



School of Law

# Mason Law News

A Newsletter for Alumni, Students, and Friends of the School of Law

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[www.law.gmu.edu/alumni/](http://www.law.gmu.edu/alumni/)

Summer 2013

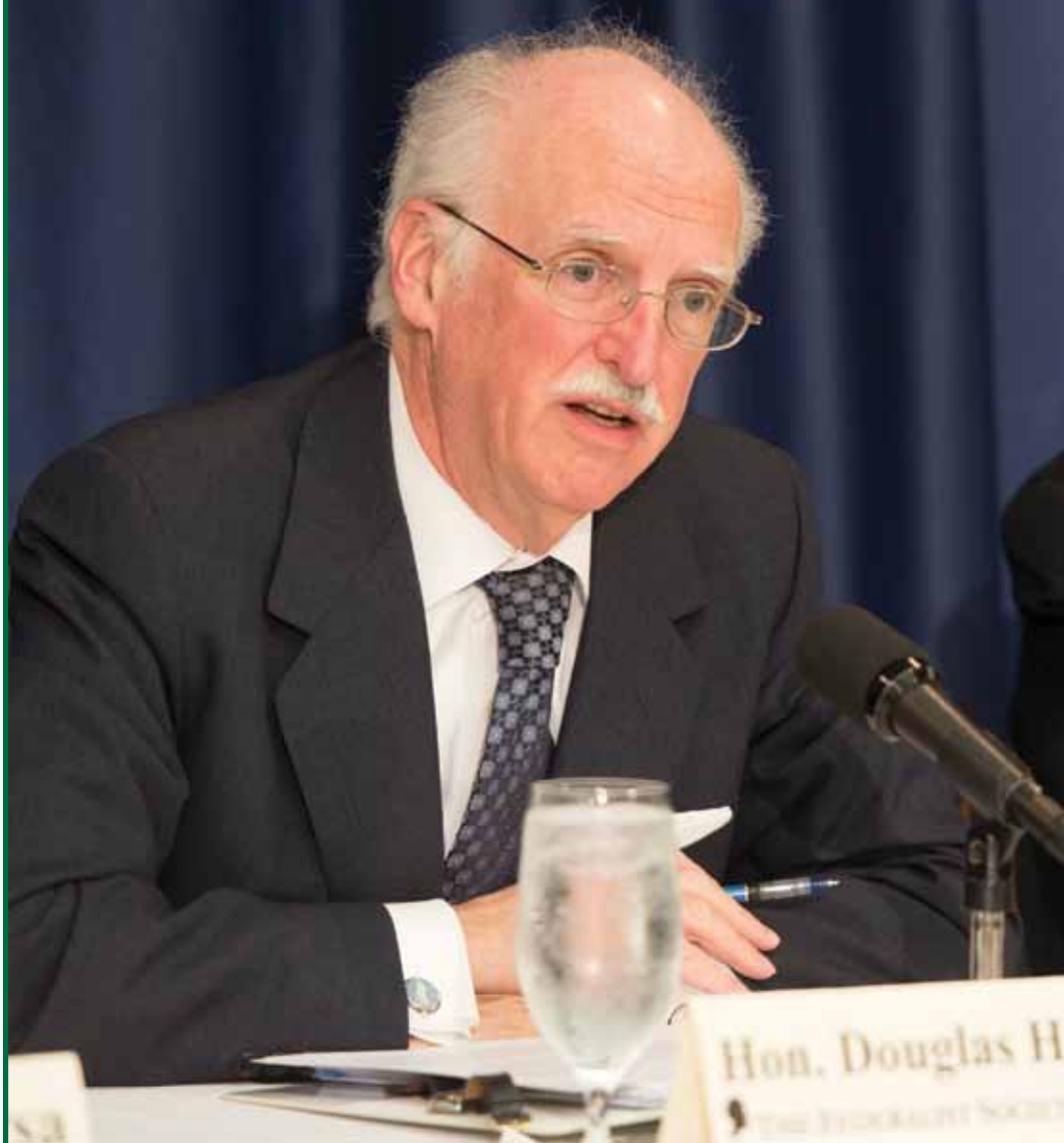
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The Honorable Douglas H. Ginsburg was one of three eminent judges participating in a panel discussion sponsored by Mason Law's newest center, the Center for the Protection of Intellectual Property (CPIP). *See story on page 6.*

Judge Ginsburg also joined the law school's faculty as a professor of law in July, while continuing to serve as senior judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. *See story on page 18.*

## Law School Launches Center for the Protection of Intellectual Property



**George Mason  
University  
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Law Alumni Association  
Board of Directors  
2013–14



## A Message From the President

By **Kyung (Kathryn) Dickerson ('99)**  
Past President, Law Alumni Association

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I have occasionally wondered why the president's column is included in the summer edition of *Mason Law News*. Perhaps it is because during the summer things tend to slow down, the days get longer, and we have more time to contemplate things. Perhaps for the president, it is the last "final exam" before the summer vacation may begin. Certainly it has become one of the traditions of Mason Law. Another tradition is the Alumni Association annual meeting, held this year at the American Tap Room on June 12. At our annual meeting, we thanked **Frank Vlossak ('99)**, **Bryan Haynes ('98)**, **Christopher Soucie ('00)**, **Tim Keeler ('06)**, and **Jennifer Lattimore ('05)** for their completed service on the Board. We also welcomed **Angela France ('01)**, **Tim Libutti ('09)**, **Kristen Moran ('04)**, **Jason Rabinovich ('09)**, and **Karen Yankosky ('02)** to the board. We eagerly anticipate being able to utilize their energy and fresh perspectives to continue to improve the Alumni Association.

Summer also brings with it thoughts of vacations and travel; however, you did not have to wait until the summer to travel. **John Caulfield ('80)** traveled to New York to join **Kevin Shehan ('06)** at our George Mason School of Law Alumni Happy Hour in New York City. The event was held at the Empire Room and hosted alumni from New York City and the surrounding area. On the incoming board, we have an alum from Philadelphia, and we hope to have an event in the City of Brotherly Love in the upcoming year. We also held our Annual Happy Hour in Richmond. Special thanks are owed to **Jennifer Lattimore ('05)**, **Bryan Haynes ('98)**, **Bill LeDoux ('05)**, **Jeremy Williams ('08)** and **Justin Ayars ('07)** for spearheading the event.

The Judicial & Legislative Reception and numerous other events are only possible through the concerted efforts, patience, and diligence of **Dana Fallon ('99)**, Director of Alumni Services, who deserves the gratitude of our alumni board (and a wonderful, all-expenses-paid vacation somewhere exotic, which sadly our board cannot give her). Alumni involvement this spring also included the opportunity to provide valuable feedback for the upcoming American Bar Association reaccreditation process. The standard 7-year renewal process begins with a self-study by the law school in which alumni are an important part. Several focus groups were held this spring and many alums offered their time and opinions by taking part in these discussions.

For those alumni who have given back to the school this past year in time and in money—your law school thanks you, and I, as the president of the Alumni Association, thank you. Your generosity with your time and money has helped support the school as it aims to become one of the model legal educational programs in the country. Before almost any other law school in this country, our law school focused its curriculum on helping students develop the skills necessary for the practice of law. Before this current trendy movement toward ensuring that a law degree has quantifiable economic value, our law school ensured that our alumni were trained to read, write, and think like lawyers—not like law students.

If you are interested in volunteering or participating in upcoming events, please feel free to contact our new president, **Kate McSweeney ('04)**, or **Dana Fallon ('99)** at 703-993-9862 or [dfallon@gmu.edu](mailto:dfallon@gmu.edu). It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as your president, and I know that I leave this Alumni Association in the able stewardship of Kate McSweeney. I hope to see you around the law school and at various law school events. Happy summer, everyone!

With Kind Regards,

**Kyung (Kathryn) Dickerson**



## Alumni Campaigns Inspire Giving



Dean Daniel Polsby, center, congratulates SmolenPlevy alumni who raised the largest sum in combined contributions during the Law Firm Challenge.

The **2011–12 Law Firm Challenge** concluded successfully, with 15 law firms meeting the challenge for 100 percent participation in annual giving. Leading the way in the competition were **Venable LLP** with the largest number of Mason Law alumni contributing to the Challenge, **SmolenPlevy** with the largest sum in combined contributions from alumni, and **Curran & Whittington** with the highest average contribution per graduate.

In addition to the three leaders, the following firms with 100 percent participation earned honors in the Challenge: **Ob- lon, Spivak, McClelland, Maier & Neustadt, L.L.P.**; **Banner & Witcoff, Ltd.**; **Kirkland & Ellis LLP**; **Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, P.C.**; **Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC**; **Albo & Oblon, L.L.P.**; **Bean, Kinney & Korman, PC**; **Arlington Law Group**; **The Bowen Law Firm**; **Whitestone, Brent, Young & Merril, P.C.**; **Albrecht Tousi & Farnum PLLC**; and **Paul Hastings LLP**.

In addition to being celebrated in a full-page advertisement in *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*, firms meeting the Challenge were honored at a fall 2012 reception hosted by Dean Daniel Polsby in gratitude for the commitment and generosity of the school's alumni.

Right, Dean Polsby poses with Class Giving Competition honorees, who display their awards at the event celebrating their achievements.

The **Fiscal Year 2013 Mason Law Alumni Class Giving Competition** also ended on a strong note, with new and returning winners among the classes.

Congratulations to the **Class of 1976** for winning the **Class Participation Rate** category with a 29.03% rate. The Classes of 1976 and 1983 (23.97%) were neck and neck all year long, with '76 scoring an additional donor in the final week to put them atop the leader board.

Congratulations to the **Class of 2007** for winning the **Total Alumni Donors** category with 44 alumni donors. This year's second place finisher was last year's winner: the Class of 1980 (38).

Congratulations to the **Class of 1994** for winning the **Total Alumni Dollars to the School of Law** category with just under \$90,000 contributed. This is a repeat victory by '94, but this year the class's total giving to Mason Law exceeded its FY12 contributions by almost \$6,000.

Congratulations to the **Class of 2012** with the **Largest Increase in Class Participation Rate** (12.56%) from last fiscal year. Twelve's increase from its FY12 mark placed them just ahead of the 12.37% increase by '76. Along with '76 and '12, these classes netted an increase in class participation rate in FY13 over FY12: 1975, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 2005, 2007, and 2011.

Congratulations to all of the winning classes and their alumni. Every gift matters, and every donor counts. Thank you for your support of Mason Law.



## Alumni Assume Leadership Roles

Congratulations are in order for two of our alumni as they assume important and influential leadership roles in the support and governance of the university.

**Kelly McNamara Corley ('89)**, was appointed to George Mason University's Board of Visitors for a term ending June 30, 2017. In 2011 McNamara Corley received Mason's School of Law Distinguished Alumnus Award at the University's Celebration of Distinction.



**Rodney Turner ('93)** recently was elected president of the George Mason University 2013–14 Alumni Association Board of Directors.



# Supremely Challenging

On April 22 of this year, **Dan Ruttenberg** ('97) of Smolen Plevy experienced a career highlight unlike any other as he presented oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Hillman v. Maretta*.

"I never had a dream to argue before the Supreme Court, but this case just kind of happened; and once it happened, I had to go with it. It turned out to be a great experience," Ruttenberg concedes.

When Ruttenberg took Jacqueline Hillman's case, he expected it to be a standard statutory law case involving a Virginia estate. It soon became apparent, though, that the unique issues of the case involved federal law, requiring him to get up to speed quickly on federal procedure and rules. "I had to increase my knowledge of some areas of law substantially," he explains.

Ruttenberg notes that preparing for this case was difficult and time consuming. "It was harder than anything else I've done, and draining both emotionally and physically," he says. "I'd work 17 hours, get some sleep, and do it again for long stretches." This was particularly true while preparing the Petitioner's Reply Brief. While the normal time frame to file the brief is 30 days, the case was fast tracked, allowing Ruttenberg only 20 days to file the brief.

"The brief was filed on Monday, I mooted on Tuesday, went to the Court to watch a case (since you don't want your argument to be the first time you've been to the Supreme Court), and had a second mooted session on Wednesday. I tried to take a little break on Friday, with Saturday and Sunday spent making final preparations."

As challenging as the process was, Ruttenberg found the day of the argument to be rewarding. "You can't prepare any more, so you just have to enjoy it," he says. "You're like a rock star for the day. When I was dropped off in front of the Court, friends and family who came to see the argument cheered for me as I got out of the car. I was escorted to the front of the Court, where I then argued with the nine greatest legal minds of our day. It was a great feeling."

While the Court found in favor of the Respondent, Ruttenberg has no regrets. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I really enjoyed and was able to share with friends and family who traveled from all over the country to see the argument. I am proud to be the one to get the case before the Supreme Court, though I do wish we had won."

Incidentally, in conjunction with the case, Ruttenberg managed to win a very old \$20 wager made by a friend at Ruttenberg's graduation from law school. The friend challenged him to use the classic kids' argument of putting fingers in the ears and saying, "I can't hear you" in the event Ruttenberg ever argued at the High Court. Ruttenberg managed to work the line in (in a respectful manner, of course) at about the nine-minute mark of the recorded argument in *Hillman v. Maretta*, which is available on the U.S. Supreme Court website.

Have you, too, had the opportunity to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court? If so, please let us know at [laivalum@gmu.edu](mailto:laivalum@gmu.edu).



Dan Ruttenberg has his day in court—the U.S. Supreme Court—as he represents the Petitioner in *Hillman v. Maretta* on April 22, 2013.



Artist's rendering of Ruttenberg before the Court.





# The JLR

## An Annual Success

Founders Hall was the venue for this year's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Judicial & Legislative Reception (JLR) on May 22, where over 420 alumni, judges, legislators and other attendees gathered to enjoy each others' company and sample fine food and drink, including fresh oysters from the **New Point Oyster Company** provided by Mason alumnus **Jack White ('86)**.

The JLR remains one of the law school's most heavily attended and popular events of the year.

"For me the JLR event each year is the premier event put on by the Law School Alumni Association. It is the perfect opportunity to see old friends and make new ones. The increasing number of attendees each year attests to the popularity of the event,"

comments **Alan Plevy ('77)** of **SmolenPlevy**.

"This annual event is always a special evening," adds **Brian Drummond ('88)**, of **Whitestone, Brent, Young and Merrill, PC**. "Where else do you get to meet and greet federal and state judges in such a relaxed setting? Jack White's oysters are extraordinary, the food is delicious, and the company delightful. I encourage all Mason alumni to attend!"

"Our firm and guests had such a great time at the reception and it was our pleasure to be a sponsor. We look forward to next year's reception and sponsoring it once more," **Brianna Salerno ('10)** of **The Carlberg Law Firm** comments.

A sampling of the fine wines of **Breaux Vineyards**, **Philip Carter Winery**, and **Cave Ridge Vineyard** were offered to attendees of this year's event. In addition, guests were offered the opportunity to enjoy craft-brewed ales from **Blue Mountain Brewery**.

"From a young lawyer's perspective, it is a superb networking event. It was a terrific opportunity to meet or reconnect with many of the leaders in the law from our community—a truly wonderful occasion," says **Bret Lee ('11)** of **SmolenPlevy**.

The Law Alumni Association extends sincere thanks to its event sponsors, listed right, without whose support the event would not be possible.

More pictures online at [law.gmu.edu/alumni/gallery](http://law.gmu.edu/alumni/gallery)



[www.law.gmu.edu/alum](http://www.law.gmu.edu/alum)





## With Gratitude



The Law Alumni Association and the School of Law offer sincerest thanks to the generous sponsors of the 2013 event.

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