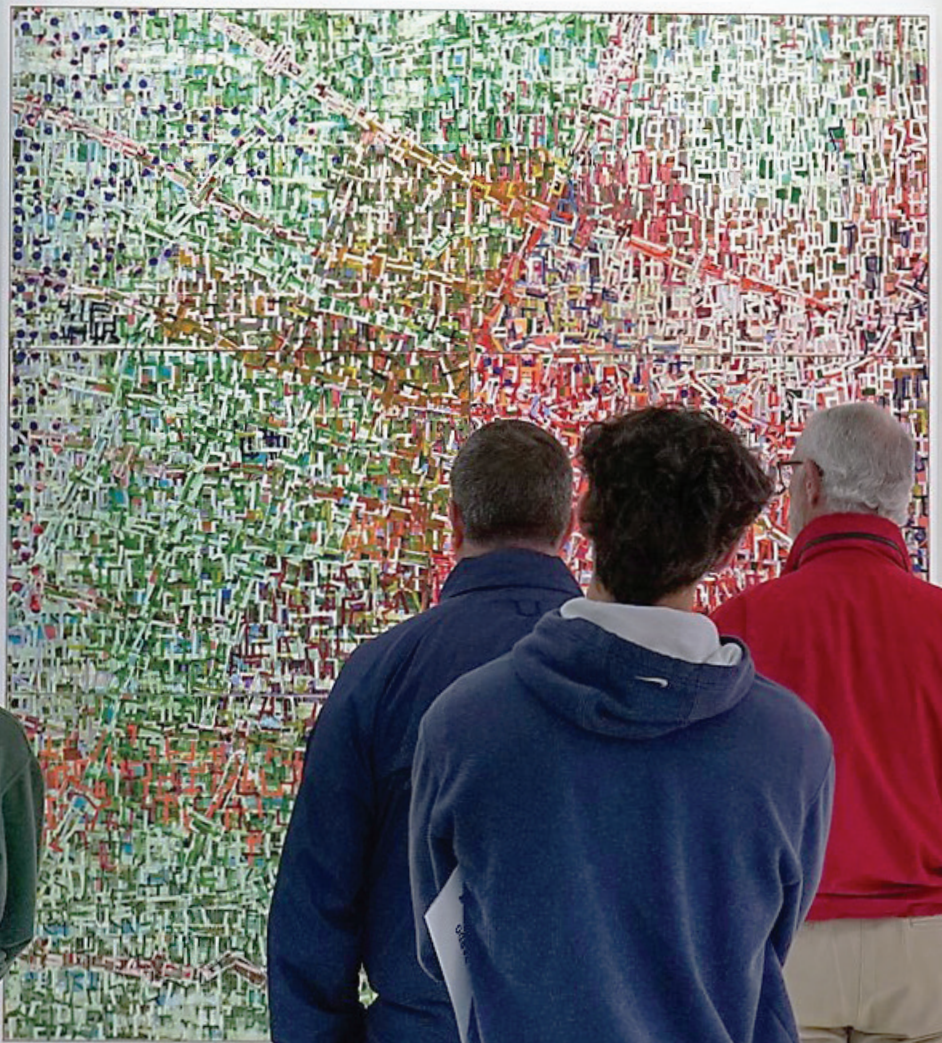


# BRIEFCASE



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER

## ART, LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



2023  
YEAR  
IN  
REVIEW

# BRIEFCASE



Please direct correspondence to:

**Carrie Anna Criado**  
**BRIEFCASE EDITOR**  
University of Houston  
Law Center  
4170 Martin Luther King Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77204-6060  
[cacriado@central.uh.edu](mailto:cacriado@central.uh.edu)  
713.743.2184

**Marketing Director** Rhamel "Mel" Miranda  
**Writer** Henry J. Acevedo, John T. Brannen,  
Bonnie Buffaloe, Andrea De La Cruz,  
Phoebe Gibson, Jillian Holden, Edel Howlin  
**Photographers** Rhamel "Mel" Miranda, Dayna Hudson,  
Jacob Tennessee, Sarah De La Rosa, Evan Clark  
**Sr. Designer** Dayna Hudson  
**Editorial Assistant** Jaymie Turner  
**Printing** UH Copy and Print

## UH Law Center Administration

**Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law**  
Leonard M. Baynes

**Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, HIPLA College Professor of Law**  
Greg R. Vetter

**Associate Dean of Alumni and Community Relations**  
Sondra R. Tennessee

**Assistant Dean of Communications and Marketing**  
Carrie Anna Criado '95

**Assistant Dean for Faculty Development, Baker Botts L.L.P. Professor of Law**  
David Fagundes

**Assistant Dean for Admissions**  
Pilar Mensah

**Assistant Dean for Student Affairs**  
Monica Mensah '14

**Assistant Dean for Career Development**  
Tiffany J. Tucker

**Senior Director of Development**  
Brena Baumann-Gonzalez '90

**Director of Information Technology**  
Tommy Abraham

**Assistant Dean for Opportunities and Community Engagement**  
**Alumnae College Professor of Law**  
Meredith J. Duncan

**Director, Outcomes and Assessments, Professor of Law and the Larry and Joanne Doherty Chair in Legal Ethics**  
Renee Knake Jefferson

**Executive Director of Global and Graduate Programs**  
Karen L. Jones

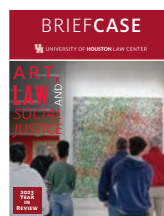
**Executive Director of Business Operations**  
Jessica Claiborne Haynes

**Director, Special Events**  
Samantha Martin

**Director of the Law Library and Assistant Professor of Law**  
Amanda Watson

© 2023 University of Houston Law Center

All publication rights reserved.  
The information contained here does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Law Center and the University of Houston.  
4170 Martin Luther King Boulevard | Houston, TX 77204-6060  
713.743.2100 | [www.law.uh.edu](http://www.law.uh.edu)



**2023**  
Volume 41  
Number 1

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER – SCHOOL CENTERS, INSTITUTES AND SELECT PROGRAMS

### A.A. White Dispute Resolution Institute

*Director, Jim Lawrence*

### Blakely Advocacy Institute

*Executive Director, Jim Lawrence '07*

### Center for Children, Law & Policy

*Director, Ellen Marrus, Professor Emerita of Law*

### Center for U.S. and Mexican Law

*Director, Julian Cardenas, Assistant Research Professor*

### Criminal Justice Institute

*Director, David Kwok, George Butler Research Professor in Law*

### Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Center

*Co-director, Tracy Hester, Associate Instructional Professor of Law*

*Co-director, Gina S. Warren, O'Quinn Chair of Environmental Studies and Professor of Law*

### Health Law & Policy Institute

*Director, Jessica L. Roberts, Leonard H. Childs, Professor in Law*

*Co-director, Jessica L. Mantel, Professor of Law, George Butler Research Professor*

*Co-director, Valerie Gutmann Koch, Professor of Law*

### Program on Law and Computation

*Seth Chandler, Law Foundation Professor of Law*

### Initiative on Global Law and Policy for the Americas

*Director, Elizabeth Trujillo, Mary Ann & Lawrence E. Faust Professor of Law*

### Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law

*Director, Greg R. Vetter, HIPLA College Professor of Law*

### Texas Innocence Network

*Director, David R. Dow, Cullen Professor of Law*

*Co-director, Cassandra Jeu*

## 2023–2025 UH LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD

Kris Thomas '83 | **President**

Kate Blaine '83 | **President-Elect**

Michelle Gray '11 | **Vice-President**

Stacy Wilson '09 | **Secretary**

Alex Roberts '06 | **Immediate Past-President/Ex-Officio**

### Directors

Rehan Alimohammad '01

Jeff Andrews '05

Scott D. Ellis '06

Fermeen Fazal '00

Weston O'Black '08

Shannon Quadros '10

Judge Ravi K. Sandill '01

Peter Scaff '00

Robert J. Sergesketter '95

Mishell Parreno Taylor '03

Shannon Terry '18

Harve Truskett '08

Richard Whiteley '99

Victor Wright '98

The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university and an EEO/AA institution.

Briefcase 2023 Year In Review





Dean Leonard M. Baynes

## DEAN'S NOTE

As we look back at 2023, we herald and celebrate the University of Houston Law Center's continued success with increased entering class credentials, increased bar passage rates, and the continued use and enhancement of the ultramodern John M. O'Quinn Law Building.

First, we welcomed the 1L incoming class with the highest credentials in the Law Center's history with a 3.72 median GPA and a median LSAT of 161. The 1L cohort is comprised of about 53% women, 44% underrepresented groups in the legal profession, and 15% identify as LGBTQ+. Most of this year's class are first-generation law school students and almost 18% are first-generation college students.

Second, we are expanding outreach to law students from low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented backgrounds. Participants in our award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs have increased median LSAT scores by 6-14 points, depending on the year. The program is complemented with the *Aspiring Lawyer* online magazine. The second issue, published in September, offers insights and advice for anyone wishing to pursue a legal career. Resources like these create new pathways for all students.

Third, on the July 2023 bar exam, almost 90% of UH Law first-time test takers passed. This was the highest UH Law first-time bar passage percentage rate in over 10 years.

Fourth, we celebrated the building's first anniversary with a conference highlighting the transformative impact of art, law, and social justice. Three beautiful displays were unveiled, recognizing the significant contributions of the Law Center's African American and Hispanic law graduates and faculty. On the fifth floor, we unveiled a portrait of our much-beloved faculty member, the late Professor Michael A. Olivas, and his wife, UH College of Education Professor Emerita Dr. Augustina Reyes. On the second floor, we unveiled the African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor thanks to the generosity of State Senator Royce West (J.D. '79) and his wife Carol West. The third installation was the Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor thanks to the support of Ezequiel Reyna, Jr. (J.D. '80) and his wife Livia Reyna (M.Ed. '79).

The Olivas/Reyes portrait and honor walls stand as powerful symbols, recognizing pioneers who've enriched our legal community and paved the way for a more accessible legal system.

The John M. O'Quinn Law Building remains an inspiring space, fostering a strong legal foundation for students through our excellent faculty and innovative learning environment.

I am filled with pride in our achievements in the building's first year. With your support, we can continue to do remarkable things together in 2024 and empower students to shape a better world through the law.

Sincerely,

Leonard M. Baynes

*Dean, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law*









## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Dean's Message</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Rankings</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Briefly Noted</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Feature</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Faculty News</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Alumni</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Community</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>In Memoriam</b>	<b>52</b>

Rick Lowe  
*The Line*, 2023  
Acrylic and paper collage on canvas



# RANKINGS

## THREE UH LAW CENTER SPECIALTY PROGRAMS MAKE TOP 10 IN U.S. NEWS 2024 RANKINGS

Several University of Houston Law Center specialty programs are among the best in the nation, according to results of the 2023-2024 U.S. News & World Report annual list of Best Law Schools.

This year, 10 UHLC specialty programs are among the Top 50 in the nation, including three in the Top 10 nationwide, and five ranked No. 1 in Texas. The Law Center's overall ranking is No. 60.

"I am delighted that the UH Law Center has once again achieved three Top 10 specialty rankings nationwide for our remarkable intellectual property law, health law and part-time programs," said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "The Law Center leads among schools in Texas in those three areas, as well as in legal writing and environmental law."

US News suffered various publication complications and delays and revised its ranking format, implementing changes after the initial circulation of the embargoed rankings.

"It is important to point out that the methodology of the U.S. News & World Report, Best Law School rankings has been criticized, resulting in a boycott by 63 law schools, comprising almost 1/3 of all law schools. Despite this tumult, law school rankings have and will likely persist because US News continues to rank all law schools (including those who are boycotting) with publicly available data. US News is now working with law school deans and other stakeholders to try to address the criticism. These rankings reflect the new, adjusted methodology," Baynes added.

### Top 50 Ranked UHLC Programs nationwide are:

- Part-Time Program (No. 6)
- Intellectual Property Law (No. 6)

## U.S. NEWS RANKINGS

**TOP 10  
NATIONWIDE**

- Part-Time Program
- Intellectual Property Law
- Health Law

**#1  
IN TEXAS**

- Part-Time Program
- Intellectual Property Law
- Health Law
- Legal Writing
- Environmental Law

- Health Care Law (No. 9)
- Legal Writing (No. 21, a 41-point increase from 2023)
- Trial Advocacy (No. 24)
- Environmental Law (No. 26)
- Tax Law (No. 44)
- Business/Corporate Law (No. 47)
- Contracts/Commercial Law (No. 47, a 12-point increase from 2023)
- Criminal Law (No. 50, a 16-point increase from 2023)

### #1 Ranked UHLC Programs in Texas are:

- Environmental Law
- Health Care Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- Legal Writing
- Part-Time Program

U.S. News Law School Rankings methodology has changed to "reflect the insights and input of more than 100 law school deans as well as other experts in the legal field across the country." More weight was placed on bar passage rate and employment 10 months after graduation while less was applied to median LSAT/GRE/GPA scores. □

## UHLC LL.M. PROGRAMS RANKED AMONG THE TOP SPECIALTY AREAS IN THE COUNTRY BY THE NATIONAL JURIST

The University of Houston Law Center's LL.M. programs have earned national recognition as top specialty areas in the National Jurist magazine's Honor Roll.

The four UH Law Center LL.M. programs that have been recognized in 2023 are:

- Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Law
- Health Law
- Intellectual Property Law
- International Law

"We are honored to receive this recognition from the National Jurist. Our LL.M. programs provide students with a unique opportunity to specialize in their chosen area of law and gain a competitive edge in their legal careers," said Karen Jones, University of Houston Law Center's executive director of Global and Graduate Programs.

National Jurist computed the LL.M. Honor rankings by calculating the amount of courses, professors, career opportunities, practical training and student offerings. □



## UH LAW CENTER ACHIEVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION IN 9 PRELAW MAGAZINE CATEGORIES FOR 2023

The University of Houston Law Center has received seven more national awards from preLaw magazine, bringing the total to nine for 2023.

In the preLaw magazine issues for 2023 Spring, 2023 Back to School and 2023 Fall, the UH Law Center earned accolades in multiple categories not only for providing “affordable, results-driven education” but also for outstanding program achievements.

The UH Law Center was also named as one of the “Most Diverse Law Schools,” based on ABA analyzed data collected nationwide, and a “Top School for Advocacy/Litigation” in the Winter 2023 preLaw magazine.

UH Law Center was ranked in the following for 2023:

1. Best Value Law School (2023-2024 Fall Issue)
2. Top Business Law School (2023-2024 Fall Issue)
3. Top School for Criminal Law (2023-2024 Fall Issue)
4. Top School for Family Law (2023-2024 Back to School Issue)
5. Top School for Health Law (2023-2024 Back to School Issue)
6. Top School for Alternative Dispute Resolution (Spring 2023)
7. Top School for Intellectual Property Law (Spring 2023)
8. Top School for Advocacy/Litigation (Winter 2023)
9. Among the Most Diverse Law Schools (Winter 2023)

The preLaw magazine is a guide to undergraduates contemplating a legal career, offering suggestions in legal fields, insight from legal professionals and academic ratings for evaluation when choosing a school. UHLC now has received 52 awards from preLaw since 2018. ■



## UH LAW CENTER NAMED A ‘GO-TO LAW SCHOOL’ FOR SECURING BIG LAW JOBS

The University of Houston Law Center has been selected by Law.com as a 2023 Go-To Law School, an annual ranking of the nation’s top 50 law schools based on the percentage of J.D. graduates hired as associates by Big Law.

This year, UHLC ranks No. 32 on the Go-To list. During the last three years the UHLC has increased placements at the top 100 largest law firms in the country by more than 5 percent, with 19 percent of J.D. graduates starting careers in Big Law in 2022, up from 13.85 percent in 2019.

“The University of Houston Law Center is well known for producing practice ready graduates who thrive in fast-paced legal environments with complex and sophisticated cases and deals. More Big Law firms compete to recruit our students each year and we consistently cultivate relationships within these firms to help create even more opportunities for our candidates,” said Tiffany J. Tucker, Assistant Dean for Career Development.

The job searching tools, mock interviews, networking events, career panels and one-on-one advising resources offered by the Career Development Office at UHLC prepare law students to explore their career options in Big Law and beyond.

Located in Houston, UHLC offers law students a foundation in academic strength along with one of the best values in legal education. Houston is not only home to one of the top legal markets in the nation but also home to various Fortune 500 companies and the world’s largest health care and medical complex.

The Law.com ranking methodology for the Go-To Law School list is defined as “the top 50 law schools by percentage of 2022 juris doctors who took jobs at the largest 100 firms by lawyer head count—as identified in The National Law Journal’s annual survey of the nation’s 500 largest law firms.” ■



## BRIEFLY NOTED

### LIFE-LIKE CGI INFLUENCERS IGNITE LEGAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS, SAYS SPEAKER AT HIPLA FALL LECTURE



From left Nik Guggenberger (IPIIL/Houston), Victoria Schwartz, and Greg R. Vetter (IPIIL/Houston)

Prominent media and entertainment law scholar Victoria L. Schwartz explored the emerging trend of virtual influencers engaging in brand endorsements during the 30th Annual Fall Lecture hosted by the University of Houston Law Center's Institute for Intellectual Property & Information Law this November. The Fall Lecture is sponsored by the Houston Intellectual Property Law Association. Explore the history of the Fall Lecture Series.

Schwartz, a Professor of Law at Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, elaborated on the intellectual property and entertainment law implications and other ethical implications that should be considered when virtual influencers are brought into play.

Schwartz teaches and writes in the fields of intellectual property, copyright, entertainment and privacy law. Her work has been selected for the prestigious Harvard/Stanford/Yale Junior Faculty Forum and earned the competitive Dukeminier Award. She has held various leadership positions at her school, including serving as associate dean for academic affairs and serving as the co-director for the Caruso School of Law's LL.M. and certificate programs in entertainment, media and sports law. □

### UH LAW CENTER FOSTERS GLOBAL CONNECTIONS WITH CONSULATE RECEPTION

The University of Houston Law Center's Global and Graduate Programs recently hosted a diplomatic reception to engage with Houston's international community.

Consulate representatives attended from a wide range of countries, including Angola, Bahamas, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia and Vietnam.

Among the notable diplomats participating was Lynden B. Rose, UHLC alumnus from the class of '89, who serves as Honorary Consul of the Bahamas and vice dean of the Consular Corps of Houston.

"UH Law Center has established international collaborations with universities, organizations, ministries and various other entities around the world," said Karen Jones, executive director of Global and Graduate Programs. "This reception is one of many ways we are building a stronger connection with the consulates in Houston."

UH Law Center has significant international representation, with 80% of the LL.M. students possessing their first law degrees from outside the United States. The current LL.M. class also consists of



Consulate representatives attend a diplomatic reception hosted by the Global and Graduate Programs at the University of Houston Law Center.

students from 18 countries and nationalities and speaks 17 different languages, including Arabic, English, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Igbo, Italian, Mandarin, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Telugu, Ukrainian, Urdu and Yoruba.

The LL.M. program at the UH Law Center is ranked Top 10 in the world for health law, intellectual property law, energy law and global law, according to the LLM Guide. □



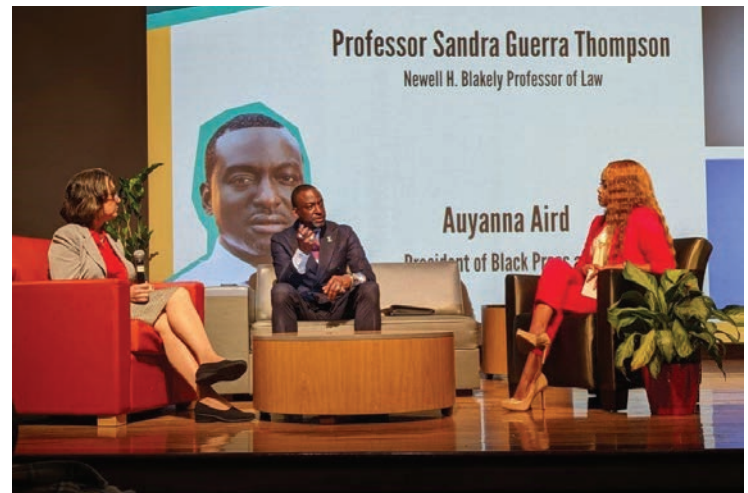
## UHLC PROFESSOR THOMPSON INTERVIEWS MEMBER OF EXONERATED FIVE AT MLK EVENT

Yusef Salaam, Ph.D., a member of the Exonerated Five, shared his wrongful conviction experience and insights on criminal justice reform at the University of Houston's 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 25.

Salaam, falsely imprisoned at 15, discussed the Central Park Jogger case in a conversation with Sandra Guerra Thompson, Newell H. Blakely Professor of Law at the University of Houston Law Center and Auyanna Aird, President of the University of Houston Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists.

Thompson, a former prosecutor, recalled when she learned of the boys' coerced confessions. Her experience in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office led her to focus on wrongful convictions in her teaching. She emphasized the importance of exposing students to the reality of incarceration through prison tours.

The Central Park Five, now the Exonerated Five, had their convictions overturned in 2002. Salaam's discussion shed light on the need for criminal justice reform and the impact of wrongful convictions. ■



Sandra Guerra Thompson and Auyanna Aird interview Yusef Salaam, Ph.D., a member of the Exonerated Five, during the 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration.

## UH LAW CENTER COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER JUDGE SALDAÑA ENCOURAGES GRADUATES TO CHANGE THE TONE OF THE PROFESSION TO MAKE IT A KINDER, MORE GENEROUS BAR

The University of Houston Law Center's graduating class of 2023 marked one of the Law Center's most representative classes yet. Fifty-two percent of graduates were women, and 35% of students were from underrepresented backgrounds in the legal profession.

In her commencement speech to the UHLC Class of 2023, Diana Saldaña, U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas in Laredo, offered three points to help graduates stay the course in using their legal education to make the world a better place. Saldana emphasized the importance of civility and respect toward others, a commitment to maintain faith in the constitutional system and a reminder that the degree is both a privilege and a duty.

"We don't have to accept the status quo: to the contrary, thoughtful criticism is a patriotic act. Without it, we wouldn't have the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement and all the other campaigns that have bent the arc of justice so that our country — and our profession — could become more just and inclusive," Saldana said. ■



Diana Saldaña, United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas in Laredo, delivers the commencement speech for the 2023 UH Law Center graduation.



## ENNR SPEAKER DISCUSSES INCREASING RISK TO ENERGY SECURITY

Kristen Eichensehr, director of the National Security Law Center at the University of Virginia Law School, said that preparation is key to mitigating the threats of climate change during the 7th Annual North American Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Conference. She was the keynote speaker.

“Climate change has been forecast for decades, and it really seems to be playing out in the form of a sort of slow-moving disaster, but each manifestation from extreme heat causes rolling blackouts in California to winter storms in Texas to stronger, more frequent, hurricanes from a manifestation that is seen as sort of a surprise,” Eichensehr said. “However, none of them should be a surprise or at least not as surprising as they are.”

Eichensehr, Martha Lubin Karsh and Bruce A. Karsh Bicentennial Professor of Law at the University of Virginia Law School, highlighted the

multifaceted threats faced worldwide, critically breaking them apart and presenting resilience as an important outline for strategic responses. She presented different strategies to prevent geopolitical developments and cyber operations, the standard approach being that the adversary is at a disadvantage if it attacks because the cost is too high.

The conference’s theme was, “Increasing Risk to Energy Security: Taking on political, climatic and criminal risks to North American Energy Supply.” Providing a platform for 20+ speakers, the conference discussed the interweaving of climate and energy systems and ways to address the worsening of the production and distribution of energy sources relative to climate changes. ■

## UH LAW CENTER STUDENTS HONE ADVOCACY SKILLS IN BLAKELY-BUTLER MOOT COURT COMPETITION

More than 30 University of Houston Law Center students paired up to analyze complex legal issues and deliver compelling oral arguments for the annual intramural Blakely-Butler Moot Court Competition this fall.

“Participating in competitions like this helps you to build oral advocacy skills, and it also helps you to decide if you even want oral advocacy to be a large part of what you do in your career,” said Beth Gallaspy, Blakely-Butler Moot Court Competition Student Director and UHLC 3L.

The duo of UHLC 2Ls, Giancarlo Yaquinto and Erica Kuntz, won for best team and UHLC 3L Aaron Holmes earned the Best Speaker title for the 2023 competition.

The competition was hosted by The Advocates, a student organization at the Law Center that promotes the development of oral advocacy skills.

By participating in the competition, students can network with the competition judges who are practicing attorneys, judges and academic leaders. UHLC students can also earn one hour of course credit.

Sixteen teams of UHLC students participated in the preliminary rounds of the moot court competition, with eight teams advancing to elimination rounds. Students experienced a simulated



Participants in the 2023 Blakely-Butler Moot Court Competition are in the front row, from left, finalist team Aaron Holmes and Erin Kelly, winning team Giancarlo Yaquinto and Erica Kuntz and back row, from left, final round judges Danielle Giaccio, assistant director of UHLC Moot Court Team, Justice Meagan Hassan, 14th Court of Appeals, Houston and William Demond, staff attorney, 5th Court of Appeals, Dallas.

courtroom environment, with each team presenting appellate and appellee arguments.

Jackson Walker sponsored the moot court competition, and cash prizes were awarded to the finalists and overall best speaker ■



## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER'S MOCK TRIAL TEAM WINS THE TEX-ABOTA BEST IN TEXAS VOIR DIRE TOURNAMENT

The University of Houston Law Center's Mock Trial Team triumphed at the Best in Texas Voir Dire Competition that was hosted by the TEX-ABOTA.

The competition consisted of Texas law schools competing for the winning title at the TEX-ABOTA tournament through the process of selecting jurors and opening statements. The team defeated Texas Tech in the semi-final round and South Texas College of Law Houston in the championship round.

UHLC mock trial members Jessalyn McAlister, Jeff Krumpholz and Mercy Obisesan made sure to bring the title home to Houston. The team was coached by Judge Christine Weems of the 281st Civil District Court and UHLC Mock Trial Program Director, and Erik Baumann, partner at the Hudgins Law Firm and UHLC adjunct professor of trial advocacy.

"I am especially excited for our students to win this particular tournament, in part, because as a judge I value the importance of the 7th Amendment but also because of how few opportunities there are to practice jury selection," Weems said.

UHLC previously won the TEX-ABOTA Best in Texas Mock Trial Tournament in 2021. □



University of Houston Law Center's mock trial team wins voir dire championship. Pictured are, from left, coach Erik Baumann, Jeff Krumpholz, Mercy Obisesan, Jessalyn McAlister and coach Christine Weems.

## UH LAW CENTER SKILLS LAB NAMED IN HONOR OF ALUMNUS, LITIGATOR ROBERT TALASKA '88

The University of Houston Law Center hosted a ceremony this spring semester for the dedication of the Robert J. Talaska Advocacy Skills Lab.

"Naming is important because the person becomes part of the fabric of the building and the memory lives on," said Leonard M. Baynes, Dean of the UH Law Center.

Robert J. Talaska passed away in 2019. On hand to dedicate the space were his sons Dylan Talaska and Travis Talaska, and their mother Debra Clairmont ('88).

Talaska, a 1988 graduate of the UH Law Center, spent two decades advocating for clients in birth trauma litigation and served as national chairman of the American Association for Justices' Birth Trauma Litigation Group.

"Bob's expertise in complex medical malpractice and birth trauma litigation brought him in close proximity to hurting families. You can't do that type of work well without a great deal of empathy and humanity. The legal community needs more attorneys like Bob," said Baynes.

"There is not a better person to name an advocacy skills lab after than Bob," said Scott Kruka ('87), a UH Law Center classmate of Talaska's and of counsel with Waters Kraus & Paul. "Skills that he brought to bear representing those families started at UH Law Center."

Kruka noted that friends and family from both coasts attended the ceremony, a testament to how deeply Talaska had touched the lives of those around him.

The lab, located on the second floor of the John M. O'Quinn Law Building, will serve as a dedicated space for the Blakely Advocacy



UH Law Center Dean Baynes celebrates the dedication with the family of Robert Talaska. From left are Baynes, Dylan Talaska, Debra Clairmont and Travis Talaska.



## CAREERS CAN BE DEFINED BY A MOMENT, SAYS TRAILBLAZING U.S. ATTORNEY ALAMDAR HAMDANI '99

**U.S.** Attorney Alamdar Hamdani (J.D. '99) emphasized the importance of connections and pivotal moments during a fireside chat at the University of Houston Law Center.

"We are all going to have that defining moment. It is going to happen to you," Hamdani told the audience.

For him, that moment came in the aftermath of 9/11 when he recognized "that people who looked like me or shared my parents' faith would be looked at jaundiced by the deeds of Muslim terrorists. When I came to that realization, my life changed, and it eventually led me to the U.S. Attorney's Office."

As the first Asian American to serve as a U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas, Hamdani is "the chief law enforcement officer responsible for prosecuting and defending the interests of the United States in the seventh largest district in the nation."

Reflecting on his educational journey, he shared, "I went to law school as a part-time student, not knowing what a lawyer was or what I wanted to do. This law school helped shape that. Houston is a great place to be a lawyer and to be a law student."

Commentators for the fireside chat included UHLC alumnus Judge Ravi K. Sandill (J.D. '01) of 127th Civil District Court and UHLC

student Christopher Wong, internal vice president for the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. 



Attending the fireside chat are, from left, UHLC Alumnus Judge Ravi K. Sandill (J.D. '01), UHLC Dean Leonard M. Baynes, UHLC Alumnus U.S. Attorney Alamdar Hamdani (J.D. '99) and UHLC student Christopher Wong.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CLASHES WITH EQUAL ACCESS IN 303 CREATIVE SCOTUS, EXPERTS DECODE THE DECISION

**I**n an annual U.S. Supreme Court update presentation hosted by the University of Houston Law Center, legal academic experts discussed key cases from the latest term.


Professor Daniel Morales, associate professor of law and George A. Butler Research Professor at the University of Houston Law Center, provided insights on the Supreme Court's 6-3 decision in 303 Creative, which found the First Amendment protected a Colorado web

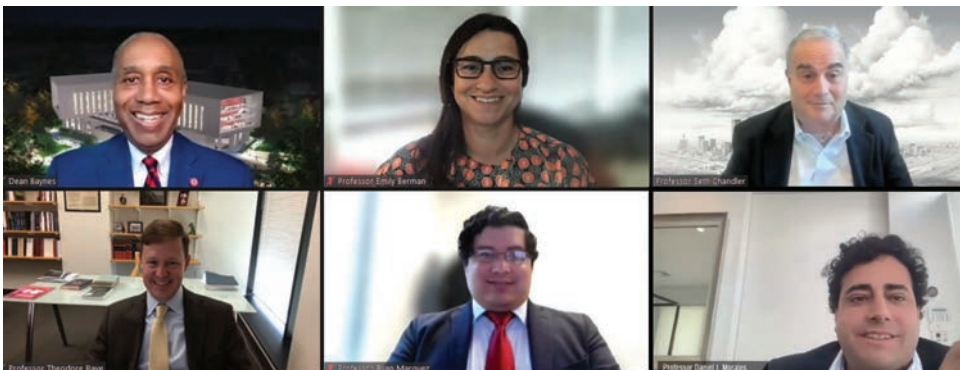
designer from being compelled by state public accommodations law to create designs against her beliefs.

D. Theodore Rave, professor of law at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed the issues and scope of public accommodations law, emphasizing its enactment under the Commerce Clause.

Emily Berman, Professor of Law and the Royce R. Till Professorship at the University of Houston Law Center, offered context on the Court's decision, noting the Court's tendency to emphasize constitutional rights more strongly for disadvantaged individuals in majority groups.

On the federal level, public accommodations law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin. It does not protect against age, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. While some states such as Colorado do protect additional classes, the legal landscape is changing.

The panelists also touched on color-blind jurisprudence, the Biden administration's attempt to cancel student loan debt and the future direction of the Court. 



University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes moderated the 2023 Supreme Court Update discussion with panelists Emily Berman, Seth J. Chandler, D. Theodore Rave, Ryan Marquez and Daniel I. Morales



## UH LAW CENTER FORMER DEAN AND PROFESSOR STEPHEN ZAMORA MEMORIALIZED IN A BOOK OF ESSAYS

Family, friends, faculty and students of University of Houston Law Center Professor Emeritus Stephen Zamora gathered to launch a new book, “Essays in Honor of Professor Stephen T. Zamora: A Life Between Mexico and the United States.” A collection of 19 essays written by colleagues and friends, the book reflect on Zamora’s commitment to Mexican law, education, and the promotion of U.S.-Mexico cooperation, on Zamora’s commitment to Mexican law, education and the promotion of U.S.-Mexico cooperation.

Zamora joined the University of Houston Law Center faculty in 1978 and became the first Hispanic dean in the history of the Law Center in the mid-1990s. He passed away in 2016.

“We are working to maintain Professor Zamora’s legacy. We are expanding our research projects, applying for multidisciplinary grants, increasing our internship agreements with Mexican institutions and working toward legal and economic understanding between Mexico and the U.S. through seminars, lectures and professional training programs,” wrote López de la Osa in the introduction of “Essays.”

Lopez de la Osa, a co-editor of “Essays” and dean of law and international relations at Nebrija University in Madrid, Spain, noted that Zamora was the recognized authority for research between U.S. and Mexico.

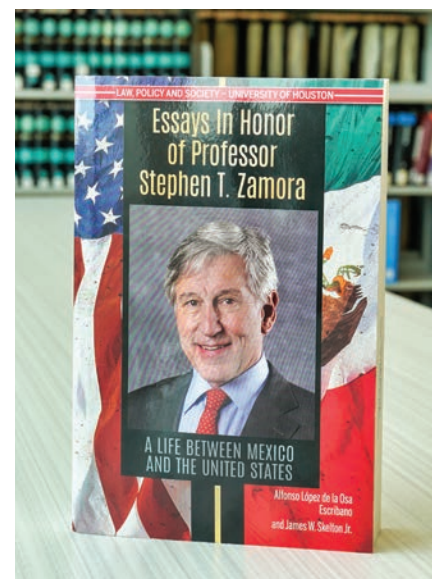
“This book is to honor and remember him,” said Lopez de la Osa. “He inspired us to be the best version of ourselves. He was a true leader.”

Zamora founded the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law at the University of Houston Law Center in 2012. The Center for U.S. and Mexican Law provides cross-border education and critical study of legal aspects of U.S.-Mexico relations.

The current center director, Research Assistant Professor Julian Cardenas, served as the event moderator.

“He was always upbeat; he was larger than life and one of the greatest men we’ve ever known,” said James W. Skelton Jr., “Essays” co-editor and a former adjunct professor of law at UHLC. Skelton went on to say that Zamora made everyone he encountered feel important and highly treasured friendships.

The final speaker of the evening and co-author was UH Law Center alumna Sofia Adroque. She spoke about Zamora as a changemaker and someone who would gather people across the divide between the U.S. and Mexico. □



## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER SECURES EIGHTH CONSECUTIVE HEED AWARD

The University of Houston Law Center has been honored for the eighth year in a row with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

“I am overwhelmed with pride as our institution earns this award for the eighth consecutive year. It is a testament to our school’s unwavering dedication to cultivating an environment where our faculty, staff and students are not only supported but also encouraged to succeed,” said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes.

UH Law Center has introduced several initiatives to improve law school access for aspiring lawyers and create an environment where students of all backgrounds can thrive and reach their potential.

Among these initiatives stands the award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, a race-neutral endeavor designed to increase the representation of law students from low-income, first-generation



and underrepresented backgrounds. Since its inception in 2015, this program has proven its effectiveness, with over 140 participants securing admission to law schools across the country.

To complement the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, the UH Law Center launched Aspiring Lawyer, an online magazine that offers insights, resources and advice for individuals interested in a legal career. The publication caters to undergraduates and those interested in pursuing the legal profession. The second issue, released earlier this year, features articles on topics from law school admissions, legal news and career development to profiles of donors, alumni, faculty and students.

UH Law Center will be featured alongside the nation’s top colleges and universities as an award recipient in both the print and digital formats of the November/December 2023 issue of INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. □



## AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY IS BEING TESTED, CAUTIONS LDF PRESIDENT DURING UH LAW CENTER'S ROSENBERG LECTURE

The future of the multiracial, multiethnic democracy of the United States remains an open question, said Janai S. Nelson, the keynote speaker at this year's Yale L. Rosenberg Memorial Lecture.

Nelson, president and director-counsel of the Legal Defense Fund, presented, "The Future of Our Multi-Racial, Multi-Ethnic Democracy."

"Before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — despite high rhetoric and values of those who many call our Founding Fathers — we were not a democracy, not truly. Not until Aug. 6, 1965, when Texas' own Lyndon B. Johnson signed that voting rights act into law," Nelson said.

Though victories have been won in the realm of civil rights legislation, "many people still today, especially Black people and people of color, are unable to fully and freely exercise the right to have their vote counted and, most importantly, to elect representatives who they can hold accountable to represent their interests," Nelson said.

"Our democracy is being stretched and tested today in ways we haven't seen in the last generation," Nelson said. These assaults are "directly linked to our past and rooted in a fear of the future of our multiracial democracy, who it includes, who it will empower and how it will function for those whose power hasn't been fully realized and those whose power may be waning."



Janai S. Nelson, President and Director-Counsel of the Legal Defense Fund delivers the keynote at the UHLC Yale L. Rosenberg Lecture.

The Yale L. Rosenberg Memorial Lecture is named in honor of University of Houston Law Center professor and award-winning scholar, Yale L. Rosenberg. □

---

## JOSEPH A. VAIL ASYLUM LAW WORKSHOP EXAMINES BEST PRACTICES, THE JUDICIAL ROLE IN IMMIGRATION LAW



Speaking on the panel "The Judicial Role in the U.S. Immigration Courts: A Unique Perspective" are, from left, Elizabeth Mendoza, William K. Zimmer, Rosemary Vega and Jimmie L. Benton.

The 2023 Joseph A. Vail Asylum Law Workshop offered insights and strategies from top immigration law experts, raising thousands of dollars to support UH Law Center's Immigration Clinic.

More than 500 registrants gathered online and in-person to learn about the judicial role in U.S. immigration courts, best practices for representing asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors,

navigating federal court appeals and obtaining forensic and country conditions experts at the Joseph A. Vail Asylum Law Workshop.

The first panel on "The Judicial Role in the U.S. Immigration Courts: A Unique Perspective" offered insights from retired immigration judge Jimmie L. Benton, retired immigration judge William K. Zimmer, and Rosemary Vega and Elizabeth Mendoza, members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and Executive Office for Immigration Review liaisons.

Judge Benton, a former immigration judge with the U.S. Department of Justice, provided an overview of Title 42, while Judge Zimmer, a former immigration judge serving in Miami and Houston, examined 2022 asylum decisions published by the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, underscoring the implications for each.

The Asylum Law Workshop was hosted by the UH Law Center's Immigration Clinic, which was directed by Teresa Messer. This annual workshop is named after former federal immigration judge, lawyer and UH Law Center Professor Joseph A. Vail. □



## MEET THE THREE STUDENT LEADERS AT THE HELM OF THE BUSINESS/ TAX, HEALTH AND INTERNATIONAL LAW JOURNALS

Samuel Kuang, Lizzy Do and Julia Tape, all 2Ls, Asian American and first-generation law students at the University of Houston Law Center, share their unique academic paths to law school.

The three editors-in-chief evidence increasing ethnic and racial representation in student journal/law review leadership.



UH Law Center law journal editors-in-chief are, from left, Julia Tape, Samuel Kuang and Lizzy Do.

Kuang, editor-in-chief of the Houston Business and Tax Law Journal, has a bachelor's degree in music and a master's degree in accounting. He worked for about three years in tax accounting before attending law school.

"As an Asian American editor-in-chief, I hope to raise awareness and serve as an example. If I can be in charge of a law school journal, you can be the president of your organization," Kuang said.

Do, editor-in-chief of the Houston Journal of Health Law & Policy, has a bachelor's degree in biology and worked in clinical research for more than five years before starting her law journey.

"I like the challenge and moving parts of a journal," Do said. "I am also excited to continue the work of former editors-in-chief Bebe Thomas and To Nhu Huynh. I want to create an inclusive environment and empower people."

Tape, editor-in-chief of the Houston Journal of International Law, has a bachelor's degree in education and challenged herself with a career change after two years in the education field as an outdoor educator.

The three students chose the Law Center for various reasons, ranging from its high percentage of job placements for graduates, a student body representative of a wide range of backgrounds, scholarship offerings and location. □

## UHLC DEAN BAYNES RECEIVES HOUSTON BAR ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

The Houston Bar Association recognized University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes and his fellow HBA Law & Media Committee co-chairs with the President's Award for outstanding committee leadership.

Award winners were honored during the annual dinner on May 11. HBA President Chris Popov selected the committee co-chairs to receive this distinction for their service in executing special programming focused on Elevated Civil Discourse. Program topics included the U.S. Supreme Court's Dobbs decision and voting laws in Texas. The series concluded with a final program on big tech and free speech.

The Law & Media Committee co-chairs are Dean Leonard M. Baynes of the University of Houston Law Center; Michelle Morris, associate vice president of Marketing and Communications at South Texas College of Law Houston; Professor Elsa Ransom of Thurgood Marshall School of Law; Professor John Greil of The University of Texas School of Law; Daniella Landers, Partner at Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP; and Christopher Tritico, partner at Tritico Rainey, PLLC. □



The Houston Bar Association Law & Media Committee co-chairs were honored with the HBA President's Award for outstanding committee leadership at the annual dinner on May 11. From left are John Greil, Daniella Landers, Leonard M. Baynes, Michelle Morris and Christopher Tritico.

Photo by Deborah Wallace, Barfield Photography.



## UH LAW CENTER TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS CHANGING TECHNOLOGY AND HOW IT CAN IMPACT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

The University of Houston Law Center raised awareness of domestic violence and equipped legal professionals with the skills to support survivors during the “Domestic Violence: Training Lawyers and Judges Through a Trauma-Informed Lens,” session attended by more than 300 individuals.

When a domestic violence homicide has been reported, physical and technological stalking has also played a predominant role. Technology, and technology in the law, is changing rapidly, noted the panelists.

“Something to keep in mind is the apps on your phone that reveal your location and whether you are sharing that information with a person that may be stalking you,” said Barbara Stalder in the panel on “Technology and Domestic Violence: How to Protect Your Clients.”

The Nov. 3 event delved into multiple topics such as the intersection of suffering and domestic violence, best practices for legal professionals and the importance of collaboration among different disciplines.

“Repeated reporting of trauma in different and difficult circumstances often cause inconsistencies,” said Judge Janet Heppard, a presenter in “Trauma and Witness Testimony — A Judge’s Perspective.” She added, “This has a lot to do with memory, and things flashing in and out of your client’s brain such that they can’t testify. The trauma is clear, but the surrounding details are absent or disjointed, and it comes out different each time they talk about it.”

The panel “Protective Order Statutory Changes and Impact on Your Case,” discussed changes seen due to updates in Title 4 of the Texas



Nearly 300 attended the “Domestic Violence: Training Lawyers and Judges Through a Trauma-Informed Lens,” hosted in November by UHLC and AVDA.

Family Code. Lawyers may now prove domestic violence with no obligation to prove the likelihood of violence in the future. Judge Damiane Dianne Curvey, Maisha Colter, Nora Law and Carolyn Robertson gave current impressions.

“By definition, family violence includes dating violence, it includes certain relationships, and it also includes people who have lived in the same household where violence has occurred, or the threat of violence has occurred,” Maisha Colter, CEO of Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, said. “It doesn’t have to actually be physical assault, but there is a fear factor as well.”

“One of our roles is to guide and advise. We have a duty to not just do what the client wants because sometimes that is not healthy, is not appropriate and is not something that the court should be used for ...” added Colter.

UH Law Center organized the training in partnership with AVDA, a 43-year Houston nonprofit, striving to end family violence through advocacy, support, and community response. ■

## UH LAW CENTER RECOGNIZED AMONG HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL’S 2023 DIVERSITY IN BUSINESS AWARD HONOREES

The Houston Business Journal has named the University of Houston Law Center an Outstanding Diverse Organization as part of the publication’s annual Diversity in Business Awards. HBJ announced the 2023 honorees in February.

“We are honored to be recognized by the Houston Business Journal,” said Leonard M. Baynes, Dean of the University of Houston Law Center. “Our business is educating law students from all backgrounds and instilling them with the power of legal education. This power is something

that we can provide to all students regardless of their background or circumstances, and it can change the trajectory of their lives.” ■



## MEXICO'S LAWSUITS AGAINST U.S. GUN INDUSTRY AIM TO STOP FLOOD OF FIREARMS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SAYS AT UH LAW CENTER PRESENTATION

Legal advisor for Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Alejandro Celorio Alcántara (LL.M. '09) discussed the weaponry relationship between Mexico and the United States and the civil lawsuits against the gun industry during a presentation hosted by Center for U.S. and Mexican Law.

"The government of Mexico is not against this country. We have no say in what happens in the United States, but we do have a say in whether it is killing us in Mexico," Alcántara said. "If there is going to be a gun trade with the United States, we want it to be responsible, transparent and with accountability."

In Mexico vs. Smith & Wesson, the Mexican government filed suit against U.S. weapons manufacturers, alleging that negligent business practices led to illegal arms trafficking and deaths in Mexico. Named defendants include merchants Beretta, Colt and Smith & Wesson.

The Mexican government filed a second suit, Mexico vs. Diamondback, against U.S. gun dealers, alleging negligence of sellers that supply weapons to criminal organizations.

Panelists discussed differences between Mexico and the United States, reviewing methods of regulating and selling weapons in "Mexico Sues the U.S. Gun Industry."

The event was moderated by Julian Cardenas Garcia (LL.M. '11), UHLC director of the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law. Assistant



Alejandro Celorio Alcántara (LL.M. '09), Julian Cardenas Garcia (LL.M. '11) and Jessica Bregant present at a CLE on "Mexico Sues the U.S. Gun Industry."

UH Law Professor Jessica Bregant and Western New England University School of Law's Professor Webster (attended virtually and not pictured) served as commentators. □

## SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHY POSES HURDLE FOR FAIR REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS, LEGAL EXPERTS SAY DURING ANNUAL FRANKEL LECTURE

Legal scholars addressed representation challenges facing U.S. democracy amid a growing immigrant population during the 28th Annual Frankel Lecture in November hosted by the Houston Law Review.

The keynote speaker, Rachel F. Moran, professor of law at Texas A&M University School of Law, delved into the complexities of fair representation, particularly in Texas, a state she believes to be "the place with the playbook for preserving power in a changing demography." She highlighted the dual nature of Texas — a state of "transformative inclusion at the same time of powerful exclusion."

Ilya Somin and Joseph Fishkin joined Moran in the discussion on "The Perennial Eclipse: Race, Immigration and How Latinx Count in American Politics" and explored different approaches to enhance civic engagement.

Somin, a professor of law at George Mason University, offered a perspective on political engagement through what he termed "foot voting."

He said that people vote with their feet in three ways: choosing where to live, migrating internationally and engaging with the private sector.

Fishkin, professor of law at UCLA School of Law, argued, "We need to enable more people to actually vote" and explored avenues for enhanced representation, including nationalization processes, broader immigration reform, ending felony disenfranchisement and lowering the voting age.

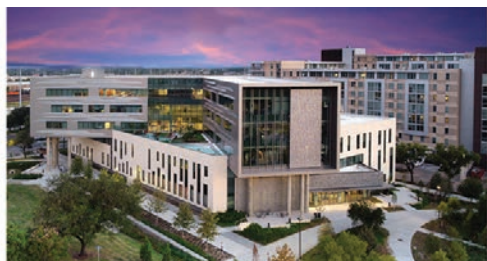
He noted that although it is an "imperfect, messy system" that "as long as there has been politics, voting has been recognized as the feedback loop you need." □



From left, Ilya Somin, Professor of Law at George Mason University; Rachel F. Moran, Professor of Law at Texas A&M University School of Law; and Joseph Fishkin, Professor of Law at UCLA School of Law speak at the 28th Annual Frankel lecture hosted by the University of Houston Law Center's Houston Law Review.



## NEW UH LAW CENTER FACILITY COMMENDED FOR ITS SUSTAINABILITY BY U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL



The University of Houston Law Center's John M. O'Quinn Law Building has received national recognition for being an environmentally-friendly structure. The U.S. Green Building Council awarded the Law Center with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification, receiving 55 points.

Dean Leonard M. Baynes noted that the John M. O'Quinn Law Building is the newest law school building in Texas and expressed his delight that it has met these high standards and is being recognized for being environmentally friendly as well as being beautiful.

"The University of Houston is committed to certifying new campus facilities as LEED 'Green' buildings," said Liz Clark, UH Office of Sustainability coordinator. "The Cougar Woods Dining Hall was the first campus building to achieve LEED Silver in 2013. The John M.

O'Quinn Law Building is one of the latest campus constructions to earn LEED Silver Certification."

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED certification is achieved by earning points and adhering to prerequisites and credits that address carbon, energy, water, waste, transportation, materials, health and indoor environmental quality. Projects go through a verification and review process by Green Business Certification Inc. and are awarded points that correspond to a level of LEED certification.

"Buildings consume energy and resources at an alarming rate," the U.S. Green Building Council said in a statement. "We can do better. LEED provides a framework for healthy, efficient, carbon and cost-saving green buildings. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement, and it is backed by an entire industry of committed organizations and individuals paving the way for market transformation."

LEED-certified buildings save money, improve efficiency, lower carbon emissions and create healthier places for people, according to the U.S. Green Building Council. They are critical to addressing climate change and meeting ESG goals, enhancing resilience and supporting more equitable communities. LEED categories can also contribute toward meeting the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. ■

## UH LAW CENTER'S JOHN M. O'QUINN LAW BUILDING EARNS 2023 INTERIOR DESIGN AWARD



The John M. O'Quinn Law Building received the Higher Education Award of Merit at the 2023 International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Southwest Chapter Design Awards ceremony on April 20.

The IIDA awards honor "design excellence" and "innovative solutions for interior spaces." This marks the first design award for the University of Houston Law Center building.

"I am delighted that our ultramodern, world-class John M. O'Quinn

Law Building is now award-winning," said University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Many thanks to the stalwart efforts of the Law Center's Building Committee — Professor Amanda Watson, Professor Johnny Rex Buckles and our intrepid Associate Dean Greg Vetter — for helping to lead us through the design and implementation process."

The building was brought to life through the collective support of the UH Law Center donors, alumni, faculty, students, staff, UH leadership and members of the Texas Legislature.

"Many thanks to the Law Center alumni leadership in working to make the decades-long dream of a new law building a reality. Many thanks also to UH President Renu Khator for making the law school building a key priority in the last legislative session and Vice President Eloise Brice for her philanthropic genius. Working together contributed to the success of the building campaign, raising funds necessary to construct the John M. O'Quinn Law Building," added Baynes.

The law building was designed by the women-owned architecture firm, Shepley Bulfinch. The five-story, cantilevered building has dedicated spaces for instruction, research, clinics and events. At approximately 180,000 square feet, the all-above-ground facility includes a multi-level library, a meditation room, a courtroom, commuter showers with changing rooms, an outdoor terrace, student lounges, an advocacy skills lab and an AI-enabled contactless convenience store.

The law building, located at 4170 Martin Luther King Boulevard, is the newest law school building in Texas and one of the newest in the country. ■



## UH LAW CENTER EMERITUS PROFESSOR JOYCE HOSTS STUDENT REUNION



UHLC Emeritus Professor of Law Craig Joyce (center) surrounded by former students during a class reunion at the Coronado Club.

University of Houston Law Center Emeritus Professor of Law Craig Joyce orchestrated a reunion for students from his last 1L class. The event, held at The Coronado Club in downtown Houston on Tuesday, Nov. 7—coincidentally, Election Day—was a celebration of shared memories.

"I wanted them to feel honored and appreciated," Joyce explained, reflecting on the motivation behind the event. "This was a significant

occasion, one that will be etched in their memories for the whole rest of their lives."

Joyce, who retired this September, decided to organize a reunion for his last 1L class, a section on Torts, which included about 35 students and the class tutors. The past students, now legal professionals, reminisced about their academic journey at the UH Law Center and their graduation without a traditional commencement ceremony, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The novel and inaccessible word 'torts' is emblematic of the experience of being a 1L. Law school brings with it new ways of thinking and writing, a new language, and new protocols for professionalism and civility. Professor Joyce had the expertise, the patience, and the humor to guide my class through both Torts and the broader transition into the legal profession. And for

generations of UH graduates, including myself, that guidance never ceased. We have so much to be thankful to Professor Joyce for.

This latest reunion event was no exception. It was great to see old friends, catch up, and celebrate our journey," Drew M. Padley (J.D. '20) a former student of Professor Joyce and member of the 2017 Torts section. □

## UH LAW LIBRARY ENCOURAGES STUDENTS, FACULTY TO "CHECK OUT" NEW SERVICES

The University of Houston Law Library is implementing innovative solutions such as a book vending machine, open periodical shelving and self-checkout machines. These options provide students access to study materials while engaging faculty and extending the Law Library's presence beyond its physical walls.

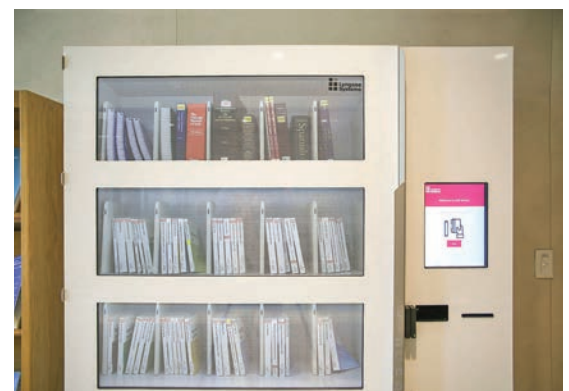
With the move in fall 2022 to the UH Law Center's new John M. O'Quinn Law Building, the library focused on outreach and space maximization for its new location.

"We began to think outside of the box for how we could have the best experience for the students while also meeting the requirements of the university about square footage and layout," said Amanda Watson, Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the UH Law Center Library.

The vending machine went live in the 2023 spring semester on the third floor of the John M. O'Quinn Law Building outside of the faculty offices. It is stocked with practical materials such as Bluebooks, citation manuals, study aids and books of various types to assist

students in their research and study. Throughout the year, the vending machine will be assessed to learn what circulates the most and what items should be increased, decreased or added.

Students can check items out by scanning their Cougar Cards, and the vending machine reads an embedded RFID chip. After removing items and closing the door, the machine runs an inventory and notes all books removed since its last scan. □



A new library vending machine is located on the third floor of the John M. O'Quinn Law Building.



# Art can be an act of social justice,

says expert at University of Houston  
Law Center conference

## UHLC CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY WITH CONFERENCE SHOWCASING THE TRANSFORMATIVE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ON ART AND LAW

The University of Houston Law Center marked its first anniversary in the John M. O'Quinn Law Building with a conference that brought together prominent figures in art, government, and law to explore the impact of social justice in their fields. More than 250 alumni, students, faculty and members of the Houston legal community attended the Law, Community and Social Justice Conference on Sept. 22

"The John M. O'Quinn Law building is a place of inspiration. This conference is designed to make sure that we have a moment where we can celebrate our first anniversary and to provide an opportunity for us, as a convening place, to shed light not heat to issues," said University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes.

### COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The conference commenced with a panel discussion on "The Community and Social Justice," moderated by Jeronimo Cortina, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and the Director of Faculty Research Initiatives at Population Health, University of Houston. The panelists included Texas State Sen. Royce West (J.D. '79) and Texas State Rep. Armando Walle (J.D. '14).

Cortina remarked that the John M. O'Quinn Law Building "represents the face of our students that come from many different backgrounds, from many different life experiences and for many different

socioeconomic statuses."

"This law school gave me the chance of a lifetime," said West, who was the first in his family to graduate from college.

ART,  
LAW AND  
SOCIAL  
JUSTICE





Speakers at the Law, Community, and Social Justice Conference, from left, UH Associate Professor of political science Jeronimo Cortina, Texas State Sen. Royce West (J.D. '79), and Texas State Rep. Armando Walle (J.D. '14).



UH Associate Professor of political science Jeronimo Cortina moderates the panel on "The Community and Social Justice."



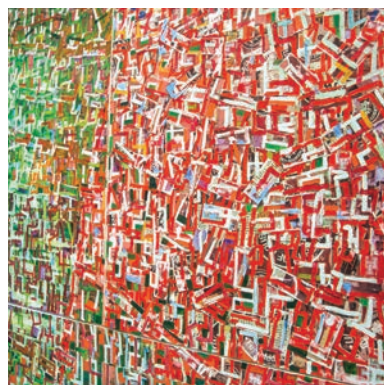
UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes introduces the luncheon keynote speaker Carlotta Ramirez, Museum Counsel at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

"I am first generation like Senator West," said Walle. It is important when we are encouraging young people that they see themselves "reflected in positions of authority. They can't be who they can't see."

Cortina posed a question to the panel about how art, community and justice can be used to build a cohesive social fabric.

"Art to me is an expression of creativity," said West. "We utilize art to symbolize different things" such as telling the stories of communities.

"You are talking about the intersectionality of art, justice, and community," said Walle. "You have that not far from here in the Third Ward Project Row Houses," a project designed to enrich the community in a marginalized neighborhood.



of Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, led the discussion as the moderator. The panelists for this session included Rick Lowe, Kan-eem Smith, Adriana Corral, Luis Alvarez Roure, and Vincent Valdez, all prominent artists.

Lowe, Professor of Interdisciplinary Practice at the Katherine G. McGovern College of the Arts, challenged that there is no traditional art, and creativity should not be confined to any specific category. Through social sculpture, Lowe discovered and reclaimed 22 shotgun houses in downtown Houston, developing a community.

"I consider that an act of social justice, and that project, Project Row Houses, still goes on now," Lowe said. "It is only about a mile away from here."

Adriana Corral, an El Paso-born, Houston-based artist, has a "trace" methodology when creating art, often working from a trace while driven to leave a record, documentation or time capsule behind to mark involvement or change for the next generation. "Layers of research and material exploration"

## ART AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The conference continued with a second panel on "Art and Social Justice." Ryan Dennis, Senior Curator and Director of Public Initiatives





Ryan Dennis, Senior Curator and Director of Public Initiatives at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, moderates a discussion on art and social justice with artists Rick Lowe, Kaneem Smith, Adriana Corral, Luis Alvarez Roure, and Vincent Valdez.

structure Corral's recent work, *Latitudes*, as she strives to view material from diverse angles and disciplines, such as human rights.

"Art opens the gates for us to dig deeper, asking 'What is this about?' encouraging us to know more about an individual or piece for centuries," said Roure, artist of the *Olivas/Reyes Portrait*. "To the best of my abilities, I hope this is what I am doing because art has always been able to bring people together and to feel more empathetic toward others."

"The works that I create are personal," said Smith, artist of *Laborscape*. "They're familial and they're always tied to communities and workers — marginalized, displaced people and migrants."

Valdez, artist of *One in a Million*, began as a muralist focused on addressing the issues plaguing the housing projects in San Antonio. He talked about the divide between these impoverished communities and the more privileged neighborhoods "less than a mile away, but they might as well have been on different planets." Valdez made a commitment to devote his life to "being a picture maker for the sole purpose of telling stories about people and for people."



## LUNCHEON KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ART, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The luncheon keynote address was from Carlotta Ramirez, Museum Counsel at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Ramirez (J.D. '92), an alumna of UH Law Center, shared her family's immigration story, describing her father's transformation in pursuit of education, despite facing challenges as a first-generation Mexican American. She also recounted her initial doubts upon entering law school and the perseverance it took to overcome negativity.

"It is a rare breed that can create opportunities for him or herself. Whether it looks like a first-generation Mexican American becoming a physician or a lawyer having the gumption to create her own role, her own job even," Ramirez said, who became the museum's first general counsel.

"I still remember walking into class here at the Law Center on the first day of my first year of law school and thinking I may have made a terrible mistake," said Ramirez. "If you don't have the right kind of enthusiasm and energy, you might just leave it. You might just say this is too much. I can't handle it. But I found that power within myself to just keep going even when I made mistakes even when I





Artists Luis Alvarez Roure and Rick Lowe talk about how art can impact social justice.

thought I didn't know what I was doing. I kept going.”

Ramirez also highlighted the role of museums in social justice, acting as stewards of art from disadvantaged communities and serving as conduits for the voices and stories of marginalized artists and communities.

## CELEBRATION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AND CAREER OF THE LATE MICHAEL A. OLIVAS

In the afternoon, the conference paid tribute to the late UH Law Center William B. Bates Chair Emeritus and Professor of Law Michael A. Olivas.

*Continued on p.25*



Using color and collage, Rick Lowe explores the way that communities surrounding the University of Houston were made geographically and divided into wards in his new artwork, *The Line*.

The piece by Lowe, a University of Houston Professor, MacArthur Fellow, and Project Rowhouse Co-founder, was installed at UH Law Center's John M. O'Quinn Law Building this spring.

"The UH Law Center is very grateful for UH Public Art and Professor Lowe for providing this beautiful and meaningful piece of art in the John M. O'Quinn Law Building," said Leonard M. Baynes.

According to Public Art UHS, the title of the piece, *The Line*, "is a reference to The Third Ward community's informal demarcation of Scott Street — commonly referred to as 'the line' among



residents — as the boundary between the University of Houston and the neighborhood in the early 1990s."

Today more than 30 years later, "Lowe questions whether it is time to metaphorically erase 'the line' through increased communal action by University of Houston and Third Ward stakeholders to help preserve, develop, and celebrate the heritage and culture

of the Third Ward."

Lowe is known for his community engagement projects most notably the Project Row Houses, an arts and cultural community located in the historic Third Ward.

This piece is displayed on the first floor of the John M. O'Quinn Law Building, located at 4170 Martin Luther King Blvd. ■





Honorees for the Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor and the Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor along UH College of Education Professor Emerita Dr. Augustina Reyes gather at the University of Houston Law Center for the unveiling ceremony.

## HERITAGE HONORED: UH LAW CENTER'S NEW

The University of Houston Law Center debuted three new installations celebrating the significant achievements of its African American and Hispanic law graduates and faculty. The Michael A. Olivas and Augustina H. Reyes portrait, the Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor, and the Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor were unveiled during a September 22nd ceremony with the honorees and their friends and family at the John M. O'Quinn Law Building.

"It is with great pleasure and pride that we gather here this evening to celebrate a significant milestone in our institution's history," said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Today, we honor the vision, brilliance, and tenacity of those who have blazed trails and shattered barriers. Their contributions have not only enriched the tapestry of our legal community but have also paved the way for a more inclusive and just legal system."

### Michael A. Olivas and Augustina H. Reyes Portrait

The late UH Law Center William B. Bates Chair Emeritus and Professor of Law Michael A. Olivas committed his life to advancing civil rights and immigrant justice. The portrait of Olivas and his wife Dr. Augustina H. Reyes, professor emerita at the UH College of Education, is dedicated in honor of the couple who gave their time and talents to the university community as well as the local, regional and national community of scholars, academics, and lawyers. The portrait by the award-winning artist Luis Alvarez Roure is displayed on the 5th Floor of the Law Building in the Olivas-Reyes Reading Room.

University of Houston Law Center Professor Sandra Guerra



The late Professor Emeritus Michael A. Olivas

Thompson spoke about her late colleague and the dedication of the portrait.

"We are honored to have the artist with us tonight. This was a labor of love to make this happen. Thank you to the Hispanic Bar Association, Mexican American Bar Association, and many others for making this a possibility," said Thompson.

Reyes thanked the university and spoke on her husband's prolific scholarly publications including his latest book *Perchance to DREAM: A Legal and Political History of the DREAM Act and DACA*. The publication, "the first comprehensive history of the DREAM Act" will be available in paperback in June 2024.

### Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor

State Sen. Royce West (J.D. '79) and his wife Carol West dedicated the heritage wall to recognize the achievements and contributions of UH Law Center African American alumni and faculty.

"To whom much is given much is required. What we do we do

Sandra Guerra Thompson, Newell H. Blake-ly Professor of Law at the UH Law Center, moderated the panel discussion. The panel-ists, including Norma Cantu, Rachel Moran, Thomas A. Saenz, and Cheryl Wade, shared their perspectives on the legacy and contributions of Michael Olivas.

"I served on the faculty with Michael Olivas for 33 years," said Thompson. "He is one of the few people I will probably ever meet and know well who is a historic figure in U.S. American history. He's the kind of person who ends up in history textbooks."

"Michael stood out among academics," said Rachel Moran, Professor of Law at Texas A&M University, School of Law. "Michael fought tirelessly for the rights of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged among us."

"I became aware of Michael when I was a first-year law student in 1989 because of the Dirty Dozen List," said Thomas A. Saenz, President and



General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Olivas helped create the list which "about the dearth of Latino and Latina professors in the academia."

"My interaction with Michael and the lessons he taught me, even at this late stage in my life, were so profound," Cheryl Wade, Dean Harold McNeice Professor of Law, St. John's University School of Law. "Michael and I connected around the idea of enriching the law with culture. Art can transform lives, and it can transform cultures too."

"That the place in which one learns affects the quality of education," said Norma Cantu,

Professor of Law and Education, University of Texas, School of Law, adding Olivas believed "that we will prepare students as citizens and leaders, empowering them to improve their lives and their communities through high quality, transformative and affordable learning experiences." □

## INSTALLATIONS CELEBRATE LEGAL LEGACIES



The Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall

because it is the right thing to do," Carol West said. "To help others accomplish their dreams. We want everyone to know that yes it is possible. Keep believing; keep dreaming."

"When you look around this room, you look at Texas. You look at UH," Royce West said to the audience of honorees. "It is so important that we who have been given so much give back. The reality is we owe this law school. But for what this law school has afforded us, we would not have the quality of life that we have."

The Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall of Honor is located on the 2nd floor of the Law Building.

### Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor

Ezequiel Reyna Jr. (J.D. '80) and Livia Reyna (M.Ed. '79) designated their heritage wall to recognize the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic alumni and faculty at the University of Houston Law Center. "It is an honor to



The Royce and Carol West African American Law Heritage Wall

be here," said Ezequiel Reyna Jr. "For you to understand how monumental it is for someone like myself, you need to know who I am and where I came from."

Reyna Jr., who is one of eight children, recounted his educational journey which started by being placed in a special needs classes due to his limited knowledge of English. Despite facing language barriers in his early years, Reyna Jr. not only completed college but also earned his J.D. from UH Law Center in 1980.

The Ezequiel Reyna Jr. and Livia Reyna Hispanic Law Heritage Wall of Honor is located on the 2nd floor of the Law Building.

Baynes concluded the ceremony by reminding guests about the importance of unity: "As we remember the Olivas-Reyes Reading Room and heritage walls that we have seen tonight, let us reflect on the strides we have made and the journey that still lies ahead. Together, we commit ourselves to fostering an environment where every aspiring legal mind, regardless of background, can find their rightful place," said Baynes. □



## SUPREME COURT'S 6-3 RULING IN 303 CREATIVE CASE NARROWS LGBTQ+ PROTECTIONS, SAYS UHLC CONSTITUTIONAL LAW EXPERT

The Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision in June, limited LGBTQ+ protections, ruling that the First Amendment protects a Colorado business from creating same-sex wedding websites, despite the state's protective anti-discrimination law. The case is 303 Creative LLC v. Elenis.

Seth Chandler, Law Foundation Professor of Law at the University of Houston Law Center, provided commentary on the Supreme Court ruling on LGBTQ+ rights.

"The Court's decision in 303 Creative has stated that a state like Colorado cannot enforce a "public accommodations" law to make businesses that don't squarely fall into that category, such as a website design firm, create messages they don't agree with. For example, they can't be forced to make a website celebrating gay marriage if they object to it. However, the Court has also made it clear that the state can still require traditional public accommodations like hotels and restaurants to certain groups even if they dislike their members," said Chandler.

The Court's decision is vague on where the line is.

"States will need to proceed with great caution before they seek to use public accommodations laws as a way of forcing businesses that in some way combine service with expression to say things of which the government approves. The cost of that freedom, however, will be continued insult and continued business complications for minorities in some places," Chandler said. □



Seth Chandler



Bret Wells

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR WELLS FILES AMICUS BRIEF IN SCOTUS TAX CASE TESTING THE 16TH AMENDMENT

University of Houston Law Center Professor Bret Wells, Reuven Avi-Yonah (Michigan) and Clinton Wallace (South Carolina) filed an amicus curiae brief in *Moore v. United States*, Docket No. 22-800 in October.

In *Moore*, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether the 16th Amendment authorizes Congress to tax unrealized income without

assert income taxation before an actual realization event notwithstanding that the Internal Revenue Code is littered with numerous instances where taxpayers are subject to income taxation without regard to actual or constructive receipt. Congress, by necessity, has imposed taxation on unrealized income so that tax planning by sophisticated taxpayers cannot be used to divert income away from themselves and underrepresent their true economic income on their tax returns.

"Imposing a constitutional realization requirement will allow taxpayers, for the first time in many decades, to shield significant categories of income from U.S. tax through complex tax planning structures that deflect income away from themselves. Creating a new constitutional requirement to only assert income taxation when the taxpayer decides to engage in a specific transaction would break with history and would have severe practical consequences to the administration of the income tax that Congress has authority to implement under the 16th Amendment," said Wells, the Law Foundation Professor of Law at UHLC.

The Supreme Court was scheduled to hear oral argument for the case on Dec. 5. □

apportionment among the states. Unrealized income is economic income that is taxed without regard to an actual sale or exchange event. Congress will often wait until an actual transaction to assert taxation, but not always. The taxpayer in *Moore* claims that Congress does not have authority to

## AI WRITING BOTS WILL CHANGE THE LIVES OF STUDENTS AND PROFESSIONALS SAYS UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER SCHOLAR SALIB



Peter Salib

The use of artificial intelligence platforms such as ChatGPT will have widespread implications on education and in professional settings, according to University of Houston Law Center Assistant Professor Peter Salib. While ChatGPT has the potential for abuse and inaccuracies, Salib added that when used properly, it can benefit students and professionals.

“For everybody whose main work is writing things on a computer, this is a tool that is going to change how you work, especially as it gets better,” Salib said. “ChatGPT

produces mediocre content in response to complex questions. There might be some incentive to plagiarize, but probably not if a student wants an A.”

“On the other hand, I’m not sure it’s right to think of using those kind of language models in the classroom just through the lens of plagiarism. They’re extremely useful tools, and they’re going to be extremely useful tools for real people doing real work. I think we do a disservice to a student if we said these tools are not part of education, and they’re forbidden to use them as they work their way through law school or their undergraduate education.”

Salib said students should learn to use resources like ChatGPT, and that they can contribute to how a student thinks through issues and writes ideas.

“As professors, we have to ensure that when students do work for us that doing it well requires that you actually learn something. If an essay question is just copied and pasted into a ChatGPT prompt and the answer earns a B or B+, then we’re not teaching students to use ChatGPT as a tool that helps them think, we’re teaching them to use it as a replacement for thinking, and that’s not good either.” □

---

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR WARREN SHARES EXPERTISE AS A DISTINGUISHED VISITING ENERGY SCHOLAR DURING A SUMMER SESSION IN VERMONT

The University of Houston Law Center Professor Gina Warren was selected as the Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS) Distinguished Energy Law Scholar. Warren was to share her expertise in energy and environmental law, providing insight into her research on high-impact environmental justice matters.

“I’m honored to be in this space,” Warren stated. “It’s a privilege to be amongst a group of scholars who are talking about a sustainable energy future. It’s an honor to be selected.”

Nominated by colleagues, Warren was to give a public lecture at VLGS and was invited to participate in informal gatherings with faculty and students. Scholars are chosen from varied subject areas such as environment, climate, energy and food.

A top-ranked environmental law program in the United States, VLGS specializes in environmental summer sessions, and Warren will join VLGS scholars to discuss multidisciplinary educational approaches. “These types of events allow for important interdisciplinary work and provide opportunities for diverse thoughts, communications and ideas,” Warren said. “It will be fun to sit at the table and have a conversation.”

“Biden’s infrastructure bill added fuel to the fire,” Warren said.

“He set aside a lot of money to go into energy infrastructure, and through his Justice40 Initiative, 40% of all the benefits will go to underserved, underprivileged communities. Now it’s just a matter of figuring out how the benefits will filter through the system.”

For her research project, Warren is studying environmental justice and sustainable, affordable housing as well as environmental justice issues that impact the indoor cultivation of marijuana. □



Gina Warren



## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER PROFESSORS RECEIVE GRANT FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH TO ORGANIZE 'SUSTAINABILITY WEEK' IN ITALY

The University of Bologna is providing funding to the University of Houston Law Center to co-host "Sustainability Week" in Bologna, Italy. The grant-funded project will facilitate collaborative research on sustainability between the two universities. The project is supported by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the universities and will be facilitated by the UH Law Center's Global Law and Policy for the Americas Initiative.

To be held fall 2024, the event will showcase presentations on the various ways sustainability intersects law, political science, economics and sociology. Topics will include Sustainability: A Transnational Issue; Sustainability and Trade, Between Law and Economics; Energy Transition and Private Sector Sustainability; and From Global to Local: Sustainable Cities.

"We are so excited that they accepted our proposal. This grant will further the research on sustainable development being done through the Global Law and Policy Initiative for the Americas," said Professor Elizabeth Trujillo, founding director of GLPA and the Mary Ann & Lawrence E. Faust Professor of Law.

The proposal for this grant-funded project spreads across 33 departments at the University of Bologna. This multidisciplinary research and teaching project also brings together the work of UH Law Center's Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Center and GLPA.

This academic collaboration stems from Trujillo's long-time work with the University of Bologna's Center for Latin American Studies, uniting researchers from Bologna's Department of Political and Social Sciences and the GLPA to research cutting-edge topics that address the delicate relationship between the local and the global with a focus on the role of the Americas in shaping global law and policy. Mutually beneficial opportunities for faculty and students stem from this partnership. □



Elizabeth Trujillo

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR KELLEN ZALE NAMED FULBRIGHT RESEARCH CHAIR

University of Houston Law Center Associate Professor Kellen Zale was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Comparative Canada-U.S. Studies. Selected by the Foundation for Educational Exchange between Canada and the United States, Zale taught and conducted research at Trent University in Ontario, collaborating with Canadian scholars and practitioners in her field.

"I got to experience the fall semester in Canada," said Zale. "The opportunity is multi-layered, with both a research and teaching component at Trent University, which works with the Fulbright organization to organize the opportunity."

The non-governmental, not-for-profit organization has awarded Zale a one-semester Fulbright grant to pursue her research on land use, housing affordability and short-term rental markets.

"Canada is a little more similar to the U.S. than many other countries, but it's different enough that it provides a unique opportunity to see how they're responding to similar problems in their communities, such as affordable housing needs, environmentally sustainable development, growth in short-term rental markets and various other land use issues," Zale said. "It'll be an opportunity to explore and see how some of these challenges are handled in another country."

As a Fulbright Visiting Scholar, Zale also taught a seminar in comparative

land use law and planning that will complement her research on regulatory responses to the growth in short-term rentals in the U.S. and Canada.

"While there are abstract ideas in property law, to a significant extent, you can literally see the impacts of land use law and policy on the ground and in the built environment," Zale said. "It is something that you can have conversations about with people about in a way that is sometimes more easily relatable than in other areas of law."

Given a stipend from the Fulbright organization for housing and living expenses, she was based at Trent University for the Fall 2023 semester, where she worked on a comparative research project stemming from her prior work on the sharing economy, land use regulation and local government law. □



Kellen Zale



Sandra Guerra Thompson

## HISPANIC BAR ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON HONORS UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR THOMPSON WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

University of Houston Law Center professor Sandra Guerra Thompson received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hispanic Bar Association of Houston in recognition of her work as an engaged educator, a leading scholar, and a community champion. Thompson described the recognition at the association's 35th Annual Gala in May as both "overwhelming" and "exciting."

The first Latina-tenured law professor in Texas, Thompson's scholarship has been of direct benefit to the Greater Houston community.

"I have found there's a synergy between my community work and my scholarship," Thompson said. "The scholarship enriches my community work because I have more knowledge about best practices and all the ideas out there that I can bring to my community work. The community work in turn gives me ideas about new avenues of research."

Thompson's scholarship includes Debiasing Criminal Justice, A Systemic Approach to Systemic Problems: Responding to Irregularities in the Criminal Justice System, and Cops in Lab Coats: Curbing Wrongful Convictions Through Independent Forensic Laboratories.

In 2012, Houston Mayor Annise Parker selected Thompson to serve as a founding board member of the Houston Forensic Science Center, the successor of the Houston Police Department Crime Lab. The Forensic Science Center has risen to national and international prominence for its quality control system.

A Laredo, Texas native, Thompson graduated from Yale Law School in 1988. Thompson was an assistant district attorney in the New York County District Attorney until 1990 when she joined the University of Houston Law Center where she teaches courses like criminal law and evidence. For Thompson, some of "the most rewarding moments" of her career come from teaching and mentoring law students. □

"The University of Houston Law Center is very proud of Professor Guerra Thompson's many accomplishments. We congratulate Professor Guerra Thompson on this very well-deserved honor," said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes.

The Newell H. Blakely Chair Professor of Law and former Director of UHLC's Criminal Justice Institute, Thompson's work is largely centered on her expertise in criminal law, evidence, the regulation of forensic evidence, and federal asset forfeiture.



Renee Knake Jefferson

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR RENEE KNAKE JEFFERSON TO RECEIVE RHODE AWARD FROM ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS

University of Houston Law Center Professor Renee Knake Jefferson has been selected as a recipient of 2024 Deborah L. Rhode Award presented by the Association of American Law Schools. The annual award is given by the AALS Sections on Leadership, Professional Responsibility, Women in Legal Education, and Pro Bono and Service Opportunities. She was

"Deborah was a dear friend and mentor, who left us much too soon." Jefferson first met Rhode in 2010 but had previously studied Rhode's work as a junior scholar.

Jefferson teaches professional responsibility and a writing seminar on leadership at the University of Houston Law Center. She is also the Joanne and Larry Doherty chair in Legal Ethics and director of the Law Center Outcomes and Assessments. Over the years, Jefferson has been selected for several leadership roles that mirror Rhode's work. For example, Jefferson sits on the board of directors for the International Association of Legal Ethics. In 2017, she was elected to the American Law Institute and was named a fellow of the American Bar Foundation in 2016. She is also a past chair for the AALS Section on Professional Responsibility.

"My scholarship, like Deborah's, intersects ethics, access to justice, leadership, and gender, and I am grateful to be recognized in this way," said Jefferson.

Jefferson shares the honor with co-recipient of the award Penelope Andrews, John Marshall Harlan II Professor of Law, Director, Racial Justice Project Dean, New York Law School. □

recognized during the 2024 AALS Annual Meeting, in Washington, D.C.

The award is named in honor of the late Rhode as a memorial to her long legal career where she served as president of the AALS and founding president of the International Association of Legal Ethics in 2010.

"I'm honored to receive what is a bittersweet award for me," said Jefferson.





J. Anna Cabot

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER NAMES ANNA CABOT DIRECTOR OF THE IMMIGRATION CLINIC

Clinical Associate Professor J. Anna Cabot took on the Immigration Clinic Director role this fall. Cabot emphasized the importance of the Immigration Clinic for both students and the community.

“Clinics are a crucial step between being a law student and a practicing lawyer,” said Cabot. “Clinic students function as their client’s lawyer, with all of

the responsibility this entails, under the guidance of an experienced attorney. Practicing law for the first time, if you will, with a safety net. Students learn lawyering skills and how to engage in the complex process of legal problem solving. Finally, students are helping address a genuine legal need and can have life-changing effects on their clients. This is particularly true in immigration law, where we have the chance

to make a real impact on the community in Houston. I am thrilled to be part of an institution that encourages students to engage with real-world legal issues from day one.”

Before joining the University of Houston Law Center, Cabot taught in clinics at the American University Washington College of Law and the University of Connecticut School of Law. She also worked at the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies in San Francisco, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso, and Asylum Access—Tanzania in Dar es Salaam.

The Immigration Clinic, founded in 1999 by Joseph A. Vail a former immigration judge and University of Houston Law Center professor, handles asylum applications for victims of torture, domestic violence, human trafficking and other immigration-related matters.

The Immigration Clinic with the financial support of grants from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation and private donors maintains an active case list of upwards of 100 immigration cases. The Immigration Clinic litigated before the U.S. Court of Appeals in the 5th, 9th and 11th Circuits and the U.S. Supreme Court. □

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR JESSICA BREGANT HONORED FOR ADVANCING DISPUTE RESOLUTION RESEARCH

University of Houston Law Center Assistant Professor Jessica Bregant received the 2023 Hugh L. Carey Center’s Dispute Resolution Advancement Award for settlement research this year. The “award recognizes scholars whose published empirical research furthers the advancement and understanding of the values and skills of dispute resolution,” published Harvard Negotiation Law Review.

“It was very exciting to receive the award because it recognizes not just one article but a series of papers that we are working on,” Bregant said. “It is great to know that others are as excited as we are about what we have been working on in settlement and recognize its importance.”

Co-authoring *Perceptions of Settlement* with University of Illinois College of Law Professors Jennifer Robbennolt and Verity Winship, she examined how parties involved in conflict or dispute perceive the terms, outcomes and fairness of a potential settlement.

In *Perceptions*, the authors describe settlement as “merely an agreement to resolve a legal dispute, but in the law and in public consciousness, the way settlement is conceptualized is often more complicated.”

“Settlement is multifaceted and can be associated with apologies,” Bregant said. “I am interested in how people think about whether justice has been done to both parties ... and reactions are very different depending on situational experiences.”

A survey was performed with a nationally representative sample, gaining answers from an estimated 1,000 individuals in the first phase of the

project for insight into people’s views of settlement.

“We started by focusing on the inferences that people are making specifically about the parties and their responsibility,” Bregant said. “That led to further study of settlement, in part because of the discussions we had with people after that set of studies, prompting the question, ‘Do people really even know what settlement means?’”

The article discusses perceptions of settlement in cases such as wrongful death, police excessive force and jury verdicts. Settlement hindrances and practical solutions to common obstacles in negotiation were analyzed, examining how biases can prevent parties from reaching a mutually beneficial agreement and providing an understanding of how parties can overcome such challenges to reach successful resolutions. □



Jessica Bregant

## UHLC HEALTH LAW PROFESSOR KOCH NAMED FACULTY FELLOW BY ELIZABETH D. ROCKWELL CENTER ON ETHICS AND LEADERSHIP

Valerie Gutmann Koch, Co-Director and Assistant Professor of the Health Law & Policy Institute at the University of Houston Law Center, has been selected as a 2023-24 Faculty Fellow. The award is



Valerie Gutmann Koch

presented annually by the Elizabeth D. Rockwell Center on Ethics and Leadership at the Hobby School of Public Affairs to UH faculty to pursue “research projects on ethics and/or leadership.”

Passionate about bioethics and the law, Koch will examine how to ensure the legal doctrine of informed consent reflects the ethical goals that underly it.

“I am thrilled to receive this award, and I am really excited to be able to do an even deeper dive into a subject area that I have

been fascinated by for a very long time,” Koch said. “This award really enables me to devote my time to a project that I am passionate about.”

Koch’s proposed project, “Reimagining Informed Consent,” emphasizes the bioethical principle of justice, which is often ignored at the expense of autonomy (the freedom to make decisions) and beneficence (the desire to do good) and is swept away by circumstance.

“Hearing about the incredible experiences had by other members of the Law Center faculty prompted me to try for the fellowship,” Koch said. “My entire academic career is focused on the ethics of medicine, and the leadership element of being able to work toward something better, made this too good of an opportunity to pass up.”

The Faculty Fellows award provides Koch with \$24,000 to continue her studies on the legal doctrine of informed consent. As such, Koch proposes a new rule that includes an element of comprehension into the tort of informed consent, which has historically focused solely on disclosures.

“In previous scholarship, I have explored different ways to address the deficiencies of the legal doctrine of informed consent,” Koch said. “I have even explored eliminating liability for failure of informed consent. Ultimately, I concluded that it was not time to do that. The legal doctrine of informed consent is still effective in some ways and exists to protect patients and allow for autonomous decisions.” □

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER PROFESSOR TRACY HESTER EMPHASIZES ETHICAL ROLE OF LAWYERS IN CLIMATE CHANGE DURING UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE IN GERMANY

University of Houston Law Center instructional associate professor Tracy Hester attended the United Nations Bonn Climate Change Conference as one of two representatives of the American Bar Association in Germany.

The discussions in Bonn this summer were a precursor to the UN’s COP28 conference taking place in Dubai during December. The UN holds annual climate conferences under their climate conventions, and the American Bar Association, alongside other national bar associations, has participated in the past several conferences to bring attention to the role of lawyers in combating climate issues.

“We talked about what sort of ethical duties lawyers are going to have to do when they advise clients on issues that are affected by climate change,” Hester said, “as well as what changes in the role of lawyers might take place in light of these issues.”

Hester, who also serves as the Co-Director of the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Center at UHLC, highlighted competence as a crucial factor for lawyers to play a positive part in

combating climate change.

“Lawyers have an ethical duty to remain current on developments of the law and circumstances that affect the advice that they give to clients,” he said. “They have an obligation to remain informed and current on climate change impacts that might affect the legal advice they offer. If a real estate lawyer is drafting a contract to purchase coastal estate that will be underwater after a certain period due to climate change, that will affect the terms and value of the transaction. Therefore, there will be an ethical duty to make sure the client is aware of the full impact of the advice they are providing.” □



Tracy Hester





**U.S. Representative Jasmine Crockett (J.D. '06)**

## U.S. REPRESENTATIVE CROCKETT '06 BEGINS FIRST TERM, CREDITS UH LAW CENTER EDUCATION

When U.S. Representative Jasmine Crockett '06 took her oath of office this year to represent Texas' 30th Congressional District, she started a historic term in Congress. Crockett is the first African American University of Houston Law Center graduate in the school's 75-year history to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

She also became the first Black woman elected as Freshman Leadership

Representative, a position the Democrats added in 2016. The liaison role, an honor bestowed upon her by colleagues, is a formal position with greater access to House leadership.

The freshman congresswoman, who has a career of many firsts, encourages law students and aspiring public servants to explore the full gamut of career opportunities.

Crockett says her legal education helped steer her career path.

"I wanted to use my law degree in a way that would make the most impact for my community and for the future. That is what led me to become a legislator," Crockett said.

Law was not always on the horizon for Crockett. As an undergraduate, she studied business administration at Rhodes College in Tennessee. However, during her senior year, Crockett was recruited for the school's renowned mock trial team, and her trajectory changed, leading her to law school and Texas.

After graduating from the University of Houston Law Center, Crockett worked as a civil rights attorney and a public defender in Bowie County, Texas before starting her own practice. Her legislative political career started in 2020 with her election to the Texas House of Representatives.

Crockett attributes an election law class at UH Law Center for preparing her for a role in government. In that class, her research project focused on voter disenfranchisement and the disproportionate impact that occurs on minority communities.

In addition to representing the Texas 30th Congressional District in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area, the US congresswoman will serve on the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability and House Committee on Agriculture. □

## UH LAW CENTER ALUMNI NAMED JUDGES OF THE YEAR BY TACTAS

The Texas Association of Civil Trial and Appellate Specialists (TACTAS) recognized two University of Houston Law Center alumni during an annual awards ceremony.

Southern District of Texas Judge Jeffrey V. Brown, a 1995 UHLC graduate, was named the Trial Judge of the Year, while 1st Court of Appeals Justice Julie Countiss, a 2002 UHLC graduate, was honored as the Appellate Judge of the Year.

The awards event at the end of May was attended by members of the legal community, including judges, attorneys and court personnel. TACTAS has been dedicated to improving "the availability, accessibility and quality of the services of civil trial and appellate lawyers to the public" for more than 30 years. □



**Judge Jeffrey Brown (J.D. '95)**



**Judge Julie Countiss (J.D. '02)**



Rochelle Garza (J.D. '13)

## UHLC ALUMNA ROCHELLE GARZA '13 APPOINTED TO U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Rochelle Garza '13, former Democratic nominee for Texas Attorney General and Texas Civil Rights Project President, was sworn in this spring as one of the newest members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Garza was appointed as a Commissioner by President Joe Biden, an honor she says is “absolutely incredible.”

“It’s really an honor of a lifetime to be appointed,” said Garza, a civil rights attorney and Brownsville,

Texas native. “On a personal level, I think a lot about my grandmother who gave birth to 13 kids and everything that she had to go through in order to give these kinds of opportunities — or the possibility of this kind of opportunity — to her children and grandchildren.”

Growing up in the Rio Grande Valley influenced Garza’s perspective on immigration, civil rights, and advocacy, propelling her toward a career focused on “us[ing] the law to make sure that powerful people treat [her] clients fairly and recognize everyone’s humanity.” For Garza, her life experiences illuminated the law as a tool that can “either build or destroy.”

“I very much want to build, to build a society or a state or country that really contemplates every single person and recognizes their humanity, recognizes their civil rights,” Garza said.

Established in 1957, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a bipartisan, independent agency “inform[ing] the development of national civil rights policy and enhanc[ing] enforcement of federal civil rights laws.” The Commission is tasked with evaluating the status of civil rights issues across the country and informing the U.S. Congress and the President, according to Garza. Currently, the Commission is working on a report on the federal response to anti-Asian racism in the wake of COVID-19, she said.

“Reports like that are important for us to understand the moment that we’re in and the impact on the civil rights of people across this country,” Garza said. □

## UHLC ALUMNUS JIM PERDUE '63 SHARES DECADES OF TRIAL ADVOCACY WISDOM IN “COURTROOM STORYTELLING”

University of Houston Law Center alumnus Jim M. Perdue Sr. (J.D. '63) draws from more than 50 years of trying cases and 12 years of teaching at UHLC in his new book, “Courtroom Storytelling.”

The 2020 Texas Trial Lawyers Association Lifetime Achievement



Jim M. Perdue Sr. (J.D. '63)

Award-winner shares his inspiration for writing and imparts lessons on storytelling in the legal arena.

### What led you to pursue writing about trial advocacy?

This is my ninth published book, four of which were legal treatises. I wrote two books on trial advocacy and the different tactics that a lawyer could use in the courtroom. Then, I did a book of stories, noting stories from legal history about prominent lawyers and judges.

### What lessons does your book offer for persuading a jury?

The basic premise of my book is that the law is not a trial. It is not a debate. It is a contest of stories, which is a unique approach. It was an epiphany for me, and it’s an epiphany for a lot of lawyers, that maybe there’s a better way. You have to have a story that is logical and is not counterintuitive. It has to meet with not only logic but intuition or, in Texas, gut.

### For new trial lawyers, what lessons in your book are crucial?

You must start with your concept of storytelling in your opening statement, and then you must use it with your witnesses. You must use it when you’re putting on evidence, when you’re cross-examining and in your closing argument. You’ve got to be committed to telling the best story.

### Any favorite memories from your time at UHLC as a student or adjunct professor?

We have made incredible progress as a law school. It began after World War II, and most students were veterans. Classes were first held in Quonset huts over by the Cougar Den, and just before I went into law school, students moved into the basement of the M.D. Anderson Library. Now, UHLC is in a \$93 million, 180,000-square-foot building with one of the best faculties in the country. □



## BENNY AGOSTO JR. LAUNCHES FIRST-GEN SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF UHLC TRAILBLAZER JUDGE RENDON

Benny Agosto Jr., the managing partner of Abraham, Watkins, Nichols, Agosto, Aziz & Stogner, established a scholarship in December to support first-generation college students at the University of Houston Law Center. This donation is dedicated to the UH Law Center alumna Judge Josefina Rendon (B.A. '72, J.D. '76).

"It is my great honor and pleasure to donate this endowment in honor of Judge Josefina Rendon," said Agosto Jr. "The example of hard work and dedication to the law" makes Rendon the ideal person to honor.

The scholarship for first-generation college students is named after Rendon, a trailblazer in the legal field, who became one of Harris County's first Hispanic women attorneys in 1977, Houston's first woman Civil Service Commissioner in 1981 and one of Houston's first Hispanic judges in 1983.

"This scholarship will reduce the cost of legal education for students, and being named after Judge Rendon, the scholarship recipient will have the judge's career to serve as a guiding star for their legal careers," said University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Congratulations to Judge Rendon on this well-deserved recognition, and many thanks to Benny Agosto, Jr. for his philanthropy."

Rendon, whose accolades include the Hispanic Bar Association Lifetime Achievement Award, The Houston Lawyer Magazine Pioneer in Houston Law award and the City of Houston Lifetime Achievement Award, expressed her gratitude for the honor.



From left, Benny Agosto Jr., Judge Josefina Rendon and University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes celebrate the donation of the Rendon Scholarship for first-generation college students.

"Thank you so much to Benny Agosto Jr. and Dean Leonard Baynes for your generosity and graciousness in establishing a student endowment scholarship in my name at the University of Houston Law Center," said Rendon. □

## TEXAS BAR FOUNDATION AWARDS QUENTIN BROGDON '89 FOR A ZEALOUS DEVOTION TO CLIENTS, THE BAR AND PUBLIC



Quentin Brogdon (J.D. '89)

Quentin Brogdon '89, partner at Crain Brogdon, LLP in Dallas, was named the 2023 Dan Rugeley Price Memorial Award recipient from the Texas Bar Foundation. Practicing law for over three decades, Brogdon is noted for an unreserved commitment to his clients and the legal practice.

"This is a high honor," Brogdon said. "I'm not sure I'm deserving of it, but it is extremely gratifying to have both your peers and the State Bar of Texas recognize what you've at least tried to do for many decades."

at the JW Marriott hotel in Austin.

The Texas Bar Foundation is the largest charitably funded bar foundation in the nation, driven to advance justice in Texas and prompt legal assistance for the underserved. Brogdon named UHLC to receive \$1,000 for a law student scholarship and a commemorative award when selected for the Dan Rugeley Price Memorial Award, honoring his memories and the education gained at UHLC.

"I've always felt that in addition to putting the needs of the clients first as a practicing lawyer, I should try and pay it back — to pay back some of the mentoring, the leadership, the guidance and the tutoring that I received and still continue to receive candidly in my career," Brogdon said.

Brogdon graduated from the University of Houston Law Center with his J.D. and from the C. T. Bauer College of Business with his M.B.A. in 1989. During law school, he worked as associate editor of the Houston Law Review.

"I intended to be a business transactional lawyer," Brogdon said. "However, when I took a trial advocacy class and sat in on a lecture given by a guest lecturer, John O'Quinn, an alum of UH Law, it prompted me to change my plans and to work to become a trial lawyer." □

Brogdon and the other 2023 Bar Foundation Award recipients were honored at a black-tie dinner on Friday, June 23 during an annual meeting

## HUNDREDS OF ALUMNI AND STUDENTS CONNECT THROUGH UH LAW CENTER 2023 MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Students attended the UHLC Professional Mentoring Program's Virtual Kickoff Event this fall, hosted by the University of Houston Law Center's Career Development Office and Alumni Relations. The program paired students with alumni mentors who shared their expertise and helped to shape the future of the legal profession.

This year's mentorship program brought together 170 mentors and 202 mentees to develop ongoing dialogues about law school success, the legal market, transition to practice and developing a professional network.

The program involves alumni from across the United States who want to invest in UHLC students by sharing professional experience and advice. Alumni from California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Italy, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. participated as mentors, offering a broad base of experience in different sectors of the legal economy. The UHLC Class of 2019 provided the largest group of mentors for any participating class year, with 13 alumni mentors.

Mona Deo, a UHLC 2L and previous mentee, shared her experiences from the program. She emphasized how the mentor-mentee dynamic provided a sense of camaraderie and helped her network effectively. For her, the guidance from her attorney-mentor was invaluable, offering insights into the professional life of a lawyer.

She advised students to "take full advantage of the opportunity, come prepared and have a clear outline of what your goals are."

Kris L. Thomas (J.D. '83), president of the UH Law Alumni Association, underscored the

importance of mentorship, adding that "This program is so successful because it creates a sense of community and continuity going forward."

The kickoff event helped mentors and mentees get to know each other and prepare them for follow-up interactions.

Assistant Dean for Career Development Tiffany Tucker shared that the mentoring program is not just a one-time event but a platform for sustained engagement. The program provides an "intrinsic value to mentors, giving them a chance to teach and network."

UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes closed the program by thanking the alumni participants for providing meaningful career advice to current students.

"We applaud our mentors for wanting to help the next generation of law students," Baynes said. "This program offers a chance for our UH Law Center students to meet influential and talented lawyers in our community who can help guide them."

For more information on the Professional Mentoring Program at UH Law Center, contact the Career Development Office at [lawcareer@uh.edu](mailto:lawcareer@uh.edu). □



## HONORING A LEGAL LEGACY: FAMILY ESTABLISHES DONN C. FULLENWEIDER SCHOLARSHIP TO SUPPORT UH LAW CENTER STUDENTS

The Fullenweider family, friends and colleagues funded a scholarship in memory of Donn C. Fullenweider, an alumnus of the University of Houston Law Center.

Earning his J.D. in 1958, Fullenweider belonged to one of the early graduating classes at the UH Law Center. He dedicated his career to practicing family law for 65 years, until his death at the age of 88.

According to family and friends, Fullenweider never stopped practicing law.

During more than half a century in the legal field, he earned numerous accolades. Fullenweider was inducted into the Hall of Legends by the State Bar of Texas (2004) for his "significant impact on the practice of family law." He was also named one of the "25 Greatest Lawyers of the Past Quarter Century" by Texas Lawyer (2010) and selected as an Outstanding 50 Year Lawyer by the Texas Bar Foundation (2016) for adhering to "the highest principles and tradition of the legal profession and service to the public."

Fullenweider's granddaughter is continuing the family's legal legacy as a rising 2L at the Law Center.

Memorial gifts may be directed to the Donn C. Fullenweider Endowed Scholarship at the University of Houston Law Foundation c/o University of Houston Law Center, Office of Alumni Relations, 4170 Martin Luther King Blvd, Houston, TX 77204-6060 or online at [giving.uh.edu/law](http://giving.uh.edu/law). □



Donn C. Fullenweider ((J.D. '58)





Jeff Mundy (J.D. '88)

## LEADING NATIONAL TRIAL LAWYER MUNDY '88 CHAMPIONS TEXAS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Environmental lawyer and University of Houston Law Center alumnus Jeff Mundy '88, was named as one of the Top 100 in 2023 by the National Trial Lawyers, marking his third year among the ranks.

The National Trial Lawyers is an invitation-only organization composed of high-caliber civil plaintiff and criminal defense attorneys from around the country. "Being asked to join

was a pleasant and unexpected surprise" for Mundy, founder of The Mundy Firm PLLC in Austin.

A staunch advocate for environmental conservation, Mundy focuses on land, wildlife and water protection, and personal injury. His work is mostly in South Texas and the Hill Country, where he has met "ranching families that are incredible stewards of their lands and fight valiantly to protect the wildlife."

Growing up, Mundy spent time hunting and fishing with his father nearly every weekend. As a Boy Scout, he camped along the Blanco River, filling buckets and canteens with pure river water to drink.

"I was able to see so many wonderful areas of Texas, which I now see being polluted, destroyed and vanishing in front of my eyes," Mundy said.

A "true turning point" in Mundy's practice occurred in 2011, when Houston's Jim Blackburn asked Mundy for help in trying *The Aransas Project v. Bryan Shaw, et al.* In 2010, The Aransas Project accused the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality of violating the Endangered Species Act, stating that by not allowing fresh water to flow from the San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers into the Aransas Refuge, 23 cranes died.

The initial victory in the case (later reversed by the Fifth Circuit) was the impetus for Mundy to combine his trial skills with "an ability to help endangered species and the habitat and water upon which they — and we — depend for survival."

Mundy recommended that aspiring trial lawyers "get themselves into a courtroom," even if for no charge. He approached the Whooping Crane trial driven simply by the desire to better the environment. □

## UHLC ALUMNI COUPLE ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES IN LEGAL EDUCATION



Jeff (J.D. '90) & Jenifer (J.D. '93) Cody

University of Houston Law Center alumni Jeff (J.D. '90) and Jenifer (J.D. '93) Cody are dedicated to providing opportunities for underrepresented groups within the legal field. The Codys recently established a scholarship, the Cody Scholarships for Opportunity, to support students from the Law Center's Pre-Law Pipeline Programs who choose to pursue their legal education at UHLC.

In an interview, Jeff Cody, US Managing Partner at Norton Rose Fulbright, delved into the impact of

On why it was important to become involved with the Law Center's Pre-Law Pipeline Program, Cody said:

"Jenifer and I believe it is important that the legal profession include people from all walks of life. As the managing partner of a large law firm, my perspective centers on our recruitment in the legal market, trying to hire the best and the brightest and make sure that we have well-rounded incoming classes. Diversity of thought and experiences create a better work environment and results in better outcomes for the attorneys, clients and entire firm.

The Pre-Law Pipeline Programs offer a way to accomplish this. The Pipeline Programs allow us to support people with varied life experiences, interests and paths into law school. We believe the pipeline program will prove very valuable as we move forward."

Cody commented on what made the scholarship special.

"Both Jenifer and I strongly believe in giving back and serving others. We want to support the Law Center and creating opportunities for first-generation groups and other students aspiring to attend law school. The scholarship is significant for us because it combines the pipeline initiative and our alma mater. □

legal education and the legacy of giving back to the University of Houston Law Center, the institution that helped shape their careers.

## FORMER FEDERAL JUDGE VANESSA GILMORE '81 FINDS NEW PASSION AS ARBITRATOR AND MEDIATOR

Following more than 27 years of distinguished service as a federal judge, Hon. Vanessa Gilmore quickly acclimated to a new role where she is able to use a similar skill set.

Since March 2022, Gilmore has worked as an arbitrator, mediator and referee/special master at JAMS: Mediation, Arbitration and ADR Services, the world's largest private alternative dispute resolution provider.

"I really enjoy the opportunity to help people come to a resolution of their problems and their issues," Gilmore, a member of the University of Houston Law Center Class of 1981, said. "I believe my experience on the bench makes me particularly well-suited to help people get to the bottom of the issues that are in contention and to figure out a way to reach some common ground."

The two aspects of Gilmore's current role are arbitration and mediation. While arbitration resembles the courtroom experience, she said that mediation is generally less adversarial in nature.

"In an arbitration, each side presents witnesses and exhibits, and then I write a final ruling or opinion at the end," Gilmore said. That's more akin to the trial experience.

At the time of her appointment in 1994, Gilmore was the youngest sitting federal judge in the U.S. and the first Law Center graduate to serve in

that role. She had previously worked at the Vickery, Kilbride, Gilmore and Vickery law firm where civil litigation was at the center of her practice.

She credits her community involvement as a major contributing factor that led her to become a federal judge.

"People already saw me as someone that committed to community service, who was interested in doing things to better the community that I lived in. I think that is as important as your legal skills and your legal acumen when you're looking for an opportunity to become a judge or serve in another public service type of position."

Gilmore presided over several high-profile cases, including a dispute between the ridesharing companies Lyft and Uber against Yellow Cab Houston, an environmental case that resulted in a cruise ship terminal in Galveston and a decade of litigation over the fallout of the Enron scandal. □



Vanessa Gilmore (J.D. '81)

## UHLC ALUMNUS KAYHAN PARSI '93 TURNED PASSION FOR BIOETHICS AND HEALTH CARE INTO ACADEMIC CAREER

University of Houston Law Center alumnus Kayhan Parsi (J.D. '93) was influenced by his parents' health care background. However, health law and bioethics were discovered to be his forte while attending UHLC.

Parsi, the immediate past president of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities, sheds light on his unique journey and how his experience at UHLC led him to a career as an academic bioethicist.

Reflecting on the factors that influenced his decision to pursue legal education at UHLC, Parsi stated:

"I considered going to graduate school to study history and even toyed with the idea of film school, but I eventually decided to apply to law school. Being in a major city like Houston was important to me, so the only law school I applied to in Texas was UHLC. Being a state-supported law school, UHLC was also incredibly affordable."

On why health law interests him, Parsi noted:

"Health law seemed to touch on so many aspects of life. At the time, UHLC offered two-week intersession courses where visiting faculty would come and teach courses on a variety of topics, such as genetics and the law, children's health law and comparative health law. I found these courses to be incredibly interesting."

Parsi talked about the ways becoming president of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities helped his career, saying:

"It gave me a much more national profile as an academic ethicist. Serving as president has also helped me have a better understanding of how a professional society works. As president, I worked closely with the board on a number of strategic goals and strategic initiatives, such as helping support the society and its growth, recruiting younger and new members into the field, making sure we have an excellent annual meeting and working on issues related to DEI, ethics consultation and health humanities. I'm particularly proud that our board was able to issue a statement on academic freedom this past summer. Serving as president gave me a deeper understanding of how our professional society works. It also gave me connections to a number of amazing people." □



Kayhan Parsi (J.D. '93)



## UH LAW CENTER EXPANDS BRIEFCASE PROGRAM WITH VIDEO SERIES

University of Houston Law Center's new video series focuses on the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. This series complements the Briefcase radio program on KUHF, launched in 2016.

UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes hosts both series; during this season, he will explore how the amendments relate to society today.

"Recently, the Supreme Court has reversed decades-old precedent affecting significant constitutional rights and has modified the interpretation and analysis of other long-existing constitutional and statutory frameworks. As such, it is more important than ever that the members of the public understand the guarantees afforded in the U.S. Constitution," Baynes said.

In 1791, the Bill of Rights became law. For more than 200 years, the Bill of Rights has protected individual freedoms and rights. While the language of the amendments remains the same, interpretations by the modern U.S. judicial system are changing.

This season's Briefcase series starts with the broad and complex First Amendment, which covers freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to peaceful assembly and the right of a citizen to petition the government.

"UH Law Center debuts these short videos to give members of the public easy access to understanding the U.S. Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights. We need this basic understanding more now than ever," Baynes added. □

## UHLIC STUDENTS LEARN IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DURING ABA'S NATIONAL PRO BONO WEEK



Participating in the 2023 Pro Bono week at UH Law Center are, from left, Clinical Associate Professor Ryan Marquez, Stasja Drecun (J.D. '22'), Drew Padley (J.D. '20), Karla Perez (J.D. '18), Franklin "Tripp" Hise (J.D. '22) and Clinical Associate Professor Christopher Heard.

The University of Houston Law Center hosted several events in October to celebrate The ABA's National Pro Bono Week, which acknowledges the remarkable impact lawyers make on the community by providing representation to those who cannot afford it.

Among the festivities was a panel discussion that focused on how the Law Center's clinical programs assist in legal career development. Speakers included alumni Stasja Drecun (J.D. '22'), Franklin "Tripp" Hise (J.D. '22), Karla Perez (J.D. '18) and Drew Padley (J.D. '20).

Perez commented on how participation in the clinics can be a positive extension to a resume.

"It was amazing to get that exposure and be hands-on," she said. "It made me very marketable when I was looking for internships because I had that

experience already."

Hise shared that the pro bono clinics have provided him with a source of inspiration.

"It's the simple things you do in the clinic that provide a lot of value to the community at large, he said. "Because I was in the clinic and enjoyed that experience, I made pro bono a priority."

Drecun emphasized that student advocates learn 80% of what you do as an attorney through the clinical experience.

"The sooner you are exposed, the more confidence you're going to have when serving your client," she said.

Padley echoed Drecun's sentiments, adding that participating in the clinic has many similarities to being a licensed attorney.

"The clinic is the most similar to what I do on a day-to-day basis," Padley said. "For that reason, I think it is very helpful."

Additional programming included a Clinic Open House and a Pro Bono Pop-Up where students spoke with various local aid organizations on how they can get involved.

Pro Bono Week events were organized by Clinical Associate Professor and Pro Bono Facilitator Alissa Gomez, Clinical Associate Professor, Assistant Dean of Clinical Programs and Director of the Entrepreneurship & Community Development Clinic Christopher Heard, and Clinical Associate Professor and Director of the Civil Justice Clinic Ryan Marquez.

For questions about how to get involved with pro bono at UHLC, contact Professor Alissa Rubin Gomez, at [argomez3@central.uh.edu](mailto:argomez3@central.uh.edu). □



The Women of Color in Leadership Forum hosted by St. John's School Unity Council welcomed panelists, from left, Elizabeth Trujillo, Kiran Verma, student Mackenzie Rice, Hélade Scutti-Santos and Brenda Rangel. Photo courtesy of St. John's School.

## UH LAW CENTER PROFESSOR TRUJILLO INSPIRES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH LEADERSHIP-FOCUSED COMMUNITY OUTREACH

University of Houston Law Center Professor Elizabeth Trujillo shared her career experiences and leadership fundamentals with students during the St. John's School Unity Council Women of Color in Leadership Forum in April.

"Leadership begins with ourselves — with knowing who we are, accepting who we are, and understanding what we are good at," Trujillo told attendees.

Trujillo is the Mary Ann & Lawrence E. Faust Professor of Law and the Founding Director for the Initiative on Global Law and Policy for the Americas at UH Law Center. She teaches first year Contracts and upper level international economic and business law classes, researching in the areas of trade, decarbonization strategies, and international law. She transitioned from practicing law to academia and emphasized the importance for students to make intentional choices that align with one's values and aspirations.

"Many people will ask a lot of you when you are talented, and especially as a person of color. You must know when you can say no and say yes to the opportunities that will allow you to contribute the best of yourself," said Trujillo.

Trujillo added, "Find mentors, connect with others, keep learning, help others be the best versions of themselves, and remain hopeful. In doing so, you will find that you will grow as a leader and find fulfillment in the process."

The forum's panel included Houston women leaders in the sciences and the humanities. The women in humanities speakers included:

1. Elizabeth Trujillo, University of Houston Law Center Professor and Founding Director of the Initiative on Global Law and Policy for the Americas
2. Kiran Verma, Founder and Executive Chef of Kiran's, an upscale Indian fusion restaurant
3. Hélade Scutti-Santos, Director of Language Instruction at Rice University
4. Dr. Brenda Rangel, Assistant Dean of Rice University Center for Education

The role of the St. John's School Unity Council Women of Color in Leadership Forum is "to promote an environment of acceptance, equality, and progress within the St. John's community, to discuss and address any issues that may make a student feel unwelcome in respect to diversity, to provide a safe haven for the diverse community at St. John's, and to make diversity of all sorts a well-known and well-understood presence in the St. John's community." □





UH LAW Center students, staff and faculty volunteer at the Houston Food Bank.

## UH LAW CENTER WELCOMES INCOMING STUDENTS WITH ENGAGING ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES, FOSTERING PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

The University of Houston Law Center welcomed its incoming class of 1Ls with a week of activities. Incoming students started their orientation in August by hearing remarks and insights from the dean, faculty, staff, upper-level students, alumni, and members of the legal community.

University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes greeted the class by saying, “We are very excited to officially welcome you to the UH Law Center community. Law school changes people’s lives. By going to law school, you have the opportunity to make a difference in your family, society, city, state, and the world. That’s the transformative power of legal education. Congratulations on being a member of the UH Law Center family.”

Additional welcome speakers included Assistant Dean for Admissions Pilar Mensah, Professor of Law and Assistant Dean of Opportunities and Community Meridith Duncan, and Student Bar Association President Natalie Luera.

Recent graduates and current students shared their law school experiences with the incoming 1Ls during two days of panel presentations.

The week of orientation activities continued with a professionalism dinner where students learned about the importance of establishing their professional identity early in their legal careers. Featured guest speakers included the Houston Bar Association President and Chamberlain Hrdlicka Partner Diana Gomez, U.S. District Judge George C. Hanks Jr., and UH Law alumnus and personal injury attorney Jacob Karam (J.D. '17).

The UH Law Center also encourages first-year students to participate in the 2023 Community Service Day to bond with class members and give back to the Houston community. Community Service Day was established in 2014 to engender a sense of public service in students.

Students volunteered for projects and organizations including the Houston Food Bank, Hermann Park – Japanese Garden, Native Seed Packing, and Houston Volunteer Lawyers Veterans Clinic. □

## UH LAW CENTER DELEGATION ATTENDS UH DAY AT THE CAPITOL

A group from the University of Houston Law Center went to Austin in March to support key legislative priorities that will help advance the university.

Law Center students Tyler Brewster, Lizzy Do, Cesar Rivera Infante, Hunter Mitchell and LaTheena Thomas, and Dean Leonard M. Baynes together with four busloads of University of Houston students descended on the Capitol.

The UHLC group along with other University of Houston faculty, students and staff met with special guests, state representatives and state senators. This session, the University of Houston requested a \$1 billion investment by the legislature to be used to improve research capabilities and propel UH to a Top 50 public university.

"It was a great day," said University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Many thanks to our wonderful Law Center students for coming to Austin for UH Day at the Capitol and advocating for a \$1 billion University of Houston endowment, support for increased student financial aid, and mental health counseling. Moreover, our students got insights into how our state government operates and developed expertise in advocating for a cause."

The UHLC delegation heard inspirational speeches from UH President Renu Khator, Chair of the UH Board of Regents Tilman Fertitta and alumnus and Texas State Representative Armando Walle '14. Baynes and the law students visited the offices of Texas State Senator Royce West



University of Houston Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes (center) is joined by UHLC students, from left, Hunter Mitchell, Tyler Brewster, Lizzy Do, Cesar Rivera Infante and LaTheena Thomas in Austin for UH Day at the Capitol on Thursday, March 2.

'79, Texas State Representative Ann Johnson and Texas State Senator Brandon Creighton.

"I joined my colleagues in Austin for University of Houston Day at the Capitol. We met with legislative members and their staffs to advocate for UH priorities and were also able to personally thank the members for the \$45 million that was given to the University of Houston Law Center to complete our beautiful new John M. O'Quinn Law Building," said Tyler Brewster, UHLC Student Bar Association President and 2L.

In between meetings, the group was entertained by student performances from the UH Mariachi Pumas and Concert Chorale.

"I had a great time advocating for UH alongside my classmates at the Texas Capitol. It was truly a unique experience. It was also inspirational to meet and hear from the various speakers and UH alumni" said Lizzy Do, UHLC Asian Law Students Association President, incoming Houston Journal of Health Law & Policy Editor-in-Chief, and 2L. □

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER EMPOWERS TOMORROW'S LEGAL MINDS WITH ASPIRING LAWYER MAGAZINE

The University of Houston Law Center in September released its second issue of *Aspiring Lawyer*, an online magazine that offers insights, resources and advice for individuals interested in a legal career. The publication caters to undergraduates and those interested in pursuing the legal profession, featuring articles on topics from law school admissions, legal news and career development to profiles of donors, alumni, faculty and students.

"Aspiring Lawyer magazine is designed to complement UH Law Center's award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, which is a race-neutral program designed to increase the representation of law students from low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented backgrounds," said Leonard M. Baynes, Dean of the University of Houston Law Center.

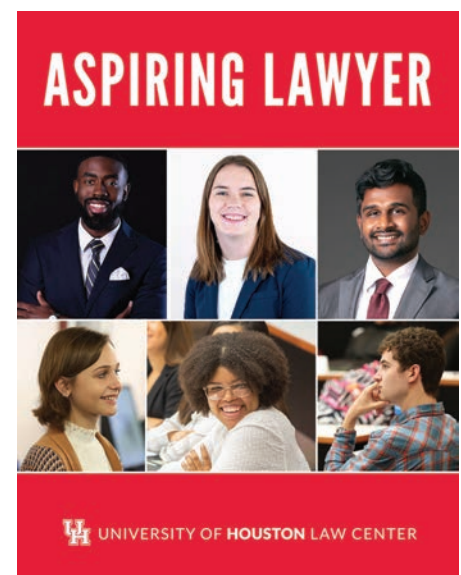
The magazine contains essential information pertinent to pursuing and excelling in the legal field. It offers tips such as the importance of networking, strategies in preparation for the LSAT and mentorship opportunities.

"Through this innovative magazine, I am thrilled that the University of Houston Law Center has stepped up again to provide foundational law school preparatory information to those who need it most," said Mariesha Keys, Director of the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs.

Since the launch of the first pipeline program in 2015, 140 scholars have been accepted to law school and have been awarded over \$11.1 million in scholarships. Students who participate in the LSAT prep curriculum have seen a median LSAT score increase of 6-14 points with the highest individual LSAT score increase of 27 points.

Aspiring Lawyer expands the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs

outreach by ensuring that students from first-generation, low-income or underrepresented backgrounds are provided the information, resources and direction essential for career growth, regardless of their enrollment in the Pipeline Programs. □







Featured speaker Reginald Dwayne Betts (center) is joined by event sponsors (from left) UH College of Education Interim Dean Cathy Horn, UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes and Bracewell LLP D&I and Community Outreach Director Monica Parker and Bracewell LLP Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair and Partner Jeff Vaden.

## A BOOK IS A LIFE RAFT SAYS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM ADVOCATE DURING A BLACK HISTORY MONTH PERFORMANCE AT UH LAW CENTER

Award-winning author, 2021 MacArthur Fellow and lawyer Reginald Dwayne Betts spoke about the transformative power of reading and explored the prison experience through poetry during his performance “Felon: An American Washi Tale” at the University of Houston Law Center during Black History Month.

Incarcerated at 16, Betts started writing poetry in prison. He went on to become a critically acclaimed writer and Yale Law School graduate.

“The only thing that has taught me how to resolve whatever horrors I’ve seen and whatever horrors I’ve inflicted on somebody else is the time I have spent with books,” Betts said on the power of literature. “So much of what we become is based on our belief of what is possible for us.”

A backdrop to the performance was an arched handcrafted bookshelf. Betts explained that the curved design allows access to books on both sides and creates a community. The shelf is part of Freedom Reads, a nonprofit organization he founded in 2020 that opens libraries in prisons.

“Libraries present a world of possibility and opportunity that doesn’t exist without it,” Betts said on the importance of his mission to bring books into prisons.

According to the project page, Freedom Reads has shipped more than 77,000 books across 40 states.

During the performance, Betts shared pieces from his book “Felon,” which won the 2020 American Book Award.

He captures the time lost to incarceration in “Felon” stating, “we first discovered jail cells decades ago, as teenagers & just today, a mirror reminded me of my disappeared self.”

Betts holds a B.A. from the University of Maryland; an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College; and a J.D. from Yale Law School. He is a Ph.D. in Law candidate at Yale and, as a Liman Fellow, he spent a year representing clients in the New Haven Public Defender’s Office.

He was also one of 25 selected for the 2021 MacArthur Fellowship — also known as a genius grant, that awards exceptionally talented and creative individuals with a significant, unrestricted grant.

The event was part of the Bracewell LLP Distinguished Lecture in Racial and Social Justice and was co-sponsored by Bracewell LLP, the University of Houston Law Center and the University of Houston College of Education.

For more information on this speaker please visit: [www.simonspeakers.com](http://www.simonspeakers.com). □

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CLINIC SECURES CAT VICTORY FOR SALVADORAN TATTOO ARTIST AFTER DECADE-LONG LEGAL BATTLE

University of Houston Law Center Immigration Clinic Senior Clinical Supervisor Vanessa Lopez and Immigration Clinic student Anusha DeSilva Bradley won a withholding of removal under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) for their client, a tattoo artist from El Salvador.

“Getting protection under CAT is extremely difficult in Texas,” said Anna Cabot, University of Houston Law Center Clinical Associate Professor and Immigration Clinic Director. “This is a significant victory for the Clinic and the client after a decade-long legal battle.”

The client who had numerous visible tattoos was falsely marked as a gang member in El Salvador and was stopped nearly every time he left his house, suffering repeated and violent encounters with the El Salvadoran police and military because of his tattoos.

“He was afraid for his life, and after the El Salvadoran police threatened and laughed at him, he fled. Once in the United States, he was immediately placed in removal proceedings,” Lopez said.

The legal process started in 2013, the client won CAT protection while representing himself at the York Detention Facility in Pennsylvania, but the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appealed. The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) remanded for more fact-finding, and with representation, the client won CAT protection again.

However, DHS appealed again, and the BIA again remanded the case to the Immigration Judge. In this most recent hearing, Lopez and Bradley presented a strong case, resulting in the judge granting CAT protection and DHS waiving the appeal.

“This final CAT grant gives the client the stability he needs to move forward with life and ends a decade of what-ifs,” Lopez said. □



University of Houston Law Center Immigration Clinic clients left with Senior Clinical Supervisor Vanessa Lopez and Immigration Clinic student Anusha DeSilva Bradley right.



UHLC Dean Leonard M. Baynes congratulates Director of the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs Mariesha Keys (J.D. '19) on her new role.

## UH LAW CENTER'S PRE-LAW PIPELINE PROGRAM UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP WITH DIRECTOR MARIESHA KEYS '19

The University of Houston Law Center welcomed Mariesha Keys this fall as the new director of the award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs, a race-neutral initiative designed to increase the

representation of law students from low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented backgrounds.

Keys succeeds founding director Kristen Guiseppi, who stepped down after nine years of service. Under Guiseppi's leadership, the Pipeline Programs was recognized for its excellence by the ABA and the UH Board of Regents, and more than 140 students from a wide variety of backgrounds were accepted into law schools garnering millions of dollars of scholarships and significantly increasing their LSAT scores.

“UH Law has the good fortune that Mariesha Keys will be filling Kristen's very big shoes. Mariesha has devoted her life to public service and for the past few years served as the Law Center's Assistant Director of Admissions. Mariesha has the passion and the skills to continue Kristen's important legacy and work,” said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes.

Keys, a 2019 alumna of the Law Center, was in the Pipeline

Program's inaugural class.

“The Pre-Law Pipeline Programs provided invaluable experience and exposure to all facets of the legal profession and solidified my interest and desire to attend law school. As the newly appointed director of this dynamic, national, award-winning program, I am proud of our scholars' achievements,” Keys said. “I aim to continue the legacy and impact of the Pre-Law Pipeline Programs.”

Since the launch of the first pipeline program in 2015, students who participated in the LSAT prep curriculum have seen a median LSAT score increase of 6-14 points with the highest individual LSAT score increase of 27 points. College students from over 100 undergraduate institutions have participated in the program during its lifespan.

The award-winning Pre-Law Pipeline Programs has been recognized by the American Bar Association with the 2019 Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Award for Excellence in Pipeline Diversity, honored by the University of Houston Board of Regents with an Academic Excellence Award, cited in the Law Center's HEED Award and received a Congressional Recognition from the 18th Congressional District of Texas. The program had received support from several partner institutions and sponsors, including AccessLex and LSAC.

For information on how to support the Pre-Law Pipeline Program, contact [uhprelaw@central.uh.edu](mailto:uhprelaw@central.uh.edu). □



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## 3L and Recent Graduate Hiring Initiative

In 2023, the Career Development Office (CDO) hosted several training, recruiting, and networking programs. CDO JD career counselors facilitated mandatory professional development training to all JD students through the Passport to Success Professional Development Series. Students networked with Houston area federal court judges and former judicial law clerks at the inaugural Judicial Lunch & Learn, with transactional law attorneys at the inaugural Transactional Lunch & Learn, with alumni and other attorneys at the UHLC Professional Mentoring Program kick-off, and with OCI employers at the Meet the OCI Employers Reception. Employers recruited talented students and graduates through the On-Campus Interview Program (OCI), the Government and Public Interest Table Talk (GPITT), and the Fall Small & Midsize Firm Open House.

The CDO also launched the 3L Hiring Initiative, to assist graduating students with securing post-bar employment. Due to the success of the 2023 3L Hiring Initiative, we have expanded the program to include recent graduates. Through the 2024 3L and Recent Graduate Hiring Initiative, employers can gain a preview of the talent the UH Law Center has to offer:

### Recent Graduate and 3L Resume Books - Ongoing

- Highlights the excellent talent of UH Law Center Recent Graduates and 3L students seeking post-bar employment.
- Interview candidates at your convenience.
- To request a copy of the Recent Graduate Resume Book email the CDO Director of Employer Relations & Development at: [ctjacks5@central.uh.edu](mailto:ctjacks5@central.uh.edu).

### CDO Job Bank - Ongoing

- Post jobs for law students and recent graduates within the CDO Symplicity Job Bank.
- To post a job: <https://www.law.uh.edu/career/employer/posting.asp>.

### Graduate Apprentice Program – Now through February 2024

- Encourages employers to hire a recent graduate on a trial basis to determine fit by offsetting the cost of initial hiring.
- Employers hire recent graduates for full-time, long-term employment by March 2024.
- To learn more: contact the CDO Director of Employer Relations & Development at [ctjacks5@central.uh.edu](mailto:ctjacks5@central.uh.edu).

### Government & Public Interest Table Talk – January 26, 2024

- Invites government agencies and public interest organizations to campus to meet and interview UH Law Center students.
- Recruit 1Ls and 2Ls for internships and 3Ls and recent grads for post-graduate fellowships or post-bar employment.
- Employers register now through January 19, 2024,
- To learn more and register: <https://www.law.uh.edu/career/employer/GPITT.asp>.

### Judicial Lunch & Learn – February 16, 2024

- Houston and Galveston area federal court and state appellate court judges and former judicial law clerks share their insights into the benefits of judicial clerkships and internships.
- Students network with judges and former judicial law clerks in a relaxed setting.
- To learn more: contact the CDO Director of Internship & Externship Programs at [wapowers@central.uh.edu](mailto:wapowers@central.uh.edu).

### Disputes over Dinner: A Litigation Learning Event – February 29, 2024

- Practicing attorneys share their insights on litigating, trying cases, and resolving legal disputes with law students over dinner.
- Attorneys in varied litigation, trial, appellate, or alternative dispute resolution practices are invited to attend.
- Volunteer to share your experience and insight: contact the CDO Director of Employer Relations & Development at [ctjacks5@central.uh.edu](mailto:ctjacks5@central.uh.edu).

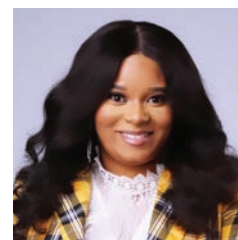
### Spring Small & Midsize Firm Open House – March 22, 2024

- Invites law firms with 50 or fewer attorneys to campus to recruit recent graduates and 3Ls for post-bar positions and 1Ls and 2Ls for legal internships.
- Employers informally interview students and collect resumes for current or future employment opportunities.
- Employer registration: January 29 - March 15, 2024.
- To learn more: visit <https://www.law.uh.edu/career/employer/Small-Midsize-Firm-Open-House.asp>.

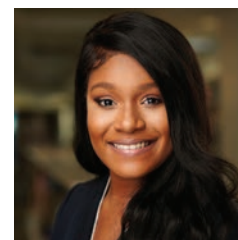
## WELCOME NEW CDO STAFF

**Kaila Roberson**, Associate Director for Career Development, comes to the Career Development Office after working as a Senior Director for Legal Education at Kaplan North America. Kaila will work closely with 3L students and assist them with finding temporary and post-graduate employment. Kaila will also support the office's professional development programming efforts, particularly the 2L and 3L Passport to Success sessions.

**Kaie Bodden**, Associate Director for Career Development, joined the Career Development Office after working in the Appeals & Legal Issues practice group at Greenberg Traurig, LLP in Austin, Texas after law school. Kaie will counsel UHLC students and assist with application materials and interview preparation in addition to supporting the office's professional development programming efforts.



**KAILA ROBERSION**



**KAIE BODDEN**

# FUEL THE FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP CAMPAIGN

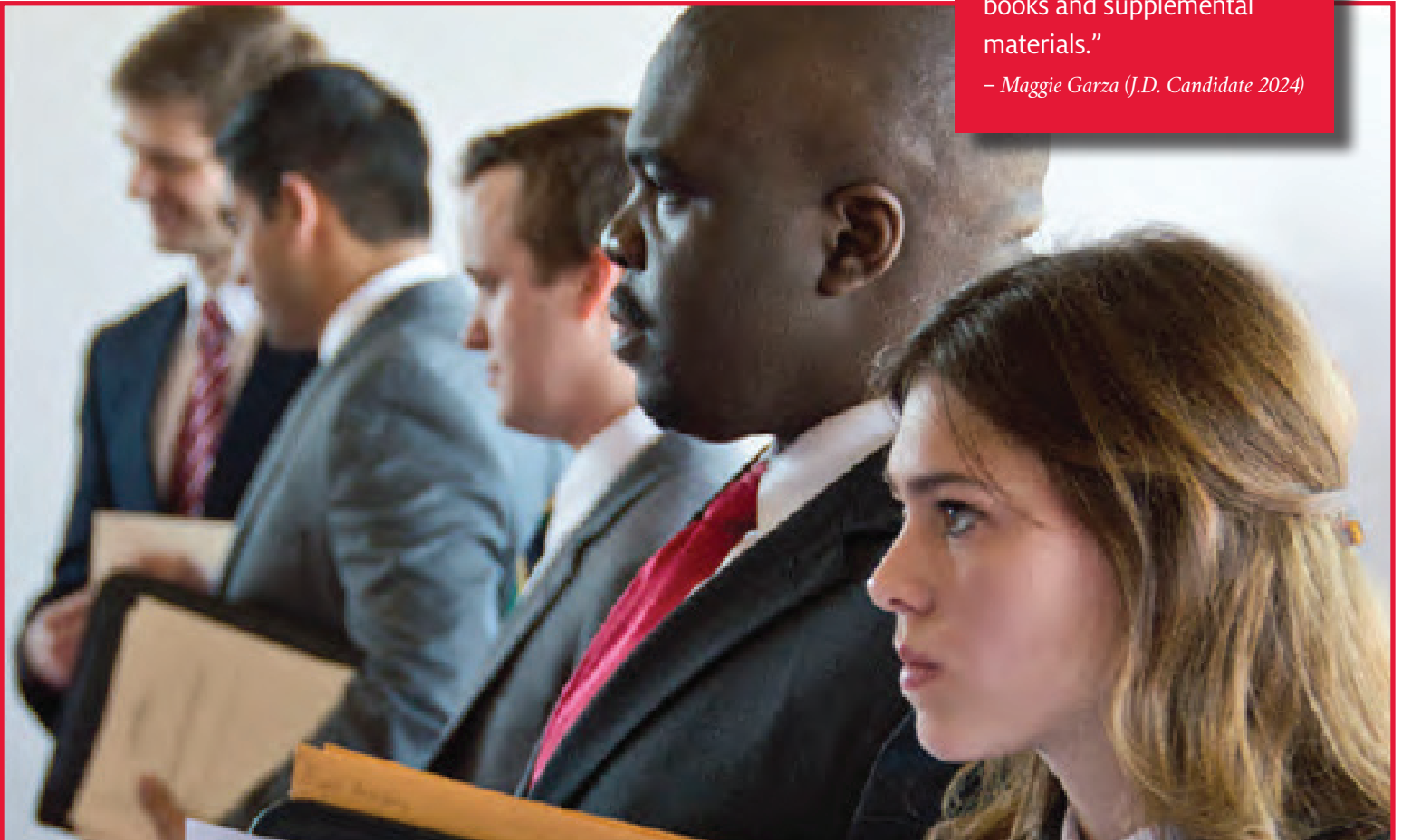
Imagine a world where every bright, driven law student has the opportunity to excel, regardless of their financial background. That is the reality we are building here at the University of Houston Law Center. We attract high-caliber students, and a robust scholarship program is crucial to recruiting and retraining top talent. Scholarships help remove financial barriers and ensure students can reach their full potential.

To be part of a community who supports the legal minds of tomorrow, please contact Brena Baumann-Gonzalez (J.D. '90) at **bbaumann@central.uh.edu** or **713.743.0978** for scholarship information.



"Aside from alleviating the stress of being able to focus on class and help my mom financially, I was also able to afford tools to succeed in class like a desk, monitor, books and supplemental materials."

– Maggie Garza (J.D. Candidate 2024)





# 2023 Holiday Coffee











## UH LAW CENTER RAISES \$445,000 DURING ‘BOLD & BRIGHT’ GALA NIGHT

The University of Houston Law Center and the University of Houston Law Center Alumni Association presented the 46th Annual Law Gala & Auction with the theme “Bold & Bright.” Nearly 400 UH Law Center alumni, faculty, and friends attended, adorned in vibrant colors from Cougar red, canary yellow, fierce fuchsia and lively lime.

The gala, held at the Post Oak Hotel in Uptown Houston in May, celebrated the achievements of the 2023 UH Law Alumni Association Award recipients and raised \$445,000 for scholarships and UH Law Center initiatives.

The 2023 Law Gala co-chairs Michelle E. Gray ’11 and Buddy Gray along with UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes served as hosts for the festivities.

“This year’s Gala was a success, thanks in large part to the many firms and individuals who sponsored and contributed. A special thanks to those individuals on the Host Committee, everyone who donated, and the two ladies behind the scenes, Ann Dick and Dean Sondra Tennessee. It was an honor to Chair the event and to support the bold and bright future of the University of Houston Law Center,” said Michelle Gray.

The night began with an electrifying display as LED Angel Dancers gracefully illuminated the stage and reached new heights with LED

stilt walkers who ushered guests at the end of the evening.

Celebrants had the opportunity to bid on two Shasta-themed paintings by University of Houston President Renu Khator. Other popular auction items included a bourbon tasting dinner with Hon. Ravi K. Sandill ’01 and James Beard Award Winning Chef Justin Yu and vacation getaways to Cabo San Lucas and Saint-Martin.

The gala and auction proceeds will fund scholarships, advocacy programs, faculty research, student organizations, library acquisitions, technology advances, student recruitment, and student activities at the UH Law Center.

“We have much to celebrate,” said UH Law Center Dean Leonard M. Baynes. “The Law Center has moved into our fourth home – the ultramodern John M. O’Quinn Law Building. Our Law Center is a world-class law school in a world-class city, and we now have a world-class building. My thanks again to all the alumni and donors who contributed to our new state-of-the-art facility and who have named rooms, classrooms, and other spaces. Your philanthropy and generosity have helped our Law Center to shine even bolder and brighter.”

The law building, which opened in fall 2022, is the newest law school building in Texas and one of the newest in the country. □

# THE 2023 UH LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARD WINNERS



**DEAN'S AWARD**  
Danny M. Sheena '95



**PRESIDENT'S AWARD**  
Laura Gibson '84



**ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR AWARD**  
Capt. Reginald E. McKamie,  
USN (Ret.) '86



**CORPORATE SECTOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
Melody J. Wang '12



**FACULTY DISTINCTION AWARD**  
Professor Jessica L. Roberts



**HONORARY ALUMNUS AWARD**  
Judge Andrew M. Edison



**HONORARY ALUMNUS AWARD**  
Professor Craig Joyce



**JAMES M. ROACH LAW FUND VOLUNTEER AWARD**  
William J. Jackson '92



**LAW GALA & AUCTION AWARD**  
Troy ('98) & Christin  
Chandler



**PRIVATE PRACTICE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
Edwin Sullivan '97



**PUBLIC/NON-PROFIT SECTOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
Drew Willey '14



**PRO BONO/COMMUNITY SERVICE & LEADERSHIP AWARD**  
Jennifer A. Hasley '95



**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AWARD**  
Shannon A.S. Quadros '10



**RISING STAR AWARD**  
Edward B. Goolsby '14



**RISING STAR AWARD**  
Kim Mai '12



# 2023 LAW GALA



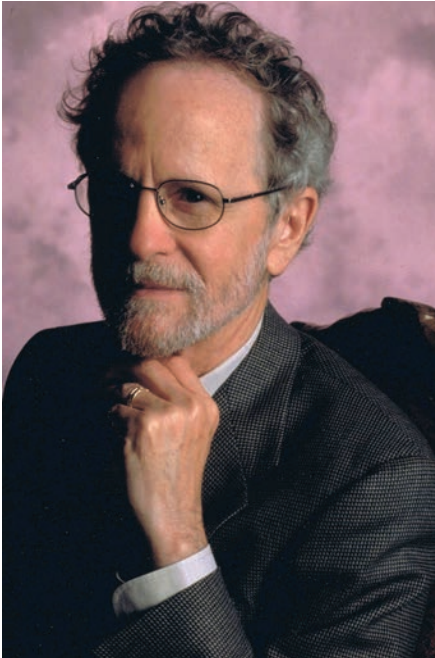






# IN MEMORIAM

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER REMEMBERS PROFESSOR G. SIDNEY BUCHANAN



Emeritus G. Sidney Buchanan

University of Houston Law Center Professor Emeritus G. Sidney Buchanan died Saturday, Jan. 7 at the age of 89 after a long illness.

Buchanan joined the Law Center faculty in 1967, teaching constitutional law, wills and trusts. In 1970, Buchanan became the first faculty advisor to the fledgling Houston Law Review, a position he held until his retirement in 2004.

For more than three decades, Buchanan provided advice and counsel to approximately 1,000 law review students. Upon his retirement, numerous former students paid their respects with tribute articles in the Houston Law Review.

In the tributes, many former students remembered Buchanan, known affectionately as the singing professor, for his “legal lyrics set to classic musical scores” and were “grateful for the enthusiasm” he brought to class that was “unequaled and contagious.”

Known as an excellent teacher, Buchanan received recognition for his expertise in the classroom by earning Outstanding Professor of Year three times. In 2001, he received the University of Houston Enron Teaching Excellence Award, followed by winning the 2002 Piper Professor Award for superior teaching at the college level in Texas. Buchanan is the only University of Houston professor to receive this statewide honor for teaching law.

He served as Associate Dean for Student Affairs and had the distinction of holding the Baker Botts Professorship.

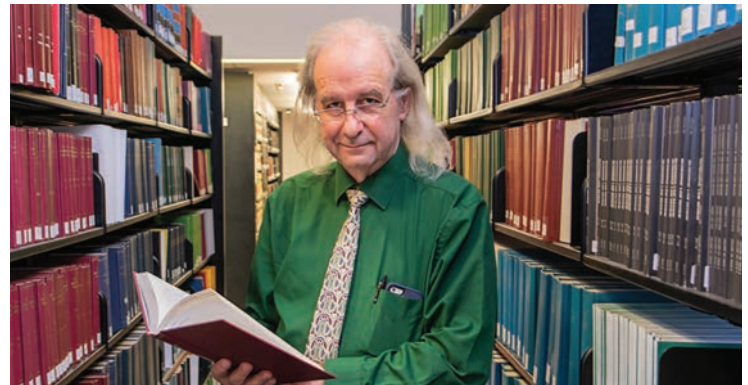
Buchanan graduated from Princeton University in 1956 and received his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1959. □

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER MOURNS THE PASSING OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS ROBERT PALMER

University of Houston Law Center Professor Emeritus Robert C. Palmer, a scholar of American and English legal history, died in March 2023.

He held the Cullen Chair of History and Law at the University of Houston until retirement. Palmer also held a dual appointment with the UH College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, teaching in the Department of History and serving on multiple committees targeting the writing and development of graduate students’ dissertations and theses.

Palmer made documents from Medieval and Early Modern England virtually accessible by launching the Anglo-American Legal Tradition (AALT) website in 2006 under a license from the National Archives in London held by the University of Houston Law Center Library. Targeting English legal history from 1200-1880, Palmer was a pioneer in digitization, opening previously rare English law to the world through reliable documentation.



Emeritus Robert C. Palmer

The Wiki for the Anglo-American Legal Tradition (WAALT) website he created provides a collaborative model for researchers to discuss findings and catalog errors. Palmer continued his work on WAALT after retirement to further expand historical research of England and Wales.

Palmer received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Oregon and both his master’s degree and doctorate from the University of Iowa. He also served on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Board of Directors for the American Society for Legal History. □

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## 2024 Black History Month Lecture

Featuring: Matthew Delmont, Ph.D.

Frank J. Guarini Associate Dean of International Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies and the Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor of History

Monday, February 5, 2024, 6:30PM – 8:30PM Central

In-Person and Virtual, John M. O'Quinn Law Building  
4170 Martin Luther King Blvd  
Houston, TX 77204-6060

[Register Here](#)

## FREE SPEECH AND HATE SPEECH WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE

Thursday February 8, 2024, 6:00PM Central

In-Person and Virtual, John M. O'Quinn Law Building  
4170 Martin Luther King Blvd  
Houston, TX 77204-6060

[RSVP Here](#)

## Legal, Political, and Ethical Dimensions of Presidential Indictments

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 4:00-6:00PM Central

Virtual

Approved for 2 hours of Texas MCLE credit, of which .50 is ethics credit

[Register Here](#)



## 6th Annual University of Houston Law Center Denney L. Wright International Energy Tax Conference and The Houston Business and Tax Law Journal's 24th Annual Symposium

Friday, March 22, 2024, 9:00AM – 6:30PM Central

In-Person, *CLE Pending*

[Save The Date](#)



## 2024 Yale L. Rosenberg Memorial Lecture

featuring Noah R. Feldman

Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law

Director, Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

<https://law.uh.edu/rosenberg/>

[Save The Date](#)

## 47th Annual Law Gala & Auction

Saturday, April 6, 2024

The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Houston

1600 West Loop South

Houston, TX 77027

<https://www.law.uh.edu/alumni/gala/>

[Register Here](#)



## 8th Annual North American Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources Conference

Thursday, April 18, 2024,

1:00PM – 5:00PM Central

In-Person, *CLE Pending Lecture*

[Save The Date](#)







UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON** LAW CENTER

University of Houston  
Law Center  
4170 Martin Luther King Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77204-6060

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
HOUSTON, TEXAS  
PERMIT NO. 5910

## STAY **CONNECTED**

We are committed to keeping alumni and friends engaged and informed.  
Update your contact information at [uh.edu/giving/update-info](http://uh.edu/giving/update-info)  
and make a gift at [law.uh.edu/giving](http://law.uh.edu/giving)



/uhlawcenter



/UniversityOfHoustonLawCenter



@uhlaw



/UHLawCenter



[law.uh.edu/](http://law.uh.edu/)

### WANT TO HEAR FROM US?

Sign up to get news and  
event emails for all UH Law  
Center communications at  
[www.law.uh.edu/alumni/  
sign-up-ebriefcase.asp](http://www.law.uh.edu/alumni/sign-up-ebriefcase.asp).

### CLE PROGRAMS FOR UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LAW CENTER ALUMNI

Are you looking for a convenient  
way to meet your CLE  
requirements? The University of  
Houston Law Center offers year-  
round CLE programming.

For more information on upcoming  
programs, visit [www.law.uh.edu/  
CLE](http://www.law.uh.edu/CLE) or email [lawalumni@uh.edu](mailto:lawalumni@uh.edu).