WOMEN in the LEGAL PROFESSION

Dean Wendy F. Hensel and others discuss leadership, success and challenges
2018 spring graduates
J.D.: 183
LL.M.: 18
Number of pro bono hours: 11,000
Graduated with pro bono distinction: 44
Graduated with academic honors: 80
Class Gift: more than $8,000
Commencement speaker: Cynthia H. Coffman (J.D.’91)
Student speaker: Mike Hodell (J.D.’18)
Read more at news.gsu.edu/law-commencement-2018.
Andrea M. Beltran-Rodriguez (J.D.’18) trained dogs for the Guide Dog Foundation while she was in law school. Read more at law.gsu.edu/Beltran-guide-dog.
WOMEN IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

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Georgia State Law Magazine is published by Georgia State University College of Law for alumni, students, faculty, staff and supporters.

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WHEN I BEGAN AS A STUDENT at Harvard Law School more than two decades ago, I heard stories about the days when there were only a handful of women law students in attendance. I remember being incredibly grateful that these women had the courage to demand a seat at the table for me and my female classmates, who then filled about 30 percent of the incoming class.

Women before and since then have broken down barriers in the legal profession on a daily basis, and law schools are no different. In 2016, for the first time, the number of women in the first year of law school nationally exceeded that of men. Law faculties are now as diverse in gender as the profession, and the number of women serving as deans has risen dramatically.

There is no question that both Georgia State University and the College of Law have always valued diversity. I am proud to follow in the footsteps and stand on the shoulders of Marjorie Fine Knowles, Marjorie Girth and Janice Griffith, all of whom have led this law school with distinction. It may be that we are the only law school in the country that has had a majority of our deans over time be women. That is an incredible legacy and stands as a testament of our commitment to rewarding talent in whatever form.

I know you will enjoy reading stories about our incredible alumnae who continue in this same tradition. Phi Nguyen (J.D. ’09) on page 21 is working hard to expand voting rights and immigrant rights through impact litigation. Susanne Hollinger (J.D. ’08) talks about her experience as the head of patents for The Coca-Cola Co. on page 23, and Bea Yorker (J.D. ’88) explores the impact of her research for abused children on page 18. Wherever you care to look, there are Georgia State lawyers making a difference in their communities and serving as role models for future generations of women.

Although much remains to be done to ensure women’s equality, there is also much about which to be proud. We have been and will continue to be the law school that provides access to all students seeking to make an impact. Look for Georgia State lawyers on the front lines of the fight for equality. We’ll be there in force.

Wendy F. Hensel
Dean and Professor of Law
“Georgia State University College of Law had such a great deal to do with why I stand here as mayor of this city,” said Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms (J.D. ’94) at a reception in her honor hosted by the Ronald J. Freeman Chapter of the National Black Law Students Association (BLSA).

“Georgia State helped create a work ethic in me that really has made all the difference,” Bottoms said when she struggled her first semester of law school, her husband, Derek Bottoms (J.D. ’94), whom she met at Georgia State Law, motivated her.

“Derek said to me what we should all say to each other: ‘You can do it, you are smart, and you are able,’” she said.

By her second year, Bottoms was working full time and participating in an externship with improved grades.

“I realized ... [being successful] was really about what I did for myself and how I believed in myself,” said Bottoms, a former BLSA member.

Bottoms said she shared her story to encourage students who question their abilities. “Your degree from Georgia State can get you anywhere in this world,” she said. “Don’t ever doubt that, don’t ever run away from it, and celebrate all that you’ve been called to do.”

One of the first things Bottoms did as mayor was sign an ordinance to end cash bail for most minor, nonviolent offenses handled by municipal court. Mawuli Davis (J.D. ’02), a member of the mayor’s transition team, and Tiffany W. Roberts (J.D. ’08), adjunct professor and deputy director of the National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism, were among those advocating for reform.

“The first time we talked about [cash bail reform], I said, ‘I don’t know enough about it.’ But because there were people in this room who knew about it and brought it to my attention, it has already made a difference,” Bottoms said.

“If there are things you are passionate about, don’t keep it to yourself, because it can make a difference in people’s lives — it will make a difference in people’s lives.

“Being elected the 60th mayor of this city has truly been the greatest honor of my life … because I get to make a difference.”
Center for Access to Justice receives grant

Georgia State Law’s Center for Access to Justice received a $24,000 Opportunity Grant from the American Bar Endowment (ABE), an independent 501(c)(3) public charity, to support a pilot study on individuals’ experiences and interactions with dispossessory courts, which handle eviction proceedings.

“There has been little research relating to evictions conducted in the South, and even less outside of urban areas. As a result, we have very little insight into whether and how the process differs in more rural parts of the state,” said Lauren Sudeall Lucas, Center for Access to Justice founding faculty director, associate professor of law and one of the study’s principal investigators.

According to Lucas, there are no reliable figures on a statewide level for how many people are evicted, where they are evicted and the underlying causes of those evictions.

The project is in partnership with the Georgia Legal Services Program, and Georgia State Department of Sociology assistant professor Daniel Pasciuti will serve as principal investigator with Lucas.

The center also released a report, “Mississippi’s No-Counsel Courts,” detailing the denial of counsel in state criminal courts in Mississippi in violation of the Constitution’s Sixth Amendment. The report incorporates the observations of Georgia State Law students who participated in the center’s 2017 Alternative Spring Break trip to Jackson, Miss. Working with the Office of the State Public Defender, the students spent the week identifying trends in indigent defendants’ experiences in state criminal courts.

Read more at news.gsu.edu/Mississippi-courts-report.

Corpus Linguistics and the Constitution

Did those who framed and ratified the Constitution have different understandings than we do today of phrases such as executive power, excessive bail and cruel and unusual punishments? Students presented new insights on the original meaning of the Constitution using “big data” of corpus linguistics to Justices Nels Peterson and Keith Blackwell of the Supreme Court of Georgia and Georgia Court of Appeals judges Sara Doyle, Stephen Dillard and Carla Wong.

Read more at news.gsu.edu/corpus-linguistics.

‘Georgia State believed I was worth taking a chance on’

Alexandra Armbuster (J.D. ’20) shared the story of her struggle with addiction, which led to overdoses and arrests, at the annual Scholarship Donor and Recipient Recognition Award Luncheon. After getting sober, Armbuster decided to pursue law so she could help others access treatment.

“Serving time in jail and living as an active addict for so many years opened up my eyes and my heart to the systemic inequalities in our justice system. The present emphasis on punishment, over rehabilitation, prevents convicted criminals from getting jobs, pursuing an education and effectively re-entering into society,” she said.

Armbuster is grateful that Georgia State Law and the Catherine C. Henson Law Scholarship is providing her with an avenue to pursue her passion.

“I hope one day I can help someone like me to get that second chance that will change their whole life,” she said. “This path has given my life meaning and helped me to realize that my struggles have a bigger purpose. Your scholarship donations make all of this possible, and I hope that I can convey my gratitude for your generosity.”

Armbuster was one of 151 students who received scholarships for the 2017–18 academic year. At the luncheon, the recipients met with the scholarship donors. Read more at news.gsu.edu/2018-scholarship-donor-lunch.

Armbuster was also featured in the Georgia State University alumni magazine. Read her story at news.gsu.edu/magazine/summer2018/a-life-worth-fighting-for.
Taxpayer clinic anniversary
The Philip C. Cook Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic celebrated its 25th anniversary with a reception at the College of Law in March. Nina E. Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, was the guest speaker.

Wood (J.D.’94) honored with Trailblazer Award
The Georgia Latino Law Foundation honored Jessica J. Wood (J.D. ’94) with the Trailblazer Award, which recognizes attorneys who have helped amplify the foundation’s mission to guide and mentor Latino law students.

“She has gone above and beyond in mentoring and being available,” said Ana Maria Martinez (J.D. ’09), Georgia Latino Law Foundation founder. “She’s not Latina, but she really values these students and our community.”

Wood said her efforts are simply supporting people and an organization she believes in.

“GLLF’s architecture is carefully put in place. Everything Ana Maria Martinez does is purposeful,” Wood said.

Explaining her tendency to “push people to the front of the line,” Wood called upon her time at Georgia State Law. “My experience at the college and leadership training in bar organizations showed me how to help propel people forward.

“Georgia State Law has students with a wide range of ages, experiences, and backgrounds, including many who are the first in their family to attend college or law school,” Wood said. “I am impressed by the efforts of Lyn Knapp (senior director of the Center for Professional Development & Career Strategies), Amy McCarthy (J.D. ’02) (director), and alums like Ana Maria, who ensure that these students get appropriate support from the school and the community.”

Martinez also drew inspiration from her experience at Georgia State Law when starting the foundation. “The mentoring of strong women like Wendy Hensel that I received greatly educated me in how invaluable mentorship is for success,” she said.

Wood is a principal at Bodker, Ramsey, Andrews, Winograd & Wildstein, where she focuses on commercial litigation. She serves on the Atlanta Bar Association’s Board of Directors and on advisory boards for the Atlanta Legal Aid Society and Good Thinking, a nonprofit organization that creates communications strategies for other nonprofits. She also started Water Cooler Office Hours, a mentoring program for those in the legal field.

Health is a Human Right: Race and Place in America exhibit extended!
View the exhibit at Georgia State Law, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and after hours by appointment. Visit publichealth.gsu.edu/health-exhibit for more details and to view the online exhibit.

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Jester-George retires

Working in the mailroom to learn a business may be old-school advice. But that spot worked well for Cheryl Jester-George, Georgia State Law’s former senior director of admissions, who retired June 30.

“It’s been awesome,” Jester-George said of her 36-year career.

Her graduate student work-study assignment was in the university’s admissions mailroom. She soon became a receptionist in admissions, processing applications for all departments, including the College of Law. As the law school developed its administrative departments, she transferred there.

As senior director of admissions, she has been responsible for policy setting, implementation and evaluation of admissions, and scholarship and retention processes.

“Georgia State Law always has had the great fortune of recruiting outstanding classes of well-rounded and well-grounded students, who go on to make important contributions to the profession. It is no accident that Cheryl Jester-George has led the college’s admissions and recruitment over these many years. I have had the good fortune to witness up close Cheryl’s ‘magic’ during my time as both associate dean and dean,” said Steven J. Kamminshe, professor of law.

The students are the “center of our lives,” Jester-George said. The admissions staff created a student-centered, approachable environment. “We can’t take their exams and notes or go to class for them, but we can let them know there is always someone they can talk to,” she said.

And Jester-George has been there to listen and encourage not only students, but also potential students who have yet to decide if they will enroll.

“One of my most fulfilling experiences is to get people to trust themselves and their abilities. A lot of people really want to go to law school, but they’ve been swayed by other people, creating a self-doubt, not believing in themselves. I try to encourage them,” she said.

Jester-George has been involved in and recognized for numerous programs, but it is her pipeline development of underrepresented groups she hopes will continue. For example, she’s worked with the Gate City Bar Association to provide summer camps at the law school and has played host to two Law Days for Latinos admitted to any law school in Georgia. She’s developed mentoring programs with Morehouse College and with DeKalb and Rockdale County schools.

“Cheryl is a marvelous person with an infectious personality that makes people feel they are capable of accomplishing anything,” said Tanya Washington, professor of law.

An adjunct professor at Clark Atlanta University’s College of Business, from which she earned a master’s and a doctorate of education, Jester-George will teach leadership courses there this fall.

>> Professors Sylvia Caley (M.B.A. ’86, J.D. ’89) and Roy Sobelson also retired this summer. Read more on pages 26 and 29.

Coffman (J.D. ’91) addresses Class of 2018

“I encourage you to allow yourself the grace to seek out a place where you can do what you really want to do, and what you do best,” Attorney General of Colorado Cynthia H. Coffman (J.D. ’91) said to graduates at the 2018 Commencement and Hooding Ceremony on May 11.

“[Find] something that is fulfilling, that makes you happy,” she said.

Coffman also encouraged the graduates to use their gifts and talents to give back. “Engagement with community epitomizes and distinguishes the Georgia State way. I urge each of you to further Georgia State’s legacy and to enrich your own lives by volunteering and bettering your own community. Serve the people around you in a way that honors your profession and your place in it,” she said.

Student speaker Mike Hodell (J.D. ‘18) also emphasized helping others. “We are at our best when we help others become their best. It may be in our role as a lawyer, it may be as a spouse, a co-worker, a neighbor or a volunteer. No matter our role, the opportunity is the same—to make a difference in the lives of others and those around them.”

Read the story and learn more about a few of the Class of 2018 graduates at news.gsu.edu/law-commencement-2018.

Alumni serve State Bar

Joyce Gist Lewis (J.D. ’99) and Sutton Connelly (J.D. ’09) have been elected to the State Bar of Georgia Board of Governors and were installed during the State Bar’s annual meeting in June.

Lewis, partner and managing member of Shingle Law, represents Post 12 of the Atlanta circuit, and Connelly, managing partner of Cook & Connelly, represents in Post 3 of the Lookout Mountain Circuit.

Ana Maria Martinez (J.D. ’09), a staff attorney for Judge Dax E. López in the State Court of DeKalb County, was appointed to serve as the Board’s Member-at-Large Post 3 representative.

J. Antonio DelCampo (J.D. ’94), who will continue to serve on the board representing Stone Mountain Circuit, Post 3, was elected to the executive committee. DelCampo, a former judge in the State Court of DeKalb County, practices in all areas of litigation in state and federal courts, primarily representing individuals who have been injured by negligence, at DelCampo & Grayson.

Dawn Jones (J.D. ’00) of The Firm of Dawn M. Jones, was elected treasurer; she served as secretary in the previous term. (Read more about Jones on page 22).
Manuscript conference

Timothy D. Lytton, associate dean for research & faculty development, Distinguished University Professor and professor of law, hosted a manuscript conference in April to workshop the second edition of Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law, by Robert Kagan, the Emanuel S. Heller Professor of Law (Emeritus) at the University of California, Berkeley. The book discusses the costs and benefits of the unique culture of the American legal system—with its heavy reliance on lawyer-dominated litigation and mistrust of centralized government bureaucracies. Conference participants included senior scholars from Yale, Stanford, University of Pennsylvania, UC Berkeley, Texas, Vanderbilt and Georgia State. The conference was co-sponsored by the College of Law and the Center for the Economic Analysis of Risk at the Georgia State Robinson College of Business.

Alumni receive award for defense in I-85 fire case

On March 30, 2017, an Interstate-85 overpass in Atlanta erupted into flames, destroying a section of one of the country's busiest interstates.
A homeless man, Basil Elerby, was charged. Elerby was adamant that he was not guilty.
Because of their defense for that man, two alumni received the Gideon's Promise Award from the Southern Center for Human Rights.

Tiffany W. Roberts (J.D. ’08), adjunct professor and deputy director of the National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism, and Mawuli M. Davis (J.D. ’02), a founding partner of Davis Bozeman Law Firm, are part of the pro bono defense team that was honored.

“As a public defender, I have represented so many people struggling with homelessness and addiction who are blamed for things because of their station in life,” Roberts said.
Elerby’s case has been dead docketed. His defense team is helping him get his life back on track. Davis employs Elerby to handle clerical duties, and Roberts helped marshal support for such things as completing a sobriety program, finding housing and pursuing his GED.

“The Promise Award is a reminder that we should be very careful about disposing of people. These are human beings who shouldn’t be judged just by their current circumstances, but by looking at their potential. That’s what we’re proud of,” Davis said, adding that his partner, Robert Bozeman (J.D. ’01), joins him in their commitment to community.

SEC Town Hall

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) held a town hall at Georgia State College of Law on June 13, marking the first time all five commissioners appeared together outside of the SEC headquarters in Washington, D.C., to meet with investors and answer their questions. Following the town hall were breakout sessions on topics such as Bitcoin and initial coin offerings (ICOs), investing in small companies, and stopping fraud, of which Nicole G. Iannarone, associate clinical professor and director of the Investor Advocacy Clinic, was a panelist.
Joyce Gist Lewis (J.D. ’99)

How did your English and theater degrees lead to law?
I wanted to be an actor. But, opportunities for actors in Atlanta were not what they are now. My fiancé, now my husband, was an attorney, and as I learned more about the issues he was dealing with, I realized I was interested in law.

I love being handed a problem and the resources to answer it, marrying research and advocacy skills. It lit me up in a way I had not expected.

You are the Atlanta Bar Association’s Outstanding Woman in the Profession for 2018. What has been your experience as a woman lawyer?
It has evolved. When I was younger, I would show up for a meeting or deposition and have to explain that I was the lawyer. I’ve had older, male opposing counsel speak to me condescendingly. I don’t let myself be walked on, but I don’t take the bait. My response is to remain professional. Women can get painted into a corner by the way we respond. The best comeback is kicking their butt in the case.

Once when a male opposing counsel spoke to me rudely, a young male lawyer heard. He told me he was going to point out to this person that his comment was inappropriate. That was admirable. I hope we, as a profession, start speaking up when things like that happen.

I don’t mean to imply any malice in the lack of diversity in our profession, but in many instances, I don’t think people recognize that there is only one woman in the room. I want people to be more aware of that and bring qualified women into the firm, boardroom, conference or legal team.

You were elected to the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Georgia, representing Atlanta Circuit and Post 12, and have had countless leadership roles in various organizations. What’s your leadership style?
In addition to being prepared, I respect people’s time. I start meetings on time and provide a written agenda and information in advance for review. I try, graciously, to keep us from going off on tangents.

In my firm, I ensure my time management is strong. I let people know what I need and what’s expected, and I set deadlines with time to complete the work. I complete briefs a week before they’re due because others need to review it, and doing so reduces mistakes.

What advice do you offer law students?
I would have liked to have known about the importance of networking, connecting with practicing lawyers to find out what they do and how they do it, what they like and dislike about the practice of law. Learn as much as you can from everyone.

Pay attention to business. You’re building a business in almost any legal path you choose, so lay that groundwork early. You are securing your financial future by developing a book of business for your firm.

And enjoy your life. That is why you’re earning money.

Joyce Gist Lewis (J.D. ’99), a partner/managing member at Shingler Lewis, has represented private companies and governmental entities in all areas of litigation for more than 15 years. She co-chairs the State Bar’s Committee to Promote Inclusion in the Profession and the National Association of Minority and Women-Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF) Trials Practice Area Committee and is a past Atlanta chapter president of the Georgia Association of Women Lawyers (GAWL).
“Women often equate success with working in a private firm, but you can be just as successful working in public agencies.”

**Josefina “Josie” Tamayo (J.D. ’85)**

**You began your career as an assistant state attorney in Florida in 1985. How have things changed for women in the legal profession since then?**

When I started my career, there were not a lot of women in the public sector. Now there are more women in law school, more women in general counsel positions and slightly more women in the public sector. There are more women in the workforce, but I’d like to see more women in leadership roles.

I think women often equate success with working in a private firm, but you can be just as successful working in public agencies. Using your legal acumen to enhance other people’s lives is extremely important.

We need to have qualified and diverse individuals—both men and women—who choose to work in the public sector and take on leadership roles.

**How did you handle gender bias?**

A number of times early in my career I was called “sweetie” or something similar. How you handle yourself in a situation makes a difference.

In Georgia, where I grew up, calling someone sweetie is sometimes just a way to say hello. So I would simply introduce myself, “Hello, I’m Ms. Tamayo, and I’m the assistant state attorney assigned to this case. You’re welcome to call me Josie.”

Another challenge was so many people thought all Hispanics were Mexican. When I was asked if I spoke Mexican, I saw it as an opportunity to educate the person that there are many people of Hispanic origins who speak Spanish.

How did that affect you?

It just made me work harder. My family immigrated to the U.S. when I was three years old. I grew up in a small Southern town, and many people there had never met people from Cuba. My parents always said, “It is your responsibility to teach people who you are; it is not their responsibility to find out who you are.” So I brought that into my career. I showed people my work ethic and what I bring to the table. I also encouraged questions. I was thankful to be bilingual because it provided me opportunities throughout my career.

There were ups and downs, but overall my experience was positive. I learned a lot, and they all learned with me.

**Your successful career, including being the first Hispanic judge on the Second Circuit Court in Florida, has made you a role model for many.**

I think my career path shows people, young women specifically, that you can attain your dreams. I wanted to be a judge since I was fourteen, and one of the greatest days of my life was when [then] Governor Charlie Crist appointed me.

You have to be passionate about what you do, you have to have a plan and sometimes you have to take risks. My whole life, I’ve tried to be the one knocking on the doors. If you were going to be given special cases, or given the opportunity to be in the room with the decision-makers, you had to do the work.

It’s also important to realize things may not go according to plan and to be open to other opportunities.

Many people want to have it all now, but it’s not always possible to get everything you want at the same time. I got married at the age of 38 and had my son. I’m still evolving as a lawyer, a mother, a wife, as a professional and as a member of society. You never stop growing.

I am a keynote speaker at a naturalization ceremony each year, and I love sharing my story so others know what’s possible. The American Dream lives and breathes in each one of us. Here I am, this immigrant from Cuba, this little girl from Milledgeville, and through my career I got to be involved in some of the most fascinating legal issues of our time.

Josefina Tamayo (J.D. ’85) has served as general counsel for six state agencies in Florida: Department of Children & Families, Department of Business & Professional Regulation, Department of Health, Department of Management Services, Department of Transportation and the Florida Lottery. She also served as a circuit court judge in the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida from 2010–13. A Florida Supreme Court–certified mediator, she started Tamayo Mediation and Consulting in 2018.
Wendy F. Hensel, who was named dean of Georgia State Law in November 2017, chats with law students.
WOMEN in the LEGAL PROFESSION

Women leaders are on the rise in law schools, but women attorneys are still waiting for a paradigm shift in firms and businesses — and many are leaving the field altogether. Law school leaders and alumnae discuss the triumphs and the obstacles. by Patti Styles
In 1986, Georgia State Law appointed Marjorie Fine Knowles as dean. At the time, only a handful of law schools were helmed by women — around six percent. Wendy F. Hensel, who was named dean in November 2017, is the fourth woman in the law school’s top role (out of six total deans). While Georgia State Law has had a history of women leadership, women have only begun to close the gap nationwide.

Twenty years ago, less than 21 percent of law school deans were women. By 2017, that number grew to 31 percent, with most of the increase occurring within the last three years according to Tracy Thomas, a professor at the University of Akron School of Law and editor of Gender and the Law Prof Blog. Thomas reported in 2017 that 50 percent of the new deans that law schools appointed during the standard hiring season were women — and the percentage continues to climb. Eleven of the 18 new appointments listed in the American Bar Association’s Spring 2018 issue of Syllabus are women — that’s 61 percent, or, excluding interim and acting dean appointments, 64 percent (9 of 14).

Hensel said part of the reason for the nationwide spike in women deans is because the first female deans were very successful and opened up opportunities for other women.

“Women apply when they think there are realistic chances of getting the job,” she said.

In general, more women today can envision themselves in chief positions because they have seen more women leaders as role models, said Lisa Radtke Bliss, clinical professor and associate dean of experiential education and clinical programs.

“The more a woman can see someone like herself in a leadership role, the more real the possibility becomes for all women,” Bliss said.

The article “If It’s a New Law Dean, It’s Likely a Woman,” which was published on Law.com in March 2017, speculates that the trend is, in part, due to how significantly the role of dean has changed.

Hensel says there is probably some truth to this. “Within the last five years, law school admissions have declined nationally, by an average of 35 percent,” she explained. “Law schools used to be significant money-generators for universities, but they need to be much more fiscally responsible now and responsive to the market in ways they didn’t before. To me, that makes it an exciting time, but it also requires a different type of leader.”

Women are willing to put themselves on the front lines of problem-solving for an institution, Bliss says.

Associate Professor of Law Kelly Cahill Timmons, who served as associate dean for student affairs for 11 years, echoes this sentiment.

“Female law professors have done a lot of the important, but not as glamorous, institutional service work in law schools for many years. I suspect that some of them are recognizing that they can — and should — take their talents and experience to the next level,” she said.

Timmons also pointed out that leaders such as Hensel, who are mothers, show other women they can have a family and a career.

“Her daughter was an infant when she started at Georgia State Law as a legal writing instructor, and her son was born two years later. Everything Dean Hensel has accomplished as a legal academic, she did while also being a mom. I think this should be inspiring to all of our students and alumni who strive to balance work and family life,” Timmons said.

Will the increase in female deans change legal education in any way?

Timmons suspects it may lead law schools to focus additional attention and resources on “the whole student,” including students’ mental and physical wellness. “That is definitely true of Dean Hensel,” she said.

Bliss said she hopes it will have tremendous impact on the future of law school and, more importantly, the profession. “At Georgia State, we have a culture of innovating and an entrepreneurial spirit that has always made this place full of energy and optimism,” she said. “We are constantly adjusting the curriculum to help create opportunities for our students to learn and grow and to be ready for what the legal profession is going to become.”

Stephanie Everett (J.D. ’02), the community manager of Lawyerist.com, said legal education is changing, but not just because more women are leading. “Any time we get different voices, it will change, and that’s a good thing.”

The trend stops here

Although women are making strides in legal education leadership, representation in other parts of the legal field is occurring at a considerably slower pace. The American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Legal Profession stated in its 2017 report that women make up 36 percent of the
legal profession—even though women have been almost 50 percent of law graduates for more than a decade.

In leadership roles, the numbers are even bleaker. According to the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), only 19 percent of women are equity partners—a number that has increased only slightly within the past 10 years. Women are 30 percent of non-equity partners.

The Georgia Association for Women Lawyers (GAWL) studied this "leaky pipeline," a term to describe the situation in which women, who are underrepresented in the upper ranks of many scientific and professional fields, are exiting those industries at much higher rates than men.

In its summary, the 2016 report states: "Overall, significant differences are observed between women’s and men's experiences as attorneys in the legal profession: women are less satisfied, are more likely to consider leaving, believe they are a poorer fit with their organizations, feel less successful in their careers, and feel less appreciated by their workplaces than men feel."

To combat this, many law firms have policies and practices that attempt to retain talented women lawyers. However, those efforts don’t seem to be achieving the desired effect.

"The problem for law firms is the same as it is for the rest of corporate America—there's a lack of flexibility," Hensel said. "A reality for many women is that they have families and need a way to balance everything. Frankly, that applies to many men these days too."

The expectation of being accessible 24/7 is also an issue. "When the client wants your attention, they want it right now," Hensel said. "That’s very challenging to deal with. However, when firms lose good people, it’s very expensive to recruit and train new ones."

"Until there’s a true paradigm shift, these retention problems will continue," said Adwoa Ghar-Teay-Seymour (J.D. '06), assistant general counsel for Cox Enterprises Inc. "We’ve broken the glass ceiling, but in most cases, we’re still the primary caregiver. That’s hard to handle. I’ve seen incredibly bright, Ivy League–educated women struggle with this. And it’s not as if they were people who didn’t like their careers. They loved being lawyers, but they couldn’t help but think, ‘Look what you’re asking me to choose between.’"

In addition, most retention policies only focus on predicting the number of billable hours a working mom can produce.

"When female attorneys want to achieve better work-life balance, most firms’ responses are to reduce hours and, therefore, reduce pay. That seems like a broken way to fix an already broken system."

—Stephanie Everett (J.D. '02)

Success and staying motivated

The ways in which some women leaders measure their own success also seem to break from tradition.

"It’s easy to get caught up in titles and accolades," Seymour said. "When you focus on that, you may do well by some standards, but you often aren’t happy. I can’t live that way. I’ve found that when I’m walking in my purpose, that’s when I’m most successful."

Ev Everett measures success not only by how well she’s able to help her clients, but by how much she makes a positive impact in her community. "I strive to live a life that reflects my values and leave the world a better place than I found it. In fact, I’ve written that goal on top of my planner to remind myself of it each day."

The challenge of "balancing it all"—while also having to deal with gender bias—compels many women to zone in on what’s important to them and on what keeps them motivated or passionate about their jobs.

"I always try to do the best I can with what I have at any particular time," Hensel said. "I’ve learned to accept the reality that few days will end with everything done and everyone happy. Success for me is keeping my priorities front and center."

Hensel said her love of Georgia State Law and its students is what keeps her invigorated. "I think about how I can influence their path for the better, and that motivates me every day."
Timmons also is energized by the students. “My time in the classroom reminded me how amazing our students are and reaffirmed my commitment to representing their interests as part of the administrative team,” she said.

Similarly, Everett is inspired by her clients. She helps attorneys run their firms more efficiently so they can focus on what matters most to them — practicing law.

“When the lightbulb goes on and it clicks for them, that gets me excited,” she said. “I enjoy knowing that I really am making a difference. A single mom that I helped who had two teenage kids told me she was afraid if she didn’t change the way she ran her business, she would end up getting sick. She was overwhelmed and running herself into the ground. Now she’s approaching her law practice in a much more effective way. I love knowing I was able to help her improve her business and the way she lives her life.”

Knowing when to take “mental health days” helps keep Seymour grounded. “Being a litigator is exciting; however, it’s also draining to be in an adversarial environment all the time,” she said. “I try to stop and smell the roses every so often, then I can get back into it.”

Exploration is the key to rejuvenation for Bliss. “I especially enjoy traveling to places where I can experience something very different from my everyday life, whether it’s the landscape or natural surroundings, language, food or culture,” she said. “I always learn valuable lessons when I’m challenged to communicate or navigate in an unfamiliar place.”

Elevating each other
Bliss also stressed the importance of surrounding yourself with an uplifting community.

“I found my way in my leadership journey by connecting with friends and colleagues, mostly women, who were willing to share their wisdom and professional insights with me,” she said. “For example, I’m fortunate to be a part of a wonderful national and international community of clinical legal educators who are truly inspiring scholars, teachers and lawyers. I’ve also been the recipient of support, advice and mentoring from so many, both inside and outside my institution. All of this has enriched my professional life tremendously.”

Seymour and Everett both feel the diverse and inclusive culture at Georgia State Law helped prepare them to adapt and persevere, as leaders and as mothers who work outside the home.

“My daughter was five when I started law school, and at Georgia State Law, I felt like there was implied permission for my personal life to meld with my professional life,” Seymour said. “Hopefully that type of empathy and acceptance will begin to infuse into our industry as well. Working mothers need to know it’s okay to bring your whole self to work. It’s okay to be who you are.”

Bliss said that environment also translates to the school’s leadership. “This inclusive culture recognizes the ways in which everyone in the building contributes to our collective success. Our culture has allowed people to grow and develop in ways that suited them and benefitted our institution and its students.”

Free to be me
Everett said when she began her career 16 years ago, she probably would have said she wanted to be considered one of the boys. Now, she feels differently. “I want everyone to be recognized for the voice they bring. We all have our own experiences. Being a woman isn’t the whole story for me,” she said. “I’ll be even more excited when we’re all celebrated for who we are as individuals.”

Seymour said her experiences contribute to what she has to offer. “I’m a black, female lawyer and feel that both my gender and my race help me bring something different to the table,” she explained.

Hensel recognizes the importance of this too. “It used to be that women had to adopt a masculine-style of leadership in order to be taken seriously. That just doesn’t work for me.”

“A critical component of leadership is authenticity,” she said. “I know that I am at my best when I am collaborative rather than confrontational. There is no question in my mind that we achieve more effective results when we engage a diverse set of voices and strengths in problem-solving.”

While it’s generally agreed that every person has their own approach and style of leadership, and that differences are not wholly based on gender, there are certain attributes common among women leaders.

Bliss said one of the strengths she’s noticed in many female deans and associate deans is that they’re skilled communicators. “Effective communication, including the ability to listen, is valuable for deans and associate deans because they interact with so many different constituents and must often navigate challenging conversations.”

Timmons has noticed women’s ability to balance the demands of different stakeholders. “Maintaining balance is something we deal with every day, especially for those of us with children,” she said. “The female leaders I work with also run particularly efficient meetings. Their time is valuable, and they recognize the value of others’ time as well.”

When it comes to dealing with challenges, Seymour said women leaders tend to be particularly effective at collaboration and dispute resolution. “In the practices I worked for, I noticed how great they were about listening to everyone’s input, not just the loudest person in the room. Being open to diverse opinions generated better solutions.”

Hensel said it’s also important to recognize that leadership has many manifestations. “You don’t have to sit at the head of the table to make a difference in someone’s life. You can lead by example too. Collectively, that makes a significant difference.”

Leadership is about more than power, Hensel added. “It’s about helping people. It’s about doing something — even when you don’t want to, even when it’s hard. It’s doing something for someone without expecting anything in return.”
Woman presidents nine and ten of the 111 total Atlanta Bar presidents are Georgia State Law professors. In May, leadership transferred from Margaret Vath, senior lecturer in law, to Nicole Iannarone, associate clinical professor.

“Nicole is capable, organized and enthusiastic. We share a common goal, and I’m delighted to pass the gavel to her.” — Margaret Vath

Nicole Iannarone (right) succeeded Margaret Vath as president of the Atlanta Bar.

Vath said, “If I find an organization I love, that’s worth my time and efforts, I seek leadership positions.”

An initiative of Vath’s “Gratitude and Responsibility” themed presidency was the fun-filled Member Appreciation Month. Members competed in weekly trivia contests to win Braves and Atlanta United tickets, received free headshots and attended the first-ever Reception About Nothing, which included no speeches or program, just friends and fun.

Another of Vath’s goals was connecting the largest volunteer bar association in the Southeast with the talent and leadership in the smaller bar associations in Atlanta in order to share knowledge and support. Vath participated in the Multi-Bar Leadership Council and made great progress in her quest to reach out and connect the talents of the Atlanta legal communities by fortifying relationships with sister bars.

Collaboration is Vath’s leadership style. She selected her board for inclusion and diversity of experiences and perspectives. “I don’t have all the answers,” she said. “It’s important that I remain open to people who feel differently so we can have robust discussions.”

It was a smooth year, free of significant challenges, Vath said. Because of this, Iannarone says her year will have a strong foundation.

While she has ideas about new initiatives, Iannarone wants to capitalize on the Atlanta Bar’s strengths and the things that make people want to be part of the organization. “The reason so many people are involved in the Atlanta Bar is the supportive community we have for lawyers at all stages of their career and our commitment to service.”

Organization is key to Iannarone’s presidency. Before her term began, she and the executive director planned next year’s programs, set dates and confirmed speakers for major events, and set dates for executive and board meetings.

“Iannarone leads by discovering people’s interests. ‘When people have good ideas and want to contribute, I let them,’” she said. “‘I’ve enjoyed meeting with board members and committee chairs to learn about their plans and see how I can help. I plan to get out of their way, while supporting them.’”

Before entering academia, Iannarone was in a private practice that modeled giving back and encouraged leadership as a way to do so. She found an environment at Georgia State Law that encourages engagement with practicing lawyers.

Vath says skills honed while president will prove valuable this fall when she becomes director of the law school’s Lawyering Foundations program, a collaborative effort with seven legal writing professors. She continues as producer of the Atlanta Bar’s theatrical fundraiser because “fun is integral to a successful organization,” she said.
“It’s my dream job, combining my love of forensics and nursing.”
Leading the way

Five inspiring trailblazers discuss success, mentorship and the challenges women face

DETERRING CRIMINAL CAREGIVERS

Beatrice Yorker’s research on serial murder by health care professionals and Munchausen by Proxy has led to more safeguards to protect patients and children. | by Charles McNair

EARLY IN HER CAREER, roughly once a week, Bea Yorker (J.D. ’88) saw a child with suspicious burns, fractures or bruises. Blood in the underpants. Anxiety.

The shocking frequency of classic signs of child abuse shook the young clinical specialist. This was 1982 in downtown Atlanta, when Yorker worked part-time in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Mental Health Consultation Services at Grady Memorial Hospital and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. She also attended Georgia State Law part-time.

“I had no inkling that in pediatrics one of the components of treating mental health issues was to deal with the fact of child abuse,” Yorker said. “It surprised me as well as my colleagues.”

That experience set the course for Yorker’s life work.

After earning her J.D., she involved herself more and more deeply in probing the shadowy corners of the psychology of human care. Her investigations led to a law review article on covert video surveillance of a rare form of child abuse — Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, in which a parent makes their child ill for medical attention. Her interest in this type of abuse led to a landmark study on nurses accused of murder that established her as an authority in her field … and as a health care rights champion.
In 2006, in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, Yorker headed an international team of researchers in publishing “Serial Murder by Healthcare Professionals.” Spurred by the prosecution of Charles Cullen, a New Jersey nurse who killed at least 40 patients over a 16-year period, the authors examined 90 criminal prosecutions of health care providers. The 90 cases had resulted in murder convictions for 317 patient deaths, with more than 2,000 other suspicious deaths attributed to convicted caregivers.

Yorker’s publication offered the most comprehensive overview ever seen of serial murder in clinical and hospital settings — a problem mostly unrecognized and little-discussed before the revelations of Yorker and colleagues.

Her profession took notice. “A nice side effect of our look at the number of patient deaths and injuries has been the safeguards put in place to deter potential rogue nurses,” she said. “It’s my dream job, combining my love of forensics and nursing,” she said.

While dean, Yorker headed schools of Nursing, Criminal Justice, Social Work, Child Development, Public Health, and Criminal Justice and Criminalistics. Her university also built the new Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center, housing the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department crime lab and Forensic Science Institute, which provides state-of-the-art DNA, ballistics, trace evidence processing and other forensic analysis.

“I am very fortunate to have been able to close out my career in such an interdisciplinary and rewarding setting,” Yorker said.

**Yorker Recalls** her Georgia State Law experience with great affection. “I always felt welcomed and appreciated as a woman at GSU,” she said. “Coming from a female-dominated profession of nursing, I learned balance from entering a more traditionally male profession … although when I entered, there were many women in law, and now, since its inception, four out of six deans at Georgia State Law have been women.”

Yorker says law school increased her skills in court, handling cross-examination and confidently presenting to judges and juries about child abuse. (She teaches nurses today how to testify in sexual assault cases, family courts and even congressional hearings.)

Yorker credits founding dean Ben F. Johnson Jr. with helping her write to publish in professional journals. Steven Kaminshine, professor of law and former dean, helped her understand employment law, valuable when she became an academic. Marjorie Knowles, former dean and professor of law emerita, taught her about women’s issues in academia in an intimate seminar on women and the law.

“Fortunately, I had Dr. Susan Kelley, [former] dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences at Georgia State University, who nurtured my academic career. We worked together on Project Healthy Grandparents, which assists grandparents raising grandchildren in parent-absent homes. She showed me how to successfully obtain funding for research that helps vulnerable children.”

**Yorker’s Work Isn’t Finished.** Abuse in the health care arena persists, and professionals must be on watch. She has in the works a new, expanded follow-up study on serial murder in health care. And a task force she serves, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), published national interdisciplinary guidelines this year on Munchausen by Proxy, providing up-to-date guidance for practitioners, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and the lay public on how to recognize and appropriately handle this baffling type of child abuse.

“We as a society are very familiar with traditionally masculine forms of violence — shooting, bludgeoning, stabbing. We go after perpetrators of these obvious types of violence and try to put them away,” she said.

But? “We are much less aware of traditionally feminine forms of violence — suffocation, poisoning, injection … so-called ‘killing with kindness.’

“Any caregiver, in or out of facilities, can appear very caring but may insidiously poison or incapacitate. It’s easy for a judge or jury to convict a father who has beaten his kid, but not as easy to convict a mother who has injected fecal material into her child.”

Thanks to Yorker’s path-breaking work, health care today has a better chance of punishing these crimes and even preventing them from happening.
Civil rights attorney Phi Nguyen focuses her work on voting rights and immigrant rights. | by Holly Cline

WHEN PHI NGUYEN (J.D. ’09), litigation director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta, chose to pursue law school, the decision didn’t feel entirely like her own, but she quickly discovered that being an attorney armed her with the skills to fight injustice.

“I pursued law because it was one of three careers that my immigrant parents pushed. I wasn’t a math or science kid, so law school it was,” she said. “Learning to see my role as a lawyer within the context of a broader social justice movement enabled me to deepen my appreciation for my profession. I am motivated by a deep commitment to fighting inequity.”

Nguyen’s oldest sister, Betty Nguyen Davis (J.D. ’04), became a mentor early in Nguyen’s legal career.

“My sister insisted that becoming a lawyer would open up a lot of doors and that I would have the freedom to shape my legal career however I wanted. I thought at the time that she was just being bossy, but I am grateful now for the wisdom of her advice,” Nguyen said.

Nguyen focuses on impact litigation, specifically in the areas of voting rights and immigrant rights. She is litigating a class action in federal court that challenges the unlawful immigration detention of Vietnamese refugees. Through experience, she has become more comfortable in a field she considers “inherently confrontational.”

“Women who are litigators constantly face the age-old dilemma of juggling the need to be assertive with the desire to be ‘likable.’ Navigating this particular dynamic will continue to be a challenge for me and for other women in the legal field, but I think the art of caring less about what others think comes with time and experience,” she said.

Prior to joining Advancing Justice – Atlanta, Nguyen worked as a medical malpractice defense attorney at Bendin Sumrall & Ladner. A few years into her practice, a colleague encouraged Nguyen in a simple, but impactful, way.

“She had been a lawyer for many more years than I, and we were discussing the difficulty of working in our male-dominated profession. In the middle of this conversation, she said, ‘I really hope you realize how good you are, though.’ That simple affirmation struck right at the heart of the uncertainty that so many professional women face,” Nguyen said.

Nguyen’s male mentors have supported her professional growth without questioning her abilities as a lawyer, but she knows other women have had different experiences. She is aware of the gender stereotypes that box women in and can professionally disempower them, but she’s not discouraged.

“I suspect that women lawyers still have to prove themselves more than their male counterparts, and I know that we are still underrepresented in positions of leadership. However, the longer I’ve been in my career, the more opportunities I’ve had to work alongside some very talented, bright woman lawyers, including in important leadership roles,” she said. “The reality is that women can lead in all of the same ways that men can—we just have to fight harder for a seat at the table.”

When reflecting on her career achievements, Nguyen considers her ability to do things she once deemed impossible.

“I’m able to successfully run a case from the time a complaint is filed against a client to when a jury returns a verdict — and almost always as the only Asian American woman in the room. I have written briefs tackling complex medical questions that I never thought I would understand. Last year, I quit my medical malpractice career to start over as a civil rights attorney. And three months ago, I sued Jeff Sessions,” she said.

Nguyen’s advice to women attorneys beginning their careers is simple, yet impactful, like the words from her colleague: “Trust your judgment and your abilities. Take risks and get comfortable with being wrong. Find a mentor. Be a mentor.”
MAKING IT EASIER FOR FUTURE LAWYERS

Gratitude motivates Dawn Jones to clear obstacles for law students.

by Jennifer Bryon Owen

WHEN CHANGES IN HER PROFESSION urged her toward a new career, Dawn Jones (J.D. ’00) walked across the street from Grady Hospital, where she was a full-time nurse, to Georgia State Law, where she enrolled as a part-time student.

She loved ICU nursing for 14 years and had never considered law school. But during her master’s studies she encountered two nurses with law degrees who worked for the Department of Health and Human Services. Jones was intrigued.

“How to succeed in law school should not be a secret. I want to make it less painful for students than it was for me.”

“I didn’t have a clue about being a lawyer or navigating law school,” said Jones. “It was painful, but I figured it out.”

The kindness of students was one thing that helped her.

“Sometimes, I arrived for class late, still in my scrubs. Students, some I didn’t know, would slide me their notes,” she said. “We were all starting second careers, all stressed out together.”

Another was the community involvement professors emphasized.

“Their focus was never on making money. It was being a servant, being a successful lawyer who served clients and the community.”

This summer, Jones completed a term as secretary and began another as treasurer for the State Bar of Georgia. She received its 2017 Commitment to Equality Award to Promote Inclusion in the Profession. She’s also recipient of the Justice Benham Award for Community Service for her ongoing community efforts, including mentoring, coordinating clothing drives, organizing nonpartisan voting rights programs and implementing events that support law students and younger lawyers.

Jones’ mission is helping law students “have a clue.”

“How to succeed in law school should not be a secret,” she said. “I want to make it less painful for students than it was for me.”

She created mock interview/resume review workshops in which students spend 30 minutes being interviewed by established lawyers and judges and having their resumes critiqued.

At the annual Black Law Students Retreat, established by Jones and now in its 11th year, all law students in the state of Georgia are invited to learn how to become professionals. At the opening reception, students practice simultaneously balancing food and drink and concisely introducing themselves and their aspirations to judges and lawyers. The second day, these members of the legal profession lead workshops such as essay/exam writing, perfecting job search skills and leaving a good impression.

Jones believes most attorneys want to help; they just need to be asked. “Once you give lawyers the opportunity, they’re happy to participate.”

She involves people through motivation and buy-in. Initially, Jones’ leadership focused on completing tasks. Now she also wants volunteers to learn to lead.

“Giving back is something we all should be doing,” said Jones, who admits to a selfish element. “I get a lot out of it. It balances me.”
FORGING HER OWN PATH

Head of patents for The Coca-Cola Company, Susanne Hollinger isn’t afraid to go out on a limb. | by Jennifer Bryon Owen

WHILE WRITING HER DISSERTATION in neuroscience, Susanne Hollinger (J.D. ’08), now head of patents for The Coca-Cola Company, discovered something. She was about to become the world’s expert on one specific protein.

“I am driven by being interested in lots of different things,” Hollinger said. “I went to graduate school for neuroscience because that studies a whole array of different topics. But I was becoming more and more focused.”

Not sure this was for her, Hollinger did what is indicative of her problem-solving style. She talked and listened to established researchers, gleaning what worked for her.

“I spend time talking to the people who are at the next stage of their career and are successful at it. I try to gauge if their life and the things they enjoy, or don’t enjoy, fit me,” she said. “I try to make sure I’m not only doing what I want in the moment, but that I see the end of the road and it’s what I want.”

This process led her to patents, which incorporate her interests—advocacy and diverse experiences.

“As a patent attorney, you work on whatever is put in front of you. It can be scientifically diverse,” she said.

While pursuing her law degree at night, she worked as a patent agent for King & Spalding and gained experience doing something she loved.

For Coca-Cola, Hollinger is in charge of their global patent portfolio as well as their patent strategy in the United States and internationally.

“We have innovations coming out on a regular basis. We’re constantly launching products or equipment all over the world,” she said. “With those, we have to make sure we have aligned all our risk management plans appropriately, we have the right contracts in place and we’ve educated the local staff so they understand patent issues in their jurisdiction.”

As a problem solver, she drives toward practical solutions and isn’t afraid to go out on a limb.

“I do a good amount of listening and try to make whatever I’m suggesting meet as many needs as possible,” she said.

Throughout her career, she’s had challenges similar to most women’s: balancing all parts of one’s life, being overlooked, being labeled “aggressive.” Again, she has sought advice.

“A lot of women struggle with that exact question of who they are going to be. My success at that has been just being myself,” she said, noting that situations change. She’s found that she does get invited back to the table and people do rely on her leadership.

She helps those she supervises progress professionally but is frustrated by the lack of women in senior leadership.

“It was 20 percent in 1991, and it’s still 20 percent,” said Hollinger, who is seeking creative ways to help young women advance.

She does advise them to socialize with male colleagues (something she admits she hasn’t done well herself), because it’s often in informal settings that contacts are made, information is shared and relationships are built.

“Or, young women can just create their own career path,” Hollinger said.

In this, she leads by example.
LITIGATION WAS NOT THE OBVIOUS CHOICE for Maria Batres (J.D. ’11) when she decided to pursue a law degree. An introvert, the former middle and high school social studies teacher wasn’t entirely comfortable with public speaking outside of the classroom. But she was encouraged to try out for the Student Trial Lawyer Association (STLA), and soon realized that being a litigator had many intriguing similarities to being a teacher.

“Litigation was not the obvious choice for Maria Batres (J.D. ’11) when she decided to pursue a law degree. An introvert, the former middle and high school social studies teacher wasn’t entirely comfortable with public speaking outside of the classroom. But she was encouraged to try out for the Student Trial Lawyer Association (STLA), and soon realized that being a litigator had many intriguing similarities to being a teacher.”

Her passion for teaching also plays a role in her involvement in the various organizations through which she mentors new attorneys or students and in her service as president of the Georgia Hispanic Bar Association (GHBA). In leading, Batres fosters collaboration by empowering everyone to contribute their ideas — teamwork is vital to growth and success, she believes.

“Women are often raised to be problem solvers, to be compassionate and to listen, so I think that allows us to look at things from different perspectives,” she said. “To an extent, the very nature of the challenges we experience as women gives us a unique perspective with regard to resolving issues.”

At GHBA’s Cafecito events, in which Latina attorneys meet to support each other, the conversation often turns to those challenges.

“Women in the legal profession are often underestimated by both clients and other attorneys, and so we have to work that much harder to establish our presence and gain respect as a strong, competent force,” Batres said.

Many describe similar experiences — being called belittling names, having people assume they are anytime but the attorney, continuously being asked to take on extra work that male counterparts are not, being denied raises or promotions when male colleagues who haven’t met as many benchmarks are given them. Some have been harassed while the firm’s leadership turns a blind eye or is dismissive of their complaints.

Sometimes, women are asked to sit at the table to give an impression of a diverse team but not given the opportunity to contribute in a significant way.

Many women struggle with how and when to voice their concerns at work—which is why mentoring and groups such as Cafecito in which women find support are vital. Batres advises her mentees that it’s not worth staying at a job where their voice isn’t being heard.

“I’ve been lucky to have supervisors who have been open to listening, but a number of my colleagues have not had that support,” she said. “To some extent, there are things you just try to ignore, but you also have to decide what your limits are, and if those limits are breached, you must speak up about it, respectfully—but firmly, setting your boundaries.”

Women do have fewer challenges today because of the hard work of women before them, Batres said, especially those who have taken on leadership roles. “Their efforts serve as inspiration to a new generation of women attorneys establishing their presence in the profession,” she said.
“We removed a lot of those abusers from this community forever.”

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD GIRL put a chilling title to her written and pictorial narrative of sexual abuse by her mother’s boyfriend: “It Happens at Night.”

That little girl is one reason Chris Cohilas (J.D. ’02), a partner at Watson Spence, helped create Lily Pad, a sanctuary for the sexually abused in Albany, Georgia. Because of Lily Pad, victims do not have to retell the horror in a sterile, tiled hospital room or to a police officer at their home, in front of the abuser. Lily Pad offers victims a comfortable room in a small house with calming paint colors and stuffed animals.

Lily Pad is where the healing starts for the victim and the reckoning starts for the abuser. Victims are carefully examined — physically and emotionally — by trained professionals, which include nurses trained in forensics. DNA is collected. A video recording is made of the victim’s interview. The evidence chain is solid.

This eight-year-old’s abuser was sentenced to life in prison.

“We removed him from this community forever,” said Cohilas, a former prosecutor for Dougherty County. “We removed a lot of those abusers from this community forever.”

Lily Pad has changed the way sexual assault is handled in the community. Since it was established in 2008, the organization has helped over 3,500 primary and secondary victims. And the conviction rate of offenders has risen to nearly 100 percent, Cohilas said.

“It was a very beautiful and organic thing that happened in our community. We have this resource that is used not only by this community, but by many rural communities that don’t have these resources. It is so needed. I don’t think people conceptualize how often sexual assault occurs,” he said.

Cohilas, who was elected to serve as chairman of the Dougherty County Board of Commissioners in 2014, is a community builder, an unabashed cheerleader of Albany and Dougherty County. His leadership after tornado-producing storms in January 2017 ushered in federal dollars and support to accelerate the area’s recovery — one of the reasons he was named one of the 100 most influential Georgians by Georgia Trend magazine in 2018.

Cohilas also serves those in need through his work as a board member of the Georgia Public Defender Council, the statewide, independent agency that provides representation to indigent people.

“Compared to where it was 10 to 15 years ago, indigent defense, at least in my circuit, is a superior product,” Cohilas said.

It is not only in the interests of the indigent to provide a credible defense, it is in the best interest of the state. When he was a prosecutor, the last thing Cohilas wanted to see opposite him in the courtroom was an ill-prepared defense attorney. It is Cohilas’ mission on the Georgia Public Defender Council to continue to improve that side of the courtroom.

“When you have competent and effective representation, there is an appropriate check and balance on the state,” he said. “It ensures that if a conviction is obtained, it is done in a way that is constitutional and prevents the cost and expense of retrial.

“Retrial causes an enormous disruption. If you can do it right one time, do it right one time. Everybody benefits from making sure the system, on both sides, operates more competently and effectively.”

So where did Cohilas’ healthy dose of empathy come from?

He said it came from his father, Alex Cohilas, and his mother, Brenda Crowe. The family lived by the Greek ideal of “philotimo,” which for the Cohilas family meant “You should stand for your fellow brother. You should stand against injustice.”

Alex Cohilas lived it and breathed it, according to his son. He was a master carpenter, but also a firefighter who organized the Fraternal Order of Clayton County Firefighters to combat cronynism in the county regarding hiring and promotions. Alex filed civil lawsuits against the county and not only succeeded in a transformation, but actually became the fire chief.

“My father was told he would never be promoted because of his activism,” Chris Cohilas said. “You fight injustice and keep things honest — that came from home at an early age.”
Caley leaves mark as she retires

After seeing the issues of inequality with her patients as a nurse, Sylvia Caley (M.B.A. ’86, J.D. ’89) went to law school to help more people rather than just one patient at a time. She is retiring after 11 years as the director of the Health Law Partnership (HeLP), a medical-legal community collaboration among Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, the Atlanta Legal Aid Society and the College of Law, and the co-director of the HeLP Legal Services Clinic, which she helped found. Caley is a member of the Grady Health System Ethics Committee and the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Bioethics and Public Affairs Committees.

“Sylvia Caley is a truly gifted teacher, a multi-talented lawyer, an invaluable public servant and an outstanding contributor to our community. She’s earned the trust and respect of everyone she has worked with,” said Charity Scott, the Catherine C. Henson Professor of Law and a founding leader in HeLP.

Caley said the university and College of Law helped make her dreams come true. “Here I received a first-rate education and was provided the tools necessary to create change,” Caley said.

She also expressed gratitude for her students. “You helped me fulfill my dreams and in the process helped me touch so many more people than I could have on my own. I will miss all of you and this wonderful community that we have here; you have given me so very much.”

Caley also touched the lives of her students. Laurice Lambert (J.D. ’10) met Caley in her second year of law school during a challenging time in her life.

“Sylvia’s kindness and compassionate manner allowed me to feel comfortable opening up to her, and from then on I looked to her as a mentor and friend,” Lambert said. “I am thankful for all she has done to support and encourage me personally and professionally. She is truly an amazing person that has touched and helped so many people.” Read more at news.gsu.edu/Caley-retires.
America: Jewish Communal Self-Governance in a Liberal Society.”

Lauren Sudeall Lucus, associate professor of law and director of the Center for Access to Justice, presented on her forthcoming article on public defender clients’ experiences with civil legal needs at Vanderbilt Law School, the University of Alabama School of Law and at the 2018 Annual Meeting on Law and Society. She also presented as part of a panel on “Innovations in Teaching Access to Justice Across the Law School Curriculum” and delivered a keynote address on the Center for Access to Justice at the Section on Law Libraries and Legal Information Luncheon at the 2018 AALS Annual Meeting.


Mary F. Radford, professor of law, served on many panels, including “Taxes Under Trump” at Georgia State Law’s Towers to Trenches CLE; “Elder Abuse: The Crime of the 21st Century” at the ACTEC Annual Meeting; “An Overview of the Uniform Probate Code and Georgia Law Unsupervised Probate Procedures” for the Connecticut Bar Association; “Ethical Challenges in Representing Small Business Owners” at the ACTEC Summer Meeting; and “Possession is Nine-Tenths of the Law, Isn’t It? The Ethical, Legal, and Practical Considerations Involving the Financial Exploitation of Seniors” for ALI-CLE Estate Planning in Depth.

Natsu Taylor Saito, Distinguished University Professor and professor of law, presented “The International Legal Framework for Redress and Reparations” at the Sparer Symposium; “Repairs Now” at the University of Pennsylvania Law School; and “Redressing Foundational Wrongs: Indigenous Peoples, Decolonization, and Racial Reconciliation in Settler States” at the Conference of Global Perspectives: Regimes of Redress and Reparations, Transitional Justice, and the Rule of Law at Tulane University Law School. She spoke on “Executive Power: Lessons from the Transition” at an international, interdisciplinary symposium sponsored by the Obama Institute of the University of Gutenberg and Georgia State University. She also moderated a panel on ethical conflicts for the Georgia State Law Review Symposium, “From the Crime Scene to the Courtroom: The Future of Forensic Science.”

Charity Scott, Catherine C. Henson Professor of Law, gave a workshop on mindfulness at the annual mid-year meeting of the State Bar of Georgia. She presented on how mindfulness can be used in law teaching to promote well-being, reflection and professional identity formation for law students at the Externships 9 conference co-sponsored by CLEA and the AALS Section on Clinical Education. She also spoke on mindfulness for health care professionals at a training in Memphis on conflict resolution.

Jonathan Todres, professor of law, delivered multiple lectures on human rights in children’s literature and other children’s rights topics at University College Cork in Ireland, Queen’s University Belfast in Northern Ireland, and Leiden University Law School in the Netherlands and delivered the keynote address at a conference on human rights in early childhood in Dublin, Ireland.

Anne Tucker, associate professor of law, presented her corporate governance scholarship in January at a conference board roundtable on the role of the corporate board, which was co-hosted by Columbia University School of Law. In May, she participated in the University of Pennsylvania Law School’s Spring 2018 Corporate Roundtable.

Tanya Washington, professor of law, moderated a panel, hosted by the Diversity Committee at Baker-Hostetler, focused on equity, diversity and inclusion. She also organized “Through the Prism of Law and Social Justice,” a panel of law faculty that was part of a Post-Game conference connecting Georgia State University and the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the University Mainz in Germany.

Leslie E. Wolf, professor of law and director of the Center for Law, Health & Society, presented about ethically issues in child maltreatment research as part of a training program sponsored by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. She presented on the revised federal regulations governing human research protections at the Health Law Professors Conference. Wolf also participated in workshops at UNC Chapel Hill and in Amsterdam as part of her work as a member of the Expert Working Group for the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Disease–funded project, Pregnancy + HIV/AIDS Seeking Equitable Study (PHASES).

Patricia J. Zettler, associate professor of law, presented on FDA regulation of drugs with public health impacts, such as opioids, at Stanford Law School and at a Georgia State Law From the Towers to the Trenches CLE. She also participated in workshops about direct-to-consumer neuroscience at the Banbury Center and about agency permitting at the Center for the Study of the Administrative State at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University.

PUBLICATIONS


Andrea Curcio published “Disparate Institutional Service Workloads—Recognizing and Addressing the Problem” on the Best Practices in Legal Education blog, resulting in an invitation to speak at this summer’s Women in Academia Leadership Conference. She also published “Drafting Exams With Test-Taking Speed in Mind” on the same blog, which was republished on a blog published by the American Association of Law Schools.


Julian Juergensmeyer and Ryan Rowberry, associate professor of law and co-director of the Center for the Comparative Study of Metropolitan Growth, published the fourth edition of Land Use Planning and Development Regulation Law with Thomas Roberts and Patricia Salkin.


Paul A. Lombardo published “From In Vivo to In Vitro: How the Guatemala STD Experiments Transformed Bodies into Biopsicimens” in the Milbank Quarterly.

Lauren Sudeall Lucas published “Public Defense Litigation: An Overview” as part of a symposium on the right to counsel in the Indiana Law Review.


**NEW PROGRAMS**

Clark D. Cunningham developed a new course in which students learned how to use “big data” linguistic analysis to research the original meaning of provisions of the U.S. Constitution. The presentation of their findings to panels of judges from the Georgia Supreme Court and Court of Appeals was the subject of a story published on law.com and reposted extensively around the country.

**AWARDS AND ACCOLADES**

Stephen B. Bright received honorary degrees from Quinnipiac School of Law and from Centre College in Kentucky.

Andrea Curcio, along with Jessica Isabel Cino, Kim D’Haene, director of academic success, and the GSU Office of Institutional Research, was awarded a $50,000 grant from AccessLex to examine predictors of law school success beyond the LSAT, how LSAT scores predict grades in experiential learning courses and predictors of risk factors for the bar exam.

Lauren Sudeall Lucas secured a 2018 Opportunity Grant from the American Bar Endowment to support a pilot study of evictions and eviction court in semi-rural Georgia, working in partnership with GSU sociology professor Daniel Pasciuti and the Georgia Legal Services Program. In 2017, she received the BLSA Bernadette Hartfield Faculty Award.

Natsu Taylor Saito received the Bernadette Hartfield Faculty Award from Georgia State University’s Black Law Students Association.

Jonathan Todres received a Fulbright award and was in residence at University College Cork in Ireland for the spring 2018 semester.

Tanya Washington was honored with the President’s Award for Excellence from the Gate City Bar Association.

Cornell Stephens, professor of law, is now director of lawyering advocacy and will be supervising the College of Law’s Litigation Program. Also, through the efforts of third-year student Hunter Rodgers (J.D. ’18) and Stephens, the College of Law was granted a charter into the Order of Barristers. The Order of Barristers is a national organization that honors graduating law students who excel in advocacy. Stephens will be the advisor for the chapter.

Leslie E. Wolf was named a Distinguished University Professor, Award on behalf of the clinical section.

Mark Budnitz, professor of law emeritus, submitted comments to the American Law Institute objecting to the current draft of its proposed Restatement of the Law of Consumer Contracts. He contended that it is premature to attempt a restatement of law that applies to transactions that increasingly take place in a rapidly changing electronic environment. Only a small number of appellate cases from a few jurisdictions involve online contracts. Moreover, the agreements in these cases took place years ago in an online environment different from today’s, when consumers use devices such as smartphones and tablets for their transactions.

B. Summer Chandler, visiting assistant professor, was selected by the Northern District of Georgia Bankruptcy Court to serve on its Bench and Bar Committee.

Clark D. Cunningham was reappointed as the Georgia State Law representative to the Georgia Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism. He continues to serve as the Georgia State Law representative to Lawyers for Equal Justice, the nation’s largest new-lawyer incubator program; he is a member of the executive committee of the board of directors.

Erin C. Fuse Brown continues to serve as the academic liaison on the executive committee for the Health Law Section of the Georgia Bar. She also serves on the board of Georgia Watch, a nonprofit consumer protection and advocacy organization in Georgia.

Nicole G. Iannarone was named president of the Atlanta Bar Association.

Tanya Washington co-authored an amicus brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in *Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*.

**SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION**

Charlotte Alexander was named editor of the volume of contributions to the 71st Annual NYU Conference on Labor: Labor and Employment Law Initiatives, Proposals and Development During the Trump Administration.

Lisa Radtke Bliss concluded her term as chair of the AALS Section on Clinical Legal Education in January, when she accepted the inaugural Section of the Year (VITA) Program and is the co-chair for the AALS Section on Clinical Legal Education’s Clinicians of Color Committee.

Lauren Sudeall Lucas testified before a subcommittee of the Georgia House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee regarding HB 768, which related to the standard and procedure for determining intellectual disability in capital proceedings.

Timothy D. Lytton was selected to serve on the board of trustees of the Academy of Food Law & Policy. He was also elected to the executive committee of the Tort and Compensation Systems section of the American Association of Law Schools.

Kristina L. Niedringhaus is president of the Southeastern Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries.

Natsu Taylor Saito was appointed to the Atlanta Progressive Working Group’s Criminal Justice Commission.

Charity Scott has been appointed to the advisory board of the national Mindfulness in Law Society and serves as faculty advisor to its student division.

Anne Tucker was named an affiliated research faculty of the Wharton Social Impact Initiative at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania for her work on impact investments.


Nicole G. Iannarone was named president of the Atlanta Bar Association.

Tameka Lester testified as an expert witness before the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee about the taxpayer experience with the Internal Revenue Service and made recommendations on how to improve the IRS’s touch points for low-income taxpayers. She also serves as a trainer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program and is the co-chair for the AALS Section on Clinical Legal Education’s Clinicians of Color Committee.
Sobelson retires after 33 years

Some titles are formal; others are not. Professor Roy Sobelson has gained several since joining Georgia State Law in 1985. Official positions he has served in include professor of law, associate dean for academic affairs and director of the LL.M. program. In addition, students have given him nicknames like SoBe-Wan Kenobi and The Law School’s Dad to describe the roles he has played in their law school experiences and lives.

“I will never forget that first class in law school,” said Elizabeth Ames (J.D. ‘05), compliance counsel for Oldcastle Inc. “With his soft, calm voice, Professor Sobelson confused us all as he riddled his way through Pennoyer vs. Neff.”

In addition to dissecting cases, Carolyn Altman (J.D. ’07), who was Sobelson’s graduate research assistant, said he has a gift for helping students examine their career paths and aspirations.

“Before meeting Professor Sobelson, I had been told that if I wanted to become successful, I should pursue big-firm practice. However, he validated and encouraged my desire to work in public interest law,” said Altman, a solo practitioner in juvenile law.

Sobelson said his most memorable moments are seeing how much students grow.

“We’ve discussed each stage of my career and how to reach my next goals,” Ames said. “Most importantly, he always asks me if I’m happy. He is one of the few lawyers who includes happiness as part of the analysis of a successful legal career.”

There have been many changes since Sobelson entered the profession.

“It’s amazing how the faculty, classes, clinics and our approaches to teaching and assessing success are always evolving,” he said. “For alumni who haven’t been back in a while, many things are different than when they were here. Rest assured, however, that Pennoyer vs. Neff is still on the menu.”

Sobelson’s humor—and imprint—will remain too.

“His commitment, high standards and accessibility to students are infused in others throughout the school,” Altman said. “We’ve all been influenced by him and are better for it. In all of our capacities, we are his legacy — doing difficult work and doing it well.”

Read more at news.gsu.edu/Sobelson-retires.

LawSeq: Building a Sound Legal Foundation for Translational Genomics into Clinical Application.

Patricia J. Zettler continues to serve on the editorial advisory board for the Food and Drug Law Journal and as an ad hoc peer reviewer for various medical and legal journals.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

Charlotte Alexander was quoted in “alt.legal: Legal Analytics Is Heating Up in Hotlanta” on Above the Law; “Data (Gold) Mining: The Rise of the Law Firm Data Analytics Teams” in the New York Law Journal; “Georgia State University opens groundbreaking new legal analytics lab” on SaoporaReport; “GSU Law starts big data lab as industry girds for disruption” in the Daily Report; and “AI goes to law school” on LegalTech News.

Clark D. Cunningham was quoted in “Yes, Sean Hannity was a legal client of Michael Cohen’s” in the Washington Post. From February through May, he provided extensive expert consultation to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and to WSB-TV2, Atlanta’s ABC affiliate, in their ongoing investigation of alleged violations of the Georgia Open Records Act by the City of Atlanta.

Andrea Curcio was quoted in an article published in several outlets, “Jeff Sessions may have violated his recusal pledge when he fired Andrew McCabe”; spoke to Vox about the meaning of due process; was interviewed for the Rewire News article “Losing Your Job for Sexual Harassment Is Not a Violation of Due Process”; and was quoted about sexual assaults in Le Temps, a Swiss paper published in French.

Erin C. Fuse Brown was quoted in an Associated Press story on surprise medical bills and in a series of stories in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch about out-of-network air ambulance bills that launched an investigation by Senator Claire McCaskill. She also was quoted in a CNN report on legal and ethical questions raised by the actions of President Trump’s former physician.

Paul A. Lombardo was the featured interviewee on the National Public Radio podcast Hidden Brain on eugenics, was quoted in Buzzfeed News: “Human Tissues from Cruel Studies of Sexually Transmitted Infections May Be Sitting in US Government Labs” and was interviewed on Listening to Literature on the Savannah NPR station WRUU concerning his book Three Generations, No Imbeciles.

Lauren Sudeall Lucas and Darcy Meals were mentioned in a feature on the Center for Access to Justice on the blog What Great Law Schools Do, written by Dean Michael Hunter Schwartz of the University of the Pacific’s McGeorge School of Law.

Timothy D. Lytton was quoted in articles on mass shootings and gun control published in numerous media outlets, including the Washington Post, Reuters, USA Today, CNN, The American Lawyer, the Christian Science Monitor, Financial Advisor, the Legal Reader and Chinese Social Studies, and he was interviewed by radio programs on NPR, Radio Hong Kong, and Radio Sputnik (Moscow). He also appeared as a guest on CBC News Tonight with Carole MacNeil.

Patricia J. Zettler was quoted on various FDA issues in Politico, Buzzfeed, LongReads, The Nation and Gizmodo. She was also interviewed about biohacking on The Guardian’s Science Weekly podcast, and her research on pre-approval access to drugs was covered in a STAT news article.

VISITING PROFESSOR

Steven J. Kaminson, professor of law, served as a visiting professor at the Shepard Broad College of Law at Nova University, where he developed and taught an online version of his Employment Discrimination Law course. He will return to Georgia State Law faculty full time in the fall, teaching courses in Civil Procedure, Employment Discrimination, Alternative Dispute Resolution and Labor Law.

Paul A. Lombardo was a visiting professor at the Sindh Institute for Medical Sciences in Karachi, Pakistan, where he led a seminar in law, medicine and contemporary bioethics at the Center for Bioethics and Culture.
As lawyers, our practice includes the constant process of teaching others. And if you already have a mentee (or several), you know about reverse mentoring: even experienced practitioners have much to learn. You can give back to others and reap the benefits of mentoring. Here are some ideas that you can implement today, with particular focus on mentoring women.

**Read up.**

Although women are not a homogeneous group, we encounter similar implicit biases and unhelpful behavior from institutions and individuals. Obstacles are multiplied for women of color. To better understand how you can help empower women, excellent resources are just a click away. One study commissioned by the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers examines why women leave law firms at higher rates than men, noting lower salaries, lower job satisfaction, lack of autonomy and a feeling of “misfit.” How can you be part of the solution?

**Start with an existing relationship.**

Mentoring relationships do not require an engraved invitation. Look around you and offer to meet a law student, practitioner or judge who may benefit from your wisdom. If you are approached for guidance, give the amount of time that is sensible for your schedule. You may spend a few minutes critiquing a resume or serve as a champion by publicly praising accomplishments or nominating your mentee for a key committee or board position. If you work directly with your mentee, ensure that she has substantive work, and introduce her to clients and their team. She should be invited to celebrations, particularly if she played a role in the litigation or transactional/deal-closing victory. Check in with her to see whether your advice is helpful. Introduce her to others who can serve in a similar role: it takes a village to raise an attorney.

**Recognize and exercise your power.**

Be alert to your own firm’s policies (or lack thereof) that may impact women attorneys. If a change is needed, be a catalyst. If you are with a mentee in a meeting, at a deposition, in court or elsewhere, be cognizant of how others treat her. It’s not uncommon for women attorneys to be mistaken for court reporters or to be called derogatory names such as “Little Missy.” If this happens to your mentee, take action. If your mentee is interrupted or talked over, amplify her contributions: “As Mentee just pointed out, . . . ” If she communicates an idea that is ignored and someone else takes credit for that idea later, correct the record. And please give her a (literal) seat at the table.

**Rethink the status quo.**

Do you typically give your best advice on the links or over drinks? Be thoughtful when you extend invitations. Not everyone golfs. And not everyone imbibes (for health, religious and/or cultural reasons). Consider a trek on the BeltLine. Work together on a pro bono case. Co-author an article or book chapter. Volunteer at a shelter together. Meet your mentee at a CLE or bar networking event and introduce her to your contacts.

**Listen.**

Ask your mentee for ideas; this is where reverse mentoring comes in. Benefit from her perspective. Find out if she knows your opposing counsel or the judge in your case. Seek input on a legal question of mutual interest. Her vantage point, contacts and knowledge are useful to you. And if you give her an opportunity to dazzle in a professional setting, you have a success story that you can tell others.

Make a point of helping others because it is the right thing to do. Ideally, mentoring enhances our understanding of others from different generations, backgrounds and skill sets. When viewed expansively, anyone could be our mentee or mentor. And when you mentor a woman, it gives you a pivotal role in retaining and promoting more women attorneys, which benefits our profession, clients and community.

Jessica Wood (J.D. ’94) is a principal at Bodker, Ramsey, Andrews, Winograd & Wildstein, P.C. She focuses on business litigation, including business torts, contracts, director and officer liability, employment, minority shareholder and trade secret issues. She created Water Cooler Office Hours, an innovative mentoring program for law students. Visit www.brawwlaw.com for more information.
Dawn R. Smith of Smith & Lake was named to the 2018 Super Lawyers list of Top 50 Women in Georgia, in addition to being named one of the Top 100 Super Lawyers in Georgia.

1997

Sheri Tomblin Lake of Smith & Lake was named to the 2018 Super Lawyers list for the state of Georgia.

2003

Alice W. Limehouse has become of counsel with Smith & Lake.

2009

Angela Forstie, malpractice trial attorney, has been promoted to junior partner at The Linley Jones Firm.

2011

Taylor W. Hensel was named partner at Buckley Christopher in Atlanta. Hensel will maintain a practice devoted to litigation and focused on general liability, transportation/trucking and municipal liability, as well as employment/workers’ compensation.

2014

Brittanie Browning received the Award of Achievement for Service to the Public from the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar.

2016

Christine H. Lee has joined Miller & Martin as a litigation associate.

Kevan Dorsey has joined Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers as a litigation associate.

2017

Eric J. O’Brien has joined Buckley Christopher in Atlanta as an associate. His practice will focus on civil litigation, governmental/municipal liability and workers’ compensation matters.

Gainey joins Equal Justice Works’ new Georgia Housing Corps

Equal Justice Works has selected John Gainey (J.D. ’17) to serve as a legal fellow for the Georgia Housing Corps (GHC), a new fellowship program sponsored by the Georgia Bar Foundation, which addresses barriers to housing stability in Georgia’s rural and urban communities.

Gainey joins 10 other fellows and seven community advocates to provide a combination of services at select nonprofit legal organizations, including client representation, advocacy, community outreach and education. Gainey will work with the Cobb Legal Aid’s Eviction Clinic.

“1 worked with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society as a law student. While there, I discovered my potential to make real and meaningful change in communities and in the lives of my clients’ families by representing people that could not otherwise acquire legal services,” Gainey said. “A law degree gives us such a capacity to help others and impact society. As advocates, we have a duty to reduce barriers to equal justice and respond to needs other than our own. I want to make sure I play my part in that.”

Read more at news.gsu.edu/Gainey-EqualJusticeWorks.
Two views | What I learned in my first year of practice

Sheila Kazemian (B.A. ’13, J.D./M.S.H.A. ’17)

I don’t think there’s a single first-year associate who hasn’t had feelings of doubt, hasn’t been scared or hasn’t wanted to “be more.”

In my first year, I have found myself floating between feeling confident in my grasp of what is going and then feeling completely overwhelmed and realizing there aren’t enough hours in the day. Sometimes it feels like my first year is just one big initiation into living life in six-minute intervals and constantly turning to legal search engines.

But, I have realized the point of the first year of practice is to learn what works for you, what doesn’t and what skills you need to set the foundation for your career. I feel incredibly fortunate to work at a firm that values teamwork and to have supportive partners who value their associates.

One piece of advice I was given by a young partner, which I value and think of daily, is to “treat your supervising partner like a client.” Our firms and our supervising partners took a chance on us. They trust us with their work, and they are teaching us how to excel so that we can be assets to the firm. Our mission at Hall Booth Smith P.C. is “Serving to achieve excellence.” As first-year associates, I believe we should be treating our partners like clients we wish to serve.

Having a strong support system outside of your job is also essential to working towards success. My first day of work, I felt both anxious and blessed. My family called to wish me luck, and they discounted any feelings of doubt I expressed. It’s important and helpful to call your family, your friends, your significant other or whoever else pulls you up when you start to feel stress creep into your thoughts, and thank them.

Sheila Kazemian (B.A. ’13, J.D./M.S.H.A. ’17) is an associate in the Atlanta office of Hall Booth Smith P.C. She focuses her practice on the defense of hospitals, physicians and health care providers in medical malpractice actions.

Pierre-Joseph Noebes (J.D. ’17)

In my first year of practice, I have been fortunate to learn from the incredible attorneys around me as they work through a variety of problems. They are constantly thinking about why a client may want to take one approach over another, or how a particular strategy may seem better on paper but be disadvantageous in practice. Through all of this, I think back to a piece of advice a shareholder gave me when I first started — “Don’t be a lawyer that only says ‘no.’”

At the time I assumed this was his subtle way of telling me that as a first-year associate, I had to take on every case or question that came my way. I now realize he was saying so much more.

Providing the effective legal advice and counsel that every client issue deserves is not just about finding the answer to a question. My shareholder was telling me it is our responsibility to look beyond “no” — to look beyond the simple answers and consider how we can provide a meaningful solution to our clients’ problems while helping them achieve their business goals, even when the options are unclear.

That small piece of advice has continued to motivate me throughout my first year of practice. While it can be difficult to find meaningful solutions at times given my lack of experience as a first-year associate, I use those instances as opportunities to learn from the experience and expertise of those around me.

By asking questions and searching for that meaningful solution, I can not only offer my supervising attorney the best approach to a problem, but I can continue to improve and prepare myself for the rest of my career.

Pierre-Joseph Noebes (J.D. ’17) is an associate at Littler Mendelson. He represents and counsels employers in a broad range of employment matters arising under federal and state law. He is also a class representative on Georgia State’s Law Alumni Council.
INTERNATIONAL PATENT DRAFTING COMPETITION

Mitch Foley (J.D. ’18), Brandon Reed (J.D. ’18) and Brad Czerwonky (J.D. ’18) took first place in the International Patent Drafting Competition, held in Detroit in February. This is the first time Georgia State Law participated in the competition, which is hosted by the Midwest Regional Office of the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office (USPTO).

SAUL LEFKOWITZ MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Two Georgia State Law Moot Court teams won the Saul Lefkowitz Moot Court Competition, South East Regionals. Team B, consisting of Lauren Newman (J.D. ‘19) and Erin Winn (J.D. ‘19) won first place overall, best brief, and best oralist. The team was coached by Audra Lynn (J.D. ’19).

Team A, consisting of Sharnell Simon (J.D. ‘19) and Taylor Williams (J.D. ‘19) and coached by Colleen Hampton (J.D. ‘19), won second place overall.

ACS CHAPTER RECEIVES AWARD

The American Constitution Society for Law and Policy (ACS) recognized the Georgia State Law chapter with a 2018 ACS Program Award, which honors ACS student chapters that conducted at least 20 “substantive and compelling events” during the school year. In addition, Shelby McKenzie (J.D. ’18) was named as an ACS Next Generation Leader, one of a small group of students who have demonstrated commitment to ACS engagement and strong leadership qualities.

Read more at news.gsu.edu/ACS-leader-McKenzie.

88%

passage rate for first-time takers on the February 2018 bar exam, well ahead of the state rate of 70.4 percent and that of other law schools. Georgia State also finished first among all schools for all applicants, with a passing rate of 83.1 percent.

RANKINGS

No. 2

Best law school for those looking to minimize and repay their student loan debt — Student Loan Hero

A+

Georgia State Law was one of 12 schools to receive an A+ in the field of environmental law from preLaw magazine.

No. 3

Georgia State Law’s health law program rose to No. 3 and the part-time program rose to No. 10, while the full-time program held steady at No. 65 in the 2019 U.S. News & World Report rankings. The college’s clinical education program was ranked No. 31.

GIVING

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More than 300 guests joined Georgia State Law faculty and staff in May to celebrate and recognize the exceptional service of Sylvia Caley (M.B.A. ‘86, J.D. ‘89), Cheryl Jester-George, Paul Milich and Roy Sobelson, who retired this year. Read more at news.gsu.edu/four-retire-2018.