

A COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE

# CUNY LAW

FALL 2007

**From Baking Bricks to  
Writing Briefs:  
A CUNY Success Story**

**Incubator Trains Alums to  
Manage Solo Practice**

**2007 Haywood Burns  
Chair Richard Abel**

**Alumni Reunion Photos**



**Ruthann Robson: CUNY  
Distinguished Professor**



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**CUNY Distinguished Professor Ruthann Robson, page 10**  
*Photo by Chris Rottler*



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Pictured on cover: Muhammad Faridi takes a break to talk to *CUNY Law* magazine.

Dear Friends,

I am excited to share with you great personal news. On Sept. 29, 2007, I gave birth to a baby girl. My spouse, Gavin, and I have named her Eavan Kore. We could not be happier.

This issue of *CUNY Law* magazine is about a series of new beginnings at the Law School.

As the cover of the magazine indicates, you will read about the birth of Muhammad Faridi's legal career. Early childhood in his native Pakistan was marked by hard labor instead of school. After immigrating to the United States at 14, he learned English, drove a New York City taxicab to help his family make ends meet, attended John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and went on to graduate from CUNY School of Law in 2007. He is now clerking for U.S. District Court Judge Jack B. Weinstein.

This issue of *CUNY Law* magazine also features the proud delivery of a Distinguished University Professorship to our own Professor Ruthann Robson. Ruthann, an astoundingly prolific and generous scholar, is widely known as the mother of a field of legal inquiry called Lesbian Jurisprudence. Ruthann is a shining star on our faculty, one whose commitment to research nurtures her colleagues and students in their own scholarly endeavors.

You will also read about another distinguished faculty member laboring in our midst:

Professor Richard Abel is this year's Haywood Burns Chair. Richard, the Connell Professor of Law at UCLA, has a long history of public interest practice and commitment to human rights and racial justice. He was a law school classmate of Haywood and finds being the Chair a great honor in memory of his friend. He is in residence this semester rearing a large section of first-year CUNY Law students in the study of Torts.



Photo by Rebecca Bratspies

This issue of the magazine also features distinguished alum Tonya Gonnella Frichner from the class of '87, who was recently appointed representative to the U.N. Forum on Indigenous Rights. You can read about her important work representing all the tribal nations of North America at the U.N.

We are also pleased to report that a new clinic at the CUNY School of Law is in gestation.

We have hired Professor Carmen Huertas, who was most recently a staff attorney at the Urban Justice Center and professor in the Community Economic Clinic at Fordham University School of Law. At CUNY Law, Carmen will found and direct a Community Economic Development (CED) Clinic. This year, she is setting up a CED lawyering seminar for 2L students, which will feed into a fully-developed clinic next year.

Completing our natal theme, the Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) at CUNY School of Law has founded an Incubator for Justice this year to support our alums seeking to open small, community-based law practices. The Incubator for Justice is modeled after successful incubator projects created for small business owners and micro-entrepreneurs. Following the 18-month incubation period, alums will be able to use their recently-acquired professional skills and turn to the CLRN network for support as they provide high-quality, affordable legal services to scores of New Yorkers with unmet legal needs.

As you can tell, it is a time of great growth and renewal here. We hope you will join us in celebrating the new aspects of life at the CUNY School of Law.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle J. Anderson'.

Michelle J. Anderson  
Dean and Professor of Law

By Ansley Davenport

## Q & A

### ...with Carmen Huertas



*Carmen Huertas is currently developing the Community Economic Development (CED) Clinic at CUNY Law. Huertas, who graduated from Fordham Law School, most recently served as adjunct professor at Fordham, where she supervised students in the university's CED Clinic. She has also served as a senior staff attorney on the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, where she assisted grass roots groups in expanding and sustaining their missions. Here, Huertas takes time away from her work and her other job raising a 1-year-old daughter with her partner of 15 years to speak with CUNY Law magazine.*

**Q: You served as a staff attorney on the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center. Can you describe your work there in more detail?**

**A:** My clients ranged from start-up grassroots groups to more established non-profits. I assisted neighborhood residents who were seeking to form new non-profits and to provide greatly needed services, such as after-school programs and child care. I also helped them to develop democratic internal governance structures and employment policies and to comply with non-profit, employment, and tax laws as well as to create alternative institutions such as worker-owned cooperatives.

**Q: What are the most challenging issues pertaining to community development in the New York area?**

**A:** Although there is plenty of development taking place, the most challenging issue is ensuring that it occurs in a way that is accountable to communities. Accountability means ensuring that local and current residents participate in development planning processes that affect them. It also means providing technical assistance to allow residents to participate on an equal footing. Accountability translates into ensuring that communities reap significant benefits, such as having jobs that

pay a living wage.

Although many grassroots organizations have implemented successful development projects of their own, a lack of access to capital and debt financing prevents further development. There is no shortage of great ideas being generated by individual community members and grassroots organizations, but there is, unfortunately, a limited amount of capital that can be accessed to implement these ideas.

**Q: Who are the community members that the clinic at CUNY Law is geared to serve?**

**A:** We intend to serve low-income and working-class communities, including communities of color that are fighting for social and economic justice. The clinic is designed to help build and expand the capacity of grassroots organizations to implement their own development projects such as worker-owned cooperatives, after-school programs, and small business incubators, and to exercise control or influence over development projects coming from businesses outside the community.

**Q: Which portion of the student community will most benefit from participation in the clinic?**

**A:** Most apt to benefit are students who want to collaborate with clients in efforts to alleviate conditions of poverty and promote community development in a way that empowers residents as planners, decision-makers, and agents of change. Students who want to use their legal training to support individuals and groups in their identification of problems and in their efforts to solve them will be ideal.

**Q: How will the clinic be uniquely tailored to CUNY and the Flushing, Queens community?**

**A:** By conducting an informal needs assessment of community-based organizations and micro-entrepreneurs in Queens and other parts of the City, we will identify the CED needs of the community and what role the clinic, which will be up and running in the fall of 2008, can play in helping to meet unmet needs. The design of the clinic will use student input in determining who the clients are and the matters on which students work. We will also use student evaluations as a way to ensure the clinic is meeting the needs of CUNY students.

**“The clinic is geared to serve low-income and working-class communities, including communities that are fighting for social and economic justice.”**

**Q: What motivated you to become involved in social justice issues, particularly through the lens of the law?**

**A:** I grew up in a poor and working-class neighborhood and witnessed firsthand many of the economic and social injustices that I partner with my clients to fight against. I view the law as a powerful tool to help support such efforts of resistance change. I particularly view the Community Economic Development Clinic as an important tool in working with community members to combat conditions of poverty and creating alternatives.

## Director of Clinics Sue Bryant Reinforces the Importance of Clinics to the CUNY Law Curriculum

At CUNY School of Law, clinics are an integral part of all coursework. Students take practical lawyering courses during all three years of study, beginning with simulations of real world experience in the first two years. In their third year, students engage with the hands-on clinic experience itself. Bryant notes that the doctrinal courses offered at CUNY Law are often taught by professors who are also practitioners in their specialty. There is a fairly unusual integration of theory and practice that permeates the CUNY Law education.

This unique interaction of theory with practice helps prepare students for small and solo practices, legal aid practice, and government work that students are most likely to take on immediately upon graduation. Because they can't teach everything, Bryant adds, the goal is to graduate students who are capable of growth later in their careers.

The upcoming CED Clinic will be the only other non-litigation practice besides the Elder Law Clinic to occupy Main Street Legal Services, Inc. the legal clinic of the Law School. There is also motivation to establish mentoring opportunities in which



**Students listen attentively to clinical instruction.**

Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) attorneys (*see pages 6-7*) work with clinic students. Meanwhile, in the fall of 2007, all third-year students are busy preparing for meetings with clients in seven different clinics: the Criminal Defense, Mediation, and Elder Law Clinics, and those devoted to Battered Women's Rights, International Women's Human Rights, Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and the Economic Justice Clinic.

*-Ansley Davenport*

## Meet the Class of 2010

This year's entering class of 143 students ranges in age from 21 to 56. The students represent 27 states and come from countries as diverse as Colombia and Iran, Moldova and Uzbekistan and have a broad range of undergraduate experience, including study of economics, linguistics, mathematics, film production, and biology.



### Valery Paul, 24, born and raised in Jamaica, Queens

**Family background:** I grew up with just my parents, and we are a tight-knit unit. We curse at each other, but at the end of the day we love each other!

**Area of interest:** Environmental law and justice.

**How his experiences have shaped his interests:** My mom and dad came from Haiti to America with barely anything to make a life for themselves. They are my role models and inspire me with a strong work ethic. I went through the Pipeline program, which allowed me to enter the school more prepared.

**What he has done before coming to CUNY:** I knew I always wanted to come to this law school ever since I was young. My mom works at the hospital nearby, and I would pass the school all the time when my dad would drop my mom off at work on the weekends. I always wondered what was in there. When my dad explained it to me, I felt I wanted to be part of this place.

**Experience at CUNY Law so far:** My experience has been great because the people are so darned nice. Everyone is passionate, smart, and expressive of their interests.

### Bridgette Bissonnette, 29, born and raised in the Bay Area, California

**Family background:** I come from a large Irish extended family, scattered around the United States and Ireland. I was raised by a young single mother, and I also have a younger sister, with both of whom I'm very close. Growing up, we struggled with issues of poverty and class.

**Area of interest:** Juvenile justice and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and queer issues.

**How her experiences have shaped her interests:** Being a queer-identified woman who grew up on welfare, my identity plays a large role in my politics and legal interests. From a young age I knew I wanted to practice law. The injustice surrounding economic and race identities within the delinquency system incensed me as early as age 11.

**What she has done before coming to CUNY:** I was a program director at an LGBT community center. I worked specifically with youth in the East Bay of California. I've also worked with at-risk homeless, HIV-positive, and drug-addicted youth in the delinquency systems, shelters, and within the family courts of San Francisco.

**Experience at CUNY Law so far:** I'm inspired by my peers and professors. Being in a community of activists and social justice advocates, I find myself with a renewed excitement for the future.



## Candy Velazquez, 23, born in Santo Domingo, raised in New Jersey

**Family background:** My father was a criminal journalist and during his last few years in the Dominican Republic, he wrote a few of the president's speeches. He has always had an insatiable appetite for knowledge.

**Area of interest:** I have always been interested in criminal law, but I am keeping my mind open to other areas of the law.

**How her experiences have shaped her interests:** My parents were both fairly young during the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic, but they are full of stories of the atrocious events that occurred under his rule. A few years ago, I read *The Time of the Butterflies*, a book that detailed the events during this time.

Learning about the Trujillo era really made concrete my drive to work in public service, especially because so many people placed their lives on the line for the betterment of society.

**What she has done before coming to CUNY:** I was a Latino Leader Fellow through the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, and I interned at the New Jersey Governor's Office in the Department of Policy. I was also part of Latinas United for Political Empowerment.

**Experience at CUNY Law so far:** I love CUNY. I especially love the dedication and drive of the faculty; it's contagious.



From left: Candy Velazquez, Yasmin Salama, and Elette Fortune share a laugh.

## Yasmin Salama, 27, born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Family background:** My parents were born and raised in Cairo, Egypt. They moved to Ethiopia because both my father and mother had secured positions with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health as a physician and pharmacist, respectively. I have three siblings, two of whom are health care professionals.

**Area of interest:** I don't currently have a focus, but I hope my goals and career options will become clearer as I progress through the program.

**How her experiences have shaped her interests:** My background as a multilingual immigrant steers me toward an interest in making the law accessible to immigrants or persons of diverse backgrounds.

**Experience at CUNY Law so far:** The diversity of the faculty and student body adds to the School's quality as a progressive institution. Academic support facilitates thorough skills sessions, and availability of faculty allows for an easier transition into the rigorous first-year curriculum.

## Elette Fortune, 27, raised in Dorchester, Massachusetts

**Family background:** My mother is from Georgia and my father is from Trinidad and Tobago. Both my parents moved to Boston to establish a better life for themselves. I am the first person in my family to receive a college degree.

**Area of interest:** Civil rights and family law.

**How her experiences have shaped her interests:** My family's history, including my own encounters with racism and my experiences as a teacher, ignited my passion for creating social change. I believe it is my responsibility as an individual who has overcome various obstacles to continue breaking down socioeconomic barriers for young people. All young people, regardless of their family's background, should at least have the opportunity to receive an education that will allow them to have options for the future.

**What she has done before coming to CUNY:** I worked as a special education teacher in Flatbush, Brooklyn through the New York City Teaching Fellows program. I also worked for AmeriCorps in the City Year New York program before becoming a Recruitment Fellow for Teach for America. I was one class away from a master's degree in special education, but I decided to come to law school instead.

**Experience at CUNY Law so far:** So far my experience has been great. This is a very supportive community, and it feels good to be around other individuals who share the same interest in the law and public service.

## Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN)

By Emily Sachar

### CUNY to Train Start-Up Lawyers in Business Basics to Enhance Justice



**CLRN Director, Fred Rooney, brings together like-minded individuals for community based pro bono and low bono work.**

*Photo by Emily Sachar*

CUNY Law School's Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) has launched the first program in the nation to train recent alumni to set up and run their own small legal practices devoted to clients in underserved communities.

This initiative, the CUNY Law School Incubator, joins the CUNY Business Incubator Network, managed by the CUNY Economic Development Corporation (CUNY EDC), which provides a broad range of resources, counseling, technical assistance, and business development services to nurture and grow early-stage businesses in New York.

The CLRN project will train up to

nine lawyers in its first cycle to tackle everything from billing and collecting from clients to setting up an office, from laying out an advertising strategy to choosing the legal status for their new practice.

"This program will afford me the opportunity to get a great jump-start in the pursuit of my legal career," said Fatai Lawal, 40, of Queens. "The faster I can get up and running, the more I can contribute towards public service. To whom much is given, much is expected."

Added Gabe Munson, 42 (Class of '03, see *sidebar*), also of Queens, "As anyone can imagine, starting a law practice is fraught with the dangers that face any new business, in addition to the already daunting legal concerns and duties. But, beginnings also present opportunities for growth."

#### Seven to Start

The initial group of trainees includes Lawal, a Nigerian-trained lawyer who worked at the Law School, Munson, and two other trainees who intend to be sole proprietors.

It also includes three graduates from the Class of 2007 who plan to work together to create their own not-for-profit law firm in Queens. Jay Kim is one of them. "The incubator is able to provide us with guidance in areas that will be critical to our success, such as teaching us entrepreneurial skills and providing us with a strong support network," Kim said.

The goal is to provide the same sort of training to this initial pool of trainees

that graduates receive when they join law firms, corporations and governmental or legal services organizations, according to CLRN Director Fred Rooney.

"Once hired, those graduates receive immediate access to professional training and support, and they have mentors to help with almost every aspect of their professional development," said Rooney, himself a long-time private practitioner. "We want to make sure that the graduate venturing into solo or small-firm practice has the same sort of access to training and knowledge."

#### The Launch

The training began in October and will run through April 2009. Then, the lawyers are expected to go out on their own and set up practices in communities that are not adequately served by lawyers. Participants are required to commit to using their law practice to provide a wide spectrum of affordable legal services to underserved communities, Rooney said. He hopes a total of 2,000 clients will be served in the first year that Incubator trainees open their firms.

During the training, each trainee will be assigned a mentor from a pool of retired lawyers. Trainees also will have access to Laura Gentile, an adjunct professor at CUNY Law School who will function as an on-site mentor. Training also will be provided by other CUNY Law faculty and by LaGuardia Community College's Small Business Development Center.

CLRN, a nationally-recognized network of collaborative lawyers, currently has 300 alum members who reach out to one another through a list-serve, by phone, and at CLRN events.

Need for the Incubator, Rooney said, is clear. He cited the Legal Services Corp. 2005 Justice Gap Report that noted that,

while there is one private attorney for every 525 people in the United States, there is only one Legal Aid attorney for every 6,800 low-income Americans. Such figures, he said, depict the starkly lower access to attorneys for poor Americans.

Attorneys who work with CLRN and take on so-called low bono, or low-priced, legal work also are eligible to receive compensation from CLRN funding sources, Rooney said.

Incubator training will take place in a suite of offices maintained by Gentile at Fifth Avenue and 27th Street in Manhattan. Lawyers will have access to computers, copiers, and clerical work, Rooney said.

CUNY currently has in place one incubator based at LaGuardia Community College that is devoted to design of everything from dinnerware to jewelry, architecture to graphics. Two other CUNY incubators are under development – one in Manhattan to focus on emergency preparedness and health care innovation, the other a collaboration with the Center for Sustainable Energy at Bronx Community College to focus on alternative energy and environmentally friendly products, according to Carolyn Everett, executive director of CUNY EDC.

The CLRN Incubator, however, is unique in CUNY history, Everett said. “The work of

these public-minded, dedicated and enthusiastic young attorneys will address populations in need of significant legal assistance in critical areas ranging from housing and medical care to employment and safety issues,” Everett said. She noted that the lawyers are making a personal sacrifice by agreeing to charge significantly lower fees than other lawyers typically charge to serve low-income individuals.

“There is no question,” Everett said, “that these CUNY Law School graduates will have a significant impact on many individuals and, over time, will enhance whole neighborhoods and communities.”

## CUNY Defense Lawyer Alum Turns to Incubator to Learn Business

After 15 years as a paralegal and a law librarian for the Legal Aid Society, Gabriel R. Munson decided he had something new to prove. He wanted to become an attorney. “I’d been around courtrooms for 20 years, listening to lawyers and listening to judges. I thought, ‘I can do this. I can be a lawyer.’”

A Queens College graduate, CUNY Law School was a natural place for Munson, 42, to apply. He won admission and earned his J.D. in 2003.

Over the past four years, after returning to Legal Aid’s criminal defense division and posting a winning trial record, his next dream surfaced: he wanted to open his own law practice.

“I had that vision of myself being my own boss. I wanted to direct my own life and my own career,” Munson said. But something was missing.

The son of working-class parents in Queens – his mother is a nurse, his father a retired salesman – Munson feels he has a lot to learn about business. So, he has joined six others this fall to participate in one of the first “Incubator” projects to teach start-up lawyers how to set up their own law firms.

“It’s one thing to know the law,” says Munson, the father of a 3-year-old son who now lives in Jamaica with his wife, Eileen, and has set up his law office at a desk at his parents’ office. “But it’s another to know business.” For instance, he wants to learn the best way to find a proper law office and to negotiate a favorable lease.

He also hopes the Incubator will teach him everything from how to market his business to how to find the best deals on Westlaw, a legal research tool. Currently, he has six clients. For five,



**Gabriel R. Munson will be among the first cadre of Incubator trainees.**

he is doing criminal defense work; the sixth, he said, is an immigration case.

Munson said he intends to spend as much time as he can at the Incubator, picking up every piece of information he can from the trainers and on-site mentor. “It’s really the opportunity of a lifetime to get this sort of assistance when you’re just starting out,” Munson said. “It feels like a perfect fit for me.”

*-Emily Sachar*

## CUNY Law Students Take On Engaging Fellowship Positions

By Ansley Davenport

From Cambridge to Capetown, from the Bronx to Brooklyn, second- (2L) and third-year (3L) students spent the summer of 2007 gaining hands-on experience through fellowships in the legal field. Here is a sample of the varied and exciting opportunities in which CUNY Law students participated.

### Ruth Cusick, 3L



**Area of interest in law:** International human rights and educational equity.

**Worked with:** Racimos de Unguhurau Grupo de Trabajo, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Lima, Peru.

**What appealed to you about this organization:** Racimos is truly a grassroots organization that supports indigenous communities through political lobbying, litigation, and media organizing.

**The most challenging part of your experience:** Finding out how hard it is to practice international human rights litigation that keeps the clients' goals central to the litigation. Repeatedly, I saw communication problems between the U.S. attorneys and our Peruvian NGO because the U.S. attorneys were making value judgments about what

information was important for the Peruvians to know, rather than treating them as co-counsel.

**The most rewarding part of your experience:** Connecting with the indigenous plaintiffs in their communities, which were a two-day boat trip from the nearest city.

**How you expect your fellowship to shape your future:** My experience has informed and deepened my clinical education as the lessons I learned and challenges I confronted last summer have been very relevant in the International Women's Human Rights Clinic. I would love to do international human rights litigation in the future, but I am also very committed to domestic educational equity issues. I hope to do direct legal services work in Los Angeles to challenge the systemic inequities in our public education system and also to work on international human rights campaigns.

### Christel Matala de Mazza, 2L

**Area of interest in law:** Criminal and international law.

**Worked with:** African Services Committee, Harlem.

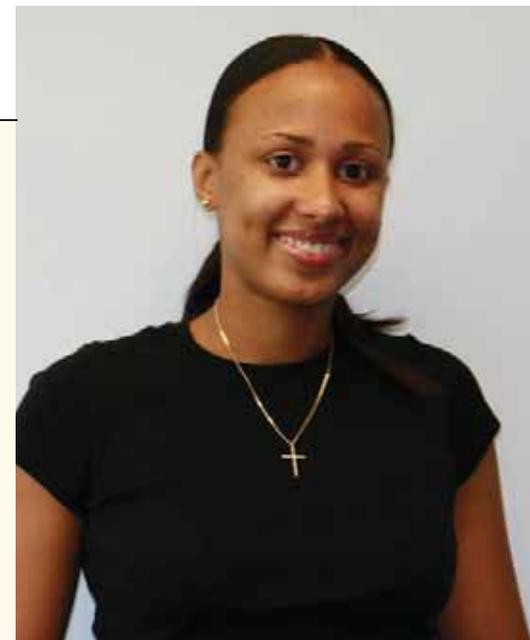
**What appealed to you about this organization:** As a result of my background, coming from the Republic of Congo, I knew that I wanted to do legal work that especially focused on the African Community in New York City.

**The most challenging part of your experience:** Going through the bureaucratic red tape, especially when people have emergency situations.

**The most rewarding part of your experience:**

Getting to know our clients on a more personal level and seeing clients go through so much and stay strong, despite the devastation in their lives from dealing not only with their legal issues, but also with HIV/AIDS and the stigma that surrounds it.

**How you expect your fellowship to shape your future:** It made me realize that what I learn here is not just abstract theory, but that it very much impacts individuals in this world every day. I began to appreciate and see what I learned from a different perspective. I know that I want to go into criminal law or civil rights. It also made me realize all the work that still needs to be done and the need for more black attorneys.



## Shuva Paul, 3L

**Area of interest in law:** Social and economic justice issues, federal disability law, and impact litigation (strategic lawsuits used for a broader purpose than the specific case in question).

**Worked with:** The Civil Law Reform Unit at the Legal Aid Society, New York City.

**What appealed to you about this organization:** I loved how such a compact unit—there are seven or eight attorneys at most—was able to alter how the City must operate with regard to treating whole communities. Earlier this year, the Law Reform Unit won a sweeping settlement for battered immigrant women who had been erroneously denied public assistance benefits for years by poorly trained City workers, and they did it in only 13 months. That really impressed me.

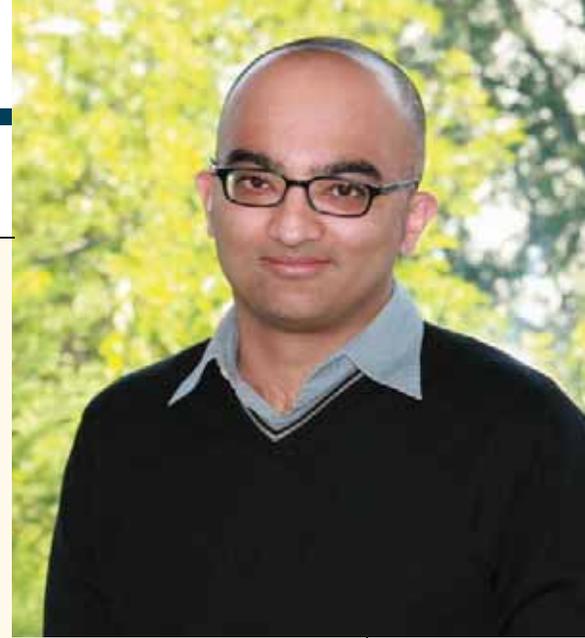
**The most challenging part of your experience:** Having to accept that I had to be patient and that I couldn't just walk in there and absorb decades of collective litigation experience in just ten weeks. I learned tons while I was there, but all summer I kept wishing I could just download everyone's expertise straight from their brains.

### **The most rewarding part of your experience:**

Getting to use my social services background. One day, I had to race across the city to pick up a homeless client and get her to a settlement conference on time. I got to the shelter and saw that she was pretty tense about the conference. I swallowed my impulse to pack her into the cab and instead let her chat with her daughter a bit. I hope to always remember that making a client whole again isn't just the end result of an adversarial courtroom process.

### **How you expect your fellowship to shape your future:**

I'm interning at Mental Hygiene Legal Services and getting to see how attorneys help individuals who have been involuntarily committed to psychiatric wards. I like being able to strike that balance. I now have a frame of reference for the Americans with Disabilities Act in regards to recipients with disabilities. If I land a job doing that after CUNY Law, I'd be pretty excited.



## Megan Stuart, 2L

**Area of interest in law:** Housing and benefits. ents receiving benefits to which they were entitled.

**Worked with:** South Brooklyn Legal Services Comprehensive Rights Unit (HIV unit).

**What appealed to you about the organization:** I was drawn to South Brooklyn because of the commitment to social justice that informs every aspect of their legal work. The organization was also appealing because the HIV unit recognizes that its clients have multiple needs. As a result, the unit addresses all of a client's legal needs and refers them to social service organizations for assistance with non-legal problems.

**The most challenging part of your experience:** Coming to terms with the fact that even though the work I was doing had an important immediate effect on my clients, nothing I did addressed the larger issues of poverty and injustice, especially when housing is considered a privilege that goes to the highest bidder.

**The most rewarding part of your experience:** I loved interacting and working with clients, especially when that work resulted in stable housing or the cli-

### **How you expect your fellowship to shape your future:**

After working at South Brooklyn, I am excited to apply to the Economic Justice Project. I spent time working with clients to obtain public assistance benefits and was able to attend a fair hearing, which made me eager to do more of this work. Next summer I plan to work with a community organization that represents tenants, especially those who do not qualify for public assistance.



## Ruthann Robson: CUNY Law's New Distinguished Professor

By Emily Sachar

An Illinois lesbian had been sentenced to die for murder. The prosecution argument: the woman was a ruthless man-hater who had lured the victim home from a bar with the explicit purpose of killing him. Ruthann Robson, professor of law, was working in her office overlooking the gardens of CUNY Law School in 2002 when an alumna, Joey

was to prove that the theory of the prosecution was wrong. There were many other factors involved in the killing that had not been brought to light at trial. Homophobia absolutely contributed to a woman being sentenced to death.”

### A Summer Honor

Now, Robson, 51, is in the limelight following the summer 2007 announcement that she has been named University Distinguished Professor by the CUNY Board of Trustees. Robson thus becomes the only Law School faculty member to hold the designation.

(Boalt Hall) and done the seminal work for *(Out)Law*, a scholarly work that addresses legal implications for lesbians on everything from crimes of lesbian sex to immigration and lesbian legal workers.

Law School Dean Michelle J. Anderson concurs in noting the importance of Robson's new designation. “Ruthann has always engaged in ground-breaking work,” Anderson said. “Having the Board of Trustees recognize her brilliance and the importance of her scholarly contributions by designating her a Distinguished University Professor is a gold star for both her and for the Law School.”

The designation, adds Associate Dean Mary Lu Bilek, who has known Robson for her full tenure at CUNY Law, has meaning to the world-at-large and to CUNY Law internally. “It's recognition from the University that Ruthann is a scholar with a national reputation. We knew Ruthann was forging new paths and creating a whole new area of scholarship. It was clear that she was the national leader in doing so and that her scholarship was changing the way other scholars thought and talked about the law and also was helping others to change the law to promote social justice, especially for the LGBT community. Internally, what is especially meaningful to us,” Bilek added, “is that Ruthann is the consummate professor and colleague, and the University has recognized that, as well.”

### Law and Literature

In fact, for nearly 20 years, Robson has made queer law, the interpretation and study of law as it pertains to lesbians, gay men, and other sexual minorities, the centerpiece of her scholarship. In addition, she is a fiction writer who has published two novels and three works of short fiction, most with lesbian themes. One of her books, *Cecile*, is assigned in many women's literature courses. She also is a poet with yet another book, *Masks*, to her credit; it was named one of the best poetry books of 1999 by *Library Journal*. And she was named a 2007 Fellow in Nonfic-



Robson enjoys a light moment.

Photo by Chris Rottler

Mogul (Class of '87), working at the People's Law Office in Chicago, phoned seeking her help. Would the law professor write an affidavit arguing that prosecutorial bias contributed to the defendant's conviction? Of course, Robson replied.

“The issue wasn't whether the woman committed the killing,” the professor in queer legal theory said in a recent interview with *CUNY Law*. “Rather, the point

was to prove that the theory of the prosecution was wrong. There were many other factors involved in the killing that had not been brought to light at trial. Homophobia absolutely contributed to a woman being sentenced to death.”

In fact, Robson sought early tenure based on lesbian legal scholarship. She earned tenure at CUNY in 1993, three years after her arrival to the Law School, having just received her LL.M. from the University of California at Berkeley

“It feels great to have my work recognized in this way, and it's so important for the Law School because we had no one on the faculty with the designation, and yet we have so many people here doing work worthy of it,” Robson said. “Also it has always meant a great deal to me that CUNY has never said: ‘Don't do this sort of writing and research; it's too risky.’ The word on the street used to be: ‘Don't mention sexuality until you get tenure.’ That turns out to be wrong.”

tion Literature by the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her legal publications, in law journals, anthologies, periodicals, and encyclopedias, number nearly 100 and include three non-fiction books.

Law and literature? “For me, they both come from this place of wanting social change and wanting to affect the way people move the social justice agenda forward,” Robson says.

Robson also has used difficult life experiences as inspiration for writing. In “Notes from a Difficult Case,” Robson wrote an award-winning essay about her experience facing liposarcoma, a rare cancer of the tissues. “What for me is especially striking in ‘Notes’ is Ruthann’s honesty in registering her frustration with the formal terms of law and medicine, which are neither graceful, supple, nor humane, and her willingness to translate those terms into language that is more resonant and resilient,” says Professor Andrea McArdle, director of legal writing at CUNY Law.

### Love of Teaching

While reticent to speak of her own family relationships, Robson talks openly of her current and former students, her grading philosophy, and her role as founding co-adviser in 1995 of *The New York City Law Review*, CUNY Law’s legal journal, devoted to the CUNY Law mission of social justice. The volumes of every edition since its inception share a prominent shelf in Robson’s light-drenched office with a bottle of sea salt, an old

copy of Black’s Law Dictionary and copies of dozens of publications written by members of the Law School faculty.

In fact, faculty have been Robson’s students, too, as she has been instrumental in establishing mentoring programs to enhance their opportunities for published scholarship. “She’s as concerned with others as she is with herself,” says Professor Shirley Lung, who teaches a variety of courses at CUNY Law. “She’s been very generous with her time and experience, giving wonderful guidance to others in getting an article conceived and going through the journal and publication submission process.”

Robson’s current and former students say they are deeply moved by her designation as Distinguished Professor. Mogul, the Chicago civil rights and capital defense attorney who turned to Robson when she was defending lesbian defendant Bernina Mata, said in a phone interview that she remembers well her time studying under Robson. “Ruthann has profoundly affected both my legal work and my work for justice,” Mogul said. “She is an inspirational professor and an inspirational theorist who has blazed a path for advocating on behalf of lesbian, gay and queer individuals.”

For her part, Robson says mentoring others is one of the most rewarding parts of her work. “With teaching, you assist people, as you would assist clients, and you also watch people grow,” she says. “We have so many alums out there doing

great work, the sort of work I would do. In fact, if I had 100 lives, I would like to do many of the things our students do.”

### New Goals

As a new distinguished professor, Robson says she has two pressing agenda items. One is to organize an event or discussion each semester at the Law School with faculty and two distinguished professors from other fields outside the School hooked to a particular class topic. The first event will be held in early November and be devoted to a conversation about poverty and class.

Second on her list of to-dos is to work within CUNY to better understand the standards to earn the distinguished professor designation and to work to get more Law School colleagues designated.

As to her own work, Robson says she is always looking to write about subjects about which she can’t find sufficient information to read. And she says she’ll continue to ponder the headline issues of the day. Should gay marriage, for instance, continue to dominate the queer agenda?

“In the law, there are always new things that shake things up, that shake me up, that make me wonder,” Robson says. “I can’t envision that I’ll ever be bored.” On the contrary, she merely wishes, she says, for one more of those 100 lives.

For more about Ruthann Robson, visit her Web site: [www.ruthannrobson.com](http://www.ruthannrobson.com)

## Robson Joins Elite Cadre of Distinguished Professors

Ruthann Robson joins 130 other distinguished professors among the 6,100 full-time teaching faculty at the City University of New York. That puts her among just 2 percent of her colleagues. She was one of seven who received the designation by the Board of Trustees in June 2007. Eight individuals were nominated.

Robson is the only professor at the Law School to hold the accolade currently. However, early in the Law School’s history, Howard Lesnick, one of the School’s founders, had been named a distinguished professor.

A CUNY Distinguished Professor is an exceptional scholar with an international reputation for scholarly and/or research excellence, according to Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Selma Botman.

The number of Distinguished Professors is limited to 175 across the University under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement with the Professional Staff Congress, the labor union that represents more than 20,000 CUNY faculty and staff.

For more information on CUNY’s Distinguished Professor program, visit: [www.cuny.edu/dp](http://www.cuny.edu/dp)

-Emily Sachar

# From Baking Bricks to Writing Briefs: CUNY '07 Alum Lands Top Federal Clerkship

He baked bricks as a child for \$1 a day to help feed his Pakistani family. For three years, after he had immigrated to the United States, he worked 30 hours a week at a restaurant, again to help his family make ends meet. He even drove a New York City taxicab 15 hours a day for the past seven years, to add hundreds of dollars a week to his family's pocketbook. He never kept more than a few dollars for himself.

At no point was private college or law school even an option; his parents didn't earn enough to co-sign for the loans. Yet, today, Muhammad Faridi (CUNY Law School '07) has earned one of the most prestigious clerkships in the United States, with Federal District Court Judge Jack B. Weinstein of the East-

ern District of New York in Brooklyn.

"Yes, there have been obstacles, and any one of them could have spelled the end of my studies at any time," Faridi says. "But I am driven by passion, even obsession at times, and I have wanted to make my parents and myself proud. I also want so much to help others like myself, who have suffered and who need help to survive. That has become my mission, as I yearn to be the very best lawyer I can be."

Faridi pondered many other professions. He thought about becoming a U.S. marshal or pursuing a Ph.D. His professors had other ideas, however, and so did some of the judges for whom Faridi, now 25, worked in law school. Finding mentors has become a way of life for the young attorney. One of his professors

at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where he did his undergraduate work, discouraged the idea of a Ph.D., considering it too limiting for a young man whose interests and capacity for serving the underprivileged seemed so vast. The idea to seek a federal clerkship was born in the chambers of U.S. District Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis, for whom Faridi interned while at CUNY Law.

"He was an outstanding intern," Garaufis said in a phone interview. "He was

extremely quick to understand the legal and factual issues in the cases that I assigned to him. It's clear to me that he was able to achieve a great deal in law school while doing so many other things because he is extremely industrious. He can handle many different tasks at the same time, which is a very special quality that most people really don't have."

CUNY Law School Dean Michelle J. Anderson concurs. "A CUNY Law School education teaches students to think creatively about how to enhance access to justice for those who are disempowered. Jack Weinstein, one of the most revered federal judges, has consistently endeavored to use the law to expand access to justice, particularly in complex and difficult cases. Judge Weinstein's selection of Muhammad Faridi as his clerk this year is a proud affirmation of the core mission of the Law School and of Faridi's talents."

The Weinstein clerkship, Garaufis added, is an important milestone for CUNY Law. "Judge Weinstein is the dean of our Eastern District bench. He is among the most respected trial jurists in America. So, this clerkship is just fabulous for Muhammad, and a feather in the cap of the CUNY Law School."

## Born with Ambition

In fact, staring down adversity and striving to dream beyond the confines of physical dilapidation, emotional uncertainty and poverty have always been at the heart of Faridi's life. As a young boy, living in a tiny village in northeast Pakistan, he found the brick work. Friends and cousins his age worked in factories around town. Most of his immediate relatives in Pakistan continue to earn just a little more than \$1 a day, he says.

Faridi came to the United States when he was in seventh grade. His father, who had never held stable employment in Pakistan, had immigrated eight



Faridi discusses his childhood experiences in Pakistan.

years earlier, settling in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn and living in an apartment with two other immigrants while working as a cab driver. The young Muhammad enrolled in English-as-a-second-language classes at the James J. Reynolds School in Sheepshead Bay, and mastered English quickly. But placed too soon in honors classes in eighth grade, he stumbled. Eventually, he caught up, earned top grades in junior high, and attended Abraham Lincoln High School in Brooklyn while working 30 hours a week at a chain restaurant.

As a high school student, he took up baseball and began mastering the statistics of every major and minor league player. Leaving New York City for college wasn't an option. But Faridi desperately wanted to go. By then, his wages as a cabbie, 14 or 15 hours a day, were too important to his family, which included an ailing brother with a heart condition. That brother, three years younger than Faridi, has not been healthy enough to attend college, Faridi notes. "My parents' focus was always on me," Faridi says.

Although Faridi's parents encouraged him to seek a private college education, both in the United States and abroad, Faridi soon abandoned the idea, and opted for the CUNY system. "I wanted to go to CUNY—John Jay College because it provided inner-city, lower-middle class and immigrant kids like myself an opportunity out of an abject life," he said. After briefly studying abroad for a semester and returning to New York City, Faridi was determined



Faridi at his clerkship in Brooklyn with Judge Jack B. Weinstein

that he wanted to be part of the CUNY system, "a place where I felt at home."

From college, he graduated summa cum laude, received the esteemed Scholarship and Service Award at graduation, and served as the school's Head Delegate at the National Model United Nations Conference.

He also wanted to stay in the New York area, he says, to continue his cab work and to help his parents, who ultimately moved to Valley Stream, Long Island. Eventually, in law school, he would take on work as a limousine driver, which doubled his wages for the same hours as a cabbie and gave him down time waiting for customers, during which he pored over his law texts and wrote papers.

Though often exhausted, Faridi remained undeterred in his quest to secure baccalaureate and graduate degrees. He worked every angle he could at John Jay, interning at the United Nations University, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, and the Center for International Human Rights at CUNY.

Yet, while attending John Jay, the unthinkable, Sept. 11, happened, and Faridi says he was shaken to the core. Friends challenged him and expressed anger at him, strangers shunned him, and he felt compelled, he says, to seek out professors who would help him through one of the most painful emotional times of his life. They did.

"I stayed up nights thinking about my role here in the United States. I had my foot in two worlds I understood, and loved – the Muslim Pakistani world, and the American world. That was the time I guess I underwent a political and intellectual transformation," says Faridi. He began, under the tutelage of his John Jay teachers, to read the works of the late Columbia University professor Edward Said, a Palestinian-American literary theorist and outspoken Palestinian activist. "I kept asking, 'Who am I? Pakistani Muslim or American?' I knew I was moving away from the U.S. marshal idea." One of his John Jay professors suggested law school.



*Top left: Faridi as a young boy playing on the beach; Top right: Faridi in his mother's arms with the rest of his nuclear family; Bottom: Faridi as a pre-teen*

## The Path to CUNY Law

At that same time, he had an unconventional and inspiring encounter with Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who is also one of the most prominent figures in the international human rights advocacy arena.

Late one night, when Faridi was driving Robinson back to New York City from a human rights conference at William Paterson University in New Jersey, his cab got a flat. "It was very dark outside and I couldn't see anything, and it took me about 15 minutes to replace the tire," Faridi recalled. Meanwhile, President Robinson nervously looked over my shoulder as we stood in the shoulder lane of Interstate 80 in Paterson." After fixing the tire and heading into New York, Faridi spoke with Robinson about his passion for human rights work and how best to advance it. "She, being a former law lecturer herself at Trinity College (University of Dublin), encouraged me to go to law school. It was at that time that I made up my mind."

Aside from the encouragement, Robinson also gave Faridi a card, which contains a poem dedicated to Amnesty International by the Irish poet Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate for Literature in 1995. Robinson received a handful of these cards as a gift from Amnesty in Ireland when she came to Geneva as High Commissioner in 1997. Faridi read from the back-page, "[h]aving found it inspiring and encouraging in my own work, I want to share it with my colleagues and friends as I complete my mandate," Signed, Mary Robinson." Robinson then gave Faridi a copy of the card.

"I couldn't believe that she gave me such an important gift," Faridi says today. "This was the best tip that I got in my seven years as a cab driver. It's more than money. It means that she had faith in me and that I could be an effective lawyer." Faridi still often reads the signed and dated personal note Robinson wrote on the inside page.

## Next Steps

Faridi then took the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), but even before sending out his applications, he had his mind set on CUNY School of Law. "I was not only attracted to CUNY Law be-

cause of its public interest mission that would allow me to effectuate my passion for equal justice and human rights, I was also attracted to this school because I took pride in the CUNY system." If it wasn't for the CUNY system, Faridi says, he would not have been able to attend college like most of his close friends from Brighton Beach and Coney Island, Brooklyn. He realized he was what he calls "a CUNY baby," so he applied to CUNY Law and won acceptance to the class of 2007.

At CUNY Law, Faridi served as the Symposium Editor of *The New York City Law Review*, for which he organized a symposium focusing on the rights of detainees in Guantánamo Bay. "The Guantánamo symposium was definitely one of the biggest achievements of my law school career: it allowed me to advocate on behalf of people who have been detained for years without receiving any meaningful due process of law." For his work on the symposium, Faridi was recently awarded the New York State Bar Association's Law Student Legal Ethics Award.

His other achievements at CUNY Law include winning first place at the American Bar Association Labor and Employment section's trial advocacy competition for the New York division (along with classmates Jennifer Hope, Kim Jones, and Andrea Ibrahim), and being ranked the eighth best oralist (out of 57) in the Jessup International Law Moot Court competition. Along with classmate Max Leighton, he also won the Best Team Award at CUNY School of Law's own summer moot court competition in 2005.

## An Author, Too

Meanwhile, Faridi has been busy with the pen. He authored a piece that argues that a provision of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA), a federal law passed in 1996 that amended the federal habeas corpus standard of review for petitions filed by prisoners in state custody, is unconstitutional. It appeared in the *St. Thomas Law Review* in 2007, and Faridi has two other pending publications.

"I guess you'd say I'm compulsive and obsessive. I never want to be bored," Faridi says, his brown-green eyes glis-

tening as he speaks in a quiet voice and gestures with his hands. “I have had a very successful and eccentric academic career, and it’s all because of CUNY.”

The honors bred an interest in judicial internships, and they led ultimately to the Weinstein clerkship. Faridi, despite extensive help from CUNY Law placement advisers and his mentors in the Eastern District, nonetheless says he was nonchalant during the interview with Weinstein. He said his own interview was bracketed with students from Yale and Columbia law schools, and that proved intimidating and discouraging. “I guess, though, it helped me because I was so sure I’d never get the clerkship with this legendary judge that I didn’t worry as much as I might have. I didn’t obsess about getting it. I just thought, ‘I won’t,’ ” Faridi says. He also says he didn’t over-prepare.

## A Natural Fit

For his part, though, Weinstein, who reviewed 700 applications for this year’s two positions in his chambers – his second clerk is a Columbia Law School graduate – said Faridi seemed a natural fit for his office right off, and he offered Faridi the position within hours of the interview. Weinstein offered Faridi several

days to think about it, but Faridi accepted on the spot. “He was an immigrant who apparently had very little and became successful financially while he was going through law school,” Weinstein said in an interview with *CUNY Law*. “He writes well and his hard work appealed to me.”

Weinstein said he has another agenda, too – checking out CUNY Law School for the first time, through the work of one of its graduates. “I want to know how good this school is that Mr. Faridi attended,” said Weinstein, himself a graduate of CUNY’s Brooklyn College and both a graduate of, and former professor at, Columbia Law School.

Faridi says he intends to stay intimately involved with CUNY Law, even though he recognizes he will have the potential to earn well into six figures in the private sector, following the Weinstein clerkship.

“The mission of the School dovetails so well with my own background – helping the indigent, looking out for the less fortunate, always noticing who needs the help I now have the tools to offer,” Faridi says. He says he is uncertain what legal road he will travel but knows he will always do low bono or pro bono-work.



U.S. Courthouse where Faridi clerks for Judge Jack B. Weinstein

“I will never forget the road I traveled to land this clerkship or the people who helped me,” Faridi says. “And I will never forget that I am a child of CUNY, which gave me so very much for so many years.”

## Class of 2007 Lands 12 Clerkships

The number of CUNY Law School graduates from the Class of 2007 landing federal District Court clerkships hit an all-time high for the CUNY School of Law. Three students landed such positions out of a graduating class of 122. And two other students landed such clerkships from the Class of 2006.

Meanwhile, the number of clerkships overall has doubled since 2001.

“Last year and the year before were banner years,” said Sam Sue, director of Career Planning at the Law School. In the past, graduates have landed Federal Magistrate clerkships – typically two or three a year – and, more rarely, a District Court clerkship.

“District Court clerkships are even more difficult to get (than magistrate clerkships) and are highly competitive. We’re very proud of this new record,” Sue noted.

The trend toward higher-level clerkships is indicative of the School’s respect among jurists. “It builds upon our past successes,” Sue said.

For 2007, 12 students so far have reported that they have obtained clerkship positions – three at the federal level and nine at the state level – compared with six in 2001. The Class of 2006 posted 19 clerkships in all.

The growth in the number of students obtaining state court clerkships is also a strong trend. “It shows that graduates are tapping into a mother lode of positions that are excellent first jobs for law graduates,” Sue said.

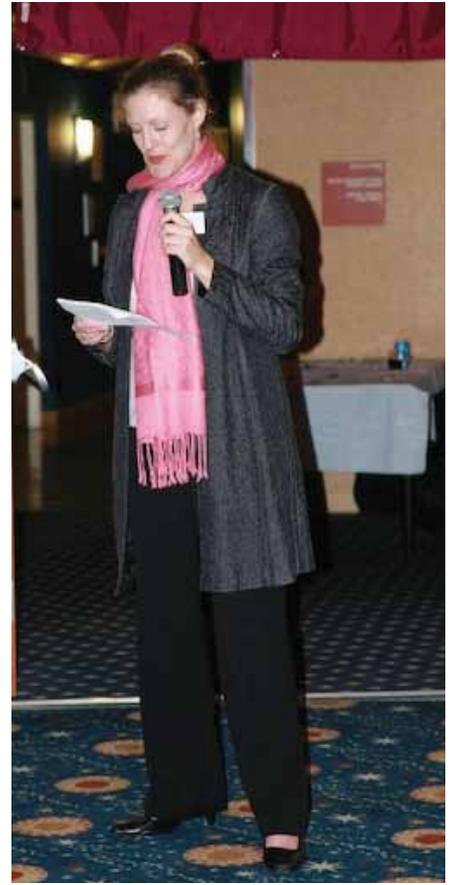
The total number of clerkships reported to the School for the last seven years are: 2001 (6); 2002 (8); 2003 (3); 2004 (11); 2005 (8); 2006 (19); 2007 (12, to date, as *CUNY Law* went to press).

-Emily Sachar

# ALUMNI

Reunion 2007 brought together alums from class years 1987, 1997, 2002, and 2006 at the Cherkasky/Davis Conference Center of 1199 SEIU in Midtown. Guests enjoyed beautiful city views, refreshments, and dinner. The night also included an impromptu song from Associate Dean Mary Lu Bilek to celebrate the birth of Dean Michelle J. Anderson's baby girl.





## Hudson Valley Bank Supports CLRN



Hudson Valley Bank here donates \$5,000 to CUNY School of Law's Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) program as part of an ongoing partnership to provide Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits for CLRN members and Hudson Valley banking customers. *From left:* Esther Vincenty, CLE administrator for the bank; Angela Perez, CLRN office administrator; Avi Azuolay, vice president at the bank; Fred Rooney, director of CLRN; Law School Dean Michelle Anderson; and Jefferson Crowther, bank senior vice president

## Awards, Presentations & Service

### March

**Professor Rebecca Bratspies** presented her paper, “Crafting a Green Landing for Spaceship Earth: Some Navigational Advice from the New Haven School,” at the New Haven School conference at Yale Law School.

**Dean Natalie Gomez-Velez** was appointed to the Judicial Screening Committee. Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye selected Dean Gomez-Velez as one of her appointees to the statewide panel, which conducts screenings for Court of Claims judges.

At a joint session of the New York State Legislature, **Dean Gomez-Velez** was appointed to the State Board of Regents.

### April

**Professor Rhonda Copelon** was the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship to support research and a lecturing project in Chile focusing on issues of accountability and gender equality in a post-dictatorship society.

**Professor Sid Harring** was awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Human Rights Law at Lund University, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law for the spring of 2008.

The Field Museum in Chicago selected **Professor Judith Kimerling** as the recipient of the 2007 Parker/Gentry Award for Conservation Biology. The award was established in 1995 to honor an “outstanding individual, team or organization whose effort has had a significant impact on preserving the world’s natural heritage, and whose actions and approaches can serve as a role model to others.”

**Professor Ruthann Robson** was the keynote speaker at a conference entitled “Standard Margin: Contemporary Issues in Canadian Law and Sexuality,” held at the University of British Columbia (Faculty of Law).

### May

Judge Fern A. Fisher, Administrative Judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York, invited **Professor Beryl Blaustone** to be the mediation expert with a delegation of judges and dignitaries working with Yale Law School that traveled to Beijing. As a delegate, Professor Blaustone assisted in the instruction of how to incorporate legal mediation into Civil Small Claims Court Administration.

### June

**Professor Caitlin Borgmann** was asked to serve on Sen. Barack Obama’s Women’s Policy Committee.

**Professor Borgmann** presented her paper, “The Meaning of Life: Abortion and Fetal Personhood,” at the International Society for Family Law’s North American Regional Conference in Vancouver.

**Professor Julie Goldscheid** was reappointed as a Commissioner of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence. She will also participate on the Advisory Board of the NYLAG’s Domestic Violence Appellate Representation Project.

### July

**Dean Michelle Anderson** was quoted in a *Time* magazine article on a Lincoln, Nebraska sexual assault case. The case has evolved into a federal case over First Amendment rights of witnesses and the language surrounding rape. The full article can be found at <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1646133,00.html>

**Professor Beryl Blaustone** was a speaker at the 5th Conference of the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education in Johannesburg, South Africa. She spoke about her recent article on effective feedback in clinical supervision. Among the delegates were Roy Stuckey, Peter Joy, David Chakin and David Koplou. These colleagues are long-time leaders in American clinical legal education. Professor Blaustone noted that, in each of their speeches, these individuals praised CUNY School of Law for innovation

in clinical teaching. Additionally, CUNY Law School’s British, South African and Australian colleagues praised the School for modeling values they wish to emulate.

**Professor Martha Garcia** presented a paper, “The Impact of Professional Background on Interdisciplinary Community Development and Collaboration: An Israel and USA Cross-County Comparison,” at the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Conference in Grenada, Spain.

**Professor Ruthann Robson** was the recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Fellowship in the non-fiction literature section. This year’s 124 NYFA Fellows were chosen among more than 3,000 applicants and were selected by peer panels in each discipline.

### September

**Professor Caitlin Borgmann** was a speaker at an abortion rights forum at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. co-sponsored by the Middlesex County National Organization for Women chapter and the Rutgers Department of Women’s and Gender Studies.

**Professor Pamela Edwards** was a commentator at the Northeast People of Color Conference held at the Southern New England School of Law where **Professor Victor Goode** was presented with a Trailblazers Award.

**Professor Julie Goldscheid** joined the board of the Stonewall Community Foundation; she has been involved in various ways with the foundation over the last several years.

### October

**Professor Caitlin Borgmann** has accepted invitations to speak at a conference on reproductive rights, “The Abortion Controversy in Context,” at the University at Buffalo Law School as well as at a panel and discussion at the New School in New York City, “The Abortion Controversies.” (Co-panelists include Nancy Keenan, president of

NARAL Pro-Choice America, and Daniel Macguire, religion and ethics scholar and author of the book, *Sacred Choices*).

**Professors Pamela Edwards, Raquel Gabriel, Donna Lee, Shirley Lung, and David Nadvorney** presented at the 12th Annual LatCrit Conference.

## November

**Dean Michelle J. Anderson** is to receive the Susan Rosenberg Zalk Award from The Feminist Press of the City University of New York.

**Professors Maria Arias, Sue Bryant, and Victor Goode** are scheduled panelists at the “Law as a Healing Profession” conference at Touro Law School on Long Island.

## Spring 2008

**Professor Rebecca Bratspies** will be presenting her paper at St. John’s as part of the Faculty Exchange Workshop. Watch for details in the spring 2008 issue of *CUNY Law*.

## Published Scholarship

**Professor Penny Andrews’** article, “Learning to Love after Learning to Harm: Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Gender Equality and Cultural Values,” was published in the *Michigan State Journal of International Law*.

The 2004 edition of *ADR & the Law*, with **Professor Beryl Blaustone’s** chapter on Evidence Issues in Mediation, has been published.

An article that **Professor Rebecca Bratspies** completed in the spring 2007, “Rethinking Decision-Making in International Environmental Law: A Process-Oriented Inquiry Into Sustainable Development,” was published in the *Yale Journal of International Law*.

**Professor Bratspies’** symposium article, “The New Discovery Doctrine: Some Thoughts on Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge,” has been published by the *American Indian Law*

*Review*.

**Professor Julie Goldscheid’s** article, “The Civil Rights Remedy of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act: Struck Down but Not Ruled Out,” was reprinted in a book to be published in India.

**Professor Jeff Kirchmeier’s** article, “Dead Innocent: The Death Penalty Abolitionist Search for a Wrongful Execution,” was published in the *University of Tulsa Law Review*.

In a Marquette Law School legal studies paper, “Imagining the Law-Trained Reader: The Faulty Description of the Audience in Legal Writing Textbooks,” author Jessica Price cites the work of **Professor Andrea McArdle**.

**Professor Ruthann Robson’s** “Footnotes: A Story of Seduction,” was published in the *University of Missouri/Kansas City School of Law Review*.

In a recently published article, “Lesbian (M)otherhood: Creating an Alternative Model for Settling Child Custody Disputes,” **Professor Robson’s** work in lesbian legal theory was featured, and her reputation as the widely regarded founder and prominent voice of lesbian legal theory was acknowledged by the author, Nadine Gartner.

**Professor Debbie Zalesne’s** article, “Lessons from Equal Opportunity Harasser Doctrine: Challenging Sex-Specific Appearance and Dress Codes,” has been published in the *Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy*. The article was written in connection with an October 2006 symposium, “Makeup, Identity Performance and Discrimination,” sponsored by the *Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy*. The symposium analyzed two conflicting value systems in recent employment discrimination cases: one that prohibits stereotyping in the workplace and another that upholds workplace appearance standards.

**Professor Victor Goode’s** article, “The Perfect Storm -- Race, Class and the Duke Rape Case,” appeared in

the September 2007 issue of *Colorlines Magazine*.

## Forthcoming Publications

**Professor Sameer Ashar’s** manuscript, “Law Clinics and Collective Mobilization,” was accepted by *Clinical Law Review* for spring 2008 publication.

**Professor Sue Bryant** has an upcoming article in the fall 2007 *Clinical Law Review*, “Rounds: A ‘Signature Pedagogy’ For Clinical Education?” co-authored with Elliott Milstein. The article identifies the learning opportunities in facilitated discussions based on students’ cases and projects.

**Professor Donna Lee** has accepted an offer from the *Arizona State Law Journal* to publish her article, “Resuscitating Proportionality in Noncapital Criminal Sentencing.”

**Professor Steve Loffredo’s** article, “Poverty, Inequality and Class in the Structural Constitutional Law Course,” has been accepted for fall 2007 publication in the *Fordham Urban Law Journal*.

## CUNY School of Law Group Admission to the United States Supreme Court

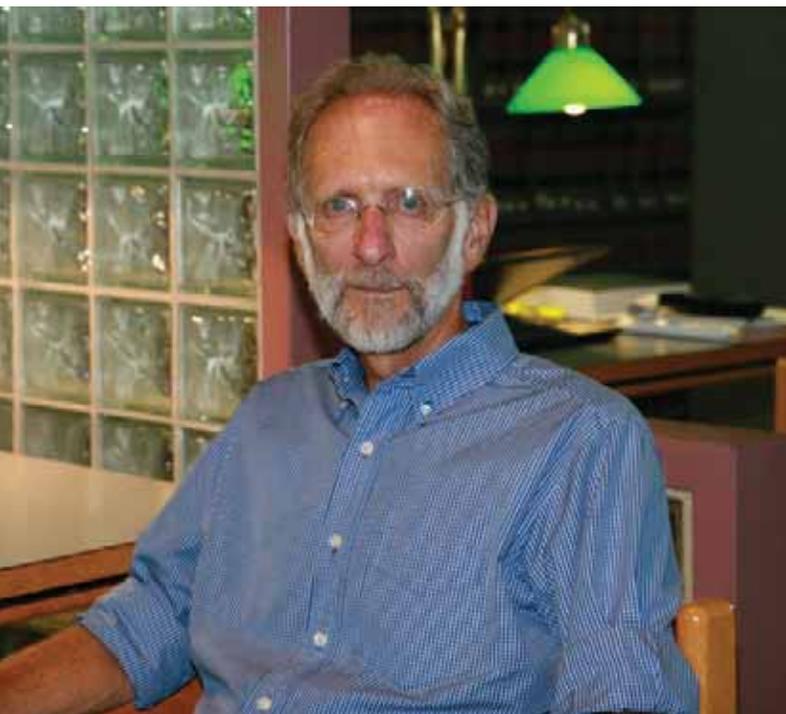
Dean Michelle J. Anderson invites you and a guest to enjoy a memorable experience at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. The half-day event on Monday, June 16, 2008 includes being admitted to the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court, a Curator’s Office lecture on the Court’s history and a continental breakfast in one of the Court’s conference rooms.

For more information on cost and eligibility please contact Coordinator of Alumni Affairs Ansley Davenport at 718-340-4472 or [ansley.davenport@mail.law.cuny.edu](mailto:ansley.davenport@mail.law.cuny.edu)

## Haywood Burns Chair 2007-08: Richard Abel

By Ansley Davenport

Professor Richard Abel, Michael J. Connell Professor of Law at UCLA, serves as the 2007 Haywood Burns Chair at CUNY School of Law during the fall semester. Abel has taught at UCLA for 30 years and is a prolific author, with works including *Politics by Other Means: Law in the Struggle Against Apartheid, 1980-1994* and *The Law & Society Reader*. Abel was a college classmate of Haywood Burns, for whom the CUNY Law Chair was created in 1997.



Richard Abel brings his knowledge to CUNY Law during the year.

**Q: Your home base is in California, at UCLA School of Law. How have you adapted to New York City?**

**A:** Actually, I was born and bred in New York. I grew up on the Upper West Side and eventually moved out to the suburbs. I also attended Columbia Law School and I have three daughters who live on the East Coast, so I come back frequently. The two coasts are very different, and require some adaptation, but I still consider myself a New Yorker.

**Q: What drove you to study and teach law to begin with?**

**A:** I was a child of the 1950s, a period of conformity with no political or social protest. I was a rebel of sorts in my own way and saw law as a means of questioning the status quo. I have always thought more clearly in the concrete than in the abstract, and I view law as practical ethics.

**Q: Can you talk about your experience in civil rights law?**

**A:** I initially thought that I would be a civil rights lawyer, and the summer after my first year of law school I worked on the Supreme Court Case of *Baker v. Carr*. (This case required not just Tennessee, but other states, to redistrict during the 1960s to provide equal representation for people of color). My sec-

ond summer I was employed at a firm on another civil rights case, and after my third year, I was in Mississippi working with the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law on public access to voting and employment. This was in 1965, a year after the high-profile murder of three voting rights activists.

**Q: You have a diverse background of study, including a Ph.D. in law at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. What spurred your interest in this field?**

**A:** I graduated college in 1962, and the first African politics class was held at Harvard University during my last year there. African Studies was just being recognized as a valid area of study in the United States. It was a hopeful time for the

Continent with a great prospect for change that is hard to imagine from where we're sitting today. I also took an African Law course at Columbia and eventually focused my studies on East Africa.

**“CUNY Law students are eager to participate, and unafraid to voice strong opinions.”**

**Q: Can you describe in more detail your field work in Kenya?**

**A:** I enrolled in the University of London in an anthropology program from 1965 to 1967. Approaching law through the social sciences, such as anthropology, is something that has always appealed to me. I then spent one year in Kenya studying customary law for my dissertation work. My wife and daughter came with me, and I bought a Volkswagen Beetle and traveled most of the country during my stay. When I returned to the United States, I taught African Law at Yale.

**Q: What was your work like at the New Haven Legal Assistance Association?**

**A:** After returning from Kenya and teaching at Yale, I took a year out to work at Legal Aid of New Haven. There, I practiced family law and was particularly involved in emotional and interpersonal law. I found a steep learning curve, and was able to incorporate my family law experience into my teaching, but found that family law practice was not for me. I was thrown into it, with no clinical experience at all during that time, and no training at Legal Aid. Even now, the mentoring and formal training that takes place within larger firms is lack-

ing in many Legal Aid offices and needs improvement.

**Q: You are a prolific published author, with many works of note. What work did you most enjoy writing or editing?**

**A:** *Politics By Other Means* was the most interesting to write. I was in South Africa in February of 1989 for the first time. I chose South Africa at a revolutionary moment and was cautioned of the cultural boycott there, but I found that when I made my project known, people were enormously welcoming and helpful to my work. In 1989, I met Albie Sachs, another (former) Haywood Burns Chair, who was jailed and exiled as a political agitator. In 1988, he was nearly killed by a car bomb in Mozambique set off by the South African secret police. He lost his arm and the sight of one eye. This book was the most satisfying, because I felt that I helped to advance the apartheid movement and make a lasting impact. I was honored with a forward by Nelson Mandela, who was released from jail to become the president.

**Q: You were a classmate and friend of Haywood Burns. What does teaching in this chair mean to you personally?**

**A.** In 1958, Haywood Burns and I entered Harvard together. I have a memory of him being one of five men of color out of 1,200 men. Everyone knew him immediately, and by the

end of our second week he knew everyone in the class by name. He ran for class president and embraced a leadership role immediately. Many years later, we both wrote chapters for a book called *The Politics of Law*. He wrote the civil rights chapter



Chair namesake and late civil rights activist Haywood Burns

and I wrote the torts chapter.

**Q: Why did you want to teach at CUNY Law specifically?**

**A:** I have been an admirer of CUNY School of Law since its founding. CUNY Law has served as a model to the UCLA School of Law Program in Public

Interest, particularly in the mechanisms and support to set up small private practice. I wanted to learn what it means to have a whole school dedicated to public interest. I have found the students here eager to participate, with strong opinions, and unafraid to voice them. They are interested in not just the rules, but the reasons for the rules.



Abel in action, teaching a first-year class on Torts at CUNY School of Law.

## Past Haywood Burns Chairs

**2006-07** Professor Anthony Paul Farley of Boston College Law School

**2005-06** Professor Paula Johnson of Syracuse University

**2004-05** Ida Castro, Commissioner of the New Jersey State Department of Personnel

**2003-04** Professor Susan Jones, Clinical Professor at George Washington University

**2002-03** Professor Camilo Perez Bustillo, formerly of the Instituto Tecnológico y Estudios Superiores

**2001-02** Professor Eric Yamamoto of the William S. Richardson School of Law at the University of Hawaii

**2000-01** The Hon. Robert L. Carter, Judge of the U.S. District Court, Southern District

**1999-00** William L. Robinson, former Dean of the District of Columbia School of Law

**1998-99** Theodore M. Shaw, Associate Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

**1997-98** The Hon. Nathaniel R. Jones, Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

## Three Staff Members Join CUNY Law



### **Emily Sachar joins CUNY Law School as Director of Media Relations and Communications.**

A graduate of Stanford University with a degree in economics, Emily has written extensively about the law, both as a reporter for *New York Newsday*--covering the Central Park jogger case, the Utah tourist slaying case, the Union Square subway derailment, the Meir Kahane murder, and the State Legislature--as well as for the *AARP Bulletin*, for whom she writes a monthly legal column that focuses on elderly adults who have been victimized by government agencies or private companies.

Emily has also been a teacher, serving as an adjunct professor at the School of Journalism at Columbia University and as a New York City math teacher. From the last experience, she wrote her first book, *Shut Up and Let the Lady Teach* (Simon and Schuster), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Emily is also a product of CUNY; she is studying for her master's degree in art history, part-time, at Hunter College. "The mission of the CUNY Law School both moves and excites me," Emily says. "Every time I turn around, I am hearing about some amazing student or alum or speaking with a professor who is making a difference in our city or in the world." Sachar will be working on *CUNY Law*, the School's Web site, grant applications and other written materials. She is the mother of two grown daughters and lives in Brooklyn with her fiance, a New York City restaurant proprietor and chef.

### **Charles Johnson joins us from SUNY, New Paltz as the new Assistant Director of Student Activities and Events.**

Charles says he is pleased to be back in New York, his hometown, to expand his horizon by working with a new and diverse group of students. He has spent six years in higher education, first expanding student activities and Greek life at a private university, Emory, before moving on to the public undergraduate school, SUNY, New Paltz. Charles studied environmental and social justice in sociology as well as divinity training and is pleased to increase his breadth in this position.

Charles looks forward to working with student government, advising student group, and increasing the community interaction and events taking place at CUNY School of Law. He also volunteers in youth development and is active in his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi.



### **Ansley Davenport will be reaching out to alumni in her new position as Coordinator of Alumni Affairs.**

She will work to help CUNY Law better serve its former students, while helping alumni find ways to give back to the School and stay connected to the community. Originally from rural Virginia, Ansley attended Sarah Lawrence College, and focused her studies on history and literature. She has studied in Cape Coast, Ghana, and in Jamaica and Belize.

"The strong focus on social justice is what initially attracted me to CUNY Law," Ansley explains. "Being at CUNY is a special experience for me. It is the first time that, instead of forging my own community of people interested in advocacy and activism, I am surrounded by those who are already working for change." With Ansley on board, alumni can look for new additions and

a new layout in *CUNY Law*, a monthly newsletter, an improved Web site, and other developments to arise as the year goes on.



By Laura Kotkin

# Tonya Gonnella Frichner, '87

## Named to U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues



**Frichner discusses her upbringing on Onondaga tribal lands in upstate New York.**

*Photos by Chris Rottler*

In January 2008, Tonya Gonnella Frichner, '87, a lifelong activist for human rights, is to begin a three-year term as the North American Regional Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. An advisory body of the U.N.'s Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Forum's mandate is to address indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, and health and human rights for the more than 370 million indigenous peoples in more than 70 countries worldwide.

During Frichner's term, the 24-year struggle to negotiate and adopt the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the U.N. General Assembly will take center-stage. "The document is built on the sweat and tears of the indigenous peoples, and when adopted, it will provide hope and optimism for meaningful change for our peoples throughout the world," Frichner said.

[www.law.cuny.edu](http://www.law.cuny.edu)

Raised on Onondaga tribal lands outside of Syracuse, New York, Frichner, a member of the Snipe Clan, Onondaga Nation, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, grew up steeped in the traditions of diplomacy and advocacy. Her ancestors in the Onondaga nation were the first to execute a treaty of peace with the newly formed United States in 1776. At home, Tonya witnessed her mother's work as a counselor, community organizer and advocate for indigenous rights, lobbying local Syracuse-area schools to address the special needs of children who were native Mohawk speakers and establishing a native community center with a program for local elders. Navigating the political channels, her mother was

equally adept at securing public funding to support these projects. Reflecting on her mother's influence on her own work, Frichner explained, "She taught me how to blend charm and diplomacy."

By all accounts, those lessons served Frichner well. After college, she founded the Circle of Red Nations (CORN), a walk-in center for native peoples on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. After graduating from CUNY Law in 1987, she served as a delegate and legal counsel to the Haudenosaunee at the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights/Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, Switzerland. That same year, back in New York City, she also founded the American Indian Law Alliance (AILA), a non-profit advocacy and direct legal service provider for indigenous nations and communities. Increasingly, her work has garnered the respect of local and international human rights organizations.

A coalition of more than 40 indigenous groups, including North American indigenous nations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, supported the nomination of Frichner for her U.N. post, calling her a "known and cherished facilitator of knowledge and power for Indigenous Nations." The California-based Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, a non-profit organization supporting indigenous grassroots communities, led the effort to nominate Frichner.

"At the U.N., I understand how the system works. I know how to 'horse trade' in the halls, but to me, such a political process should not separate from a spiritual process," Frichner said. She explained that her work is guided by the precept of the Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee, which mandates that chiefs consider the impact of their decisions on the seventh generation yet to come. "It's the faces of the future," she said, "that keep me focused."

**Wearing her heritage proudly, Frichner stands in front of the United Nations building in Manhattan.**



## 1986

**Angelo DiGangi** works as an attorney with the Queens County Civil Court and has recently been named Arbitrator of the Year of Queens County.

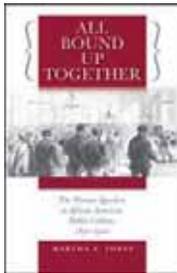
**Suzanne Sangree** recently accepted a position as Chief Solicitor with the Baltimore City Department of Law. She is divorced and resides in Baltimore with her two children, Nathaniel, 16, and Abi, 12.

**Loretta Simon** is an Assistant Attorney General for New York State in the Environmental Protection Bureau and husband **William Lynch** is an Administrative Law Judge for the New York State Department of Health.

## 1987

**Laura Gentile** is teaching New York Practice and Small Firm Practice at CUNY Law. Her firm, Gentile & Associates, litigates medical malpractice, police misconduct and negligence cases for plaintiffs. Their new associate, **Kirsten Fenick**, graduated from CUNY Law in 2007. Their legal intern from the Health Law Concentration is 3L CUNY Law student Angelo Pinto. They are pleased to be sharing a space with the CLRN Legal Incubator for Justice Program.

**Martha Jones** reports that her first book, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900*, is being published this fall by University of North Carolina Press.



**Barbara J. King** has recently become Of Counsel to the law firm of Tully, Rinckey & Associates in Albany, N.Y. Her practice concentrates on family and matrimonial law.

**Paul Lewis** was recently appointed to the position of Chief of Staff to the Chief Administrative Judge of New York State.

**Robin Moses** works in the transactional section of the Hudson County Law Department, and serves as the County's Counsel to the Sheriff, handling the county's weekly foreclosure sales.

**Kary Moss** has served as the Executive Director of the ACLU of Michigan since 1998, overseeing all operations and serving as its chief spokesperson. She has received a number of awards, including a Wasserstein Fellowship from Harvard Law School, Lawyer of the Year (2000) from the Michigan Trial Lawyer's Weekly, and many community-based awards. She has published three books and numerous law review articles.

**Mimi Rosenberg** was honored for her public service by the New York County Lawyers Association. She also hosts a radio program, "Building Bridges: Community Labor Report," on WBAI Radio in New York City.

**Carol A. Turowski** recently moved with her husband, Kevin, and 6-year-old daughter, Caroline, to Winston-Salem, N.C. She teaches consumer protection law at Wake Forest University School of Law and is working to expand the clinical offerings to provide students with significant hands-on lawyering experience, while bridging the gap between theory and practice. She reports that her experiences at CUNY have been invaluable in keeping her classroom discussions lively, relevant and public-interest oriented.

## 1988

**Carol (James) Jordan** was married in 2005 and is presently working as a Family Court Support Magistrate in New Rochelle in Westchester County, N.Y. She reports that her oldest son Adrian, 32, works for the State Department in Monrovia, Liberia, and her youngest son, Zack, 16, is doing well in boarding school.

**Neal Lewis** has been running a regional environmental protection group in Long Island, called Neighborhood Network. He supervises a small but dedicated staff, providing public interest advocacy on issues involving energy and global warming, smart growth

planning, alternatives to pesticides, and non-toxic homes. He has done some part-time teaching and serves on the Nassau County Planning Commission.

**Amy Saltzman** established the firm of Blaustein & Saltzman in March, 2007, concentrating on all aspects of matrimonial and family law including litigation, international custody disputes and domestic violence. Amy serves on the board of directors of the New York County Women's Bar Association and the Matrimonial Committee for Sanctuary for Families.

## 1989

**Careen Shannon** is Of Counsel to the immigration law firm, Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy. She has recently co-authored a number of legal handbooks published by Thomson/West and the treatise, *Immigration Fundamentals* published by the Practising Law Institute. She is also senior writer of the Thomson/West treatise, *Immigration Law and Business*. Careen is an Adjunct Professor of Immigration Law at Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City.

**Maria Timoney** is currently the Managing Attorney for the Legal Aid office in the Appalachian area of Virginia. She concentrates on bankruptcy and consumer law issues and also handles some housing and family law.

## 1990

**Andrea Briscoe** briefly pursued a career with the Legal Aid Society, before becoming an employment mediator. She then received a graduate degree in organization development and now has her own consulting practice. She is an executive coach and leadership consultant, working with lawyers in transition and providing diversity and leadership training for law firms and non-profit organizations.

**Kimberly Exe** has been practicing public defense for the past nine and a half years in Seattle. Last year she was chosen to supervise the adult felony unit of the Society of Counsel Rep-

resenting Accused Persons in Seattle.

## 1991

**Jim Bacon** is working for the not-for-profit environmental advocacy group, The Croton Watershed Clean Water Coalition. The New York State Bar Journal published his article on supplemental environmental impact statements in the January 2007 issue. He is also the Planning Board attorney for the town of Wallkill, N.Y.

**Cynthia Green** has recently been promoted to Assistant Vice President in AIG's Pollution Insurance Products Regional Claims Department. For more than nine years, she has handled environmental claims and litigated matters and environmental cleanups. She also coordinates hiring and training for the department.

**Anna Levine** has been doing mediation work for many years and has been a mediator with the New York City Family Mediation Court Program for the past two years. She is currently the head of a committee challenging a variance request by a landlord involved with property in Queens, N.Y.

## 1992

**Robert Perry** was quoted in *The New York Times* in an article, "Civil Rights Group Faults How Police Are Policed." Robert, the Legislative Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union and a national expert on civilian review of police, prepared a report criticizing the City's system of investigating police.

## 1993

**Henry J. "Hank" Pawlowski, Jr.** is now working as an attorney and legislative manager for the Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission after several years working for the Connecticut Legislature and the Connecticut Judicial Branch. He is also serving his third term on the East Hartford, Conn. Board of Education.

**Stephen Bergstein** handles civil rights cases at Bergstein & Ullrich, in Orange

[www.law.cuny.edu](http://www.law.cuny.edu)

County, N.Y. He maintains a civil rights blog at [www.seconddistrictcivilrights.blogspot.com](http://www.seconddistrictcivilrights.blogspot.com)

**David Hyland** is a senior director in the office of labor relations for MTA NYC Transit. He supervises a staff of a dozen attorneys and represents the agency in contract arbitrations and negotiations.

## 1994

**Elizabeth Alexander** is a senior associate at the firm of Marrinan & Mazzola Mardon. She concentrates on union side labor and employment law. She reports that her son, Eloy, 23, just graduated from the University of Maryland at College Park with a degree in international business and now works at Lehman Brothers. Her daughter, Rose, 27, works as a development associate at the Atlantic Theater Company.

**Eric Milgrim** is Deputy Counsel for Risk Management in Nassau County, N.Y. His responsibilities include establishing a risk management plan for the county parks by identifying hazards that could potentially lead to claims and lawsuits filed against the county for negligence; establishing a motor vehicle policy for county workers; and monitoring workers' compensation claims.

**The Hon. Todd Turner** is seeking reelection to the City Council in Bowie, Md. in the November, 2007 elections. Bowie, with more than 55,000 residents, is the largest municipality in Prince George's County outside of Washington, D.C. Todd lives there with his wife **Anita Gauhar Turner** and their two daughters, Rachel and Maya.

## 1995

**Jedd Hall** continues working as an Assistant District Attorney in the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office in Massachusetts. He and his wife recently celebrated the first birthday of daughter, Ella.

**Theresa Hughes** is pursuing her LL.M. degree at Columbia University School of Law.

**Khristie Hauck**, formerly **Khristie Sansverie**, gave birth to her second daughter, Kelly Patricia, on April 24. Big sister Jamie, 9, is proud. Currently, she is enjoying her time at home with the girls while on maternity leave from her position as Assistant District Attorney in the Felony Screening Unit, Nassau County, N.Y.

## 1996

**Marnie Berk** recently welcomed the newest member of the family, Benjamin Silvan. She is continuing to enjoy her work as Director of Pro Bono Programs at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

**Christopher Fanning** has concentrated his firm's practice in the areas of estate administration, bankruptcy and real estate. Chris welcomes contacts from his fellow alumni at [www.fanningandhughes.com](http://www.fanningandhughes.com)

**Sixtina Fernandez** and **Donald Manning** welcomed a baby girl, Gabriella Maria, in May. She joins big brother, Liam, 5, who is enjoying his new role.

**Christie Hind** writes that Cate was born on November 14, 2006 and joins brothers Calder, 7, and Finnean, 5, and husband, Patrick, an architect. She joined Pillsbury in 2004 as Counsel. She practices in the areas of securities litigation and enforcement.

**Linda Faith Marshak** is now a partner in the firm of Brady & Marshak, specializing in elder law, real estate, and social security disability.

**Joanna Piepgrass** is now a legal recruiter working for a boutique recruiting firm, The Mara Group, where she focuses exclusively in placing attorneys in the areas of intellectual property, labor and employment, and employee benefits and executive compensation.

## 1997

**John Geida** and **Carla Barone** married in 1999 and have two children, ages 5 and 3. John is in private practice in

criminal defense and civil rights litigation, with the office of Norm Pattis. Carla now focuses on estate planning.

## 1999

**Kim Allen** was married in July, 2007, to William Murray and resides in St. Louis, Mo. She works for Legal Services of Eastern Missouri practicing immigration law.

**Ila Deiss** left the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, where she was a staff attorney in 2005 and is now an Assistant United States Attorney in San Francisco. She works in the civil division, concentrating on immigration-related cases. She also practices federal affirmative civil litigation and federal civil defense work.

## 2000

**Gregory DeLuca** was recently named partner at the law firm of DeLuca & Maucher in Goose Creek, S.C., where he practices with his father and two other partners. On March 25, he and his wife welcomed a baby girl, Alexis Noelle DeLuca.

**Sonya Cardia-Porter** and her husband, Beau, had their first child, Sophia Corley Porter, on Feb. 27. Sonya is still serving the community as an Assistant District Attorney in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

**Maria E. Osorio** and her husband, Christopher Lamb, welcomed a son, Jonás Azriel Lamb, on Aug. 8.

## 2001

**Chyrel Allicock** continues working with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, assisting with developing the policies governing new consumer and vital statistics legislation, and implementing a new social program.

**Nancy Chupp** practices in the Public Interest Law Group, located in Seattle. The practice focuses on employment discrimination, wage and hour violations, civil rights, and public impact litigation. She also has two children, ages 2 and 6.

**Benjamin Forstenzer** has been work-

ing with the ACLU of Maryland for the last year on education reform work. He has also been working with the United Workers Association, an organizing group for day laborers in Baltimore, Md. The organization was recently successful winning a living wage for the workers at two city sports stadiums: Camden Yards and Raven's Stadium. He departed for travel in September and will continue labor organizing when he returns from Thailand and India in January.

**Amy Harfeld** recently began work as the new director of First Star, a small child advocacy non-profit organization in Washington, D.C. She reports that moving from litigation to non-profit management was a major transition but reports she's enjoying the learning curve while developing her leadership skills.

**Shantel Rodriguez** is currently working as a mitigation specialist in Houston, Texas with the Gulf Region Advocacy Center representing indigent clients on death row in what she calls the "capital of capital sentences."

## 2002

**Thomas E. Harris Jr.** married Jennifer Gradzki on October 6. The wedding took place in Long Branch, N.J. with a honeymoon in Riviera Maya, Mexico.

## 2003

**Katherine Haas** is working as a staff attorney at the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley in San Jose, Calif. She divides her time between the Mental Health Advocacy Project housing unit and AIDS Legal Services. She was also married on July 14, and will soon change her last name to Manning.

**Michael Hughes** is currently employed as Court Attorney in the Law Department at the Kings County Criminal Court in Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Barry Klopfer** had been working in indigent criminal defense and prosecution in the four corners area of the Navajo Reservation. He is now perform-

ing in-house counsel work in the areas of employment and labor law for the Navajo tribe's Department of Justice.

**Michael Shender** has joined the New York City Law Department, Office of the Corporation Counsel, where he defends various lawsuits filed against the City and its mayoral agencies. Michael was also a judge this year at CUNY Law's Moot Court.

### In Memoriam

Melody Marin died in August of colon cancer. She had worked part-time in the admissions office of the Law School. She is survived by her husband, who asks that contributions be made in her memory to any research organization dedicated to research or curing this illness, particularly to the National Cancer Institute.

## 2004

**Irma Dominguez** married John Volpe on Aug. 12. They are now living on Long Island, N.Y.. She continues as the director of the Justice Project and the Immigration Program at Circulo de la Hispanidad, Inc., providing pro bono legal representation to victims of domestic abuse.

**Eva Golinger** is living in Caracas, Venezuela, working as an adviser to the Chávez administration, writing books, hosting two radio programs on national radio and soon hosting a television show. In 2006, she had two books published, *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela* and *Bush vs. Chávez: Washington's War on Venezuela*, both based on declassified documents that demonstrate ongoing U.S. interference in Venezuelan affairs. Visit her Web site at: [www.chavezcode.com](http://www.chavezcode.com)



**Benjamin Mastaitis** and **Katherine (Doyle) Mastaitis** are the proud parents of a baby girl, Eleanor Ann, born on July 10. Benjamin currently works as an

Assistant District Attorney in Queens, while Katherine works as an attorney for the New York City Administration for Children's Services in the Bronx.

## 2005

**Alicka Ampry-Samuel** is the Constituent Services Manager for New York City Council Member David Yassky. She is also the proud mother of a son born August 6, 2006.

**Michael Davidov** and wife Ilana welcomed their third child, Jonathan, on May 25, 2006. As an attorney in private practice in Forest Hills, N.Y., Michael limits his work to trusts and estates and is a member of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys.

**Deborah Egel** worked as a nurse at the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (OASAS) in Queens, N.Y. for 13 years prior to attending CUNY Law. She now reports that she began her new job with the same agency as a senior attorney.

**Rebecca Goldman** became engaged to Michael Bergman in the summer and is planning an October, 2009 wedding. She is now with Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, N.Y. as the Community Support Services Attorney, working with mentally ill people as a general practitioner.

**Sebastian Riccardi** and **Malvika Gupta** became engaged in April of this year and celebrated with an Indian engagement ceremony in July with family and friends. They live in Elmhurst, Queens. They are proud to have received a competitive and versatile legal education and are glad they found each other at CUNY Law.

**Jeanette Robertson** works as a staff attorney for the Domestic Violence Family Law Unit of Western Massachusetts Legal Services in Springfield. In October, 2007, she joined the Board of Directors of Safe Passage, a non-profit agency that has provided support and services for survivors of domestic violence for 30 years in Northampton, Mass.

**Erin Stanton** wed Scott O'Brien in October in a small ceremony on the beach

in Cancun, Mexico.

**Justyna Tauferner** is currently employed as an associate at Guttikonda Law Firm in Valley Stream, N.Y.

**RJ Thompson** recently began work as the National Campaign and Advocacy Manager with the Public Policy and Government Relations Department of The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center (The Center) in New York City. RJ oversees The Center's "Promote the Vote" activities and acts as the national staff coordinator for Causes in Common. RJ recently became engaged to his partner of five years, Jeremy Rye.

## 2006

**Maryam Sayar Akbar** reports that she is presently the Civil Rights Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

**Patricia Allen** will begin working as an Attorney Advisor at the Immigration Court in Phoenix, Ariz. this fall.

**Susan Bastone** works with the firm, Olson Frank Weeda Terman Bode Matz in Washington, D.C., doing food and drug regulatory work. She was admitted to the Maryland Bar in December 2006, and is currently awaiting admission to the Washington, D.C. Bar. She and her fiancé live in D.C. and plan on getting married in August, 2008.

**Paula Griffith Edgar** recently became the Executive Director of the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc., a 23-year-old non-profit organization that provides mentoring and career and skills development resources to minority law students and beginning lawyers in the New York City metropolitan area. In her new role, she will be interacting with law students and attorneys of color throughout New York City.

**Tara Jensen** recently completed a clerkship for the Hon. Ronald L. Ellis, Magistrate Judge in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District. She has recently begun working at the law firm of Bernabei & Wachtel in Washington, D.C., in a one-year civil rights fellowship.

**Marina Meyerovich** passed the New Jersey Bar exam after graduation last year and is currently working at Christophe & Associates, a firm focusing on immigration law and asylum cases in former Yugoslavia and China.

**Yogi Patel** joined the law firm of Shebitz Berman Cohen & Delforte in New York as an associate after spending a year as Assistant General Counsel at F.J. Sciamé Construction Co., Inc. At Shebitz, he will be working on litigation and transactional matters related to education law.

**Amy Roehl** began working at MFY Legal Services, Inc. as a Staff Attorney and Equal Justice Works Fellow on the Kinship Caregiver Law Project.

**Charles Stoll** is the Assistant Public Defender in Kotzebue, Alaska in the Native Inupiaq town of 3,500 of the Northwest Arctic Borough.

**Amy Taylor** is now the Language Access Project Coordinator at Legal Services for New York.

**Brian Turbyfill** is currently working in Washington, D.C. for the House Committee on Homeland Security.



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