Student Regents
Leadership and the Law
On the Cover: UH Law Center student regents, Tamecia Glover Harris, left, Robert Johnson, Andrew Cobos, and Tamara Woods. Photo by Sandy Lankford

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Director Michael A. Olivas, William B. Bates Distinguished Chair in Law

Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law
Co-director Craig Joyce, Andrews Kurth Professor of Law
Co-director Greg R. Vetter, Associate Professor of Law
As you read through this latest edition of Briefcase magazine, I hope you feel as proud as I do of how the University of Houston Law Center prepares students and graduates to excel in a wide variety of endeavors. We expect our alums to be highly sought after by prestigious law firms in Houston and across the country, but Law Center graduates are also taking their skills to other arenas. From the highest reaches of government service to a neighborhood program instilling academic and social skills in pre-teen girls, Law Center grads are making their presence felt and giving something back in the process. The cover story details the leadership, dedication, and commitment to the Law Center and university system that four of our students have shown by serving as student regents. The job of helping to plan the future course of this great university system is daunting enough let alone while simultaneously studying for one, and in some cases two, demanding graduate degrees. In this issue, you also will read about Law Center students who played a major role in winning an immigration case that went to the U.S. Supreme Court and learn about three of our advocacy teams that will be competing in national championships while still other students earned honors and fellowships in social work, community service and national writing contests.

Some of the Law Center graduates featured in this Briefcase have turned their skills toward computer programming, literacy, and helping veterans. Our alums are also a generous group and contributed more than $500,000 at the 35th annual Law Gala and Auction with its theme of “It’s a Jungle Out There!” The Gala provides critical financial support for the Law Center’s core operational needs. Meanwhile, a corporate benefactor honored a long-time associate and UH Law Center graduate by funding a new study lounge in his name that enhances the building with a colorful upgrade and gives students a comfortable place to relax between classes. And, our overall rankings for the Law Center are up.

We look forward to continued excellence in 2012 and encourage you to stay in touch with us to keep up to date on the many exciting things happening at the Law Center.

Dean Raymond T. Nimmer,
Dean and Leonard H. Childs Professor of Law
Honoring Immigrants

The University of Houston Law Center’s Immigration Clinic honored three noteworthy immigrants at the 2011 Arrival Awards program. Durga D. Agrawal, president and CEO of Piping Technology & Products, Inc.; Oscar Castañeda, president of Castañeda Maxillofacial-Dental and Associates; and Ana Hernandez Luna, a lawyer and state representative for District 143, each received the 2011 Arrival Award. Agrawal is a native of India whereas Castañeda is from Honduras and Luna from Mexico. The Arrival Awards recognize the successes and benefits that immigrants bring to the community and nation in general. Proceeds from the awards dinner benefit the UH Law Center’s Immigration Clinic which assists hundreds of immigrants and refugees who could not otherwise find legal representation. It also serves as a vital, hands-on teaching laboratory for aspiring lawyers. Sponsors include AT&T, Carrigan McCloskey & Roberson L.L.P., Dr. Oscar Castañeda, D.D.S., M.S., CITGO, Robert H. Etnyre, Jr., FosterQuan, LLP, Harry Gee & Associates PLLC, Silvia Graves, India House Incorporated, University of Houston Office of the Chancellor/President and William Y. Sim, P.C.

Examining Free Speech

The University of Houston Law Center and the Houston regional Anti-Defamation League focused on freedom of expression and whether there should be limits when they hosted, Extremism in a Civil Society Nov. 18. In addition to a general overview of First Amendment and free speech rights, the program specifically examined those rights as they pertain to public and private universities. Guest lecturers Erwin Chemerinsky, founding dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law, and Frederick M. Lawrence, president of Brandeis University, agreed Occupy movement demonstrators have the right to protest in public places, but the First Amendment doesn’t give them the right to stay around the clock. In introducing the two speakers, Law Center Dean Raymond T. Nimmer said the program had been in the planning stage for a long time, but noted it could not have been more timely with the upcoming presidential election and other events at home and abroad.

New Grads Sworn-in

University of Houston Law Center graduates were admitted to the State Bar of Texas in November during the New Lawyers’ Induction Ceremony in Austin. The swearing-in ceremony was for July 2011 Texas Bar examinees. Two hundred and three UH Law Center grads passed the exam. At a reception held after the ceremony, UH Law Center student Sarah Loeffler 3L received the Law Student Pro Bono Award. Presented by the Texas Access to Justice Commission, the award was established in 2007 to recognize a Texas law student who has demonstrated his or her commitment to providing legal services to poor and low-income Texans.

Frankel Lecture

University of Houston Law Center alumnus Dr. Philip Zelikow, former head of the 9/11 commission and recent appointee to the President’s Intelligence Advisory Board, was the Houston Law Review’s featured speaker at its 16th annual Frankel Lecture Nov. 4. Zelikow said advisers to President Bush could have bent laws and international treaties with their interpretations of what can be done rather than choosing existing legal doctrines. And, he said, it cost the United States in its standing around the world. During his lecture, Codes of Conduct for a Twilight War, Zelikow said the Bush Administration’s handling of enemy combatants during the War on Terror underscores a distinction every lawyer faces during his or her career: The choice between what can be done and what should be done. David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, and Mark Danner, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley and Bard College, were commentators at the event.

Moving Up

The University of Houston Law Center moved up four slots to 56th among the nation’s 190 accredited law schools in the annual ranking compiled by U.S. News & World Report. Three specialty programs were again ranked in the Top 10 with health and intellectual property law both ranked 6th and the Law Center’s part-time program ranked 8th nationally. The Law Center’s flagship publication, the Houston Law Review, now stands at 38th, moving up four slots, according to the latest rankings compiled by Washington & Lee University. The new ranking puts the Law Review in the top 2.3 percent of the more than 1,600 legal journals published worldwide.
Alum Receives Washington Medal

University of Houston Law Center alumnus and former Texas Supreme Court Justice Eugene A. Cook received the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedoms Foundation in November. The award is the highest presented by the Valley Forge-based, non-profit organization that is dedicated to teaching young people the principles upon which the nation was founded. The Freedoms Foundation honors Americans who go above and beyond in their efforts to educate their communities about the values of good citizenship, either through teaching or by example. Cook earned his J.D. from the Law Center in 1966 and served on the high court from 1988-92. He then joined the firm of Bracewell & Giuliani, serving as a senior partner and heading the firm’s appellate group until his retirement in 2002.

Joyce Honored With Namesake Award

University of Houston Law Center Professor Craig Joyce was surprised with an award in his name by the American Society for Legal History for his 31 years of continuous service to the organization. The “Craig Joyce Award” will be given biennially in perpetuity “to recognize members who have given long and outstanding service” to the Society. “Apart from being dumbfounded by what had been a very well-kept secret evidently over a year in the planning, I am really deeply honored by the recognition,” Joyce said of the honor awarded at the group’s annual meeting in Atlanta. Joyce has served the Society as an officer, executive committee member or committee chair every year since he began teaching. He currently chairs the Committee on the Annual Meetings, which selects the sites and helps manage the annual gathering of members, and the Committee on the History of the Society, a new committee created to preserve and make accessible documentary records, oral histories and other aspects of institutional history.

Gus A. Schill, Jr. Scholarship Fund

A graduate of the University of Houston Law Center who wishes to remain anonymous has donated more than $900,000 to establish the Gus A. Schill, Jr. Scholarship Fund. Awarded to a rising 2L who demonstrates leadership potential and a commitment to making a difference in society, the scholarship is given in honor of Distinguished Professor Emeritus Gus A. Schill, Jr. The inaugural scholarship recipient is Marc Cayabyab. “As a first-generation Filipino-American, this scholarship has afforded me the opportunity to pursue a legal education with a lessened financial burden,” Cayabyab said. The anonymous donor decided to make the contribution after reaching a momentous landmark in his career. “As I looked back over 25 years of practice, I thought it was fitting to give back to the Law Center which has served as the spring board for my career,” the donor said. The benefactor encourages others in a similar position to reflect on their careers and give back to the Law Center as well. “Much thought and effort has been given to the entire program with the result being one that will benefit many students in the future,” Schill said. “It is a living gift to the Law Center.”
FACULTY

Seth Chandler

University of Houston Law Center Professor Seth Chandler is leading a unique program designed to bring together a spectrum of specializations united by a heavy reliance on computation and the law. Under Chandler’s directorship, the new program on Law and Computation essentially deals with the many ways in which computers and software technologies change the way law is perceived and studied.

“The idea is to bring together a number of technologies that aid in the understanding and exposition of law,” Chandler said. “These technologies include statistics, finance, decision theory, game theory, networks, computational linguistics, data mining, artificial intelligence, visualization and others whose capabilities have been liberated by modern developments in computation.”

The initiative was highlighted in a day-long workshop in April that drew a diverse international group of scholars in disciplines ranging from statistics and law to political science, all united by a heavy reliance on computation. About 30 people attended the workshop, and requests for more information on the new endeavor rolled in from across the nation.

While many scholars are doing this type of research, and other law schools offer courses in individual disciplines, the Law Center plans to concentrate efforts and become the primary center for studying these changes by providing a platform for scholars from around the world.

“There are a few small scale programs developing across the legal academy that contain pieces of our program,” Chandler said. “Some may emphasize statistics. Others may focus on artificial intelligence. There are none, however, that attempt to unify these ideas by finding commonality in their emphasis on extensive and advanced computation in achieving their most powerful results.”

Sandra Guerra Thompson

As a national expert on eyewitness identification procedures, University of Houston Law Center Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson is on a mission to shine a light on the injustices of the criminal justice system with her new book, American Justice in the Age of Innocence.

Written for judges, lawyers and scholars alike, the publication examines wrongful convictions and the most common causes behind breakdowns in the legal system. The book is co-edited by Thompson, the director of the Criminal Justice Institute at the Law Center, and two of her top students, Hillary K. Valderrama and Jennifer L. Hopgood.

In recognition of the book, Texas Sen. Rodney Ellis invited the Criminal Justice Institute to host a reception in the state Capitol. The event was held in conjunction with a national symposium on indigent defense sponsored by the Texas Indigent Defense Commission.

“The recent exoneration of more than 200 wrongly convicted people across the U.S. has renewed public interest in how existing safeguards are insufficient in protecting defendants wrongly prosecuted and convicted for crimes they did not commit,” Thompson said. “It is my hope that the book can give legislatures guidance on the needed reforms.”

In September, Thompson was honored as a “Texas Primera” by the Hispanic National Bar Association for being the first Latina tenured law professor in the state. She is a member of the Timothy Cole Advisory Panel on Wrongful Convictions for the Texas Legislature.

In addition, Thompson recently participated in the development of a model policy on eyewitness identification procedures for Texas law enforcement during a meeting of the Eyewitness Identifications Working Group.
Marcilynn A. Burke

University of Houston Law Center Professor Marcilynn A. Burke is leading the charge for a clean-energy economy as assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the Department of the Interior. According to Burke, the Interior Department is facilitating environmentally appropriate renewable-energy projects involving solar, geothermal, biofuels and hydropower, wind and waves.

Returning to the UH Law Center this fall as a guest speaker, Burke gave students a glimpse at the agency’s current initiative to create a new energy frontier.

“America spends hundreds of billions of dollars each year to buy the oil which fuels our economy,” said Burke. “As part of securing our energy future, we must move toward a clean-energy economy.”

One of the agency’s new endeavors focuses on harnessing wind from the Atlantic Ocean. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement manages the Outer Continental Shelf which is 1.7 billion acres of federal-offshore lands with enormous wind-energy potential. BOEMRE has granted the first-ever exploratory leases for wind-energy production and has established a framework for offshore renewable energy development.

An associate professor at the Law Center since 2002, Burke has taught courses on property, land use and management and natural resources. “Being back at the Law Center is a real treat,” Burke said of her visit in November. “It was humbling to see how many students and faculty members were in attendance.”

Burke initially took a leave of absence from the Law Center in Fall 2009 to serve as deputy director of programs and policy for the Bureau of Land Management.

In her current position, Burke helps establish Interior policies and provides oversight to the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

Michael A. Olivas

University of Houston Law Center Professor Michael A. Olivas is not only a prolific author, he is a Hall-of-Famer as well. After releasing his 13th book, No Undocumented Child Left Behind, Olivas was inducted into the Ohio State University College of Education and Human Ecology Hall of Fame in July for his continuing efforts in behalf of immigrants, minorities and the poor. He earned his Ph.D. at OSU in 1977 before entering Georgetown University Law Center.

The Hall of Fame statement notes: “His writings and advocacy have shaped public policy to help people of color, poor people, immigrants and migrant workers. His efforts enable them to be full-fledged participants in achieving the American Dream, especially in accessing higher education.”

In his latest book, Olivas examines the 30-year history of a landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling that made it possible for undocumented children to enroll in Texas public schools. “Plyler v. Doe from 1982 is generally considered the high-water mark for immigrants’ rights in the U.S.,” said Olivas, who holds the William B. Bates Distinguished Chair of Law, “ and still has powerful resonance within the larger community.” Olivas writes how the ruling continues to suffer from implementation issues and has required additional litigation and vigilance to enforce in the face of direct and indirect attacks.


Olivas also submitted testimony before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee in favor of the DREAM Act which would allow students of undocumented immigrants to stay in the U.S. Olivas is the director of the Institute of Higher Education Law & Governance at the Law Center and the president of the Association of American Law Schools.
Third-year law students are generally preoccupied with finishing school, passing the bar, and landing that first job to launch their legal careers. A select few, however, are deeply involved in charting a future course for a great university system.

Since 2006, the governor has appointed students to one-year terms as non-voting, but influential, members of the University of Houston System Board of Regents. UH Law Center students have filled four of the six terms, sitting down with some of the state’s prime movers to deal with school finances, major contracts, policies, philosophies and a myriad of other issues that affect the university system now and for years to come. The opportunity to share and learn is exceptional.

“They truly value our opinion,” said current student regent, Tamecia Glover Harris, a dual J.D. and M.B.A. candidate. “And the board is extremely open. Members look at it as an opportunity to get information from students as to how they feel,” she said, but it is also an opportunity for the students to learn about careers and the choices board members had to make along the way. Her opinion was echoed by the others.

“The regents treated me with an incredible amount of respect,” said Andrew Cobos ’11, whose term spanned 2010-11.

That mutual respect and give and take is likely what the Legislature had in mind when it approved the student regent program in 2005. And it has worked. “The success is evidenced by the caliber of student regents UH has enjoyed, each one’s serious commitment to the post and contributions to decision-making,” said UH System Board of Regents Chairman Nelda Luce Blair, a 1982 Law Center grad, one of four law alums currently serving on the board. “They bring fresh eyes and open minds, and a distinct ‘ground-level, on-campus’ perspective to the board. I have heard some ideas and considerations that I would not have necessarily heard without their voices. Times have changed greatly since my years on campus, so hearing from someone with boots on the ground can sometimes cause you to rethink things, in a good way!”

UH President and system Chancellor Renu Khator is also impressed with the program. “Including student regents on the board has been a welcome and successful addition,” she said. “Their perspective is invaluable. They provide direct input from the student body and various campus organizations, though their contributions have not been limited to dealing just with so-called ‘student issues.’ They bring a unique blend of idealism and practicality to most matters.”

The number of student regents appointed from the ranks of law students may seem unusual to some, but Khator believes the fit is a natural. “It is admirable that four of our first six UHS student regents have come from the UH Law Center program – and understandable,” she said. “Since our law students are highly motivated and academically engaged in matters of policy, governance and regulation, that’s an excellent background for effectively serving on the board.”

Law Center Dean Raymond T. Nimmer couldn’t agree more: “From student regents to full members of the University of Houston System Board of Regents, we are proud of the achievements of the alumni and students who have played an integral role in moving the Law Center and UH along toward its goal of Tier One excellence.”

The Law Center’s first representative, Robert Johnson ’07, found the title “student regent” a bit of a misnomer because of the weighty matters before the board and the great responsibility the position carried. “It was so much more than just dealing with student issues,” he said. “My role was to do the best for the university, with the understanding that I was going to bring a student perspective to the position.” That role sometimes forced him to walk a difficult line between two different perspectives on controversial issues. Each student regent singled out a key issue during their tenure and for Johnson in 2006-07 it was tuition increases – “controversial then as they are controversial now.” On one hand, he said, he was urged not to “slam” students with an increase for projects they probably weren’t going to see during their time at the university. While on the other, was the goal of adding value to their degree through constant improvements, which takes money. “My job was to find some sort of middle ground,” he said. “I had to understand both sides.”

Rising tuition is a constant concern, and it also was the biggest issue on the table when Harris, the current student regent, first took her seat in June 2011. She was besieged by students who wanted to talk about whether she supported or opposed a hike, and why. “The board carefully looked for redundancies and possible cuts,” she said, wading through reams and reams of documents, financial reports, and recommenda-
Students thought maybe a tuition hike was the first thing the board considered because of the state budget cuts, but it was the last,” she said.

Securing Tier One status was the main objective during Tamara Woods’ tenure in 2008-09. “That really was the focus at almost every meeting,” she said. Regents dealt with a wide range of issues in pursuit of the coveted ranking, including the amount of research dollars brought in to the university, the quality of students and facilities, and the success of athletic programs. “Research shows that if you have solid athletic programs you attract better students,” Woods explained. Their efforts paid off in January 2011 when the Carnegie foundation for the advancement of Teaching designated UH as a Tier One research university.

Keeping that designation and building on it was the board’s focus when Cobos served in 2010-11. “The board spent a lot of time discussing how we were going to continue the momentum that was going on at that time,” he said. There was much excitement over reaching Tier One status and the challenge, he said, was to determine not only how to maintain it, but expand on it by working toward long term goals. “That momentum and excitement is something that is going on today,” he said, “and it is an incredibly exciting time at UH.”

Though their goals for the university and commitment to it are similar, the backgrounds of the Law Center student regents are almost as diverse as the student body itself.

Johnson, 29, the system’s first student regent, is a native of Honolulu, Hawaii, and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Texas with a degree in economics. He was working as a research assistant to Associate Dean Richard Alderman and handling consumer complaints on a much smaller scale than the current Texas Consumer Complaint Center when he was urged to apply for the newly added student seat on the board. The day he was appointed he was inundated with boxes of documents dealing with tuition proposals, formula funding, investments, property and budgets. He began wading through the paperwork sent by the Regents Office, “trying to get up to speed” for his first board meeting. In retrospect, he said recently, it was amazing that a 23-year-old law student was expected to weigh and make decisions on such complicated and far-reaching issues. The workload never let up and his efforts on behalf of the university continued after his tenure ended as he served on various committees. He continues to affect students and the community at large as associate director of the Center for Consumer Law based at the Law Center. “I love what I do, and I can’t imagine doing anything else,” he said from his first floor Law Center office. “I can go home and feel I’ve helped people. In one way or another, this is what I’ll do for the rest of my career.”

Woods, 26, a 2009 graduate of the Law Center, is a native of Round Rock with degrees from the University of California-Santa Barbara, a Masters of Accountancy from UH, and L.L.M. in tax law from the Georgetown University Law Center. “I’ve always had a full schedule,” she said by way of explaining how she juggled law school, the graduate accounting program and a full regents agenda. I’ve always been really involved in extra-curricular activities, though I obviously had never done anything at that level.” While at the Law Center she was active with The Advocates, moot court and the Houston Journal of International Law. “You set your priorities and you make it work,” she said of her scheduling. Today, a young tax associate in the Houston office of Chamberlain Hrdlicka, Woods looks back on her board tenure with a definite sense of accomplishment and pride in the school. “UH has really come so far in just a few years, particularly in achieving Tier One status,” she said, adding that she is happy to feel that she played a part in that growth.

Cobos brought a unique perspective to the board when he served from 2010-11. At 30, he was older
and a bit more mature; a West Point graduate who led soldiers into combat during two tours of duty in Iraq. He headed to Iraq as a second lieutenant six months out of college, earned a Bronze Star during his second tour, and was promoted to captain when he returned, a testament to his leadership abilities. “And, I brought a whole lot of excitement to the board,” he said with a laugh. “I was very happy to be there.” Cobos, a native of El Paso, headed to Houston after his military service for three reasons: the reputation of the Law Center, its dual degree program with the UH Bauer College of Business, and the Texas Hazelwood Act, which offsets tuition for Texas veterans, allowing him to pursue both a J.D. and M.B.A. in three years. “In the army I was going at a very, very fast pace and doing many things at the same time. Settling into a more leisurely pace was very different.” He decided he could finish his graduate degrees as well as serve on the board of regents. “You have to be organized and prioritized,” he said. “Fortunately law students have demonstrated that they are able to do that.” He now funnels that energy into his new job as an associate in bankruptcy litigation in the Houston office of McKool Smith. He also keeps up with the Law Center and the board, is active in UH Young Professionals for Political Action and is chairman of the National Coalition of Student Regents and Trustees which serves as a conduit for exchanging ideas and information among current and past university board members.

Tamecia Glover Harris, the current student regent, is also an officer with the National Coalition of Student Regents and Trustees and has a schedule as busy as those of her predecessors. A native Houstonian and UH graduate with a degree in political science, Harris worked as an accountant for several years before deciding to go to law school. She will graduate in May with dual degrees in law and business. Harris is president of the Black Law Student Association and past-president of the Student Bar Association where she is currently the 3L student representative. She had a two-word answer to describe how she juggles law, business, the board of regents, school and national organizations, and marriage – “Time management!” adding with a laugh, “I have a planner and I stick to it.” Harris said she ultimately would like to forge a career in corporate litigation; formulating a career plan is at the top of her agenda for the new year.

The four student regents agree that much has been accomplished in moving the city “commuter school” into a Tier One Carnegie-recognized research university, but there is still much to do.

Harris said she tries to look at the needs of the whole university system and not be biased toward the Law Center, but as a “premier component,” the law school facilities need improvement. The overall image of the campus and its facilities plays a major role in the reach for Tier One status, she said, adding that progress is being made almost everywhere you look. She said members of the National Coalition of Student Regents and Trustees, which held its most recent annual conference at UH, talk about the “crane test” as a measure of how much construction and growth is going on at particular schools. UH was judged second only to Ohio State in the number of working cranes on campus, she said. Cobos believes UH needs to better spread the word about all that is right with the university. “I think right now communicating our achievements and our recent successes is absolutely essential,” he said. Cobos is active on the UH Speakers Bureau, talking to Rotary clubs, networking groups, and other organizations about the university’s excellence and the impact its recent success has had on the school, city, and its people. “For a long time UH hasn’t been held in the type of light that it should be,” he said, but the word is getting out, helped by the Tier One recognition and athletic successes. “Students are coming that wouldn’t have considered it in the past,” he said. Johnson summed up the comments of the other student regents with a checklist of key focus areas for future board members: modernizing, physical growth, improve the look and feel of the campus to heighten the image, as well as continued excellence in academics. “I would think, ‘What are you going to do to add to the value of the degree.’”
Chase Takes Helm of Greater Houston Partnership

University of Houston Law Professor Anthony Chase is the newly-elected Chairman of the Board of the Greater Houston Partnership. The principal objective of the Greater Houston Partnership, which traces its roots back to Houston’s original Chamber of Commerce founded in 1840, is to build regional economic prosperity. The Partnership facilitates relocations and expansions in the Houston area; international outreach initiatives such as business development missions outside the U.S. and receiving foreign trade delegations; and strategic planning. The 10-county Houston region encompasses Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, San Jacinto and Waller counties. Professor Chase plans to continue teaching at UH Law Center during his tenure as GHP Chairman. He took time to answer a few questions for Briefcase.

Q: How long have you served on the Greater Houston Partnership Board?
A: I have proudly served as a director for GHP off and on since 2004. I have been active on several different committees, including government affairs, since 1998.

Q: As newly-elected chairman for 2012, what will be some of your goals?
A: The Greater Houston Partnership has many ongoing initiatives whether it is serving its members through being a classic chamber of commerce, helping to create and retain jobs through regional economic development and its Opportunity Houston fund account, or through being the public policy advocate for the Houston region’s business community. With all these initiatives, the GHP Board of Directors and I have strong expectations and high goals for the organization.

I want GHP to grow its small business membership. Small businesses drive our economy, and GHP offers numerous benefits to help its small business members grow and expand their business.

GHP will also continue to promote the University of Houston and its Tier One status.

Some other areas of focus, especially in public policy, include:

- Promoting Houston as the “Natural Gas Capital of the World” through lobbying strenuously in favor of fracking, offshore drilling, and favorable financial and tax policies for the energy industry
- Fighting for increased funding for education to ensure Houston has an educated workforce for the future, which includes fixing the State Franchise Tax
- Increased funding for infrastructure and transportation
- Fighting for federal funding to make sure the Texas Medical Center has the doctors and nurses it needs to make up current shortages and provide the best medical care in the world

Q: Why is Houston such a great city to do business?
A: Simple, Houston is leading the nation as it recovers from the great recession. Our diverse economy, led by a strong energy industry and pro-business policies, has allowed us to be the first city in the U.S. to recover all of the jobs that were lost during the recession, 121,000 in total. No other city in the country has come close to recovering all of their jobs. But, it gets better. More people are working in Houston now than ever before. Companies expanding or moving to our city know we have an educated workforce and great educational institutions such as the University of Houston that are training the next generation of workers.

Noted writer and Forbes columnist Joel Kotkin called Houston a “model city” and wrote: “Houston has kept the cost of government low while investing in ports, airports, roads, transit and schools. A person or business moving there gets an immediate raise through lower taxes and cheaper real estate. Houston just works better at nurturing jobs.”

A strong economy, business friendly policies, and a welcoming and diverse community make up a formula for Houston that few, if any, other cities can match.
Shawna Hamilton Doster ’95

Shawna Hamilton Doster is on a mission to break through the nation’s literacy barrier by putting books into the hands of thousands of needy children. Bringing her legal perspective and passion to one of the country’s oldest literacy advocacy groups, she is helping provide the resources preschoolers and their families need to build a solid foundation for learning.

A native Texan, Hamilton Doster became involved with a New York-based Books for Kids program nearly a decade ago after working for several years in the Houston-area as an attorney. “I came to New York and saw an opportunity,” she said. “While I was very happy as a litigator, I was looking for something more -- a way to give back while still using my legal skills. I joined the Books for Kids Board and found that my training in law was a huge asset.”

Dedicated to promoting literacy among all children, with a special emphasis on low-income and at-risk preschool-aged children, Books for Kids creates libraries, donates books and partners with literacy programs to develop the critical early foundation and skills that young children need to be successful in life.

“The libraries ensure that all at-risk children are able to have access to reading programs, brand new books and other educational tools that serve as critical building blocks for early literacy skills,” Hamilton Doster said.

Two years ago, she took over the organization as executive director, crediting her University of Houston Law Center degree with making her the right candidate for the position. “My legal education gave me a unique perspective that allowed me to better serve Books for Kids,” she said. “I understand how to protect the entire organization and our board from a legal standpoint. Whether it be intellectual property, contractual issues or risk management, I am able to see the issues through a clearer lens given my legal training.”

As the executive director of Books for Kids, Hamilton Doster oversees its outreach efforts, which include transforming unused rooms in childcare centers in low-income neighborhoods into an educational and magical environment filled with beautiful brand new books and learning opportunities for children who may not have been afforded the same opportunity otherwise.

Hamilton Doster notes recent statistics illustrate that approximately one out of four children grow up not knowing how to read. Additionally, 80% of preschool and after-school programs serving low-income populations are without age-appropriate books. Children in middle-income neighborhoods enjoy a ratio of 13 books per child. In low-income neighborhoods, the ratio is one age-appropriate book for every 300 children.

“Access to age-appropriate books is a critical and key factor in helping a child succeed in life,” Hamilton Doster said.

Under Hamilton Doster’s tenure as executive director, Books for Kids has begun building libraries and promoting literacy on a national scale by partnering with Homewood Suites, a national upscale extended stay hotel brand, and ING DIRECT, an online financial institution. In addition, she has worked with celebrities such as Tina Fey and Mario Batali who have also sponsored libraries in New York City.

Each library costs $50,000, which covers the creation of the reading space, books and a year’s worth of program support for the teachers, families and children who will use the location.

“When you think of how many children you’re serving over the years and how desperately needed these resources are, it’s a very tiny investment,” Hamilton Doster said.

To date, Books for Kids has opened 72 libraries, stocking approximately 25,000 books and giving away another 5 million. Libraries are primarily located in the New York Tri-State area, but Hamilton Doster has recently opened libraries in Memphis, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Phoenix, Wilmington, Delaware, and Irving, Texas.
John Cleaves ’92

John Cleaves is changing the landscape of litigation by developing trial applications that allow lawyers to trade their yellow pads for iPads. Putting his University of Houston Law Center degree to a “nontraditional” use, Cleaves is drawing on nearly 20 years of experience in litigation support to ride the new wave of technology right into the courtroom.

Last December, Cleaves developed JuryTracker, an iPad application that helps lawyers track each juror during a trial. JuryTracker helps trial teams observe and report juror behavior in a consistent, clear and concise manner. “It has the potential to greatly improve a trial team’s understanding of what the jury comprehends and believes,” says Cleaves. “The app is designed to quickly and simply allow users to enter information so they can continue observing the jury.”

Cleaves’ JuryTracker application debuted in Apple’s App Store in January 2011. One year later, the app consistently ranked in the Top 200 Business App sales each week.

The application enables trial teams to speak the same language about what goes on in court. JuryTracker provides a uniform language for taking notes, a uniform system for determining the mindset of individual jurors, time-stamped notes that can be matched to the court reporter’s transcript and tools to keep jury consultants apprised on a daily basis.

In addition, it uses emoticons to evaluate each juror’s emotional reactions to what’s going on in the courtroom, including witness testimony, attorney presentations and judge pronouncements. A second set of graphics tracks whether a juror is taking notes, paying attention, making eye contact, fidgeting or checking his or her watch. The application is equipped with TrialTimer, a stopwatch that may be used to keep track of how long each party is presenting. New features available in the latest version include a chronological report that can be saved to the iPad for later review, emailed immediately to trial team members or printed. The additional feature helps attorneys identify patterns in behavior.

The creative process behind the application was simple: Cleaves saw a need and filled it. “When I was working in trial support, I noticed the attorneys would observe juror behavior and reactions to the testimony and evidence,” Cleaves said. “Back in the war room, the attorneys would make decisions on how to proceed based on the jurors’ reactions. However, there was no uniform way to make the initial observations.”

Cleaves began thinking about developing an application to fill the void. He sketched out the idea for JuryTracker and shared it with a few colleagues and consultants who gave positive feedback. When the iPad came out, he found the “perfect medium” for his brain-child. But, that is not the end of Cleaves’ application endeavors. Aside from planning to revamp JuryTracker by adding additional features, he is in the beginning stages of developing trial presentation software. Cleaves foresees marrying the two applications. In this union, JuryTracker will become an extra function for the envisioned trial presentation software.

After graduating from the UH Law Center in 1992, Cleaves spent seven years as an attorney in Houston representing clients in jury and bench trials. His areas of practice ranged from criminal defense to employment law. Eventually, he moved to California to do trial support. He has assisted attorneys by designing demonstrative graphics, trial presentation software and with story development and jury observation. “I fell in love with the world of trial support and graphics,” Cleaves said.

In addition to being the creator of JuryTracker, Cleaves is the supervisor of trial technology consulting at Latham & Watkins, based in its Los Angeles office. He is also a member of Law Technology News’ editorial advisory board.
Lisa Windsor ‘87

After working for 22 years with the Judge Advocate General’s Corps, Lisa Windsor is utilizing her extensive experience, along with her commitment and dedication to military law, to serve the military community in our nation’s capital. The retired Army colonel is giving voice to past and present service men and women.

Searching for a career path that would utilize her background in economics, Windsor enrolled at the University of Houston Law Center and got a glimpse of the world of military law during her first year when she landed a summer JAG internship in Washington, D.C. “The internship was an amazing opportunity, and it later led to my direct commission as a JAG officer,” she said.

As a JAG officer and attorney, Windsor’s practice covered everything affecting military operations, including criminal law, legal assistance, civil and administrative law, labor and employment law, international and operational law and contract and fiscal law. “I had great opportunities to practice all over the world, from Washington, D.C., to Hawaii to Korea,” she said. “A few of the cases resonate with me to this day and stand out in my mind, like the child sexual abuse cases I tried while I was at Ft. Hood.”

Throughout her long military career, she has served in many capacities, including military criminal defense counsel, command legal advisor, deputy staff judge advocate and faculty instructor. In addition, as a defense counsel for the 9th Infantry Division and 1st Corps, and senior trial counsel for the 1st Cavalry Division, Windsor has personally tried more than 75 courts-martial and represented the government in more than 100 administrative hearings. She has personally investigated dozens of cases and conducted countless witness interviews. “As an officer, I was able to give my legal education a good workout,” she said. “I essentially tried all the same offenses as in state court along with the whole gamut of military offenses.”

Furthermore, Windsor served as a training branch chief for the U.S. Army Reserve Legal Command and a faculty instructor at the U.S. Army War College. At the legal command, she was responsible for the training and development of more than 1,700 reserve attorneys, paralegals and legal administrators. Windsor retired as an Army colonel and joined Tully Rinkey PLLC to continue practicing military law and serving the military community as a criminal defense attorney. “Looking back on my career, I have come to appreciate the hands-on training I received from the Law Center,” she said. “It has proven to be a great foundation for all the work I have done.”

During Windsor’s more than two decade-long career, she has earned numerous military awards, including the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal with silver oak cluster. She also has written research papers on secondary traumatization in military spouses, the effects of combat, sexual assault and post-traumatic stress disorder on female veterans and the effectiveness of current interrogation methods on Islamic fundamentalists.

Windsor resides in Washington, D.C., and has served as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, the Hawaii International Film Festival and the LA Harbor International Film Festival. She is also a member of the Texas Bar Association – Military Law Section and a lifelong member of the U.S. Army War College Alumni Association.

Bill Jackson ‘92

Bill Jackson ‘92, the current president of the University of Houston Law Alumni Association, has taken his natural inclination toward public policy and turned it into the driving force behind his impressive career in environmental litigation, which began nearly two decades ago.

As an undergraduate, Jackson, a native Houstonian, studied political science and history at The University of Texas before coming to UH Law Center. “Law was just a natural fit for Center trained me well portunity to network,” he said. “The Law and afforded me the op- and build my career.”

Jackson began his career a Chicago-based firm, significant commercial later, he was given his on an environmental litigating the Port of Texas City oil and gas interests re- hydrocarbons and chemicals into Galveston Bay. From there, “one case just led to another and another.”

A named partner at Jackson Gilmour & Dobbs, PC, Jackson has built an envi- ronmental practice that involves several of the nation’s major river systems, bays and port authorities. In addition, he was retained by the State of Louisiana to represent it regarding the natural resource damages and economic impacts flowing from the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill.

As Law Alumni Association president, he is giving back to the school that gave him so much and helping the 13,000+ member continue its work to advance legal education. “Our goal is to broaden the reach of the association and make it more relevant to alumni on a day-to-day basis,” Jackson said.
HEALTH LAW REPORT

UHLC Honors Health Law & Policy Institute Co-founder

The University of Houston Law Center’s Health Law & Policy Institute this fall honored well-known attorney J.D. Epstein, one of the founders of the Institute. Epstein has been involved with the Law Center for more than 30 years as a professor, supporter and adviser. He currently serves as a senior member of the HL&PI Advisory Board.

“As a co-founder of the Health Law & Policy Institute, J.D. Epstein has been a major factor in helping to build our health law program into one of the best in the country,” said Dean Raymond T. Nimmer.

At a reception Nov. 8, Epstein was recognized for his many contributions to the health law community and to the Law Center both as a teacher and a mentor of many lawyers.

“J.D. Epstein is a nationally recognized lawyer who has served the medical and legal community as a teacher, lawyer, writer and leader in the field. We are grateful for the significant role he has played in the growth and development of the Health Law and Policy Institute,” said William J. Winslade, Institute director.

Epstein has represented thousands of hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, HMOs, prepaid group practices, medical staffs and various vendors to the industry throughout the nation, as well as non-health care industry corporations with health care benefit concerns. He began his career as an attorney for Blue Cross in Chicago, followed by partnerships at Wood, Lucksinger and Epstein as well as Vinson and Elkins, LLP in Houston. Epstein is now of Counsel at Greer Herz & Adams, LLP in Galveston. He is listed among the Best Lawyers in America and as a Texas Super Lawyer.

Nimmer has announced that a scholarship fund for health law LL.M. students has been established in Epstein’s honor. Contributions may be sent to the University of Houston, Health Law & Policy Institute, 100 Law Center, Suite 104, Houston, TX 77204-6060.

www.law.uh.edu

Professor Barbara Evans

The University of Houston Law Center is one of only two American law schools in history to have a Greenwall Foundation Faculty Scholar in Bioethics in residence. Professor Barbara J. Evans earned the coveted designation in a national competition that named four new Greenwall scholars for the period 2010-2013. The award provides three years of support for her ongoing research on governance models for large, interoperable health data networks and the ethics of large-scale observational studies that use individuals’ personal health information.

Evans’ interest in medical privacy law grew out of a more general fascination with the problems of regulating cutting-edge biotechnologies. “Informational research—research that uses people’s health data and biospecimens—is set to play a crucial role in 21st century biomedical discovery, but only if we as a society come up with better ways to resolve the privacy and ethical conundrums it poses.”

Last year, Evans was one of a team of leading legal, medical, and bioethical researchers that examined the regulation of direct-to-consumer genetic tests. They urged a risk-stratified approach that tailors regulatory requirements to the potential risks of each test. Their findings were published in the October 2010 issue of Science magazine. More recently, Evans was appointed to the Institute of Medicine’s Committee for the Public Health Effectiveness of the F.D.A. 510(k) Clearance Process. In October 2011, the Committee published recommendations on modernization of F.D.A.’s 35-year-old medical device regulatory framework.

Evans is co-director of the Health Law & Policy Institute at the Law Center. Her research interests include governance, privacy, and financing issues with large health information networks and tissue repositories; regulatory and judicial uses of evidence from large-scale observational studies; and legal barriers to clinical translation of pharma- cogenomics.
Two lions of the Law Center retired this Spring after more than 70 years of combined experience in the school’s classrooms. Professors John Jay Douglass and Ira B. Shepard both joined the faculty in the mid-70s and have watched as the school grew in stature and the student body changed along with the law and the way it is taught.

“The law school is no longer a closed little group of men,” said Douglass, who came to the school in 1974 and taught criminal, military and election law. “It is a far more diversified group of students -- race, background and a lot more women.” Some have already worked for law firms or been politically involved, he said. That diversity of life and work experiences means many students today “have been out in the real world and bring more to the school.”

Shepard, a tax law expert who joined the faculty in 1975, remembers the days when female applicants were given credit during the admissions process for raising children and doing volunteer work to make up for their lack of business accomplishments. And he noted women at the time held a disproportionate share of the top spots in their classes because their mobility was limited, especially for married women, which kept them from attending top ranked law schools elsewhere around the country. He also remembered, with a laugh, how things changed. “I once was hissed for using an example in a divorce proceeding of a woman earning less than her husband. I changed the example to X and Y with the woman earning more money and said, “OK, now we’re talking chromosomally.” An adjunct professor had a female student jump up on a desk and rave at him for being anti-female, he said. Times change, but the quality of students hasn’t. “I thought our classes were pretty selective then,” Shepard said, “and I think they are still selective.”

Douglass, a former Army JAG officer who once commanded fellow professor Jordan Paust, said from a teaching perspective, “the transition to computers is the most obvious change since I came here. It’s really an unbelievable change.” He said students are able to take far better notes than they did by hand and their writing has improved. “But,” he added, “I think unfortunately it may have changed their oral capabilities a bit.”

For Shepard, teaching tax law is something of a moving target as Congress enacts an “appalling” number of changes, special rules and exemptions. “It’s incredibly more complicated, but it was incredibly complicated back then. I think the real difference is that when I started teaching if you didn’t know the answer to a question, you could sort of figure it out based on your experience and what you thought the law should be. That disappeared 35 years ago. I sort of gave up trying to understand the law in all its complexities and started focusing on dealing with changes in the law.”

Shepard said it used to be possible for a taxpayer or a small business owner to go to a CPA and then be able to do it himself the next year just by filling in new numbers. “That is impossible today because of all the changes,” he said. With all his expertise, does he do his own taxes? “I do it the old fashioned way. I hire a CPA,” he said with a smile.

In general, Douglass said, “The law has opened up a lot, become much more exposed. People know about it. They’re going to small claims court; everybody has access to the courts now. That has opened up tremendously in my lifetime.”

So, what’s next for the two Law Center icons?

“After 31 years in the Army and 37 here, anyone who can add realizes that I’m not a kid anymore,” Douglass said with a laugh. Nevertheless, in addition to doing some writing, specifically a family history “for the kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids,” he intends to use his spare time to play tennis twice a week instead of once.

“I am gradually feeling my way into retirement,” said Shepard who plans to have a presence at the Law Center, at least for awhile. He will continue to advise tax L.L.M. students and work on his outline of recent tax developments. He also serves on the boards of several organizations, interviews high school applicants for his alma mater Harvard and gives about 40 speeches a year to various groups.

“I probably will miss the classroom,” he said. “But I think students will be better served by our more recent hires because one of the things that the professors here decided to do is to hire only people who are better than we are.”
NEW FACES

Faculty

Zachary Bray
Assistant Professor of Law

Zachary Bray teaches and writes in the areas of property, land use and natural resources. Bray previously worked as a litigation associate in the Los Angeles office of Munger, Tolles & Olson, LLP. His work at the firm covered a wide variety of litigation, including state and federal trials and appeals on behalf of low-income tenants in association with various public interest organizations. Bray received his J.D. from the Yale Law School, and his bachelor’s degree, summa cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame.

Jessica Lind Mantel
Assistant Professor of Law
Co-Director, Health Law & Policy Institute

Jessica Lind Mantel joined the Law Center after eight years of service with two government agencies in Washington, D.C. She worked most recently as a senior attorney in the Office of the General Counsel for the Department of Health and Human Services. She also has worked as a health policy analyst in the Government Accountability Office evaluating Medicare payment issues. Prior to her service with government agencies, she practiced as an associate in the Health Care Department of the firm of Ropes & Gray in Boston. Mantel received her J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and an M.P.P. from the University of Michigan School of Public Policy. She also holds a B.A. in psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Jessica L. Roberts
Assistant Professor of Law

Jessica L. Roberts joined the faculty of the Law Center after serving as an Associate-in-Law at Columbia Law School and an Adjunct Professor of Disability Studies at the City University of New York. Roberts’ research operates at the intersection of health law and antidiscrimination law. Her current projects explore the theoretical implications of health-care reform, the formation of genetic identity, and the antidiscrimination protection of health-related information. Her scholarship has appeared, or is forthcoming, in the University of Illinois Law Review, the Notre Dame Law Review and the Vanderbilt Law Review, among others. Roberts teaches Introduction to Health Law, Disabilities and the Law, and Genetics and the Law.

Staff

Bret Wells
Assistant Professor of Law

Douglas Bret Wells teaches in the areas of federal income taxation, corporate finance, and international taxation. Before joining the UH faculty, Wells was a visiting professor and an adjunct professor at the Law Center. Wells received his bachelor’s degree, summa cum laude, from Southwestern University in 1987. He earned his law degree with honors from the University of Texas School of Law in 1989.

Sherie Cantrell
Director of Major Gifts, Office of External Affairs

Sherie Cantrell is a former development director at The Bridge Over Troubled Waters, a comprehensive crisis center that assists survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and those who are homeless due to these circumstances or others. A graduate of Oklahoma City University, Cantrell has worked in development more than 10 years.

Carrie Criado
Executive Director, Communications and Marketing

Carrie Criado came to the Law Center from Al Gore’s The Climate Project where she was communications director. She previously worked as director of public relations for USLegal, Inc., as well as at KVII-TV, KEYT-TV, KUHT-TV and The First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University. Criado has taught communications law and journalism courses at Southern Methodist University and Middle Tennessee State. She was a law clerk for the Federal Communications Commission. Criado received a B.A. in journalism from The University of Texas at Austin and earned her J.D. at the University of Houston Law Center in 1995.
Susham Modi
Clinical Supervising Attorney, Immigration Clinic

Susham Modi is responsible for supervising upper-level students working on various pro bono immigration cases, involving victims of crimes, immigration-related federal court litigation, appeals before the Board of Immigration Appeals, asylum cases, and removal defense cases in immigration courts. He received a B.A., magna cum laude, from the University of Texas at Arlington and a J.D. from Penn State University. Prior to coming to the Law Center, he worked as an Advocate/Attorney at Harvard Law School’s Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program.

Ann-Margaret Dudley
Assistant Director, Office of Career Development

Ann-Margaret Dudley is a former commercial litigator in New York City where her practice focused on civil litigation as well as criminal regulatory defense. During law school, she worked as a paralegal with the Asset Forfeiture Unit of the U.S. Attorney’s Office. A graduate of Brooklyn Law School and a member of both the New York and Texas bars, Dudley is an active member of the Houston Bar Association, New York City Bar Association and the Brooklyn Law School Alumni Association.

Mona D. Elchahal
Career Counselor, Office of Career Development

Mona D. Elchahal graduated from Southern Methodist University with a B.S. in Economics and a B.A. in History. She earned her J.D. at SMU Dedman School of Law and her LL.M. in Taxation from New York University School of Law. She practiced tax and estate planning law prior to joining the Career Development Office and is a member of the State Bar of Texas, the State Bar of Oklahoma and the Houston Bar Association.

Allison Regan
Assistant Dean, Office of Career Development

Allison Regan joined the Office of Career Development after practicing in the area of insurance and reinsurance in New Orleans. A graduate of Clemson University and Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, Regan was chairman of the Moot Court Board and actively involved in the Student Bar Association while at Loyola. She started in the Career Development Office as a career counselor and has also served as both the assistant and associate director.

Hope Morales Young
Director of Alumni Relations, Office of External Affairs

Hope Morales Young works with the UH Law Alumni Association Board to implement programs that strategically engage alumni with their alma mater. Prior to coming to the Law Center, Young was the manager of professional development at Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. A graduate of Texas A&M University with a B.A. in International Studies, Young has worked with attorneys in the Houston-area for approximately 10 years.

Jill Davis
Clinical Supervising Attorney, Immigration Clinic

Jill Davis is responsible for supervising students working on various pro bono immigration cases, ranging from victims of crime and domestic violence to asylum applications. She also provides direct pro bono legal representation to immigrant victims of crime, domestic violence and human trafficking under a grant from the Office of the Attorney General Crime Victims Services Division. Davis graduated with honors from the University of Miami with a B.A. in Latin American Studies and received her J.D. from The University of Texas School of Law.
Clinic on a Roll

The Law Center’s Immigration Clinic won decisions that will have a far reaching impact on future deportation proceedings, including one case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and won with a unanimous decision. The team of Andrea Boulares, Magda Gonzalez, and Charlotte Simon, all of whom graduated in May, wrote the winning merits brief that culminated more than four years of work by clinic students. The case involved classification of prior offenses as justification for deportation of a legal resident alien. Geoffrey A. Hoffman, clinical associate professor and faculty supervisor of the Immigration Clinic, served as co-counsel before the Supreme Court. A second case brought before the Bureau of Immigration Appeals involved mental competency and deportation hearings. Andrea Penedo, a 3L this year, wrote the brief that resulted in stringent requirements that must be met before an immigrant can be deemed competent to face deportation proceedings. Clinic Supervising Attorney Janet B. Beck worked closely with Penedo in winning the precedent-setting decision.

Profs of the Year

Douglas K. Moll and Adam Gershowitz were honored for their mastery of the law and outstanding teaching ability as repeat winners of “Professor of the Year” awards for 2010-11. Moll was chosen for the fourth time by the Order of the Barons while Gershowitz was selected by the Student Bar Association. In 2009-10, his first year at the Law Center, Gershowitz was honored by the Order of the Barons.

Weaver Speaks in Cuba

University of Houston Law Center Professor Jacqueline Weaver was the keynote speaker on “Best Practices in Oil and Gas Contracts and Deepwater Drilling” at a conference in Havana, Cuba. Her participation was approved under a special license from the Office of Foreign Asset Control of the U.S. Treasury after the Obama administration eased restrictions on academic travels to Cuba within the framework of the 51-year-old U.S. embargo of Cuba. Weaver’s visit is considered the first academic exchange program with Cuban oil and gas officials and academics in the past half-century. Weaver, A.A. White Professor of Law, has written numerous articles on oil and gas law and energy policy, including an article on Enron’s effect on energy markets. The conference was sponsored by the Paris-based Association Andrés Bello, an association of French and Latin-American legal scholars.

Capitol Praise

A Law Center student earned high marks from Congress for developing an after-school program that teaches social and academic skills to delinquent and at-risk pre-teen girls. Jeanene Holliday, a May 2011 graduate, received a Certificate of Special U.S. Congressional Recognition for helping hundreds of girls gain the personal skills they will need to succeed in life. She started the volunteer program in 2004 as part of her master’s project at the University of Houston after realizing that young girls weren’t getting much help in developing good study habits or appropriate social behavior. Her program at a Fort Bend County middle school was an instant hit with the girls. Holliday continued the program even after she became a full-time teacher, enrolled as a part-time law student and worked as an Irene Merker Rosenberg Scholar at the law school’s Center for Children, Law & Policy. Not one to rest on her laurels, Holliday plans to continue helping youths reach their potential and hopes to expand the after-school program nationwide.

Blakely Advocacy Institute Trifecta

Three different types of Law Center advocacy teams -- moot court, arbitration, and negotiation -- will be going to national competitions in 2012. It marks the first time three such teams have competed in national championships in the same year. A pep rally for the “Blakely Advocacy Trifecta” is scheduled for Jan. 18 at 5 p.m. in the Law Center Commons. Please come and show your support for the teams.
Leadership and Service

Members of the Class of 2011 walked across the Hofheinz Pavilion stage and into the world of law after being urged by a trio of speakers to assume leadership roles and provide service to their communities, especially in these difficult times. “As you go forward, think about things not only for yourself, but to contribute to the lives of those around you,” commencement speaker Brad Smith, Microsoft’s general counsel and senior vice president for Legal and Corporate Affairs, said to the 374 graduates. Renu Khator, University president and system chancellor, told the graduates to make a difference. “Never delay when you can act; never cry when you can console; and never follow when you can lead! Go and prove you can change lives; go and prove you are special; go and prove you are leaders.” Dean Raymond T. Nimmer predicted great things: “These young men and women are the future judges, legislators, government officers, and law professors. And every one of them will be community leaders.”

New Lounge Makes Studying a Breeze

A major upgrade to the Law Center in recognition of an alumnus is giving students a new place to hit the books and relax between classes. The breezeway, located between the Hendricks Heritage Room and the Frankel Room, has been turned into a bright and comfortable, open-air student lounge in honor of Philip Donisi, a 1962 Law Center graduate. As part of the new look on the exterior, bright red signage with the letters UHLC clearly defines the entrance to the Law Center. The lounge was generously underwritten by Finkelstein Partners Ltd., a diversified company based in Houston with roots in the oil and gas industry. “We decided to do something for our 40-plus years of service to the company,” said Robert Pilegge, who heads Finkelstein Partners. Company representatives thought a lasting gift to the Law Center where Donisi started his five-decade legal career would be fitting.

Student Honors

Law Center students continue to make their mark on the state and national stage, winning prestigious awards and appointments. Meghan Baker, who earned dual J.D. and M.S.W. degrees, was honored as Social Work Student of the Year by the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Four Law Center LL.M. students were selected to present their papers at the 7th Cornell Law School Inter-University Graduate Student Conference in New York. The authors are: Regina A. Bailey, of Houston, Julian Cardenas Garcia, of Venezuela, Surendran Koran, of India, and Vignaswari “Vicky” Saminathan, of Malaysia. Two Law Center students were named Albert Schweitzer Fellows and will work with local attorneys during the coming year to teach underserved high school students about health issues and their legal health rights. Andrea Penedo and Ron Sung, both 3Ls, are among approximately 260 other 2011-12 Schweitzer Fellows across the country who will be developing and carrying out health related service projects.

Free at last

Students from UH Law Center and the University of St. Thomas saw eight years of effort pay off when capital murder charges were dropped and Anthony Graves walked out of prison after 18 years. The law and journalism students dug into the 1992 slayings of six people in Somerville, Tx., and convinced prosecutors not to re-try Graves because there was no credible evidence linking him to the crime. They found a startling lack of investigation and physical evidence, virtually no evidence or motive tying Graves to the crime and instances of prosecutorial misconduct. “This is one of those rare non-DNA exonerations that is won through sheer determination,” said Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson, head of the Criminal Justice Institute at UH Law Center, “a truly impressive feat!”

Outstanding Speakers

The Law Center continues to draw newsmakers and notables in addition to supportive alums as guest speakers in classes and during lunch hour discussions. Just a few recent speakers include: defense attorney Rusty Hardin while he was gearing up for Roger Clemens’ trial; veteran trial and appellate lawyer Lynne Liberato, teaching “Summary Judgment 101” in less than an hour; 5th Circuit Judge Edith Jones, commenting on judicial activism; Ken Starr discussing some recent eyebrow-raising First Amendment decisions; Marjorie Petty, director of Region 6 of the Department of Health and Human Services, speaking glowingly about health care reform; State Climatologist Dr. John Nielsen-Gammon who predicted a 3- to 5-degree rise in temperatures by 2050; and EEOC Commissioner Chai Feldblum who lamented the amount of discrimination that still exists in today’s workplace.
Serving the Public

The Center for Consumer Law, directed by Associate Dean Richard Alderman, continues to serve the public, the bar and the academy. During the past year it has held several sessions of the People’s Law School, attended by almost 2,000 people, and answered thousands of individual legal questions. Its Consumer Complaint Center received more than 3,000 complaints and saved consumers more than $480,000. The Center also presented Consumer Law CLE programs for the bar, and began planning for its 2012 International Conference for consumer law professors. The Center continues to be widely recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in the field of consumer law.

Lawyers in Love

For Brett Marks ’81 and Marjorie Marks ’81 Cupid’s bow struck from across the room during Professor Irene Rosenberg’s Constitutional Law class more than three decades ago. “Irene had a knack for stocking up controversy,” Brett said. “After class, Marjorie and I happened to approach her about one of her provocative statements. She told us to ‘talk about it amongst yourselves.’ The rest is history.” The pair tied the knot on May 17, 1981, the day after commencement. Like Brett and Marjorie, many alumni have met their spouses or partners while they were both law students at the UH Law Center. Are you among the lucky romantic few? If so, we want to know! Please email lawalumni@uh.edu with the following information for both you and your spouse or partner: Your names, class years, email addresses and, of course, how you met.

Dow’s Night at the Opera

Law Center professor and death penalty lawyer David R. Dow discussed “Dead Man Walking & the Law” prior to the Houston premiere of the opera Dead Man Walking at the Wortham Theatre Center. Founder of the Texas Innocence Network which uses Law Center students to investigate inmate claims of innocence, Dow is also litigation director of the Texas Defender Service which represents death row inmates and works for criminal justice reform. Dow, the school’s Cullen Professor of Law, discussed his role in representing more than 100 death row inmates in state and federal appeals and the personal toll it has taken on him. The opera is based on the novel of the same name by Sister Helen Prejean which follows a death row inmate through appeals to his eventual execution.

IPIL Fall Lecture

The Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law at the University of Houston Law Center held its 18th Annual Fall Lecture in November. The featured speaker was Robert Brauneis, Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Intellectual Property Law Program at the George Washington University Law Center in Washington, D.C. During his lecture, “Trademark Infringement, Dilution, and the Decline in Sharing of Famous Brand Names,” Brauneis addressed whether the sharing of famous brand names has actually decreased, and if changes in sharing rates can be traced to particular legal, economic, or cultural shifts. The Fall Lecture is sponsored annually by the Ronald A. Katz Foundation.

LAW FUND

The Law Fund is the UH Law Center’s annual giving program. Gifts are unrestricted and are allocated to the highest budget priorities. These funds:

- RECRUIT and retain outstanding faculty members
- ATTRACT the best students by increasing financial support
- BOOST student and career development services
- SUPPORT clinical and advocacy programs
- UPDATE computer technology and library materials
- INCREASE alumni outreach

EXCELLENCE in higher education never happens by accident. Your support is critical in helping educate the next generation of lawyers and crafting and improving legal policy. Please give.

To give online, please visit https://giving.uh.edu/law/. If you would like to make a recurring gift, please contact Leah Nusynowitz Gross ’87 at 713.743.2203 or lrgross@central.uh.edu.
Alumni and friends of the University of Houston Law Center danced to a jungle beat until well after midnight at the 35th annual Law Gala and Auction with its theme of “It’s a Jungle Out There!” and its goal of raising funds for the school.

More than 500 party-goers attended the event held March 26th at the Intercontinental Hotel with the Legends Ballroom transformed into an equatorial jungle with green foliage, water walls, two live macaws, a boa constrictor and assorted animal “trophies.” The final tally surpasses the fundraising goal of $500,000. “We tried to make it a fun evening that guests would never forget,” said Shannon Smith, director of events in the external affairs department at UH Law Center, “and the crowd was really energized.”

“For 35 years the Houston legal community has generously supported the University of Houston Law Center Gala & Auction. This important fundraising event provides critical financial support for the Law Center’s core operational needs, such as research, clinic support, library materials and facilities.

Additionally, the Law Center Gala & Auction is a much anticipated opportunity for alums to have a great time and catch up with friends and colleagues,” said Kathy Brannon, assistant dean and director of external affairs at UH Law Center.

Guests were welcomed to the ballroom by members of the Houston Grand Opera singing songs from The Lion King, and the entertainment didn’t stop throughout the night. Music was provided by Infinite Groove and a troupe of jungle dancers, and a jungle magician performed as an aerial bartender refilling glasses while suspended upside down.

Silent and live auction items, pitched by celebrity auctioneer Richard “Racehorse” Haynes ’56, ranged from vacation trips to Ireland, Costa Rica, and the 2012 Masters in Augusta, Ga., to sailing adventures, jewelry, artwork and nights out on the town.

“Because of the amazing efforts of our staff and alumni, this was one of the most successful gala’s in recent times,” said UH Law Center Dean Raymond T. Nimmer. “Special thanks to Sam (’78) and Melinda Stubbs who chaired the gala and created a unique event and to Shannon Smith and the rest of the external affairs office for putting it all together. After so many years at this law school, I continue to be amazed and delighted by the level of enthusiasm and support we receive. It remains an honor to be associated with this school.”
2012 Events
University of Houston Law Center and Law Alumni Association

January 18
“Go National” Advocacy Competition Team Rally for the three UH Law Center teams that are headed to national competitions
For more information contact: Blakely@uh.edu

January 19
A mock Supreme Court argument on climate change
For more information contact: law.uh.edu/eencenter/

January 25 – 28
Andrews Kurth Moot Court National Championship
For more information contact: Blakely@uh.edu

January 25
UHLAA Wine Tasting
For more information contact: lawalumni@uh.edu

February 11 (alt. rain date of Feb. 18)
UHLAA/Trees For Houston planting day
For more information contact: lawalumni@uh.edu

February 29
UH Law Center and UHLAA present The Law and Business of Rock & Roll
For more information contact: lawalumni@uh.edu

March 6 – 7
Fifth Circuit to hear arguments at UHLC. Cases not yet determined.
For more information contact: lgriffin@uh.edu

March 31
36th Annual Law Gala & Auction, “Catch The Wave!”
For more information contact: lawalumni@uh.edu

April 7
Center for Consumer Law’s The People’s Law School
For more information visit: law.uh.edu/peopleslaw

May 23
UHLAA Annual Meeting and Reception
For more information contact: lawalumni@uh.edu

To stay in the know go to: law.uh.edu

Stay connected to UHLC
UHLC has several online tools to help you keep up with latest news and events and to engage in discussions with alums.

• On Twitter, you can follow UHLC at www.twitter.com/#!/uhlaw.

• On Facebook, you can become a fan at www.facebook.com/uhlawcenter.

• On LinkedIn, look for the UHLC group.

• On YouTube, you can watch our videos at www.youtube.com/user/TheUHLawCenter.
The University of Houston Law Center in cooperation with Thomson Reuters West LegalEdcenter is pleased to present our gift to UH Law Center alumni for 2012.

The University of Houston Law Center has recently aligned with Thomson Reuters West LegalEdcenter to provide our alumni a valuable resource – unlimited access to the nation’s largest web based CLE and professional development service.

The program will launch in January and provide features such as:

• Access to more than 6,000 continuing legal education programs, including substantive law and practice skills programs from 50+ leading CLE providers, including the American Law Institute - American Bar Association and the American Bar Association

• Unlimited access to programs and toll-free technical support available 24 x 7
  • Programs provided directly to you from any location with an Internet connection, including an iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad
  • Monthly alerts regarding programs tailored to your practice area and state of admission

An $840 value, the accredited legal intelligence and education program will be offered complimentary by UH Law Center in 2012. Visit www.law.uh.edu for more details in January.