

amicus

A professional portrait of Allen Smith '00, a man with short grey hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a blue and white striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

MC SCHOOL OF LAW
WINTER 2024

POWDER KEG

ALLEN SMITH '00
VS. GOLIATH

OPENING STATEMENT



amicus

Amicus
Winter 2024

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On the cover: Allen Smith '00 takes on corporate giant Johnson & Johnson in a series of product liability cases that have delivered justice for thousands of women and families and counting. Read the story on page 14.

HELLO, MC LAW FAMILY!

As I travel around the state and nation meeting members of our MC Law community, many of you have commented that you're excited about the recent honors and news at MC Law – our ongoing renovations, the success of our graduates in bar passage and employment, our brand-new website, but most of all, the positive ENERGY that emanates from our students, faculty, staff, and alums. I share this excitement. As MC President Blake Thompson noted recently, MC Law has MOMENTUM!



In this issue of *Amicus*, you'll read about the multi-million-dollar renovations that are taking place at the law school. The goal of these renovations is to leverage

our prime location just steps from the state capitol, the supreme court, the governor's mansion, and many of the state's top law firms. We're creating beautiful new indoor and outdoor collaborative spaces, integrating the latest technologies, and providing new opportunities for our students to nurture their mental and spiritual wellness. But most importantly, as we near the 50th Anniversary of MC Law in 2025, we are taking care to ensure that our redesigned spaces tell the story of our alumni's successes and our faculty's accomplishments through signage, portraiture, wall wraps, and interactive technologies.

Over the last year, MC Law has been recognized by national legal publications for having one of the nation's top family law programs, for having one of the top health law programs, and for being one of the best capital city law schools. MC Law was also honored as having the #1 most improved career services program in the United States. In addition, MC Law was recently recognized as one of the top law schools for African American students, and as the #1 Army JAG feeder school in the nation.

I could go on, but don't take my word for it. Come visit our newly renovated campus, and I'll give you a personal tour. Yes—we have momentum at MC Law. And we invite you to be a part of it. Join us, as together, WE RISE.

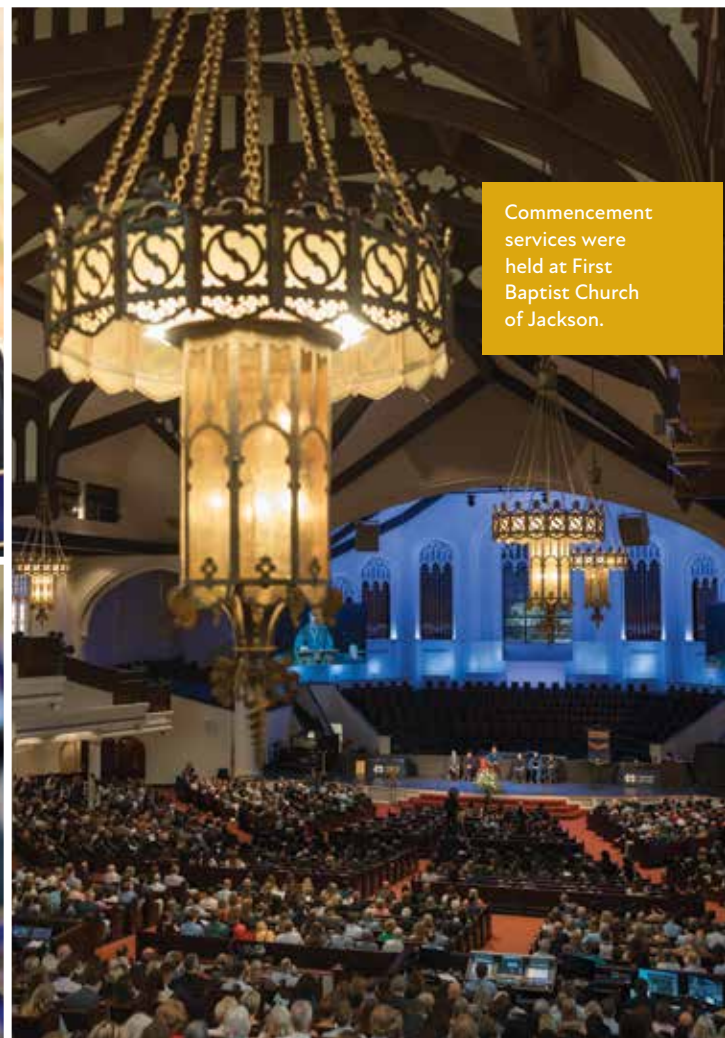
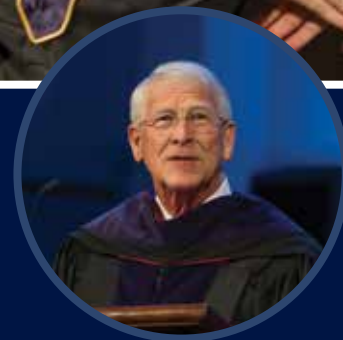
Dean John P. Anderson



COMMENCEMENT

2024

MAY 10, 2024,
WAS A DAY OF
CELEBRATION AS
118 LAW SCHOOL
STUDENTS BECAME
MC LAW ALUMNI.



Commencement services were held at First Baptist Church of Jackson.

“IN EVERY STAGE OF OUR NATION’S HISTORY, FORCES HAVE WORKED TO WEAKEN THE RULE OF LAW.”

“And time and again, the people of our country have looked to the bar for the courage and wits to defend the rule of law. The lawyers of our society have resisted passion, stood up to the mob, and kept cool heads...”

“This morning, I want to remind you, the future lawyers in this great sanctuary, of your vocational family tree...As history unfolds, you will play a role in shaping the future. You’ve been given a great gift in attending this prestigious law school. We know that from everyone who has been given much, much will be required. Our country needs your service. Thank you. Now get to work.”

EXCERPTED FROM A SPEECH BY MC LAW COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER SENATOR ROGER WICKER



A FEW
GOOD
MEN AND
WOMEN



MC LAW LEADS THE NATION IN THE
NUMBER OF STUDENTS SELECTED
FOR THE ELITE U.S. ARMY JAG CORPS.

T

THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S (JAG) CORPS IS THE MILITARY JUSTICE BRANCH OF THE U.S. ARMY, AIR FORCE, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD.

In 2023, the Army selected nine MC Law students for JAG service, an impressive accomplishment that made MC Law the #1 Army JAG feeder school in the country. The next highest law schools had three selectees each.

MC Law students were also selected for the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Marine JAG Corps. Four more MC Law students were accepted into the Army JAG Corps in 2024.

The JAG Corps evaluates candidates based on their academic performance, community service, physical fitness, work and leadership experience, and extracurricular activities. The application process for this elite group of legal professionals is highly competitive. Acceptance rates vary from branch to branch; the Army JAG Corps acceptance rate typically ranges from just four to seven percent.

WHAT MAKES MC LAW #1

Multiple factors contribute to MC Law's high student selection rate.

The school has a long history of producing JAG officers – also known as judge advocates – for every branch of the military. Three of the law school's current faculty members formerly served as judge advocates, including Professor Frank Rosenblatt; his father, Dean Emeritus Jim Rosenblatt; and Adjunct Clinical Supervising Attorney Joel Jones.

MC Law alumni have been successful judge advocates in every branch of the military. Alumni have also gone on to become JAG recruiters, visiting the MC Law campus to talk with students firsthand about JAG Corps careers.

"Those who are in the JAG Corps now have seen the caliber of candidates we produce and know that our track record has been outstanding," Professor Rosenblatt says.

MC Law is a military-friendly community. The Veterans Law Clinic provides services for veterans and helps students build military-related legal skills. MC Law maintains active affiliations with several National Guard units in Mississippi and Louisiana. In 2023, the law school added a Military

Justice Society to support student veterans and help JAG candidates prepare to apply.

"There's a lot of support for the military in general in Mississippi. Many people in the state have family members or friends who have served," Professor Rosenblatt says. "This is a place where if you say you're going into the JAG Corps, the response from the average student is, 'That's really cool. I want to hear more about that,' rather than a negative reaction to the military."

"At MC Law, I was able to take military law classes that aren't offered at most schools, including military justice, operational law, and government contracting," says Megan Donnett '24, who was selected for the Air Force JAG Corps. "I also completed a writing project with Professor Rosenblatt discussing how the military justice system handles special victim crimes, and how this impacts retention rates for women in the military."

"MC LAW'S MISSION, MINDSET, AND PROMOTION OF THE VALUES OF SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP MAKE OUR STUDENTS VERY COMPETITIVE FOR JAG SELECTION."

Megan Donnett '24, Selected for Air Force JAG Corps

MC Law also helps connect students with military internships. As an intern with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Liberty, North Carolina, Anna Beckett '25 drafted legal documents, attended a court-martial, and participated in military physical training.

"Highlights of my internship were skydiving with the Army Golden Knights parachute team and taking the army combat fitness test with one of the few female Army Rangers cheering me on," Beckett says. "My key takeaway from my internship was that it's just as important to learn to be a good soldier as it is to be a good lawyer. As a JAG Officer, you're an example to others and it's your responsibility to live up to the higher standards of officers."



"THE ROSENBLATTS and the Military Justice Society played the largest role in my decision to pursue the JAG Corps. The camaraderie and support in the military community is unmatched. My motivation to serve comes from the belief that I can help make the military a better place for some of the best people I've ever had the privilege to know."
— Anna Beckett '25, Selected for Air Force JAG Corps

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A JAG

"The people most likely to be selected and succeed in the JAG Corps are those who are strong in many areas," Professor

"MC LAW BOASTS ONE OF THE STRONGEST MILITARY PRESENCES IN THE COUNTRY. BEYOND THE FACULTY, MC LAW HAS NUMEROUS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI WHO HAVE SERVED AS JAG OFFICERS OR IN OTHER MILITARY ROLES. THE MENTORSHIP AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE OFFERED AT MC LAW ARE UNPARALLELED."

Sam Kinslow '24, Selected for Army and Air Force JAG Corps



Cody Dinkelacker '25, Professor Franklin Rosenblatt, Nicolas Rosario '26, Gabriel May '25, and Anna Beckett '25

Rosenblatt says. "These are people who are physically fit and academically successful. They have strong social skills, resiliency, communication ability, and emotional intelligence. They're involved in student leadership and community service, they enrich the student experience for others, and they're an important part of our community."

The competitive selection process for the JAG Corps is followed by rigorous training. Following law school graduation, those selected must pass a state bar exam, followed by three months of military training and legal studies. Selectees who complete the training enter the military with the rank of first lieutenant, committing to a minimum of four years of service. JAG officers then deploy to their first assignments, which might be in the United States or overseas.

"I've wanted to serve as a JAG since I was a teenager. I'm so excited to finally live my dream," says Donnett. "I'm also excited to see so many of my classmates become JAGs. MC Law's mission, mindset, and promotion of the values of service and leadership make our students very competitive for JAG selection. Having so many MC Law friends that I can call colleagues will be a blessing."

MC Law was one of **16** law schools nationwide invited to participate in the 2024 U.S. Army's Brigadier Wayne E. Alley Military Moot Court Competition.

MC Law finished second in the brief writing competition.

THE ARMY FUNDED LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Staff Sergeant Nicholas Rosario '26 is attending MC Law through the Army's Funded Legal Education Program (FLEP). Active service persons selected for FLEP receive a full scholarship to law school paid for by the U.S. Army, graduating as JAGs. FLEP is extremely selective, with only 25 servicepersons chosen for the program each year. Professor Frank Rosenblatt also earned his J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law through FLEP.



THE MILITARY JUSTICE SOCIETY

MC Law's Military Justice Society supports student veterans and students aspiring to become JAG officers. Members have opportunities to network with current JAG officers, work in the Veterans Legal Aid Clinic, and explore firsthand experiences related to military law.



SALUTE!
MC Law students accepted into the JAG Corps in 2023 and 2024 include:

ARMY
Anna Beckett '25
Kent Bounds '25
Tyler Bowman '24
Cody Dinkelacker '25
Megan Donnett '24
James Eppinette '22
Ryan Haik '24
Will Kennedy '25
Sam Kinslow '24

Dylan Loveland '24
Rose Marshall '23
Gabe May '25
Kevron McMillan '24

NAVY
John James '24

AIR FORCE
Anna Beckett '25

Gabby Cantrell '19
Megan Donnett '24
Sam Kinslow '24

MARINES
Ryan Stachowiak '23

COAST GUARD
Zachary Parker '22

THE ACCEPTANCE RATE FOR THE ELITE ARMY JAGS CORP TYPICALLY RANGES FROM 4 TO 7%

DOZENS of MC Law alumni are now serving or have served in the JAG CORPS.

“HE LOVED EVERY MINUTE OF IT.”

REMEMBERING PATRICK HURTADO

Patrick Hurtado was a smart, curious, caring man who dreamed of becoming an advocate for people in need. The 34-year-old husband and father was excelling as a second-year student at MC Law when he contracted double pneumonia. On January 28, 2024, Patrick died.

While he never became an attorney, Patrick embodied the faith-driven mission of MC Law. He left behind a law school community saddened by his loss but inspired by his example.



Hannah and Lilly Hurtado

I

IN 2021, PATRICK AND HANNAH HURTADO AND THEIR FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, LILLY, WERE LIVING IN CORSICANA, TEXAS, WHERE PATRICK HAD WORKED FOR GEORGIA PACIFIC AND ALSO AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MATH TEACHER AND HANNAH WAS A BRANCH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR AT THE EDWARD JONES INVESTMENT COMPANY.

A *summa cum laude* graduate of Texas A&M-Commerce, Patrick decided to apply to law school in pursuit of a career focused on helping others. He had seen firsthand the difference a strong advocate could make for people in crisis.

“Our daughter, Lilly, was born with congenital heart defects,” Hannah says. “She had two open heart surgeries

when she was just one month old. When we were in the hospital with Lilly, we saw a lot of families who didn’t know how to advocate for their children. That really touched Patrick. He wanted to be an advocate for them, and for children and families in other situations who needed help.”

Hannah pauses, then adds with a sad smile, “That, and Patrick loved to argue. He was larger than life, with a big presence and a booming voice, always talking. I told him more than once, ‘Baby, if you want to become a lawyer, you’re actually going to have to listen.’”

Patrick applied to law schools in Texas, as well as to MC Law, in his home state of Mississippi. Patrick was a native of Richton, Mississippi; he and Hannah had been married in Richton’s tiny Brewer Baptist Church, the same rural house of worship where Patrick’s parents and grandparents had exchanged vows.

Hannah vividly remembers the day Patrick was accepted to MC Law.

“We were sitting in his truck when the phone rang with a 601 number. Patrick answered, then said, ‘Thank you, sir. Thank you. I appreciate it. That’s wonderful news!’ Then he hung up and said to me, ‘I’m in! I’ve been accepted to MC Law and they’re offering me a merit scholarship.’ We were just over the moon. We both felt like MC Law was where we were meant to be.”

Making Patrick’s dream of attending MC Law a reality required the Hurtados to step out in faith. The young family left their home in Texas and relocated 483 miles east to Mississippi. Realizing that money would be tight while Patrick was in law school, the couple moved in with Patrick’s mother in the small town of Petal. Hannah found a new position within Edward Jones that would allow her to work remotely, and the couple researched Mississippi healthcare providers for Lilly.

In August of 2022, Patrick began making the five-days-a-week, four-hour round trip from Petal to Jackson to attend MC Law.

“Being a dad, and a husband, and a law student was very challenging,” Hannah says. “Patrick didn’t have a lot of time to participate in things like moot court, which disappointed him. But he made so many friends. He was older than a lot of his classmates, and I like to think they looked up to him. His professors understood what it was like to have a family and go to law school. MC Law just embraced Patrick. He loved every minute of it.

“We even talked about – later in life, after he graduated and was established in a legal career – creating our own law school scholarship for older students with families,” Hannah continues. “One of Patrick’s dreams was to give back to students like him.”

Patrick didn’t wait until “later in life” to give back to other students. After his death, Hannah was inundated with messages from Patrick’s classmates expressing gratitude for his friendship and encouragement.

At Patrick’s visitation, a classmate shared that Patrick had convinced her to try out for moot court, telling Hannah, “He asked me if I was going to try out and I told him, ‘Probably not.’ Patrick said, ‘You have to. You never know until you try.’ I’m just so thankful to Patrick because he had so much confidence. He was always positive and he shared that confidence with me. I tried out and I made it, thanks to his encouragement.”

“I’ve received so many letters from his classmates, telling me that they really miss him, especially in class,” Hannah says. “They told me that Patrick was the confident one, the one who would always raise his hand and ask the question they were all wondering about. That was Patrick, always so inquisitive. Always with his hand up.”

Patrick left behind a daughter who not only looks like her father, but is every bit as bright, inquisitive, and kind as he was. Lilly was only five years old when her daddy passed away.

“When Patrick was here with us, Lilly would ask me all kinds of questions about why something happened or how something worked, and I’d say, ‘I don’t know, Baby, we’ll have to ask your daddy to research that and explain it to you.’ Now, I can’t say that anymore,” Hannah says. “When Lilly asks me about her daddy, I can’t explain why this happened, but I can tell her where he is. I tell Lilly that Petal, Mississippi, is not our home. Our home is in Heaven with Jesus. Jesus called Daddy home, and someday we’ll see him again. I know that’s true.”

The Christian faith that Hannah and Lilly Hurtado cling to today is the primary reason Patrick Hurtado chose MC Law.

“When he came home from the very first day of orientation at MC Law, I told Patrick, ‘Tell me all about it! I want to know everything!’” Hannah recalls. “Patrick told me, ‘The thing that stuck out the most for me happened at lunch today. We all sat down and before we began eating, Dean Anderson prayed over us and over the food. When he prayed over us, I knew I was in the right place. MC Law is exactly where I need to be.’”



TEEING OFF FOR THE HURTADOS

The supportive Christian atmosphere that drew Patrick Hurtado to MC Law was reflected in the law school community’s response to his passing.

In March, MC Law held a golf tournament in Patrick’s memory, with proceeds benefiting his widow, Hannah, and their daughter, Lilly. The event was entirely student-led, with Patrick’s classmates planning the tournament, raising funds, recruiting golfers and sponsors, and volunteering the day of the event.

THE TOURNAMENT RAISED MORE THAN \$9,000, WHICH HANNAH PUT INTO A TRUST FOR LILLY.

“It’s bittersweet, because I know Patrick would have wanted to be the one who was fundraising for others,” Hannah says. “But I’m so grateful for this outpouring of support and thankful to know that Patrick was loved and respected at MC Law. I’m so proud that he had this kind of impact on people in the short time that he was here.”

“The Law Student Bar Association thanks all of the tournament sponsors, many of whom were alumni-owned businesses, alumni employers, and student employers,” says Cole Lothorp, Law Student Bar Association president. “We’re deeply grateful for their support, which made this event possible and helped us honor the memory of Patrick Hurtado. It’s moments like these that truly reflect the spirit of unity, compassion, and resilience within the MC Law community.”



MC Law presented Hannah and Lilly with a flag signed by all 68 participating golfers.

TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

- Alabama Insurance Agency
- Bordis Danos Pierce
- Business Communications, Inc.
- Butler Snow, PLLC
- Camp Law Firm
- Capitol Resources
- Community Bank
- Edward Jones
- Hearn Law Firm
- Iron Horse Grill

- Malouf & Malouf Law Firm
- McHard, McHard, Anderson & Associates, PLLC
- Milwaukee Tools
- P. Shawn Harris, P.A.
- Southern Beverage Company
- Tabor Law Firm
- Thompson Addison, PLLC
- Wilkinson Law Firm, P.C.

“NOW IS YOUR TIME OF GRIEF, BUT I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN AND YOU WILL REJOICE, AND NO ONE WILL TAKE AWAY YOUR JOY.”

JOHN 16:22





POWDER KEG

ALLEN SMITH '00 TOOK ON JOHNSON
& JOHNSON IN A DAVID VS. GOLIATH
SHOWDOWN THAT'S DELIVERING
JUSTICE FOR THOUSANDS OF WOMEN.

IT READS LIKE A JOHN GRISHAM THRILLER.

A solo practitioner in Mississippi follows a winding trail of evidence suggesting a multibillion-dollar corporation's signature product – a product marketed as a gentle, soothing health aid – may be linked to cancer. Outmanned and out-moneyed, the attorney decides to gamble it all, and takes the corporation to court in a David and Goliath showdown.

But this case isn't fictional. It's the true story of Allen Smith, and how his fight for women and families who may have been harmed by Johnson's Baby Powder has led to judgements totaling more than \$1 billion and may have prompted the \$395 billion company to reformulate its flagship product.



“I’VE NEVER, EVER BEEN MOTIVATED FOR ONE DAY IN THIS JOB BY MONEY.

My motivating factor has always been to expose a few of the harms in the world and contribute to remedying those harms.”

ALLEN SMITH ’00

A

ALLEN SMITH DIDN’T GROW UP DREAMING OF BECOMING AN ATTORNEY. SMITH SPENT HIS UNDERGRADUATE YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI PREPARING FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL.

But after four years on the pre-med track, Smith switched his major, graduated with a degree in English, and enrolled in MC Law.

When asked what kind of a law student he was, Smith readily replies, “Average.”

“I should have applied myself more,” Smith says. “But where I finished ranked in the class didn’t matter as much to me as having a law degree that would allow me to do what I wanted to do.”

Following graduation from MC Law, Smith practiced personal injury and product liability law with firms on the Gulf Coast and in Jackson, Mississippi. In 2007, he established The Smith Law Firm, PLLC in Ridgeland, specializing in product liability.

“I had worked on silicosis cases on the Coast, and I’d seen that too often, these large corporate defendants have knowledge that they’re selling products that are defective, that are causing injuries and sickness, cancer and death, and they don’t disclose that to the public,” Smith says. “To be honest, I guess I was a little naïve before then. You see these movies like *The Insider*, or you hear stories about tobacco litigation or asbestos litigation and these evil companies and the lengths they go to hide how bad their products are, and you think, that’s just salacious, or it’s overblown, or “That’s just a movie.”

“But when I started working in product liability, when I saw the internal documents and the emails, I realized, it’s true. It made me grow up as a person and as a lawyer to realize that this *isn’t* made up. This *isn’t* overblown. This is real life. And it just infuriated me.”

FOLLOWING THE POWDER TRAIL

Smith tried his first landmark case against Johnson & Johnson (J&J) in South Dakota in 2013, but his path to that courtroom began in the early 2000s in Jackson, Mississippi, during a conversation with his father.

Dr. Robert Allen Smith was a plastic surgeon who had patented a powder product for use in wound care. Dr. Smith received a call from the Estee Lauder cosmetics company, inquiring about his product. Estee Lauder had heard that the U.S. government could be preparing to list the mineral talc as a carcinogen linked to ovarian cancer, and wondered if Dr. Smith’s powder product could be used as a substitute for the talc in their cosmetics.

“My dad told me about this over Sunday lunch,” Smith recalls. “I went home and Googled ‘ovarian cancer’ and ‘talc.’ I found studies coming out of Harvard that showed an increased risk of ovarian cancer tied to talcum powder use for feminine hygiene. Those studies went all the way back to 1982.”

Talc was the key ingredient in Johnson & Johnson’s Baby Powder and in the company’s Shower to Shower, a powder product marketed to adults. The studies Smith found indicated there *might* be an exposure to talc *associated* with ovarian cancer. Despite numerous studies, there was no definitive proof that talc *caused* the cancer.

Over the next few years following that conversation, Smith continued to build his legal practice, all the while spending his limited free time researching the link between talc and ovarian cancer.

In 2005, Smith placed a call to Dr. Daniel Cramer, a professor of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive biology at Harvard Medical School who had been studying the link between talc use and ovarian cancer for more than 20 years. Dr. Cramer had published study after peer-reviewed study showing increased risk of ovarian cancer tied to talcum powder use and opining – to no avail – that manufacturers and sellers of talcum powder needed to warn the public.

After their phone conversation, Smith flew on his own dime to Boston to meet with Dr. Cramer and his colleague, Dr. John Godleski, a pathologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School. That initial meeting led Smith to return to Boston five more times over the next two years.

“Dr. Cramer and Dr. Godleski taught me the science behind the link between talc and ovarian cancer, to the point where I felt like I could almost teach a class on it,” Smith recalls. “I was interested in the science, but I was more interested in how this was affecting women and their families.”

Smith joined the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance, a global nonprofit whose website included a forum where ovarian cancer patients, their family members, and doctors could connect.

“In 2007, I saw a post from a woman named Deane Berg in South Dakota,” Smith recalls. “She wrote that she’d been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and that she’d used Johnson’s Baby Powder all her life as a feminine hygiene product. She wanted to know if anyone else suspected talc as a factor in their cancer diagnosis.”



Cancer patient Deane Berg used J&J Baby Powder daily.

THE FIRST CLIENT

Deane Berg was 49 years old when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in December of 2006.

A physician assistant with a veterans' hospital in South Dakota, Berg had more than 20 years' experience treating patients, including cancer patients. But nothing could have prepared her for the agony she endured during her own treatment. Berg underwent a full hysterectomy, followed by six months of excruciating chemotherapy that left her nauseated and gave her debilitating headaches. The powerful drugs designed to save her life robbed Berg of her hair, affected her hearing, and caused permanent nerve damage in her hands and feet. Berg could not work; even if her immune system had not been compromised, she was too weak to care for herself, much less her patients.

Berg was studying a pamphlet on ovarian cancer when she came across a checklist of risk factors. The list included only one factor that applied to her – exposure to talc. Berg had used Johnson's Baby Powder or Shower to Shower daily since 1975, a feminine hygiene practice she'd learned from her mother.

Berg closed the pamphlet and walked into her bathroom, where bottles of Johnson's Baby Powder and Shower to Shower body powder sat on a shelf. She read the labels and saw "talc" listed as an ingredient.

"I threw both bottles in the wastebasket," Berg recalls. "Then I went to the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance site, and typed in 'Has anyone else gotten ovarian cancer from talcum powder?'"

Convinced that J&J's products may have caused her cancer, Berg consulted an attorney in Sioux Falls. • "He literally laughed at me," Berg says. "He said, 'You actually think you could sue Johnson & Johnson? I'm not going to take your case. Forget it.' So, I thought no lawyer would be willing to take this on. And that's when Allen Smith called me."

B

BERG INITIALLY SUSPECTED SMITH OF RUNNING SOME SORT OF SCAM. ONCE HE CONVINCED HER THAT HE WAS ACTUALLY AN ATTORNEY WHO HAD BEEN RESEARCHING THE LINK BETWEEN TALC AND OVARIAN CANCER FOR YEARS, BERG GAVE SMITH ACCESS TO HER MEDICAL RECORDS AND TISSUE SAMPLES.

Smith forwarded the records and samples to Dr. Cramer and Dr. Godleski for review. The doctors found talc in Berg's cancer tumor tissue.

"Both doctors were willing to testify that talc was a contributing factor in Ms. Berg's cancer," Smith says. "They were thrilled that after years of warning about this link, *finally*, someone was listening and taking action."

In 2009, with Deane Berg as the plaintiff, Smith filed the first baby powder lawsuit against Johnson & Johnson.

Smith's next step was to file discovery, compelling J&J to turn over all internal documents, research reports, and emails relevant to talc and ovarian cancer.

"Johnson & Johnson had all these safeguards in place, all these objections they could have raised to avoid sending me the information," Smith says. "I guess they looked me up, saw that I was a single practitioner in Mississippi, and weren't worried about me. I was just some country lawyer down here in Mississippi. How could I possibly be a threat to Johnson & Johnson? They had all these safeguards in place, *and they didn't use them.*"

Instead, Johnson & Johnson buried Smith in paperwork. Smith printed every file the company provided; stacks of papers six feet high completely filled three rooms in Smith's law offices. Smith spent 12 hours a day reading every word on every piece of paper.

"I could not *believe* what I was seeing regarding what Johnson & Johnson knew, going all the way back to the 1960s, about the hazard of talc causing cancer and them not only not

telling the public about this risk, but also actively influencing the federal government's agencies not to regulate them."

The next four years were filled with discovery and depositions as Smith prepared to take the corporate giant to trial. As a plaintiff's attorney, Smith would not be paid for his efforts unless his client won at trial or agreed to a settlement. He financed his work to build the case by maxing out multiple credit cards and borrowing from his family.

Then, with the trial date approaching, Johnson & Johnson requested a mediation in South Dakota to see if the case could be settled out of court.

"Ms. Berg and I walked in, and a Johnson & Johnson representative said, 'Let me start by saying we're here to see if we can resolve this without going through an extensive trial. But make no bones about this. We are one of the largest corporations in the world and we view this as a blip on the radar screen,'" Smith says.

Johnson & Johnson's first offer was \$600,000, but it was contingent on a confidentiality agreement. If Berg accepted the settlement, neither she nor Smith would be allowed to disclose anything about J&J's internal knowledge of the hazards of talc to the public. Further, J&J would not acknowledge in any way that there was a link between Ms. Berg's cancer and their product. They would not pull the baby powder from the market, nor would they put any kind of warning on the label.

"J&J's lawyers were very arrogant," Berg recalls. "When I said, 'No, I'm not going to settle,' they looked shocked. But I didn't go into this for the money. I went into this to get a warning label put on the powder or get it taken off the market. I went into this to keep other women from going through what I had gone through."

J&J responded by increasing the amount of the settlement offer to \$1.3 million, but they would not budge on the confidentiality agreement. Berg's response was, "I'll see you in the courtroom."

Smith acknowledges that the offer would have been a legally reasonable settlement for Berg, and that his share of that settlement would have eased the financial burden he'd taken on to build the case.

"Sure, for a fleeting moment, I thought about the upside of settling. But that moment came and went in a millisecond," Smith says. "It was *completely* Deane Berg's call, and I agreed with her on that call 100%. Johnson & Johnson had tried legal roadblocks to stop us from getting there. They had degraded us at mediation, [treating me] like a small town, country practitioner that didn't know what he was doing, and [basically telling] my client, 'Who do you think you are to sue this big, wealthy company?'"

"I was ready to try the case. I *wanted* to try the case," Smith says. "From the moment I had seen those internal documents, I knew that this was going to be something much larger than the two of us sitting there."



Deane Berg was the plaintiff in Smith's first case against J&J.

BERG V JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Four years after Smith originally filed the lawsuit, the *Berg v Johnson & Johnson* trial began in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on September 24, 2013.

On the right side of the courtroom, Allen Smith, Deane Berg, and Smith's co-counsel from South Dakota sat at the plaintiff's table.

On the left side of the courtroom sat some 50 Johnson & Johnson attorneys and J&J staff members from San Francisco to New York.

"I had tried large cases before, but nothing of this magnitude. I knew the significance of this case, and I had the nerves that came with being the first and setting a precedent going forward," Smith says. "I knew the materials backwards and forwards. But it's been my experience that at trial, you can be prepared, but once they say, 'Mr. Smith, you can ask your questions,' it's off script. You have to be able to juke and jive and move and adapt to the way the witness is going and the situation is going. You've always got to be prepared for the unpreparedness. I liken trial work to jazz. It's a controlled improvisation."

The "controlled improvisation" of the *Berg v Johnson & Johnson* trial lasted for two weeks. Deane Berg, who had already suffered so much physically, was put through an emotional wringer as J&J's attorneys grilled her about her powder use, her sex life, her pregnancies, and her cancer. While other witnesses were testifying, Berg says, "I would sit there next to Allen, just wringing a Kleenex in my hand, trying not to break down."

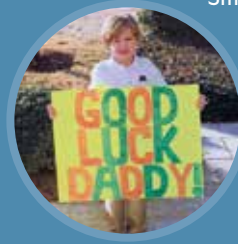
A DEADLY DISEASE

238,484 WOMEN IN THE U.S. LIVING WITH OVARIAN CANCER (2021)	19,680 ESTIMATED NEW CASES IN 2024	50.9 SURVIVAL RATE
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Source: National Cancer Institute

ALLEN SMITH'S MOST LOYAL ADVOCATES

Allen Smith's biggest cheerleaders are his family.



Smith was a newlywed when he began researching the link between talc and ovarian cancer. His wife, Geri Beth, recalls that the early years of their marriage were marked by Allen's frequent visits to Boston to confer with experts at Harvard. Allen and Geri Beth remember various milestones in the Johnson & Johnson cases based on how old their son, Peyton, was at the time. Now 14, Peyton was a newborn when Smith filed the Berg case and a toddler when he tried it. His father has been fighting for justice in the J&J cases for Peyton's entire lifetime.

"I'M PROUD OF ALL THE HARD WORK ALLEN HAS PUT IN," GERI BETH SAYS. "ALLEN LOVES THE COURTROOM, BUT HE TRULY DOES THIS WORK BECAUSE HE CARES SO MUCH ABOUT HIS CLIENTS. THEY'RE LIKE A SECOND FAMILY TO HIM."

Smith's parents have also been in the courtroom for the majority of his cases. And in the dog-eat-dog world of trial law, Smith's pups, Duke and Barkley, are always on his side.

Right: Allen, Geri Beth, and Peyton Smith



The Smith Law Firm, PLLC is a family affair. Smith's nieces, attorneys Madison Keyes (seated) and Mary Morgan Coburn '23, practice with the firm.

POWDERKEG

Smith "joked and jived" against J&J's formidable legal team until the jury went out for deliberations. "Some of the worst time periods I've ever spent in my life have been waiting for the jury to come back with a verdict," Smith says. "You've spent years of your life preparing for this case. You realize the magnitude of this litigation. You have an individual's ability to be able to be compensated for horrific injuries behind this decision. And you've got all of that wrapped up into this fleeting few seconds of time that's getting ready to happen. My heart was beating out of my chest."

The jury came back and answered a series of all-important questions.

Do you find that Johnson and Johnson should have placed a warning about ovarian cancer risk on its Baby Powder bottles?
Yes.

Do you believe that Ms. Berg's use of Johnson & Johnson's Baby Powder was a contributing cause to ovarian cancer?
Yes.

The sound of the J&J attorneys slamming their notebooks shut echoed through the courtroom.

"I'm thinking, 'we got it,'" Smith says. "And then they said, 'We award damages of... zero.'"

Deane Berg was awarded nothing for her pain and suffering. She was not even reimbursed for her medical bills. Smith received no compensation for his work building the case.

"I was dumbfounded," Smith says. "I've never had that happen before in my life. Ms. Berg was dumbfounded. My co-counsel was dumbfounded. The judge was dumbfounded. The defense counsel was dumbfounded. Driving back to Mississippi from South Dakota, I was angry. I was upset. And I was so disappointed for Ms. Berg."

"Then, I realized after that initial shock and disappointment, that *we won the case*. Twelve people unanimously said that Johnson & Johnson should have placed a warning on its product. And 12 people unanimously decided that J&J's product contributed to the cause of my client's ovarian cancer. That was a huge victory. I knew what it meant going forward for tens of thousands of women."

Berg had strong grounds for appeal, as the jury's verdict of no monetary damages was inconsistent with the finding of liability. But filing an appeal also carried a significant risk. Johnson & Johnson had previously tried to have Dr. Cramer and Dr. Godleski disqualified as expert witnesses. If Johnson & Johnson tried to disqualify the doctors during the appeal process and was successful, the case against J&J would end.

Deane Berg declined to appeal, accepting the non-monetary finding in order to make sure the precedent stood.

"This was never about the money to me," Berg says. "This was about not letting this happen to any other women after me."

A DUST-UP DECADES IN THE MAKING

A \$395 billion corporation, Johnson & Johnson was founded in 1886 as a medical supply company. In 1894, the company produced its first baby product, Johnson's Baby Powder. Baby powder became a flagship product for J&J, launching the company's family-friendly image. Decades later, Johnson & Johnson introduced Shower to Shower, a body powder targeted to adult women and marketed with the catchy jingle, "A sprinkle a day helps keep odor away." There is evidence suggesting both products may have been linked to ovarian cancer.



THE POWDER KEG ERUPTS

Smith went back to Mississippi with a winning verdict, but several hundred thousands of dollars in debt. But word of the Berg case had spread. Potential cases were pouring in from around the United States and Canada.

"I realized during the Berg case that this was going to be a national and international litigation, and that it was a lot bigger than me and a lot more than I could handle alone," Smith says.

Smith partnered with The Beasley Allen Law Firm, a large firm in Montgomery, Alabama, to assist in the next rounds of litigation.

As preparation for the next cases was underway, news of the verdict in the Berg case hit the national media. Unencumbered by a confidentiality clause, Deane Berg shared her story with *The New York Times*, *The New York Post*, and other national publications and television shows. Law firms nationwide began advertising for ovarian cancer patients who had used J&J powder products.

Smith's second showdown with J&J took place in February of 2016 in St. Louis, Missouri, in the case of Jacqueline Fox, a mother, foster mother, and grandmother from Alabama. The same lead attorney who had represented J&J in the Berg case was once again seated across the courtroom from Smith in the Fox case. This time, however, Smith would not have his client sitting beside him at the plaintiff's table. By the time the case came to court, Jacqueline Fox had died of ovarian cancer. Smith was bringing the case on behalf of her son.



Allen Smith and jurors from the Fox trial

But while Jacqueline Fox was deceased, she was still Smith's star witness. In a move he believes helped decide the case, Smith played an audio recording of Fox's deposition.

"This courtroom in St. Louis was what you envision courtrooms being like in the movies. Thirty-foot ceilings, all wood and brass and marble floors," Smith says. "It was a huge courtroom and it was packed with a huge audience. When I played that recording, you could have heard a pin drop."

Jurors heard Fox describe her grueling chemo regime, painful surgeries, and lengthy hospital stays. They heard Fox describe her family's fear that "they were going to lose me." They heard the determination in her voice when she said, "But I'm not giving up," and explained that while she may have lost her hair, "I didn't lose my smile."

And when asked what she hoped to gain from the lawsuit, jurors heard the late Jacqueline Fox say, "To be honest with you, to put [it] out there about ovarian cancer...I just want to do right. I don't want anybody to have to go through what I'm going through."

"There wasn't a dry eye in the courtroom," Smith says. "It was so powerful."

Just as they had in the Berg case, the jury in the Fox case found Johnson & Johnson liable.

But this time, they awarded damages of \$72 million.

"When they read the verdict, there was an *eruption* in the courtroom. It was unbelievable. People were crying. Mrs. Fox's son was crying," Smith says. "The lead lawyer for Johnson & Johnson was wearing a \$5,000 suit and tasseled alligator shoes. His attitude was the same as it had been in the Berg case. His arrogance was the same. I looked over at him and the defense team when the verdict was read. Their jaws were on the floor. They just *fell out*."

The verdict was delivered at eight o'clock in the evening; the rest of courthouse was closed and dark. When Smith stepped out of the elevator on the ground floor to leave the courthouse, the jurors were waiting for him.

"They had waited to take a picture with me," Smith says, his voice breaking.

Following the Fox verdict, Smith tried talcum powder case after talcum powder case, facing a revolving door of attorneys representing Johnson & Johnson.

"We went to a second trial in St. Louis and got a \$55 million verdict. Those lawyers left, new lawyers came in. I tried the third case, and got a \$70 million verdict. The fourth case in St. Louis, we got \$110 million verdict. In 2017, I tried a case in Los Angeles, California, and got a \$417 million verdict."

Other attorneys followed Smith's lead, filing thousands of cases on behalf of thousands of women who believed they were harmed by J&J's powder products.

The state of Mississippi hired Smith and the Porter & Malouf law firm to file a Consumer Protection Act case against Johnson & Johnson for selling a potentially harmful product without warning consumers of its dangers. In 2024, Johnson & Johnson settled that case for \$75 million.

THE DUST-UP CONTINUES

In 2020, Johnson & Johnson announced that it would no longer sell body powders containing talc in America and Canada. The company did not acknowledge that talc could cause ovarian cancer, saying only that product demand had fallen due to "misinformation" about the product's safety.

In 2021, Johnson & Johnson formed a spin-off company called LTL Management, assigned talc claims to that company, then placed LTL in bankruptcy. More than 35,000 talc lawsuits were temporarily postponed until mid-2023, when the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the bankruptcy filing was not made in good faith and dismissed the bankruptcy.

In August of 2022, Johnson & Johnson announced it would stop selling talc-based powder globally, replacing the talc in its powders with cornstarch.

As of October 2024, over 62,000 lawsuits have been filed against Johnson & Johnson in connection with its talcum powder products.

At the time of this writing, Smith and his legal partners were representing some 12,000 women in every state and Canada in talc cases against Johnson & Johnson. J&J was working with Smith, his partners, and other plaintiff's attorneys to negotiate a settlement deal that would compensate the remaining plaintiffs. Compensation in the most recent settlement plan



POWDER KEG

Allen Smith and co-counselors with J&J plaintiff Eva Echeverria and her family

proposed by Johnson & Johnson topped \$9 billion.

While the cases number in the thousands, Smith remembers every individual client's story.

"I vividly remember everything about Ms. Deane Berg's case. I vividly remember everything about Ms. Jacqueline Fox's case. I vividly remember everything about Ms. Gloria Ristesund's case, Ms. Deborah Giannecchini's case, and so many more," Smith says.

"Whether it's a huge case like Johnson & Johnson or a much smaller one, you become emotionally and personally involved with these people. You're meeting them during the worst parts of their lives. It's your client, their family, and you as a team, together on a quest to get compensation for the wrongs that have been put upon them."

In legal circles, Smith is recognized as the courageous, small town attorney who brought the first case against Johnson & Johnson, the David who was willing to take on Goliath. But in Smith's eyes, the real hero of the story is Deane Berg.

"Because of Deane Berg's actions at mediation, because of her actions walking into the courtroom, because of her actions not to appeal, she has saved thousands and thousands of lives," Smith says. "Johnson & Johnson removed talc from all of its body powders. And Deane Berg is the cause of that."

"When they took the product off the market, I was elated," Berg says today. "So many people have told me, 'You should have taken the money.' Sure, it would be nice to be sitting on \$600,000 today. But I look at it this way: My life is more precious than a dollar bill. My cancer is in remission. I have my life. And there are a lot of women out there who died."

I've been able to fight for them. I've been able to get [the message] out there, and hopefully save other women's lives, or at least get them awards for what they deserve.

"People have called me the Erin Brockovich of talcum powder," Berg continues. "But to me, Allen Smith has really been the big factor in this. If he hadn't decided to do this, it most likely never would have happened. I give him so much credit for having the courage as a small-town lawyer in Mississippi to go against one of the biggest companies in the world."

"Allen stood his ground, and he continues to do so when a lot of other lawyers would not even consider the case," Berg continues. "Allen is a very *kind* guy. He was very caring. And I could tell he was determined to stick with my case no matter what happened. I'm very proud of him."

"Seeing what these companies are really capable of and righting those wrongs is my purpose in this profession," Smith says. "If I can right a few wrongs during my lifetime, then I've succeeded."

ANYTHING BUT TEXTBOOK — Allen Smith gives an annual Ted Talk-style presentation to MC Law students on lessons learned in the courtroom that may never appear in a textbook. One of his best tips? Live like a local. "Watch the local news, get the local paper, get the flavor of the city and the population that makes up your jury. Get to know if your jury is young or old, whether they're hip or not hip, up on technology or current events." Smith also reminds students to pay attention to the tiniest details. "For one of my trials in St. Louis, I had a well-educated, younger, more tech savvy, more current event savvy set of jurors. The singer Prince died during that time and I wore a purple paisley tie to court. Four or five jurors looked at my tie and gave me a head nod when they walked into jury box that morning."

THE NEXT CASE — Since 2022, Allen Smith has been consulting with epidemiologists, oncologists, and toxicologists on the possible connection between repeated exposure to hair dye and cancer in hairdressers. Smith expects to file the first case in this matter in Los Angeles in December of 2024.

RAISING *the* BAR

MC LAW IS IN THE MIDST OF A \$7.5 MILLION RENOVATION THAT WILL IMPROVE AMENITIES AND TRANSFORM THE LAW SCHOOL'S BUILDINGS INTO A WELCOMING, MODERN DOWNTOWN CAMPUS.

“Our law school campus lies in the heart of Mississippi’s legal community, and we’re proud to make this investment in downtown Jackson. We’re here to stay,” says MC President Blake Thompson. “We’re excited to create an updated space that will not only better serve our current students, but will also enhance recruiting and the law school experience for future generations of MC Law students.”

“Investing in our downtown Jackson location is crucial to the future success of our law school,” says MC Law Dean John Anderson. “Prior renovations have focused on our buildings. These renovations are designed not only to make our buildings state-of-the-art, but also to create a full-service campus.”



GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

As planned, the multi-phased renovations will unfold over the next two to three years, transforming every aspect of the downtown campus. Students will open the front doors and step into a spacious, welcoming lobby with a lounge feel, where they can socialize with friends or plug in their laptops and be instantly connected to the information they need to study or work.

Reimagined interior spaces will include a dedicated room for prayer or quiet reflection, as well as a wellness room equipped with a massage chair and fountain where students can relax and recharge. The renovated student center will include a well-equipped café, while a modern vending space

will provide nutritious meals and snacks after hours. A separate café space inside the library will provide a quiet space where students can enjoy a meal without leaving their studies. Portraits, exhibits, and artwork throughout the buildings will honor alumni and showcase the law school's rich history.

The parking lot spanning the back of the building will be upgraded with trees and landscaping. The patio will be transformed with foliage and green space. The back doors will open onto a campus shaded by trees and dotted with picnic tables, water features, and shade structures, a tranquil place where students can socialize or study in the fresh air and sunshine. The grounds will be secure, gated, and accessible only by key card.

"I refer to the planned campus as having an 'airport lounge vibe,'" Dean Anderson says. "You plug in. You have food and drink. You have the information you need and a comfortable space to work. If you want to socialize, you can visit the lobby or the student lounge. If you want a quiet space, you can retreat to the library. If you want a collaborative space, you and your classmates can go into a study room with a white board and close the door."

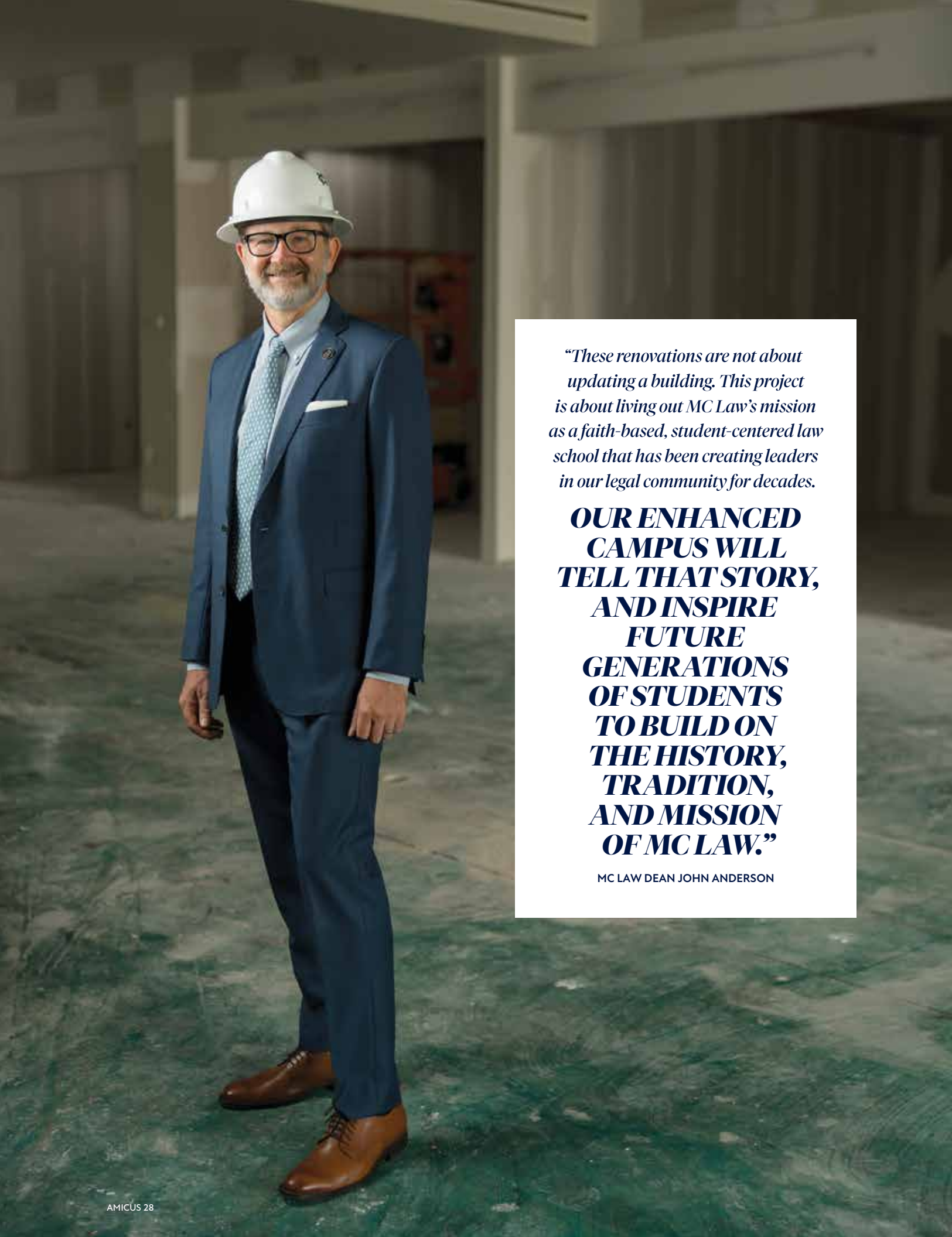
"It will be totally transformational," Dean Anderson continues. "Students will be comfortable here from 7:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night. Everything our students need will be right here."

The Mississippi Bar, local law firms, nonprofits, federal agencies, and many downtown Jackson businesses will benefit from the renovations as they continue to use the law school campus for meetings, CLEs, and other events. The renovations will also create a comfortable space for veterans, families, and others served by MC Law's many legal clinics.

PLANNED SPACES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Back patio | 4. Student Center auditorium |
| 2. Classroom building lobby | 5. Second floor classroom building student lounge |
| 3. Second floor library | 6. Student Center lobby and cafe |

Renderings depict spaces as planned and are subject to change.



“These renovations are not about updating a building. This project is about living out MC Law’s mission as a faith-based, student-centered law school that has been creating leaders in our legal community for decades.

OUR ENHANCED CAMPUS WILL TELL THAT STORY, AND INSPIRE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS TO BUILD ON THE HISTORY, TRADITION, AND MISSION OF MCLAW.”

MC LAW DEAN JOHN ANDERSON



1



2

1. Classroom building first floor classroom
2. First floor library



PHASED PROJECTS

Phase 1
Nearing Completion

- Exterior signage
- First floor library
- Some classrooms
- Administrative offices
- General campus facelift and extensive landscaping
- Updated classrooms
- Technology integration throughout campus

- Collaborative social spaces for students and faculty
- Student lounge

Phase 2
Partially Underway

- Student Center building
- Additional exterior enhancements

Phase 3

- Second floor of classroom center
- Second floor of administration building

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

68%

OF NEW STUDENTS SURVEYED
chose MC Law because of the law school’s location in downtown Jackson, in the heart of the Mississippi legal community.



The MC Law project is a collaboration between MC Law, CDFL Architects + Engineers, and Alliant Construction.



MC LAW

HELP CREATE THE NEW CAMPUS.

WHILE MC LAW BEGAN FUNDING THE RENOVATIONS WITH CASH ON HAND, our full vision for the transformed campus will only become a reality with the support of our alumni, friends, and members of the legal community.

Tax-deductible donations in any amount are deeply appreciated and every gift will be recognized.

TO MAKE A GIFT TO THE MC LAW BUILDING FUND,

VISIT
law.mc.edu

OR
SCAN



NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

MC Law offers many opportunities to name an area of the enhanced campus in honor of yourself, your firm, a friend or family member, a professor, or other honoree.

Naming opportunities are available from \$2,000 to \$1 million-plus.

TO FIND OUT MORE, CONTACT:

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TO SEE MC LAW'S CAMPUS VISION AND AN UPDATE ON THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS,

VISIT
[law.mc.edu/
about/virtual-tour](http://law.mc.edu/about/virtual-tour)

OR
SCAN



G CHANGER M E

PROFESSOR AND DEAN
EMERITUS LARRY LEE AND
THE “GAME OF CHANGE”



Retired professor Larry Lee '65 is best known to the MC Law community for his dry wit and his gift for making tax law a fascinating subject. But long before Lee became a legal professor, he was part of a team of courageous basketball players whose decision to break an “unwritten law” helped end segregation in collegiate sports.

Lee was a player in what became known as “the Game of Change,” a basketball game hailed as the matchup that broke the racial barrier in the NCAA. The history-changing game took place between Mississippi State University (MSU) and Loyola of Chicago on March 15, 1963.

MSU had won the SEC basketball championship that year, just as they had in 1959, 1961, and 1962. The SEC champions received an automatic bid to the NCAA national championship tournament, but MSU had never accepted the invitation to compete for the national title.

“The national championship tournament was integrated,” Lee, who played guard for MSU, recalls. “MSU did not go to the championship because the Mississippi Legislature had basically told the presidents of the state schools, ‘If you play in an integrated tournament, you will not get your funding.’

It was an unwritten law that Mississippi teams did not play against any team with Black players.”

But in 1963, Dr. D. W. Colvard, president of MSU, decided the university *should* play in the NCAA tournament, writing in a press release, “I am cognizant of the hazard of this action and am fully reconciled to the possible consequences of it on my professional career.” In an 8-3 vote, the Mississippi College Board upheld Colvard’s decision. The MSU team and coaching staff began packing for the trip to the tournament, taking place at Michigan State University.

But the night before the team was to leave for Michigan, a small group led by a Mississippi state senator filed an emergency injunction to prevent the MSU players and coaches from competing. The attorney general of Mississippi immediately launched a legal process to try and have the injunction suspended.

Determined to play – and to avoid being served with the injunction – President Colvard and Head Basketball Coach Babe McCarthy left the state, traveling the Mississippi backroads in separate cars under the cover of night. McCarthy reportedly hid in the floorboard of a car as he was driven to Nashville.

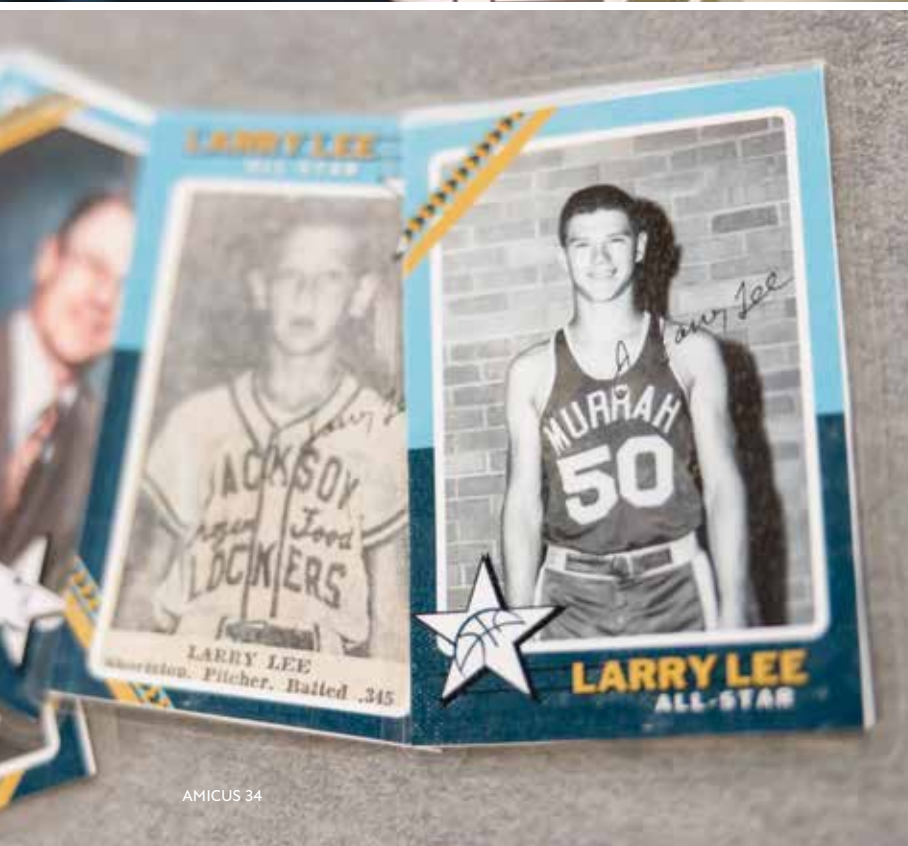
“We players went to bed that night not knowing whether we would go to the tournament or not,” Lee recalls.

“LOOKING BACK
TODAY, THAT WAS
A PROUD MOMENT
FOR BASKETBALL.”

LARRY LEE '65



On March 21, 2024, MC Law held a retirement reception honoring Larry Lee at the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame.



Mississippi State
1962-63 SEC
champions

Larry Lee pictured
(third from left,
back row)

On the morning of March 14, the MSU team split into two groups. A “decoy” group, including Larry Lee, went to the Starkville airport, prepared to be at best sent back to campus, and at worst, arrested. The first-string players who were expected to start the game remained behind. When no one arrived to stop the decoy team from leaving Starkville, they sent word for the starters to hurry to the airport. The entire team then boarded a chartered plane, cheering as the flight took off. They stopped in Nashville to pick up Coach McCarthy, and then flew to the tournament and into NCAA basketball history.

“At the time, Georgia Tech was on standby to replace us if MSU didn’t get there,” Lee says. “There was a pep band waiting at the airport when we landed. They had learned the music to both schools’ fight songs. When we stepped off the plane, they asked us, ‘Where are you from?’ When we answered ‘MSU,’ they broke into a rousing version of ‘Hail State.’”

Back in Mississippi, the injunction was overturned before tipoff. MSU took the court against a Loyola team that included four Black starting players. MSU lost the game 61-51, but won an important victory for integration in collegiate sports.

Michigan State University erected a historical marker at the game site, noting that the MSU players had to “overcome unwritten laws” just to step on the court.

The story has been memorialized in books and films, including an NCAA documentary titled *The Game of Change*. The NCAA invited the members of both teams, including Larry Lee, to attend the film’s premiere.

“They asked for a show of hands to the question, ‘How many of you were really thinking of civil rights?’” Lee recalls. “Nobody on either team raised a hand. We were a bunch of college athletes who had all grown up in gyms, dreaming of winning the national tournament. We weren’t thinking about Black and white. We were ballplayers and they were ballplayers, and at the time, that was about it.”

Lee retired from MC Law in 2021, when COVID restrictions prevented large gatherings. On March 21, 2024, MC Law held a retirement reception honoring Larry Lee for his many contributions to the law school and the Mississippi Bar, including his involvement as a fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation. The reception was held at the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame, reminding guests of the part Lee and his teammates played in shaping the history of collegiate sports.

“Looking back today, that was a proud moment for basketball. I realize now that we all did play a role,” Lee says. “A player from Loyola, the late Les Hunter, later said, ‘Sports has done more than any institution anywhere to break down barriers all over the world.’ I think he may have been correct.”



45 YEARS AND COUNTING

Previously a partner with the law firm of Dosssett, Magruder and Montgomery, Larry Lee originally came to MC Law as an adjunct professor, eventually joining the full-time staff in 1979. He served as interim dean of the law school from 2001 to 2003.

Professor Lee may have retired from full-time education, but after more than four decades teaching tax law, he still can’t bring himself to leave MC Law. Lee still maintains an office on the downtown campus. He describes his favorite part of teaching at MC Law as “interacting with the students,” which may explain why he finds it so hard to leave.



“AND IN CLASS, PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.”

In tax law vernacular, “goodwill” is an intangible that adds to a company’s perceived value and could increase the company’s purchase price. For example, goodwill could include intellectual property or brand recognition. When Professor Larry Lee asked a class of law students to define the term, he really couldn’t argue with the student who eagerly raised his hand and provided an answer sourced not from the tax law textbook, but from Luke 2:14. “What the angels said when Christ was born!” the student said confidently. “That’s not exactly what I had in mind,” Lee replied. “But it’s certainly correct.”



FACULTY Focus

FACULTY FOCUS



Dean John Anderson



Donald Campbell



Angela Dixon



Hilary Escajeda



Heather Hall

DEAN JOHN ANDERSON

Since assuming the role of dean in 2022, John Anderson has continued his active scholarship. Over the last two years, he has published nine articles spanning multiple subjects, including freedom of speech, philosophy of law, white-collar crime, financial regulation and disclosure, and insider trading. These articles have appeared in some of the nation's top law reviews, including the *Oklahoma Law Review* (2024), *Louisiana Law Review* (2024), *Tennessee Journal of Business Law* (2024, 2023, 2022), *Georgetown Law Review Online* (2022), the *University of Pennsylvania Journal of Business Law* (2022), *Seton Hall Law Review* (2022), and the *Lewis & Clark Law Review* (2022). Dean Anderson is regularly invited to guest lecture, speak on scholarly panels, and present at workshops around the nation.

DONALD CAMPBELL

Donald Campbell was named the Owen Cooper Professor of Law in fall of 2024. He continues to edit and author chapters in the *Encyclopedia of Mississippi Law* and the *Mississippi Civil Procedure* treatise. In 2024, Professor Campbell will assume authorship of Professor Robert Weems's *Wills and Administration of Estates in Mississippi*. The eighth edition of his textbook, *Professional Responsibility & Ethics: Readings, Notes, and Questions*, will be published in 2024. Professor Campbell speaks to lawyers on issues of professional responsibility and ethics.

ANGELA DIXON

Angela Dixon joined the faculty in 2021. Her scholarly and research interests include criminal procedure with a focus on the criminal justice system, health law, ethics, professional responsibility, law and religion, and topics at the intersections of those categories. A sampling of her work appears in *St. John's Journal of Civil Rights & Economic Development*,

a piece for which Professor Dixon was awarded an honorarium; Boston University's peer-reviewed *American Journal of Law & Medicine* (AJLM); the *Cardozo Journal of Equal Rights & Social Justice*; and Cleveland State University Law School's *Journal of Law & Health*. Professor Dixon presents at conferences and workshops across the nation.

HILARY ESCAJEDA

Inspired by Taylor Swift's *The Tortured Poets Department* album and her February 2024 Instagram declaration that "All's fair in love and poetry," Hilary Escajeda published a short opinion piece, "Bad Tax Policy Breeds Bad Blood Between Songwriters and Poets" in *Tax Notes* (May 28, 2024). She is working on an expanded essay, "Taylor Swift, Tortured Poets, and the Tax Code's Frankenstein." In June, Professor Escajeda workshopped new projects exploring generative AI inputs and outputs as property under I.R.C. § 351 and § 721 at the Law and Society Association Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado, and at Junior Tax Scholars at the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, Wisconsin. In July, Professor Escajeda presented "Professional Identity Formation: A Tax Court Judge's Cautionary Tale" as part of the American Association of Law Schools' Balance and Wellbeing Speed Share Series.

HEATHER HALL

Heather Hall presented at the virtual 2023 Women of Legal Tech Summit, the virtual 2023 Purdue Global Village Conference, and the Lone Star Regional Legal Writing Conference in Houston, Texas. She was chosen to serve on the Legal Writing Institute's LEAP Board for the 2024-2026 term. Professor Hall is working with key stakeholders from MC Law, the University of Mississippi School of Law, and several Mississippi access to justice committees to promote a statewide plan to address legal deserts in Mississippi.

FACULTY FOCUS



MJ Hernandez



Shirley Kennedy



Chandra Lee



Phillip McIntosh



Mark Modak-Truran

MJ HERNANDEZ

Milton “MJ” Hernandez joined the faculty in 2023 as the assistant director of the Center for Civil Law Studies. Hernandez presented a forthcoming article discussing Louisiana’s notarial will form requirements at the 2023 Southeastern Association of Law Schools Annual Conference and the inaugural Louisiana Civil Law Symposium hosted by the Louisiana State University Law Center. The article will be published in the *Tulane Law Review* this academic year. Professor Hernandez was a panelist at the 2024 Kathryn Venturatos Lorio Emerging Scholars Program, hosted by Loyola Law, New Orleans. Professor Hernandez works alongside Professor Phillip McIntosh to expand MC’s Louisiana Civil Law Program, the only one of its kind outside of Louisiana. Hernandez has helped develop course offerings, update the curriculum, create Louisiana Bar preparation materials, and foster connections between MC Law students and Louisiana judges and practitioners. For his efforts, Professor Hernandez was awarded the 2024 Mississippi Defense Lawyers Association Faculty Award. In 2024, he was named co-director of the Center for Civil Law Studies.

SHIRLEY KENNEDY

Shirley Kennedy was awarded the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Mississippi College School of Law Alumni Association at the Mississippi Bar Convention. Professor Kennedy was on the speaker panel for the MC Law Spring Law Review Symposium on *Family Law, Modern Family: Issues that Matter From Local to Global*, which discussed changes in the law in adoption.

CHANDRA LEE

Chandra Lee focuses significant attention on instructing students in the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI), artificial intelligence capable of generating text, images, videos, or other data using generative models. She presented her work on GAI to practicing attorneys at a CLE and at a Capital Area Bar Association event. Recognizing increasing mental health concerns among lawyers and law students, Professor Lee earned a certification in mental

health first aid. She is trained to recognize signs that suggest a mental health challenge and how to refer someone to appropriate professional support. Professor Lee served as a small group leader at the Legal Writing Institute Biennial Conference, instructing and advising legal writing professors on best practices. She was promoted to full professor of legal analysis and communication.

PHILLIP MCINTOSH

Phillip McIntosh chairs the admissions committee, working hand-in-hand with the MC Law admissions office. He is frequently on the road, recruiting students on college campuses across Louisiana and Texas, as well as in other states. Along with Professor MJ Hernandez, Professor McIntosh leads the development of the new LL.M. in civil law program designed for lawyers who wish to take the bar exam and practice in Louisiana. He is currently developing the first completely asynchronous online course for that program, which will launch in January 2025 pending ABA acquiescence. In addition to his teaching responsibilities and recruiting efforts, Professor McIntosh annually updates chapters on intentional torts and comparative negligence for the *Encyclopedia of Mississippi Law*.

MARK MODAK-TRURAN

Mark Modak-Truran’s research focuses on law and religion and legal theory. He is writing a chapter, “Social Media, Religion, and Social Solidarity in the U.S. and India,” for a book of essays titled *Artificial Intelligence and Constitutionalism: The Challenges in Law*. Professor Modak-Truran is also working on an article titled “The Endangered Establishment Clause and the Conservative Catholic Court,” which explores how the conservative Roman Catholic religious beliefs of the majority of the U.S. Supreme Court Justices are problematically transforming the meaning of the establishment clause into an anti-religious pluralism principle analogous to Pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism. Professor Modak-Truran published a book chapter, “Process Theology and a Pluralistic Foundation for Human Rights,” in *Christianity and International Law: An Introduction*, edited by Pamela Slotte and John D. Haskell.

FACULTY FOCUS



Mary Largent Purvis



Franklin Rosenblatt



Jim Rosenblatt



Jonathan Will

MARY LARGENT PURVIS

Mary Largent Purvis assumed the role of associate dean of academic affairs in August 2023. Dean Purvis received her doctorate of education in higher education administration from the University of Southern Mississippi in August 2023. She presented on Robert’s Rules of Order in the context of nonprofit governance at the Office of the Attorney General’s Regulatory Roundtable and the Mississippi Bar Leadership Forum in October 2023. Her article, “Mind the Gap: How Legal Education is Responding to a New Generation of Students,” was published in *The Mississippi Lawyer* in spring 2024. Dean Purvis was awarded the 2024 CABA Community Service Award.

FRANKLIN ROSENBLATT

Franklin Rosenblatt was recently promoted to associate professor. He has five upcoming publications on topics including international criminal law, evidence, and military law. Professor Rosenblatt was elected president of the National Institute of Military Justice, the country’s largest civil society organization devoted to military law. He co-founded and is co-editor-in-chief of *Forces Law Review*, an international legal journal devoted to military law scholarship distributed by Simon & Schuster and published twice a year. Last year, Professor Rosenblatt filed *amicus* briefs in several courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He maintains an active *pro bono* practice, including serving as lead counsel for Private Travis King in the highly publicized case of the U.S. Army soldier who fled to North Korea last year. MC Law students selected Professor Rosenblatt for several recent awards, including Professor of the Year, best *pro bono* contributions, and BLSA Professor of the Year. Follow Professor Rosenblatt on X / Twitter at @frankrosenblatt.

JIM ROSENBLATT

Jim Rosenblatt completed an article for the *MC Law Review* honoring former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Fred Banks. He taught two courses in MC Law’s Korea Study Program with 15 students, the largest enrollment to date for this program. Dean Rosenblatt served as the faculty advisor

for the MC Law legal fraternity, Phi Alpha Delta; the MC Law Student Chapter of the Federal Bar Association; and for the newly created MC Law chapter of Ducks Unlimited. Dean Rosenblatt also continued his service as the executive director of the Mississippi Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. He serves his community as the treasurer of Bookfriends of the University Press, an usher at Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church, and president of the Greenwood Cemetery Association, which is undertaking major infrastructure projects in the historic cemetery. He actively participates in the Charles Clark Inn of Court, the Capital Area Bar Association, and the Rankin and Madison County Bar Associations.

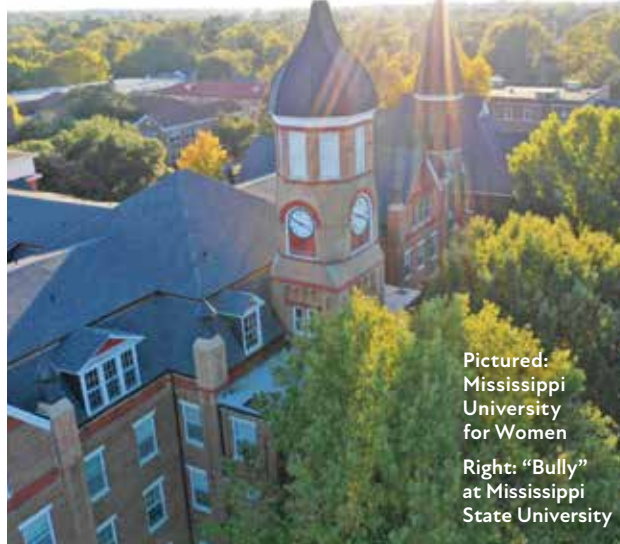
JONATHAN WILL

After spending a number of years on the senior administrative team, Jonathan Will is enjoying a refocus on teaching and scholarship. During the 2023-2024 academic year, Professor Will had the opportunity to teach the entire 1L class (half in civil procedure and half in contracts). Students voted him 1L Professor of the Year for both sections. Professor Will’s recent essays include “Covid-19: Medical Decisions, Mandates, and High-Risk Minors,” published in the widely read *Hastings Center Report*, as well as “Alabama IVF Law Doesn’t Solve Questions about Embryo Personhood,” which was published in March with *Bloomberg Law*. The essay (<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/alabama-ivf-law-doesnt-solve-questions-about-embryo-personhood-1>) reached a national audience. Professor Will is working on a full-length article, “Embryonic Children, Double Effects, and the Regulation of Reproductive Technologies,” that expands on these concepts and was the subject of his recent presentation at the Annual Health Law Professors Conference in June.

3+3=J.D.

MC LAW HAS TEAMED WITH MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU) AND MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (THE W) TO OFFER STUDENTS A NEW, ACCELERATED PATH INTO THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

THE NEW PROGRAM ALLOWS QUALIFIED STUDENTS AT MSU OR THE W TO ENROLL IN MCLAW BEFORE FULLY COMPLETING THEIR BACHELOR'S DEGREES, REDUCING THE TRADITIONAL PATH TO A LAW DEGREE BY A FULL YEAR.



Pictured: Mississippi University for Women
Right: "Bully" at Mississippi State University

This new partnership allows us to better serve Mississippi by pairing two of the state's public universities with its only capital city law school," said MC President Blake Thompson. "This arrangement offers a tremendous benefit to students and will help keep our brightest future lawyers in the state."

"Mississippi State and Mississippi College share similar values and a commitment to serve," MSU President Mark Keenum says. "This is an exceptional opportunity for students, our institutions, and the state of Mississippi."

Students will note their intention to participate in the 3 x 3 program when they enroll at MSU or at The W for undergraduate studies. MSU and W students who have completed 75% of the coursework required for a bachelor's degree will be eligible for admission to MC Law. After the student successfully completes the first year of the J.D. program, MSU or The W will award the appropriate bachelor's degree. After the student completes the requirements for the J.D. degree, MC Law will award this professional diploma.

"This program is another example of MC Law's student-centered mission," says MC Law Dean John Anderson. "Not only can participating students save a year's worth of tuition and other expenses, but they can also get a head start on entering their professional careers. Moreover, Mississippi State students and W students admitted through this new 3+3 program will be welcomed to MC Law by beautiful new indoor and outdoor spaces designed to enhance their learning experience, personal wellness, and access to all our capital city has to offer. We cannot wait to greet them."



TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE 3+3 PROGRAM, EMAIL MC LAW DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS JAY ARMSTRONG AT ARMSTRON@MC.EDU

LAW and HONOR

LAW DAY 2024

MC LAW HELD ITS ANNUAL LAW DAY AWARDS CEREMONY ON APRIL 11, 2024, HONORING OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS AND COMMITMENT TO THE LAW SCHOOL ON THE PART OF STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF.

“**L**aw Day is a highlight for our entire law school community,” says Dean John Anderson. “It’s an honor to formally recognize the work of our students and faculty and to thank our generous donors, who make these awards possible.”

MC Law presented 70 outstanding students with scholarships totaling more than \$66,000.

One of those 70 students was Shamauria Fair, the inaugural recipient of the Reverend Jerry Young and Helen Young Scholarship. Established in 2024, the new scholarship honors the beloved pastor and “first lady” of New Hope Baptist Church in Jackson.

“In junior high school, I carried a copy of the U.S. Constitution and a New Testament in my pocket everywhere I went,” Rev. Young says. “Everybody made fun of me, a boy working on a plantation with the Constitution in my pocket, but it was because I dreamed of becoming an attorney. I thought if I could become a constitutional attorney, I’d fight for justice and equality and make a difference.”

Shamauria Fair



Dean John Anderson, Reverend Jerry Young, and Mrs. Helen Young congratulate Shamauria Fair.



SCHOOL OF LAW

70
STUDENTS RECEIVED
\$66,000+
IN SCHOLARSHIPS



Young eventually realized he was being called by God to preach. Despite his clear calling to the ministry and more than 40 years as a church leader, Rev. Young never quite let go of his dream of practicing law. While they couldn't make that dream come true, his congregants decided to do the next best thing. The New Hope congregation raised the funds needed to endow a scholarship in Rev. Young's honor at MC Law. Gifts came from virtually every member of the church, from school children contributing their allowances to senior citizens on fixed incomes.

for underserved communities," Dean Anderson says. "Mississippi struggles with an issue of 'legal deserts,' rural communities with few or no attorneys. In those areas, people have no access to justice. It's a problem particularly in the Delta, where Reverend Young grew up. This scholarship is an encouragement to our students, but it's also a way for the church to be involved in the cause of providing access to justice and a voice to people who don't have one."

The Reverend Jerry Young and Mrs. Helen Young Scholarship is awarded to students who exemplify principles embedded in MC Law's culture, including a heart for servant leadership and commitment to the Christian faith. Preference is given to graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and students with financial need.

"We serve God by serving people," Rev. Young says. "We hope the person who receives this scholarship believes that being an attorney is not primarily about making money. We want this person to look at being an attorney as their ministry."

"This scholarship ties in not only with Reverend Young's dreams and aspirations, but also with the Youngs' concern

"I came to law school to pursue my passion for equal and impartial justice for all," Fair says. "It was an honor to receive an award that's based on my faith and that focuses on leadership, community involvement, and my trust in God."

"It means the world to us to see a church community come together to address issues of justice and express their belief in MC Law as the school that's going to partner with them to do that," Dean Anderson says. "Feeling the energy of their support, and knowing that we have the church behind us, encouraging us, and lifting us up – it just means the world."



FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

Recipients were selected by MC Law students.

Professor of the Year
Frank Rosenblatt

1L Professor of the Year
Section A
Jonathan Will

1L Professor of the Year
Section B
Jonathan Will

Adjunct Professor of the Year
Trey Manhein

Staff Employee of the Year
Leigh Partridge

Class Actions

PLEASE SEND FUTURE CLASS ACTIONS TO ORA DURHAM AT ODURHAM@MC.EDU

1976

Ceola James published *Nine Days of Moody Weather: A Book of Poetic Expressions*. She graduated *magna cum laude* from Horizons University in Paris, France, in 2023.

1978

Clarence Whitaker retired after serving the community for 44 years.

1979

Patricia Bennett was awarded the *Mississippi Business Journal's* 2023 Top CEO Award. She was honored with emeritus status at Mississippi College's August 2023 convocation.

Hugh Keating is seeking the Republican nomination in the 2025 Gulfport mayoral race.

1982

Judge Mark Maples was reappointed to the Bar Complaint Tribunal on January 1, 2024.

1983

Mark Simon was recognized in the 2024 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* for employment law – management.

Judge Tod Young celebrated a decade on the bench as a district judge in Nevada.

1984

C. Phillip Buffington, Jr. joined Balch & Bingham in the firm's Jackson, Mississippi, office as a partner in the banking and financial services practice.

1985

Judge Anthony Gabbert was recognized for judicial excellence and elected chief judge of the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District.

Onetta Whitley was named general counsel at Jackson State University.

1986

Hon. Kent McDaniel was appointed youth court judge by Governor Tate Reeves.

Karen Thomas is risk manager for NCH hospital system, a not-for-profit company and component of Ardent Health, in Naples, Florida.

1987

C. Joyce Hall received MC Law's Lawyer of the Year Award at the 2024 Mississippi Bar Convention.

1988

Rebecca Ruddy retired from the Wichita County Public Defender's Office.

1990

Judge Richelle Lumpkin was appointed 15th circuit judge for Place 3 by Governor Tate Reeves.

1991

Victor Dubose manages staff counsel offices for Geico in Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida.

Hon. Mike Fleenor was elected chief judge of the 27th Circuit of Virginia in July 2024.

Judge Robert Hildum was sworn in as a magistrate judge in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia.

Shirley Kennedy received the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award from the MC Law Alumni Association at the 2024 Bar Convention.

Judge Winston Kidd was named one of The Five Most Powerful People in Mississippi's Hinds County Justice System.

Judge David William Langham published his third book in 2024. He is the author of *Floridiana and the Workers' Compensation Adjudicators* (2024); *Florida Workers' Compensation: Its History, Evolution and Function* (2023); and *The Mock Trial Performance* (2022).

1992

Joan Malbrough was appointed by the 32nd Judicial District Court in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, to serve as the hearing officer for the Title IV-D Child Support Enforcement Program, effective January 1, 2024.

1993

Judge Faye Peterson was named one of The Five Most Powerful People in Mississippi's Hinds County Justice System and fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation. She was also reappointed to the Bar Complaint Tribunal.

Sherry Rowlett began working for the U.S. Treasury Department in the Federal Insurance Office in 2020. She is assigned to the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program.

1994

Matt Pesnell was inducted as a fellow of the College Labor and Employment Lawyers.

1995

George McCranie IV announced the addition of his third office of The George McCranie Law Firm in Tifton, Georgia.

Long Westerlund's firm, ASET Partners, has grown in the areas of high computer, artificial intelligence, and machine learning.

1996

Bret Davis completed an LL.M. in taxation and certificate in estate planning from Villanova in 2022.

Judge Stephen Louis A. Dillard was elected to his third six-year term on the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia.

La'Verne Edney became the first African American woman sworn in as the president of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA).

Judge Lisa Porter was elected to serve her third six-year term as a circuit judge in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

1997

Robert Hadden is a legal recruiter in Charleston, South Carolina, placing candidates nationwide with law firms of all sizes. He was previously in private practice.

1998

Judge Debra Gibbs was named one of The Five Most Powerful People in Mississippi's Hinds County Justice System.

Thomas Gilliam celebrated his 25th anniversary as board attorney and general counsel for Pensacola State College.

Jason White served as House Speaker during the 2024 Mississippi legislative session.

1999

Cody Allison was ranked AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell. He was also named a Mid-South Super Lawyer for the third year in a row and was a featured attorney in *Mid-South Super Lawyers* magazine.

Manish Patel was presented the Alabama State Bar President's Award during the 2024 Annual Seminar. He serves as chairman of the Disciplinary Commission of the Alabama State Bar.

Judge Stanley Sorey was appointed to the Mississippi Commission on Judicial Performance on May 31, 2024.

Consuelo Walley received the Chief Justice Award at the 2024 Mississippi Bar Convention.

2000

Omar Nelson was named vice president of the University of Southern Mississippi Foundation Board.

2001

Kelly Bradshaw is a teacher with Jackson Public Schools.

2004

Jenny Tyler Baker was installed as the 118th president of the Mississippi Bar at the 2023 Bar Convention in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Katina Seymour Demoran was featured in *Best of Coastal Mississippi* as leading the Best Law Firm in two categories, business law and elder law, and was named one of 100 Successful Women to Know. She recently celebrated 16 years cancer free.

Judge David McCarty with the Court of Appeals of Mississippi welcomed his first "all-MC" staff since joining the bench. Serving as law clerks are Samantha A. Jaquez '23 and Katherine G. Lingold '20. They join prior MC Law alumni who have served as law clerks, including Danielle L. Burks '16, India M. Sprinkle '18, Amber Wheeler '20, and La'Bria Barnes '21.

Leslie Sadler was named to the Trustmark Advisory Board of Directors by Trustmark Bank.

Anna Ward moved to San Diego, California, and is the Title IX coordinator for the San Diego Unified School District, the second largest school district in California.

2005

William Adams won the 2023 district attorney race for Mississippi Judicial District 14.

Judge Toni Terrett received the Mississippi Bar Association's 2024 Distinguished Service Award.

2007

Jennifer O'Donnell is chief marketing and business development officer at Segal McCambridge.



Let's do lunch. All MC Law alumni are invited to First Wednesday Lunches on the MC Law campus. Held the first Wednesday of each month during the academic year, First Wednesday is an opportunity to network with fellow alumni, reconnect with your favorite faculty members, and win MC Law swag during highly competitive rounds of *Bingo!* enthusiastically hosted by Dean John Anderson. To register for the next First Wednesday lunch, email Ora Durham at odurham@mc.edu

Ashley Schepens closed her private practice to accept an appointment as a domestic hearing officer for the 24th Judicial District Court of Jefferson Parish in Louisiana.

Joshua Underwood was sworn in as 34th Judicial Circuit Judge on August 4, 2023.

2008

Elizabeth Darsey is executive director of Main Street Demopolis, which she helped organize in 2022. Darsey helped create the Demopolis Farmers Market, which she manages, as well as working with community events, including Christmas on the River.

Charles Goldberg joined the Nashville office of the national law firm of Baker Donelson, growing the firm's prominent tax group.

Will Green became president and CEO of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.

Ryane Duffie Saucier was promoted to Vice President of Legal Affairs for FOX Broadcasting Company.

2009

Matthew Biggers joined Jackson Lewis, a nationwide employment law firm, as a member of the firm's ERISA complex litigation practice group.

Natalie Chambers joined Old Republic Title Insurance Company as underwriting counsel for South Carolina.

Tara Clark was named Mississippi's 2024 Business Woman of the Year.

Kentray Hairston spoke on "Legalities Of Economic Development" at The Next Move Group's 2024 Mardi Gras Site Selectors Panel and Economic Development Conference.

Mike Monsour, Jr. served as the Deputy Brigade Judge Advocate for the 185th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade across Kuwait, Iraq, and Syria and in support of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) while on Mississippi Army National Guard deployment in 2023. Monsour and his wife, Virginia Monsour, welcomed their second daughter, Mary Frances, in April of 2021.

Katrell Nash was named a 2023 and 2024 Georgia Super Lawyer Top 40 under 40 as ranked by the National Trial Lawyers Association.

Jaeson Smith was elected district attorney of the Tallapoosa Judicial Circuit, which encompasses Haralson and Polk counties in Georgia.

2010

Stephen Parks was elected to his third term as state librarian.

Robert White was elected stockholder at Henderson Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A.

2011

Matthew Harris opened The Harris Firm, P.C. in Manchester, Tennessee.

2012

Lysa Clifton was promoted to compliance director at AutoXcel Corporation. The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce selected Clifton as a Top 40 Under 40 Award Winner.

Rafael Green received the Bar Foundation Award at the Mississippi Bar Convention in July.

Justin Huckaby was appointed director of the law library and assistant professor of law at the University of Mississippi School of Law in July 2024.

Daryl Smith was appointed to Chapter 13 trustee for the Western District of Louisiana on October 1, 2023.

Evan Weems and his partner, Joe-Colby Langston '14, have a growing law firm on the Gulf Coast and in Louisiana representing injury victims.

2013

Paige Lyle was named partner at FordHarrison, LLP.

2014

Ann Regan Barlow joined Mississippi College School of Law as the director of student services and advancement team following 10 years in private practice. She is president of the Rankin County Bar Association and serves on the 2024 - 2025 Mississippi Bar Professionalism Committee. She was named Best Attorney 2021 by *Hometown Rankin Magazine*, was a Women in Business 2022 honoree, and a Top 40 Under 40 2023 award winner.

Beecher Bartlett joined The Trust Company of Tennessee as a customer service representative in the firm's Knoxville office.

Christopher Dunnells is a partner at Chartwell Law.

Austin Eagle was promoted to deputy general counsel-global legal affairs at Ribbon Communications.

Jad Khalaf was sworn in as the new president of the MC Law Alumni Association on July 12, 2024.

Joe-Colby Langston and his partner Evan Weems '12 have a growing law firm on the Gulf Coast and in Louisiana representing injury victims.

Jordan See is the head of government relations at Qualtrics.

2015

Kate Alexander is assistant legislative counsel with the Georgia General Assembly. She drafts legislation and provides legal counsel to Georgia's legislative members.

2016

Jonathan DeLuca joined Bradley as a litigator in the firm's Atlanta office.

Kaylon McCou is president of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association. He was also elected as a board member of the Prosecutors Section of the Mississippi Bar.

William Thames was elected to the board of commissioners of the Mississippi Bar representing District 18.

2017

Kreg Jones was appointed to the board of directors of the Escambia-Santa Rosa County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division.

Michquel McCullough published a book titled *Urban Schools Clash with 14th Amendment: the Politics of Race and Culture*.

Trey Spillman was elected Rankin County prosecuting attorney in November 2023.

2018

Judge Rodger McLane was elected county judge of Panola County, Texas.

Judge Austin Terry was appointed to the Office of Chancellor for the 12th Chancery Court District, Place 1 by Governor Tate Reeves. His term began on August 5, 2024.

2019

Abbey Barton joined the New Orleans firm of Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn, LLP as an associate.

MaCall Chastain worked with Representative Sam Creekmore and Representative Kevin Felsher to help draft House Bill 1640, which contains new civil commitment procedures. The new law went into effect July 1, 2024.

2020

Christopher Broome, Sr. is the public defender for the Jackson County, Mississippi, Youth Court.

Keleigh Finley joined Progressive House Counsel in February of 2023.

Karmel Keeton received MC Law's Young Lawyer of the Year Award at the 2024 Mississippi Bar Convention.

Kimberly Phillips was a speaker for the first Elder Law Summit (CLE), speaking on the Mississippi GAP Act. Phillips opened her own firm (Rainer & Phillips, PLLC) in September 2022 and was listed in the Top 40 Under 40 in the *Hometown Rankin* magazine.

Alexis Rayford was named one of Jackson State University's 40 Under 40, served as the Magnolia Bar Association's Young Lawyer Divisions Chair, and received the president's service award. She was selected for the Mississippi Economic Chamber's 2024 Leadership Mississippi class.

Keyona Stewart was sworn in as the City of Vicksburg's new associate city attorney and prosecutor in May 2024.

Keleigh Williams and Ibrahim Finley were married in 2022.

2021

La'Bria Barnes received the 2024 Jackson Young Lawyers (JYL) Outstanding Service Award. This honor comes after Barnes' term as chair of JYL's community service/*pro-bono* committee. She now serves on the Jackson Young Lawyers Board of Directors.

Sheridan Carr was appointed special assistant to the city attorney, litigation division, for Jackson, Mississippi. She won her first federal court jury trial in June on behalf of the City of Jackson.

Christopher Deltoro started a private investigation firm in Texas named Deltoro Investigations.

Rebecca Hamilton is counsel with Canopy Children's Solutions. In 2023, she represented Canopy at the American Health Law Association's In-House Counsel Program in Washington, D.C. Hamilton and her husband, Adam Hamilton, welcomed their first daughter, Addison Blair, in June of 2022, and their second daughter, Adeline Cate, in February of 2024.

Lillie Hobson received the Montgomery Volunteer Lawyers Program's Volunteer of the Year award.

Hamza Hussain won a jury verdict of \$108,000. The last offer before trial was \$30,000.

Wyche Monette was listed in Rankin County's Top 40 Under 40.

James "Bud" Sheppard started his own law firm, Sheppard Law Firm, in Jackson, Mississippi.

Dakota Stephens joined Jones Walker in the Jackson office.

2022

Stephanie Durr was one of 16 national semifinalists for the U.S. Supreme Court fellowship program.

Addison Hensel works at Neblett Beard and Arsenault in Alexandria, Louisiana.

Jean-Nicolette Nixon works at Neblett Beard and Arsenault in Alexandria, Louisiana.

2023

Braxton Eck is an associate attorney with the criminal defense firm of Monnat & Spurrier, Chartered.

Ford Richardson passed the bar exam in September of 2023 and has been practicing criminal law and family law with his father at Robert F. Richardson, PC in Jasper, Alabama.

In Memoriam

1949

Lee R. Spence, January 6, 2021

1952

Barbara Hederman, June 24, 2021

1955

Forrest Holder, September 6, 2021

1959

Carter Burnside, July 19, 2024

1962

W. Major Holifield, April 14, 2021
William Spell Sr., October 12, 2021

1963

A. Dale Danks Jr., June 9, 2021
George Miles, March 17, 2022

1964

Thomas Sanford, October 20, 2021
Sims Gaston Jr., July 6, 2022

1965

Billy Doggette, November 29, 2022

1966

Andrew C. Baker, October 31, 2023
Sarah McDavid, November 19, 2023
Robert Stockett Jr., October 7, 2021

1967

Morris Bailey, November 7, 2022

1968

Judge Lee B. Agnew, Jr., June 7, 2024
Jerry Bustin, April 15, 2022

1969

Marshall Hanbury, November 24, 2023

1970

Larry Spencer, March 22, 2021

1971

David Barton, May 20, 2021
Penelope Hutcherson, May 24, 2022

1972

Charles Fortner Jr., February 8, 2022
Mills Barbee, April 11, 2023

1974

Dennis Smith, June 21, 2023

1975

Gary Austin, August 25, 2023
Joseph Gautier, May 6, 2022
Jo Anne McLeod, May 29, 2022

1976

William H. Jones, December 26, 2023
Kinney Swain, August 30, 2023
John Crow Jr., March 30, 2024
Ann Williamson, November 18, 2022

1978

Richard Willis, September 27, 2023
Norma Price, August 22, 2023
Elizabeth Phipps, October 20, 2023
David Sessums, August 25, 2021
Thomas Lowe Jr., February 10, 2022
James Brown Jr., June 2, 2022

1979

David Necaise Sr., December 3, 2018

1980

Judy Gambrell, October 26, 2022
Timothy Gowan, May 27, 2024
Senith Tipton, April 13, 2024
Bryan Barry, January 10, 2022
Joanne Samson, January 14, 2022
Buren Batson Jr., February 7, 2022
Ernest Martin, February 18, 2022
Arthur May, April 13, 2022
Rudolph Estess Jr., July 6, 2022

1981

Debbie Jared, May 31, 2021
Dennis Miller, August 7, 2021
Nancy Keith, January 20, 2022
Samuel Creel Jr., June 4, 2022

1983

Albert Sweatt Sr., April 3, 2023

1985

James Davis Jr., June 24, 2021

1987

Samuel Millette, Jr., November 21, 2023
Richard Vaughan, May 8, 2021

1989

Prentiss Grant, October 31, 2021
Matthew Pepper, May 2, 2022

1991

Michael Piazza, February 26, 2021

1992

John Whalen Jr., November 12, 2021

1993

George Snellings IV, June 16, 2022

1995

Monique Montgomery, October 28, 2023
Felecia Perkins, October 5, 2023

1996

Thomas Broome, May 21, 2023

1999

Monique Brown-Barrett, November 17, 2021
Gerald Gaggini, December 11, 2021
Darren Giles, February 15, 2023
Revia Cohen, November 2, 2023

2000

Suzanne Marie Collipp, May 9, 2024
James Rogers, December 29, 2023

2002

Heather Aby, March 9, 2023

2003

Justin Smith, September 29, 2022

2004

Joshua Myers, July 23, 2024
Brandi Shafer, February 9, 2022

2007

Amanda Myers, April 8, 2024

2008

Dunbar Watt, April 4, 2022

2009

Crystal Welch, May 12, 2024
Jonathan Turner, November 1, 2023

2014

David Myers, October 22, 2021

2022

Steven C. Wallace, May 18, 2022



In Memory of Professor Crystal Welch

The MC Law community mourned the May 12, 2024 death of Crystal Welch '09, associate clinical professor at MC Law.

Welch was well-known and respected statewide for her legal and advocacy work. She taught and practiced adoption and youth court law and was the supervising attorney for MC Law's Family and Children's Law Center. Welch also served as the faculty advisor for the Black Law Students Association.

Welch had a lifelong passion for family and child advocacy. Following her graduation from Bowdoin College in Maine, she moved to Guatemala to work with Camino Seguro (Safe Passage), a nonprofit that serves impoverished children and families. Welch's experiences in Guatemala City, combined with her natural compassion, empathy, and heart for service, prepared her for a career serving young people and families in need. Before joining the MC Law faculty, Welch practiced family law with Robertson + Associates in Ridgeland, Mississippi.

In addition to her legal practice and scholarship, Welch was active in her community. She was the president of the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi and past president of the board of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi. Welch also served on the boards of multiple organizations serving families and children.

HONORING CRYSTAL WELCH'S LEGACY

Crystal Welch's passion and life's work was serving families and children, which she did every day through MC Law's family and children's legal clinics. To make a donation to the family law clinics in memory of Crystal Welch, visit law.mc.edu/crystal-welch



In Memory of Professor Lee Hetherington

The MC Law community was saddened by the passing of longtime professor Lee Hetherington on September 24, 2024.

Hetherington began his legal career with Peermusic in New York City, the largest independent music publisher in the world, where he was an assistant to the CEO and house legal counsel.

In 1976, he returned to his hometown of Jackson and partnered with Mike Frascogna to form Frascogna & Hetherington, representing clients in the entertainment industry nation-

wide. Together, Hetherington and Frascogna authored three books, *This Business of Artist Management*, *This Business of Internet Law*, and *The Lawyer's Guide to Negotiation*.

In 1978, Hetherington began his teaching career as a law professor at MC Law. In 1984, he accepted a position as vice-president of administration for Columbia Pictures Television in Burbank, California, where he was responsible for the day-to-day administration of Columbia's television operations. While at Columbia, he also served as an adjunct professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

Hetherington returned to Jackson in 1987 to teach fulltime. During his 42-year tenure at MC Law, he chaired and served on key committees, while continuing to publish numerous articles on intellectual property, negotiation, and torts. His contributions played an important role in the development of the law school and its programs.

A five-time selection as one of MC Law's outstanding professors, Hetherington retired in 2021 and was granted emeritus status. A devoted mentor to countless numbers of students, his unique and colorful teaching methods were legendary and his passion for his work never faded.

At the request of his widow, Michelle, a celebration of Professor Hetherington's life was held on the MC Law campus on October 15, 2024.

"ALWAYS ON MY MIND"

In 2022, MC Law held a retirement fundraiser honoring Professor Lee Hetherington at the Old Capitol Inn. The event featured a performance by the Willie Nelson cover band Luckenbach. The band is fronted by Trey Jones '98, one of Professor Hetherington's former students. The event raised \$25,000 to name Professor Hetherington's former office at MC Law.

Right: Trey Jones '98, Lee Hetherington, and a Luckenbach band member

Below: John Anderson, Brianna Bailey '20, Lee Hetherington, Larry Lee '65, and Matthew Thompson



HONORING LEE HETHERINGTON

To make a donation to the MC Law Annual Fund in memory of Lee Hetherington, visit law.mc.edu/lee-hetherington

Closing Statement

*The Top 5 Objections to Involvement with the Alumni Association
(OVERRULED!)*



*FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS,
I'VE HAD THE HONOR OF SERVING
AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE MC LAW
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.*

I confess that I was originally hesitant to get involved in the association, afraid that I would be hounded for money, for time, and for endless commitments. I'm happy to report that I was wrong. Here are my top five objections to getting involved in the MC Law Alumni Association and what I discovered that overruled each one.

#5. THE TIME COMMITMENT WILL BE TOO MUCH.

The time commitment is what you make it. And once you opt in to the lunches, the meetings, the student gatherings, and/or the meet and greets throughout the state and at the bar convention, you'll find they aren't as daunting as they may have seemed. In fact, they're actually fun.

#4. IT WILL BE SOLO WORK.

You'll have the strong support of an internal team at the law school. You'll also meet alums you never knew graduated from MC Law. Really, some of those lawyers you assumed went to another law school actually graduated from MC Law.

(Suddenly, they aren't so bad.) You'll also meet current students, from brand-new students to 3Ls on the precipice of real life and everything in between.

#3. I WON'T REMEMBER ANYONE.

You will reconnect with your former classmates. They'll not only remember you, they'll join you in playing "remember when." You'll be walking down Memory Lane together in no time.

#2. I DON'T KNOW ANYONE IN THE MC LAW ADMINISTRATION.

You'll get to know the dean, professors, adjuncts, and support staff as you have never before. The relationship between main campus (Clinton) and the law school (Jackson) is as strong as it has ever been and that makes both campuses stronger.

#1. I'LL BE CONSTANTLY INTRODUCING MYSELF.

When you make the big leap and serve as alumni president, you'll get a CUSTOM NAME TAG. Wear it at your whim, pleasure, and leisure. There is no rule that you ever have to take it off! (See: Dean Emeritus Jim Rosenblatt.)

Trust me, your own objections will be replaced by the sense of satisfaction you'll gain from being involved in your law school. And there are so many opportunities to get involved. The Alumni Association has a board and is always looking for members. If that's not your style, you can volunteer to help host a meet and greet in your area. Host it and they will come.

You can give by joining the Order of the Rose or the 151 Society. You can support the ongoing capital campaign, and know that you're helping fund the amazing renovations and reinventions of law school spaces currently under construction.

MC Law is working to make our law degrees more valuable every day, every class, and every year. You don't object to that, right?

So, the verdict is in. Our law school was and is there for us. And you have so much to gain by being there for MC Law.

MATTHEW THOMPSON is the managing partner of Thompson Addison, PLLC, focusing on family law and civil defense. Matthew may be reached at 601.850.8000, matthew@ThompsonAddison.com or 2060 Main Street, Madison, MS 39110.



BE A PART OF MC LAW'S

RISE

WHETHER YOU MAKE A GIFT TO THE Building Fund, Annual Fund, or General Scholarship Fund, your support secures the future of MC Law and furthers Christian legal education in Mississippi. Gifts in any amount are tax-deductible and deeply appreciated.

THE MC LAW BUILDING FUND

Help fund renovations to the MC Law campus currently underway.

- **TO GIVE, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu
- **TO SEE THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu/about/virtual-tour

THE ANNUAL FUND

Help grow this unrestricted account, which allows MC Law to respond quickly to challenges or to capitalize on new opportunities that fulfill the law school's mission.

- **TO MAKE A ONE-TIME GIFT, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu

THE 151 SOCIETY

The 151 Society provides exclusive opportunities for involvement and honors donors who contribute \$151 or more annually to the Annual Fund. 151 is a nod to the street address of the Law School, 151 James H. Meredith Drive (formerly 151 E. Griffith Street).

- **TO JOIN, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu/alumni/giving-societies

THE ORDER OF THE ROSE

The Order of the Rose recognizes donors who give or pledge \$10,000 or more to the Annual Fund. Pledge payments may be made over a period of up to five years. Donors are inducted into the Order of the Rose upon completion of payment.

- **TO JOIN, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu/alumni/giving-societies

THE GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Support MC Law in recruiting and retaining promising future lawyers with a gift to the General Scholarship Fund.

- **TO SUPPORT FUTURE ATTORNEYS, VISIT:**
law.mc.edu



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