



# The Mason Law Quarterly



The George Mason University School of Law Alumni Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 2

May 2001

## School of Law Vaults into Top Tier

by Richard Kelsey, '99

On Wednesday, March 28, word came down that the School of Law had been ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as a Tier One law school. Our official ranking was number 47. When the news broke, it spread like wildfire. E-mails were flying. A phone chain let loose; and within five hours, thousands of letters went out to alumni, students, and School of Law applicants.

George Mason had never ranked higher than the second tier before this year. Dean Grady had set the goal last year; and with the help of students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the Board of Visitors, the School of Law finally broke through the top tier. For the alumni, the ranking by *U.S. News* is nothing more than an affirmation of what we have always known; George Mason provides a first-class legal education.

The School of Law hosted an

impromptu reception and celebration on April 2, and the sense of jubilation in our community was something to see. While many believe the rankings receive far too much attention, the truth is they are the Bible to prospective applicants. In fact, a school's ranking not only affects the student applicant pool favorably, it also helps with recruiting faculty, administrators, and donors.

For the School of Law and our alumni, this ranking is another spectacular achievement by our school. Not too many years ago, pioneers set out in a row house on Rhode Island Avenue and created the International School of Law. In 1979 those pioneers joined forces with a reluctant, if not needy, university to create the present George Mason University School of Law. (How many of you remember the "Urge to Merge" campaign?) Just a few years later, we earned our accreditation.

see top tier, page 3.



Dean Grady (far right) takes a long look at the competition during the Richard S. Murphy Memorial Pool Tournament. While Dean Grady and his teammate Lizette Benedi ('99) were ousted in the second round, everyone's spirits were lifted by the nearly \$2,000 raised that day for the Murphy Scholarship Fund.

## Join the Judicial and Legislative Reception Tradition

by Jennifer Hess Smith, '95

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the Fourth Annual Judicial and Legislative Reception to be held at the law school on May 23, 2001. You already should have received your invitation to this fun social event, which will take place in the Atrium from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Last year's reception was a huge success as the Alumni Board and the law school hosted judges and legislators from all over the Northern Virginia area. We welcomed several wineries from Virginia that offered tastings and information about their respective wines. Due to the overwhelming positive response to the wine tasting, we

see tradition, page 3.

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The King Returns

## From the President: Turning the Corner Together

by Craig Young, '82

“And the beat goes on ...”

On April 19, 2001, I received the George Mason University Alumni Association's 2001 Alumni Service Award. James Laychak, President of the GMU Alumni Association, made the presentation in recognition, he said, of the work I have done over the past five years to strengthen and improve the Law School Alumni Association. I was very honored to receive this distinguished award; but as I explained to those assembled for the Celebration of Distinction, it is an award I accept on behalf of the many people who have worked tirelessly with me over the past five years to make the Law School Alumni Association stronger and more meaningful.

We have achieved so much over the past five years. Of course, there is the fact that the School of Law has been recognized at long last as a Tier One law school, up there among the top 50 giants in the nation. Our top tier ranking is a symbol of the achievements made since the founding of the International School of Law and its accreditation and merger with George Mason University in 1979.

The most visible sign of growth and improvement is our new law school building. Classrooms are now set up for the high-tech society in which our graduates are practicing. We now have two moot courtrooms, and plans are in the making to equip them with the same technology currently used in real-life courtrooms. Our library is now second to none in the Washington area. Our faculty is nationally recognized and respected.

Our Law School Alumni Association has played an important part in these achievements. When I joined the board of the Law School Alumni Association, there was virtually no money in the operating account; we had to meet in the cafeteria or in a restaurant off campus; and there was disenchantment. Because of the hard work of many people and the unquestioned support provided by Dean Mark Grady and his staff, we have turned those problems around.

Every spring, the Law School Alumni Association and Dean Grady host the Judicial and Legislative Reception through which we honor the state and federal judges and legislators of Northern Virginia and provide an opportunity for our alumni and other lawyers to socialize with the judges and legislators. Every fall, the Law School Alumni Association, with Dean Grady's support, hosts the annual Golf Tournament, last year held in memory of Dean Ralph Norvell who passed away in 2000. The proceeds of that Golf Tournament go to a new scholarship being formed in honor of Dean Norvell. We also provide outstanding continuing legal education programs for Virginia attorneys from which we make several thousand dollars to fund our operating budget. We are undertaking several initiatives to raise money for the law school, in general, and to create more scholarships for our stu-

dents. In addition, and perhaps most important, we have initiated better communication with you, our fellow alumni, including this newsletter and a web page ([www.law.gmu.edu/alumni/association.html](http://www.law.gmu.edu/alumni/association.html)).

The one thing I am most proud of is the fact that our Alumni Association is now lead by a strong, committed and diverse Board of Directors. We have 19 alums on the board, including one graduate of the International School of Law. Every one of my fellow board members is a leader. I look into the future and I see that our Alumni Association will continue to have a strong voice in, and make valuable contributions to, our law school.

Your Alumni Association works hard to make your law school a proud institution; but, we need your support. We need your financial support, in whatever amount you can afford, and we need your participatory support. Join us at the Judicial and Legislative Reception on May 23rd; attend one or more of the CLE programs that we sponsor each year (a listing appears on page 3 of this newsletter); and in October, join us at the annual Golf Tournament and help raise funds for our scholarship programs.

Let us hear from you. We need to know what you think is right and what we can do for you.



### Glory Days

Dean Mark F. Grady and Associate Dean Dan Polsby proudly display a framed cover of the *U.S. News & World Report* magazine that included our law school in its first tier rankings.

tradition, from page 1.

have brought back this theme and anticipate participation from the vineyards of Breaux, Jefferson, Whitehall, and Tarara. We also will be featuring foods from Virginia to complement the selection of wines.

In addition to providing good food and wine, the reception offers alumni an opportunity to meet with and talk to judges and legislators and to catch up with colleagues in all area jurisdictions. Students and faculty are also invited to attend this event. Students enjoy meeting alumni, and it is a good way for alumni to make contact with those future graduates of the school.

We have held the reception at the law school since 1999 when the new building opened and have enjoyed increased attendance ever since. Of course, this year there is even more to celebrate given the law school's rise into the First Tier in the rankings of *U.S. News & World Report*.

Plan to enjoy good food, wine and conversation. Tickets are \$25 per person or \$200 for a block of ten. The price for students is \$15. Please RSVP by May 18, 2001 to (703) 993-8029. We look forward to seeing you there.

**George Mason University School of Law**  
and the  
**George Mason University School of Law**  
**Alumni Association**

cordially invite you to the

**Fourth Annual**  
**Judicial and Legislative Reception**  
**for Northern Virginia**

Featuring

**wines and foods of Virginia**

Wednesday, May 23, 2001,  
from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

George Mason University School of Law Atrium

Individual ticket, \$25; block of 10 tickets, \$200. Parking in the lot on a first-come/first-served basis is \$4 per car.

Make check payable to the GMU Foundation, designated to GMU Law Alumni Association.

Mail to School of Law, 3401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 1G3  
(Attn: Finance Office), Arlington, Virginia 22201-4498

RSVP by May 18

703-993-8029

## GMUSLAA CLE Offerings for 2001

### Ethical Issues in Mental Illness Law

May 8, 2001 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
2 CLE (2 Ethics) \$60

### Understanding Disabilities Law: Challenges of the ADA

May 22, 2001 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
3 CLE \$90

### Internet Research for the Virginia Practitioner

May 29, 2001 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
2 CLE \$60

### Making the Most of Solo Practice in Virginia

June 6, 2001 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
2 CLE (0.5 Ethics) \$60

### Virginia's New E-Commerce Laws

June 7, 2001 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
3 CLE \$90

### Deposing the Damages Expert: Effective Determination of Injury Opinions Without Getting Hurt

June 12, 2001 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
3 CLE \$90

### An Introduction to Animal Protection Law

June 21, 2001 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
3 CLE \$90

For more information, contact Career Development and Alumni Services (CDAS) at 703-993-8020.

tier one, from page 1.

Now, out of the 174 accredited law schools ranked by *U.S. News*, we have cracked the top fifty.

A hearty congratulations to each of you who made it all possible. The Alumni Association thanks each alumnus, and we particularly thank those pioneers from the early years who made this all possible. When the International School of Law proposed merging with George Mason University, one Richmond politician noted, "If Thomas Jefferson had intended to have a law school in northern Virginia, he would have left the plans." Well, with all due respect, Mr. Jefferson couldn't have planned something this great.

With your help, cooperation, and participation, our next stop will be the top twenty-five. On behalf of the Alumni Association, come home and celebrate with us again at the Judicial and Legislative Reception on May 23, 2001.

## Alumni Association Awards Scholarships

by *Rodney Turner*, '93

The board of the School of Law Alumni Association is proud to announce this year's scholarship recipients: Jennifer Sands Atkins and Naveen Modi. The Dean Charles Engle Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually to a student who exhibits exceptional academic achievement and dedication to the law. The George Mason University School of Law Alumni Association Scholarship is awarded annually to a student who exhibits dedication to the School of Law community through organizational participation and leadership.

### **The Dean Charles Engle Memorial Scholarship**

Ms. Jennifer Sands Atkins is a second-year, day student at the School of Law where she exhibits her dedication to the law as a member of the Law Review, the Moot Court Board, and the Inn of Court. In addition to participating in extracurricular activities, Ms. Atkins also excels in the classroom where her hard work has earned her a place at the very top of her class. The School of Law Alumni Association is proud to award Ms. Atkins The Dean Engle Memorial Scholarship, not only because of her impressive accomplishments within and without the classroom, but also because Ms. Atkins, who follows in her father's footsteps, is well on her way to becoming the second generation of her family to graduate from George Mason University School of Law.

### ***The Mason Law Quarterly***

Editor - Richard Kelsey, '99

#### **Editorial Board**

Rodney Turner, '93

Marcia Thompson, '98

Stephen Gold, '99

### **The George Mason University School of Law Alumni Association Scholarship**

Mr. Naveen Modi is a third-year, evening student at the School of Law where he has excelled in both his extracurricular activities and his studies, all while working full time. Mr. Modi demonstrates his dedication to the School of Law through his participation in various activities. He is a Writing Fellow, a volunteer with the Student Mentor Program, a volunteer with the Orientation Program for New & Returning Students, a filer with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, a member of the Intellectual Property Law Society, and a member of the Law Review. Despite his heavy extracurricular schedule, Mr. Modi has made the time to successfully navigate through the rigors of his Intellectual Property curriculum in school. Through his hard work, Mr. Modi has earned a ranking at the top of his class.

Mr. Modi's efforts also have been recognized outside of the classroom. As one half of a two-person team, Mr. Modi won first place in the Intramural Giles S. Rich Moot Court Competition. In further testament to his hard work and success, Mr. Modi has been selected to serve as a law clerk for the Honorable Alvin Anthony Schall at the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

### **Mark your Calendar:**

***June 23, 2001***

**The Alumni Picnic will be held, and  
all alumni and their  
families are welcome.**

Call CDAS at 703-993-8020 for details on time and location.

**George Mason University School of Law**

**Alumni Association**

**3401 N. Fairfax Drive**

**Arlington, VA 22201**

**Address Service Requested**