrimination, contract, and tort actions. After moving to the Consumer Law section in 2005, he was involved in the investigation of, litigation against, and negotiation with national and multi-national corporations engaged in unfair and deceptive business practices. He previously worked in civil defense for the firm of Klinedinst, Fliehman & McKillop in San Diego. Despite his California ties, Tiede is a Texan through and through. Raised in Austin, he graduated in 1990 from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in Plan II Honors and earned his J.D. from UT in 1993. He takes over a highly successful consumer aid program that is unique among the nation’s law schools. Since its founding in 2006, students have saved consumers or helped obtain services worth more than $1.8 million.
Months earlier, after assuming the presidency of the 3,200-member Rotary Club of Houston, Bohreer had made Haiti the cornerstone of her group’s charitable work. This quick trip to Port-au-Prince was the final step before work would begin on a new water well for a small hospital in the island nation’s capital. Everything had gone flawlessly – until the world’s seismographs confirmed that a magnitude 7.0 earthquake was hitting Haiti.

Riding in an ambulance sent to pick them up at the airport, Bohreer said they began to feel some bumps and jolts. “We thought it was car trouble or maybe just bad roads,” she said, “but we realized it wasn’t just us. The whole world was shaking. Power lines started swaying and popping like gunfire and people were waving their arms. Then buildings started falling.” The planned 30-minute drive to Daquini Hospital in the heart of the capital wound up taking five hours, with the ambulance inching its way through frantic crowds and weaving around the rubble of collapsed brickwork.

When they reached the hospital, Bohreer and the others in her group helped where they could, assisting with triage, organizing supplies and helping to erect a makeshift surgical bay outside the hospital. Tuesday night, immediately after the quake, was “total chaos,” Bohreer said. “I’m a lawyer, not a doctor, so I tried to help the kids.” Bohreer found ways to comfort the smallest survivors huddled at the hospital, playing games and reassuring them that the world had not come to an end. She snapped pictures with her digital camera, and her child subjects marveled and laughed when they saw themselves on the camera’s small screen. “I was just trying to keep them from collapsing,” Bohreer said. “And just for a brief moment, they forgot.”

Bohreer won’t soon forget the sight of hundreds of corpses – bodies protruding from the wreckage, bodies lying in the streets, some left forgotten and others covered with sheets and blankets. When the Rotary group finally made its way to the airport and returned home on Friday morning, Bohreer and the others tried to give voice to their experiences. But how does someone describe the images of thousands of arms and legs and faces? Or the pervasive stench that no kerchief or facemask could filter away?

Bohreer, a founding partner of Bohreer & Zucker LLP, a small litigation firm with offices in the Montrose neighborhood of Houston, went to Haiti with four other Houston area Rotarians and a University of Texas journalism student to check on the water well project and to visit two orphanages and assess their needs. As this story goes to press, the Rotary Club of Houston now has an ambulance at the Port of Houston ready to go. But with each passing day, the needs of Haiti seem to escalate exponentially, just like the Richter scale.

“There are thousands and thousands of sweet people who are just trying to survive,” Bohreer says. “We’ve got to help rebuild Haiti, but we’ve got to get past the disaster and help the country form a government and create a sustainable culture. We need to teach the Haitians how to take care of themselves.” Haiti today needs doctors more than lawyers, but Bohreer plans to continue advocating for the island nation. “I can do more here telling congressmen that they need to help Haiti,” she says. •

Michelle Bohreer ’89

Michelle Bohreer ’89 had been on the ground only a few minutes when the earth began to move. Staring through the dust-streaked windows of their vehicle, the Law Center graduate and five members of a long-planned humanitarian mission became rolling witnesses to one of the epic disasters of modern times: the Jan. 12 earthquake that claimed the lives of an estimated 200,000 Haitians.
There are two sides to any story involving animal abuse. On one side are defendants such as former NFL quarterback Michael Vick, who can always turn to the defense bar for representation. But what about the animals? Thanks to a growing number of courses on animal law taught at law schools throughout the country, a new breed of lawyers is stepping forward with the training needed to protect the rights of abused animals.

Amy Bures Danna (left), an adjunct professor at the Law Center, introduced animal law to the school’s curriculum in 2005. Not only does the self-professed animal lover teach a spring semester course on the topic, but she also has successfully integrated animal law into her litigation practice, making it a “growing sideline” of The Clary Firm in Humble, Texas. Enrollment in Bures Danna’s animal law courses at the Law Center has remained small but steady, and she reports that at least six graduates have gone on to handle animal-related cases in their practice.

Two decades ago, Harvard was among the first schools to offer a course in animal law, and eight more had introduced similar courses by the turn of the century. Then things “exploded,” according to Bures Danna. Today, the Animal Legal Defense Fund reports that more than 100 schools offer courses in animal law, and one of them – Lewis & Clark in Portland – has launched a veritable think-tank with its respected Center for Animal Law Studies. Two years ago, in response to the growing popularity of the legal niche, the American Association of Law Schools even added a special section on animal law.

Defining the Law

Issues in animal law read like an index to Black’s dictionary. The niche can encompass property rights, landlord/tenant and neighbor disputes, free speech and other constitutional questions, personal injury, contracts, trusts and regulation of businesses and non-profits. And animal law is increasingly seen in criminal courts, with defendants charged with dog-fighting, abuse and neglect. Bures Danna admits to being an animal activist, but she says that advocating for animal rights typically supersedes “activism” for most of the lawyers who work in the animal law arena. Lawyers can make money working on behalf of animals, she adds, but the only lawyers who work exclusively in the niche generally represent major organizations with associated contracts, fundraising and other legal issues.

Bures Danna’s involvement with animals goes beyond her work in Law Center classrooms and her service on animal-related State Bar of Texas committees and various boards. In addition to caring for two German shepherds, she and her husband have helped care for more than 70 dogs rescued from abusive settings by animal control officers. She obviously favors helping animals – but she believes the extreme measures implemented by groups such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and the radical Animal Liberation Front may alienate the public and actually hurt the animals’ cause.

Of the 10 to 15 animal-related calls she fields each week, only a small number develop into actual cases. Many of the calls come from other attorneys seeking to confirm the rules of animal law in Texas. One attorney called Bures Danna recently to ask if the state prohibited an owner shooting their dog. Biting her lip, the adjunct professor dutifully recited the letter of the law: in Texas, as long as no torture is involved, an owner can kill his or her own animal “just like you can dispose of a sofa.” But some phone calls yield brighter outcomes. Bures Danna recently drafted a trust for a well-to-do woman who wanted to bequeath millions to a non-profit sanctuary for feral cats.

Animal law cases can capture the national spotlight when a celebrity athlete is convicted of animal cruelty, or a meat processing plant is accused of inhumane treatment of animals. These high-profile cases help raise the nation’s consciousness about animal rights, but Bures Danna sees other reasons for focusing on animal law and teaching it to law students.

“We have to take the coldness out of the law and look at how we can better interact with our world and all of its components,” she says. By exposing her students to the humanity woven throughout animal law, she hopes they can ultimately make life better – not only for animals, but also the planet’s two-legged creatures. •
Cutting edge speakers

Four experts in various aspects of criminal law captured the attention of Law Center audiences during the Leading Voices Lecture Series sponsored by the Criminal Justice Institute. Speakers and topics in the “Criminal Law at the Cutting Edge” series included Wayne A. Logan [1], Florida State University College of Law, Criminal Registration and Community Notification Laws in America; Corinna Barrett Lain [2], University of Richmond School of Law, Our (Not So) Countemajoritarian Supreme Court; Stephanos Bibas of the University of Pennsylvania Law School [3], Morality and Efficiency in the Criminal Justice Assembly Line; and Deborah W. Denno [4], Fordham University School of Law, Why Outmoded Views of Mental State Affect Our Ability to be Just.

Ethical victory

A Law Center mock trial team swept to victory in a major national competition in California, winning on a breach of contract case involving the film industry. Sixteen teams representing the best programs in the country competed in the invitational National Ethics Trial Competition in Sacramento. The Law Center quartet included Sean Monks, 2L, Sara Waller, 3L, Amanda Frase, 3L, and Chuck Greenlee, 2L. Waller was named Best Advocate based on her combined scores for the semi-finals and final rounds, while Frase earned the highest score in the final round. The team was coached by Jackie Houlette ’93 and Julie Gray ’04.

Day in the Life Series

Law Center students learned about life as a practicing lawyer through the “Day in the Life” series hosted by the UH Law Alumni Association. In four weekly sessions, students heard from prosecutors and defense attorneys, lawyers specializing in real estate, personal injury, energy and family law, even a former judge. The series was coordinated by Susan Sanchez ’87, and included perspectives shared by Gordon Arnold ’88, Eva F. O’Brien ’85 and Denis Braham (pictured above), along with Joe Epstein ’88, Larry Pirrie ’66, Tony Rosenstein ’76, Alvin Zimmerman ’67, George Gibson ’95, Louis Davis ’76, Jim Perdue Jr. ’93, Nicole DeBorde ’93, and Donna Clark ’83.

Extraordinary lecture for Judge Brown centennial

The Law Center commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Judge John R. Brown with a special lecture on Judging in Extraordinary Times by Samuel Issacharoff, professor of Constitutional Law at New York University School of Law. The professor (pictured below) noted how extraordinary people such as Judge Brown seem to come to the fore when society confronts “extraordinary times.” Judge Brown, a longtime admiralty lawyer in Houston and Galveston prior to his appointment to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, was instrumental in a series of crucial civil rights decisions affecting African-Americans. Students, alumni, faculty, Brown’s former clerks and his widow, Vera Riley Brown (left), attended the lecture in Krost Hall. FYI, a video of the commemorative lecture is archived on the Law Center’s website under News & Events.
‘Man of the Year’ Giuliani to deliver keynote address at Commencement 2010

New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani’s ability to calm the nation in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks earned him a knighthood and a “Man of the Year” award from Time magazine. On Sunday, May 16, 2010, this key figure of modern history will step to the microphone at Hofheinz Hall and deliver the keynote address of the Law Center’s 2010 commencement exercises. Alumni and friends are invited to attend the noon ceremony and the reception at the Law Center that immediately follows. In 2009, former Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Phillips urged graduates of the Law Center to “live greatly in the law” and carve out their own niche whether it be in the public service sector, research or rapidly developing technical fields.

Legal majority

The Law Center is well represented on the University of Houston Board of Regents with the recent appointment of two more alums bringing the total to five of the nine members. In September, Gov. Rick Perry appointed Nandita V. Berry ’95 and Jarvis V. Hollingsworth ’93 to six-year terms. They join Nelda Luce Blair ’82, Jacob M. Monty ’93 and Carroll Robertson Ray ’02.

EELPJ Symposia

The Environmental & Energy Law & Policy Journal continues to tackle leading topics of the day with signature symposia featuring leading experts in their fields. Last year, the student-run publication investigated “Sustainability: Moving from Theory to Practical Application” with lectures and panel discussions by academic experts and legal practitioners in a wide range of disciplines from energy and transportation to climate change and community planning. This year, the EELPJ looked at “Climate Change, Water & Adaptive Law,” with State Sen. Eliot Shapleigh (D-Earl Paso) delivering the keynote address.

Immigration Clinic Case Reaches SCOTUS

Clinical Professor Geoffrey A. Hoffman, the new director of the Immigration Clinic at the Law Center, obviously knows how to hit the ground running. Within weeks of taking his new post, he served as co-counsel before the U.S. Supreme Court on a deportation case initially pursued by Immigration Clinic students. Hoffman reports he is “cautiously optimistic” about the SCOTUS review, and cited how questions from the justices revealed their “high-level engagement with the diverse issues” raised in the case. 2Ls Charlotte Simon, Andrea Boulares and Magda Gonzalez researched the merits brief submitted to the high court, and Sri Srinivasan of the Washington, D.C., firm of O’Melveny & Myers LLP handled the oral argument.

Lectures mark Native American Heritage Month

It took a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to properly observe Native American Heritage Month, and Dr. Gavin Clarkson of the Law Center faculty did it in entertaining and informative style with twin lectures. The first talk debunked the myth that labels modern American Indians as rich casino moguls. (Few tribe members actually share in the spoils of casino gambling, Clarkson said.) The second explored sports mascots, caricatures and stereotypes and how they can be offensive and even painful to some Native Americans. Clarkson’s bottom line: it’s time to do away with these symbols, which can provoke economic and social damage.

Joseph A. Vail workshops aid immigrants

The Law Center hosted the first immigration workshops named in honor of the late Joseph A. Vail, a revered member of the Law Center faculty who earned enduring respect as an immigration attorney, judge, professor and founder of the school’s Immigration Law Clinic. The Asylum Workshop was designed to provide attorneys with the basic tools needed to represent applicants in asylum and immigration hearings. The “How to… Workshop” was aimed directly at immigrants, offering practical answers to questions ranging from how to get a driver’s license to how to apply for citizenship.
According to Vice President for Student Affairs Elwyn C. Lee, who served on the project’s planning committee, the addition of nearly 1,000 on-campus residents will push the university closer to the magic 25 percent benchmark that differentiates a “commuter” school from a “residential” environment. He sees the new residential facility fostering an “identity” and adding vibrancy to the campus and its sports and cultural events.

Lee says the Calhoun Lofts represent an important amenity for the Law Center. “The Law Center has long wanted housing and I think it will be a big plus, making it even more attractive to out-of-state students. The study of law is very intense,” he adds by way of understatement. “To live at a nice place, practically at the Law Center, makes the school more of a community.”

Convenience was a big factor for two LL.M. students, Magali Delhaye of Belgium and Jorge Velasco of Spain, who were among the first Law Center students to take residence in the Calhoun Lofts. “If you forget a book, you just go across the street and get it,” says Delhaye. The two were able to avoid the stress of finding suitable housing in a strange city by viewing the Lofts on the Internet. “We made all the arrangements on-line from Europe,” says Velasco. The two rave about the complex and its amenities, which they compare favorably to an upscale hotel, and are pleased with their two-bedroom apartment with its view of the downtown skyline – and their stone’s-throw walk to the Law Center.

The 547,000 square-foot facility includes 734 apartments, a movie theater, fitness room, multi-purpose rooms, computer lab, study rooms, lounges, laundry rooms with televisions and aerobic equipment, a catering kitchen/special events area and two open-air terraces with panoramic views of the campus and city. First floor retail space includes space for a cleaners, Mini Mart, Barnes & Noble and the Law Center bookstore. Prices vary according to the type of unit, ranging from unfurnished efficiency to furnished two-bedroom. Rent includes cable, Wi-Fi, local phone service, gas, water and an electricity allowance that covers most usage. • www.housing.uh.edu/calhounlofts
Alumni of the University of Houston Law Center have a new gathering spot to pursue their interests, advance their careers, and stay in touch with classmates. From blogs to jobs, from class updates to group uptakes, the center of activity is found at www.UHLawAlumni.net. This free site is reserved for Law Center graduates, and it’s easy to register. Just enter your name, class year and birthdate – and start putting the power of alumni networking to work for you.