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IMMIGRATION ISSUE



of COUNSEL

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North Carolina
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Message from the Dean

Dear NCCU School of Law Alumni and Friends:

I want to take a moment to personally thank all of you for what has been an exceptional academic year! In May, we awarded 161 juris doctorate degrees and saw these students become the newest Eagles to join the ranks of alumni. Faculty and staff have played a vital role in nurturing the talent of our students and ensuring that their dreams of earning a degree and furthering their academic studies were realized.

Throughout the 2016-17 academic year, we saw a number of great accomplishments and are celebrating other new points of pride. “Legal Eagle Pride” has gone worldwide, both inside and outside the classroom.

- Ranked 3rd for most diverse law school in the nation
- Ranked 3rd for graduating students with lowest debt load
- Ranked in top 1% in graduate and professional legal studies in the nation
- 2017 academic year, our students provided legal service to the community through our 14 clinics, having an economic impact of over 2.6 million dollars.

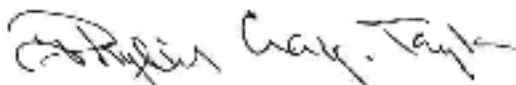
In August, we welcomed first-year and transfer students of the class *of* 2020. These 167 high-achieving students have the aptitude to both excel and soar – and they will!

Throughout this issue of *Of Counsel*, you will read about alumni who are trailblazers in the area of immigration. Stories from our immigrant students, and from alumni with immigrant backgrounds working tenaciously for the rights of their immigrant clients. You will hear from faculty who have introduced new immigration coursework, and from those fighting to protect the rights of our most vulnerable.

On June 26, 2017, we rung in the era of our 12th chancellor, Dr. Johnson Akinleye, with the promises of global leadership. We look forward to the impact of this change, as we continue to emerge at the forefront of diversity and technology.

As we assist in fulfilling Chancellor Akinleye’s vision of global leadership, we will continue to prepare the best servant leaders to represent the disenfranchised, and model how to lead our communities.

In truth and service,



Phyliss Craig-Taylor
Dean and Professor of Law



“There is no better
time to be a lawyer
than right now.
There is no greater
need.”

FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY
GENERAL LORETTA LYNCH



...based on 2010 U.S. Census data, Hispanics are the largest immigrant population in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County.

The Winston-Salem BIC Pipeline: A Pro-Active Collaborative Approach to Community Education

The Building Integrated Communities (BIC) program of Winston-Salem began in 2014 as the result of a three-year grant from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The UNC BIC grant is intended to strengthen civic engagement, linguistic achievement, and economic and educational advancement for immigrants in NC municipalities. It helps North Carolina local governments successfully engage with immigrants and refugee populations to improve public safety, promote economic development, enhance communication and improve relationships.

The Winston-Salem Human Relations Department competed for and was awarded the grant in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill.

According to Wanda Allen-Abraha (NCCU Law, '95), director of the Winston-Salem Human Relations Department, BIC is an inclusion initiative that is intended to encompass all immigrant populations in Winston-Salem. However, the Hispanic community is emphasized because, based on 2010 U.S. Census data, Hispanics are the largest



Wanda Allen-Abraha

DIRECTOR, WINSTON-SALEM
HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

NCCU Law '95

immigrant population in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County.

The Latino Migration Project is one of many focus areas for BIC. The BIC program's goals include educating the community regarding misconceptions, misinformation, and stereotypes surrounding the international community, particularly the Hispanic community.

"The Human Relations Department is responsible for investigating violations of fair housing laws and for monitoring compliance of the city's requirement to comply with Limited English Proficiency federal policies and mandates," Allen-Abraha said. "The Winston-Salem BIC program is not only a pro-active way of doing both, but a way for the community to collaborate to ensure success and thoroughness."

The Winston-Salem BIC also works to enable organizations serving common populations to share resources and services for improvements in the overall international community in Winston-Salem. Areas to be impacted include fair and affordable housing choices, education, health care – including food insufficiency, and transportation. Other key stakeholders include the Hispanic League, the Indo-U.S. Cultural Association, Second Harvest Food Bank, Wake Forest University, Novant Health, the Winston-Salem Foundation, City Link, the Winston-Salem Police Department, the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation, the International Center at Forsyth Technical Community College, Legal Aid of North Carolina, Winston-Salem Office and Compassionate Winston-Salem.

The mechanism that Winston-Salem has created to provide access to resources and reach tangible results is

the Winston-Salem BIC Pipeline. The Pipeline is a clearinghouse of information that includes quarterly informational sessions for immigrants who are new to the area and a one-stop shop for resource material. The goal is to create greater awareness among immigrants regarding local services and community resources, as well as to emphasize the relevance and importance of those services to their daily lives.

seamlessly.

BIC gives all newcomers, despite language barriers and cultural differences, a point-of-reference for accessing services and provides a baseline understanding of how our local community functions. One of the key resources for accessing necessary information is the BIC website. The website features a multilingual online directory for important resources. The

“**THE GOAL is to create greater awareness among immigrants regarding local services and community resources, as well as to emphasize the relevance and importance of those services to their daily lives.**”

Since many newcomers are completely unfamiliar with American systems and how to maneuver within them, the Pipeline helps newcomers to integrate into the local community more

online directory provides mapping and statistical population data for immigrants. As a result of the Winston-Salem BIC Pipeline, the city received a national award from the National League of Cities.



Areas to be impacted include fair and affordable housing choices, education, health care...and transportation.





Nadia's TRUTH

By Lynn Burke '10



Above: Lynn Burke '10,
Burke's Law

Below: Nadia and Valerie



In my three years of practicing Immigration Law, I've represented at least 250 clients in removal proceedings. Of those clients, the majority were removed to their country of birth despite my best effort to keep them here.

Most immigrants who are involved in removal proceedings are good hardworking people who just want to be able to provide for their families and raise their children in a safe environment. The majority have been in the United States for more than 20 years and are removed for committing the smallest of infractions.

Some of my clients entered the United States with their parents when they were very young. They consider themselves U.S. citizens because they have no memory of their birthplace. Many speak English and graduate from local high schools just like their classmates. But when it is time to go to college or get a job, they realize they are different because they do not have the required social security card.

In one case, a young woman entered the United States with her parents when she was 2 months old. She attended kindergarten and underwent all her immunizations. She received multiple awards over the years and graduated from Triton High School in Erwin, N.C., with honors.

This young woman then applied for and was granted DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status. She later was admitted to Fayetteville State University and was in her second year of studies when she was arrested for a simple DWI. Unknowingly, her parents paid her bond and within minutes she was placed in ICE custody and taken to the Irwin County Jail, in Ocilla, Ga., near Savannah, more than nine hours away. After two months, she was released on bond and is now fighting the DWI charge. If she is found guilty, she will face an order of removal to Mexico, although she is only 20 years old.

This young woman's dilemma is similar to many other immigrants who have minor criminal convictions, which under most circumstances would be considered insignificant. But for a citizen from another country, such convictions can lead to exile.

In 2015, I received a call from a woman who wanted to know how long her friend Nadia could be detained in Ocilla, Ga., while awaiting removal from the U.S. I explained that after an order is issued, ICE has 180 days to send them back to their country or release them in the United States. A few weeks later, I decided to make a telephone call to ICE concerning Nadia's detention, which had extended past the 180-day limit. I left a message with her deportation officer requesting her release. Ten days later, Nadia was knocking on my office door thanking me for helping her. She also had a pending DWI that need to be adjudicated. She confided to me that she had been a victim of domestic violence, not once but twice. She began to tell me her story.

Nadia was born in Belize and had come to the United States in 1999, leaving behind two children and an abusive husband who had placed a gun to her head and pulled the trigger. Fortunately, the gun jammed. But Nadia knew she had to go. She told me that she took her two children that night and dropped them off with her mother, intending to come back to get them after she found a place to live. Twenty years passed before she saw her children again.

Nadia ended up in Cary, N.C., without a dime in her pocket. She tried to get a job, but without a valid I.D. she could not work. Sometime later, she became a caregiver for an elderly man who paid her cash and allowed her to live at his home for free. She saved her money and began sending it to her children for support. She tried to call, but never reached them. Her children thought she had abandoned them.

After a few years, her elderly client passed away and Nadia decided to go back to Belize. She missed her parents and children horribly. Although she purchased a ticket to fly back to Belize, without an I.D. she was not allowed on the plane. Shortly thereafter, she met the man who became her second husband, Vance.

Nadia and Vance were married in May 2003. Within two years, she gave birth to her third child, Valerie. Nadia said she finally felt complete and vowed that no matter what

happened, she would never leave her daughter as she did her children in Belize.

In 2013, her husband began to use her immigration status against her. He threatened to call ICE and report her status if she didn't do what he wanted. Vance never helped her apply for a visa. It was a way to control her.

During the day, Vance would lock her in their bedroom. Nadia told me that Vance had become addicted to cocaine and also started to drug her without her consent in order to keep her under his control. Many times, Nadia thought about leaving Vance, but she couldn't bear the thought of leaving her daughter. Additionally, where would she go?

Then one night after Vance had drugged Nadia, he placed her in their van, drove her to Interstate 40, and left her there with the van running. A few hours later, Nadia awoke in the Wake County Jail charged with DWI and was remanded into ICE custody. Police thought she was drunk.

Nadia entered removal proceedings on Jan. 4, 2014. Her husband refused to claim her as the wife of a U. S. citizen, but Nadia refused to give up. She stayed in the Irwin County Detention Center in Ocilla and refused to sign her ICE officer's orders to authorize her deportation. She was determined not to leave Valerie.

Nadia eventually was released and reunited with Valerie, who is now 12 years old. She divorced Vance, although he has joint custody of her daughter. Since coming to my office, Nadia's I-360 application has been approved under the Violence Against Women Act. Soon she will become a lawful permanent resident.

Nadia has reunited with her older children since her release, and she is planning to become a certified translator in the near future. She is an outstanding example for many women who suffer at the hands of their partners but never give up. Nadia has become a very important associate of Burke's Law.



{ *She confided to me that she had been a victim of domestic violence, not once but twice.* }

Immigration LAWYER



BY POOYAN ORDOUBADI '15

During my 3L year at North Carolina Central School of Law, I externed at the offices of Fayad Law (now Polanco Law). My primary interest was criminal defense and juvenile law. I had participated in both of those clinics at school and loved it. It showed me that client interaction had to be a focal point of my career.

While I was exposed to some criminal defense work at Polanco Law, the bulk of their practice focused on immigration law. I was particularly drawn to removal defense, where you represent clients in removal proceedings. After graduating and passing the bar, I was offered a job at Polanco Law. I began assisting with, and subsequently took over all the removal cases for the firm. I still do a fair share of criminal defense work, as representing undocumented people or legal permanent residents in criminal proceedings is quite different than representing United States citizens. We often turn down very reasonable plea offers due to the disastrous impact it would have on those with different legal statuses in the United States.

I was shocked at the complete lack of empathy and humanity when it came to our immigration system. The government now usually refuses to exercise prosecutorial discretion, particularly for Central Americans fleeing horrendous violence and persecution. Enforcement memos were released by the previous administration to target children, many of whom crossed the United States



border by themselves. While removal proceedings often mirror criminal proceedings, and can have an even more disastrous effects on families, there is no right to counsel, as removal proceedings are civil proceedings. Immigration law is subject to significant changes based on modifications by the Executive Branch, which require no Congressional approval, particularly about prosecutorial discretion. They can choose to stay removal orders and not deport those that have significant connections to the United States and no criminal convictions. Alternatively, the Executive Branch can choose to aggressively enforce immigration laws and deport anyone in the United States without lawful status.

The majority of those in removal proceedings are not represented by counsel and they are simply ordered removed from the country en masse, often barring them from returning to the United States for a minimum of ten years, even if an avenue of relief was available to them. These proceedings often force families to permanently fracture, resulting in United States citizen children losing a parent, and ultimately forcing the entire family to rely on public assistance. It is a cruel, costly and nonsensical system.

When I see these fractured families it reminds me of my own family's ordeal. My father immigrated to the United States in the late 1960s and my family followed shortly thereafter. When I was born, my mother took me on a trip to Iran to visit her family. The Iran-Iraq war broke out and the United States instituted a ban against Iranians coming to the United States. My father and sister remained here while my mother and I were in Iran. It took us almost three years



While removal proceedings often mirror **CRIMINAL** proceedings, and can have an even more **DISASTROUS EFFECTS ON FAMILIES**, there is no right to counsel, as removal proceedings are civil proceedings.



to return to the United States. My father and mother did not become citizens until recently. Luckily, his employer sponsored him and he had a work visa for decades, but there was always the danger of him losing his job, which would then cause both of my parents to lose lawful status in the country.

The Charlotte Immigration Court also has one of the lowest rates of asylum grants in the entire country and it is one of the worst jurisdictions in which one can practice immigration law. At my very first asylum hearing, I represented a four-year-old boy who entered the country with his mother. His siblings were United States citizens but he was born outside of the country as his mother was ordered removed while she was pregnant, and his father remained in the United States with his older siblings. I had worked with young clients through the juvenile law clinic but it did not prepare me for representing toddlers. It was unbearably sad to have a three hour

hearing with a child sitting next to me, who is so clearly oblivious to what is about to happen to him and his family. This young boy simply colored in his coloring book, played with some stickers and ultimately fell asleep on my arm for a bit.

Even worse are the detention centers which are adjacent to immigration courts. Perhaps the most infamous one is the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Ga., about two and a half hours southwest of Atlanta. It is in the middle of nowhere, making it almost impossible for detainees to have in person legal representation. Our firm has opened an office in Lumpkin and the Southern Poverty Law Center is



also doing a wonderful job providing pro-bono representation. I would encourage anyone to read and review the countless complaints regarding violations of due process at the Stewart Immigration Court. Bonds can be specifically tough to obtain at Stewart. When someone is picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and detained, an Immigration Judge can grant a bond to allow them to fight their case after being released. In Stewart, bonds are often

denied simply because someone has been convicted of a No Operator's License years ago. They have no problem ordering someone removed who has no criminal record other than minor traffic infractions, several United States children and a possibility to obtain legal status in the country.

Sadly, with the new administration, the number of people with no criminal records who are detained has increased dramatically. What we are now seeing is that ICE will detain people before their criminal cases are resolved, making it even more difficult for them to return legally in the future as they will have pending charges. The Department of Homeland Security can also use pending charges as a justification to object to an immigration bond, even though they have not been convicted of a single offense. We have had clients detained by ICE for expired vaccination tags on their dogs, exceeding wake speed on a boat in Jordan Lake, and for just being in the wrong place at the wrong time

without a single criminal conviction. ICE refers to this last group as 'collateral arrests'. Some counties work very closely with ICE. The Wake County Detention Center, for example, has an ICE office on the premises. Other counties do not notify ICE if they arrest someone without lawful status in the country.

Detaining immigrants, both when they enter the country and when they are in removal proceedings, is big business. Most of these centers are run by private corporations which spend millions in lobbying efforts to ensure that men, women and children, many of whom have committed no criminal offense can be detained for months or even years in terrible conditions at the taxpayers' expense. A perfect example of this senseless policy can be found in the June 27, 2017 decision issued in *Jenny L. Flores, et al. v. Jefferson B. Sessions, III, et al.* A three year old had been detained for 645 consecutive days since entering the country with his mother. He had an avenue of relief available to him, but the Department of Homeland Security refused to release him. The plaintiff (one of many) in the case learned how to talk and walk in detention. He spent over two thirds of his life locked up. It is a terribly cruel and flawed system. In her written decision, the Immigration Judge noted that the plaintiffs, who in this case were exclusively children and their mothers, were often given two meals every three days. They were forced to sleep on concrete in overcrowded cells with no pillows or blankets and only an aluminum sheet to cover themselves. They were not permitted to shower or have access to soap, toothbrushes or other personal hygiene items for weeks at a time, and were provided little medical care. The petitioners also complained of frequent collective punishment if they could not stop their babies from crying.

While an Immigration Judge can order people removed or allow them to leave voluntarily under safeguards, the detention facility itself determines when they leave. It is not uncommon for someone to be ordered removed, but then remain detained for months to ensure that all the beds in the facility remain filled. We have had clients moved from detention centers in Georgia all the way to New Mexico, then back to Georgia, as the detention facilities are owned by the same corporation and there was an open bed in New Mexico that needed to be filled.

Many immigration attorneys are bracing themselves for the next few years. There is no doubt that the previous administration's policies wreaked havoc on families in the United States, including countless United States citizen children, spouses and extended family. What we have seen from the new administration is significantly worse and far more callous.

Immigration has shaped countless people's lives, and I am no different. It was my parents who gave me a different view on immigration than most American-born citizens. I wake up every day and try and make them happy.



I was born in Cairo, Egypt, and came to the States when I was two years old. My parents, like almost all other parents, dreamed of a better future for their children. My parents, however, like other immigrant families, made the

successful, the end. As a society, we hear so many of these feel-good stories that we have become desensitized to the sacrifices that were made and how those sacrifices helped shape the individuals involved.

Typically, though, no one talks about the sacrifices families make in chasing the American dream. No one explains to your mother how painful it will be to leave her sick mother to be cared for by someone else when she, the family's only daughter, makes the decision to move thousands of miles away with no intention of ever moving back, in the hope that her children MAY have a better future. No one explains to your father, who has an

archaeology degree from the University of Cairo that he worked hard to receive, would essentially be useless in this new country. He will have to be a taxi driver and, eventually, a bus driver for the next 30 years of his life.

Both my parents had to leave behind family members and loved ones, everything they knew, to come here. My parents made unbelievable sacrifices and life altering decisions, all at

the age of 26. Once they arrived here, however, life wasn't much easier and the sacrifices never stopped. Families must maneuver through difficult financial issues, such as trying to get food stamps or filing for bankruptcy after years of trying to stay afloat in a system that takes advantage of consumers.

The hardships don't stop there. Immigrant parents must try and protect their families from prejudice and ignorance. Thanks to the senseless and violent acts of 9/11 committed by terrorists that call themselves Muslims, more than half the country has turned on immigrants simply for sharing the faith of the murderers. The sacrifices continue to this day. I am sure my parents will continue to make sacrifices.

When you're young, you believe that it is the parents' job to protect their children and that they had no choice but to leave their home country. But now, as I get older and more mature, I really begin to realize and appreciate the things they've done for me. They didn't HAVE to leave. They could have decided that because an Egyptian education was good enough for them, it would be good enough for my siblings and me. But as I approach the age that my father was when he picked up his family and left the only country he ever knew, I try to imagine myself in his shoes. And I get anxiety.

I cannot imagine making the decision that he made, to take his family to a new country where he didn't know anyone or speak the language and didn't have a job secured. All he had was a very, very, shallow bank account. On top of that, he had a wife and three young children whose ages ranged from two to nine.

Now here I am, a law school graduate, all thanks to my parents. They came here for us to succeed and be successful, and I believe I have done that. But besides the education that I have gained, which will eventually all belong to me, I came to law school for my parents. If it were not for them, I wouldn't be here. For all the reasons stated above, that is why I went to law school and how immigration has shaped my view of my degree, this country and my parents.

Journey From CAIRO

BY
MARWAN RASHAD '17

ultimate sacrifice of leaving the only country, language and culture they had known to come to a foreign place, all in the hope that their children would one day have a better life than they had. The story almost sounds cliché: family leaves country, moves to America, chases American dream, children become



The evening of April 26, 1986 was an unusually warm spring evening in our two-bedroom apartment in the heart of Gomel, Belarus, part of the former Soviet Union. My mother read me a bedtime story, tucked me into bed, and kissed me goodnight – just as she had done so many other nights. But this night would soon prove to be like none other before it. A few hours later, I was awakened by my parents' desperate voices coming from the adjoining room. I recall my mother's panicked face as my dad hastily packed his suitcase, telling me he had to go "help people." Then next thing I knew, I was on a train with my grandmother on the way to Moscow. She assured me that everything was going to be fine, and that my dad would be back as soon as he completed his mission.

I was too young to understand the events of that day, including the magnitude of the disaster that had just befallen the city Chernobyl. A mere 150 km (~100 miles) south of my home in Gomel, the explosion and resulting nuclear disaster were still unknown to most residents in the area, as the events at Chernobyl were not broadcast by the media until the third day, per instructions from Soviet authorities. My father's middle-of-the-night mission was to go to Chernobyl to help evacuate the people of the city and surrounding area. While my train ride to Moscow allowed me to escape the immediate fallout from the catastrophic meltdown, my father, a former policeman, had been stationed in a close vicinity to it. He remained in Chernobyl for a year to help relocate people and find them the resources they needed to survive.

In the years that followed the disaster, many Western European countries participated in support programs for children affected by Chernobyl, including the children of Gomel. The program allowed participating children to travel to Western Europe to spend summers with host families who provided access to clean water, nutrition, and a reprieve from the ubiquitous radiation. I was blessed to be one of the program participants, spending several summers in Italy, Germany, and France. Those summers of traveling to foreign places, meeting new people, and benefitting from the graciousness and hospitality of total strangers established a course for my life, even if I didn't know it at the time.

I experienced different cultures, learned new languages and customs, and felt the care and love from people who genuinely wanted to help. I will never forget the families who hosted me, nor will I forget the lessons they taught me. As I got older and understood the immensity of they had done for me, I knew I had to do something with my life that would allow me to do the same for those in need.

Another monumental event that shaped my life occurred when I was a senior in high school. By then the Soviet Union had ceased to exist and the relationship between the former Soviet states and the U.S. was on the mend. A program was established to ease Cold War tensions and promote cultural exchange by sending select students

from Belarus and other former Soviet states to the U.S. for one academic year, during which those students attended high school and lived with host families. I was chosen as one of the program's participants and subsequently landed in the small town of Jonesville, NC where I became fully immersed into the American culture and language. Being away from my family at the age of seventeen was not easy, but it taught me independence, self-reliance, and perseverance. As a high school student, I realized education

was a powerful tool and it allowed Americans to build their careers and achieve their goals regardless of their originating circumstances or their societal position. It was then that I decided that not only would I find a way to provide opportunities for those who desperately needed the kindness of strangers, but I would do it from America – where anything was possible.

I then attended college in the U.S. on a student visa and pursued a degree in psychology at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C. I also became keenly interested in law



Chernobyl Nuclear Powerplant



Elena Nesch



while at Guilford, particularly as it concerned U.S. immigration. Upon graduation, I worked in two law firms where I learned family and business immigration and found it deeply satisfying to help families coming to America. I also became a U.S. citizen myself, 11 years after my initial arrival in the U.S. I was proud of what I had accomplished, and what I could contribute as a paralegal to families who needed assistance immigrating to the U.S., but I knew I could do more than my bachelor's degree allowed me to do.

NC Central University School of Law gave me an opportunity to do more. The education and experiences provided by NCCU Law and its devoted faculty catapulted me into the life and opportunities I sought. It equipped me with the "tools of the trade," as one of my favorite professors, Professor Bynum, used to say. I will always be grateful for the richness of my experiences coupled with the attentive guidance from so many of the school's professors and advisors.

Upon passing the NC Bar exam, I landed a job in Arlington, VA with a fast-paced, mid-sized firm where I practiced business and global immigration for over two years. I worked with



A woman, a boy and a girl at a chain link fence, Ellis Island, New York

By Way OF Belarus

by Elena Nesch '14

multinational IT corporations primarily based on the West Coast, helping them bring in the intellectual capabilities needed in the U.S. to provide innovative solutions to rapidly emerging challenges affecting the nation's technology industry. I also supported expat U.S. workers moving abroad to gain the experiences they needed to stay at the forefront of IT industry. The expansive nature of the work I was doing led me to learn the intricacies of the immigration laws of Europe, Asia, and South America so that I could provide our corporate partners with sound legal advice. My work also necessitated that I partner with in-country experts who assisted with requisite immigration filings abroad. In my experience, global immigration is one of the most challenging and complex areas of immigration law, requiring the practitioner to stay abreast of ever-changing foreign laws and regulations, be knowledgeable of international tax law, and be aware of the compliance issues at each country where immigration service is being provided. Further, it is critical for the practitioner to work closely with a client's Global Mobility contact overseeing the relocation portion of an international move to ensure that the interrelated processes are happening simultaneously and without delays. In today's global marketplace, immigration practitioners are ever more frequently adding a global component to their practice areas to stay competitive and serve as "one stop shops" for their clients with global immigration needs.

Recently, when I joined the D.C. firm of Maggio Kattar Nahajzer + Alexander, PC, I transitioned from the field of global immigration to inbound immigration, an area of immigration law to which I continue to be drawn. This firm is recognized for its strong commitment to client service and its ability to solve a broad range of complex immigration issues that span the immigration law field. We represent a variety of clients including nonprofit organizations, universities, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, restaurants, and the information technology sector. Many of our clients are D.C.-based, and we respect and appreciate our position representing the local community, helping businesses and companies grow, assisting schools with bringing native speakers to teach language courses, and guiding hospitals in process of hiring foreign nurses and doctors. Not surprisingly, as the political climate began to change with the new administration, so did immigration law. In this time of legal uncertainty surrounding immigration, the anxiety level of many U.S. companies continues to rise as we all await emerging guidance, regulations, and legal interpretations from the courts.

What question do I handle most often these days as a business immigration attorney? "Will the President abolish the H-1B lottery?" Note: an H-1B lottery is conducted each year by USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration

Services) to allow U.S. companies to employ a limited number of foreign workers in specialty occupations. The answer to the often-asked question is, "No one knows for certain." But what is known for certain, is that no matter what happens with the H-1B lottery or other immigration regulations, I will continue zealously representing the firm's clients, providing each with all available legal alternatives, thoroughly researched recommendations, and the most current information available about changes in immigration law. It's now my turn to graciously help others faced with an uncertain future.

Each day as I walk through the DuPont Circle on the way to our office on Massachusetts Avenue, I can't help but reflect on the tapestry of events that brought me to this point in my life. My time at NC Central School of Law regularly comes to mind, as do the events of my childhood and my family in Belarus. But the one event that I revisit most often is my high school trip to Washington, DC to see the nation's capital. That's when a young girl born into the very limited opportunities was blessed with an improbable chance to see first-hand what makes America the "shining city on a hill." I fell in love with America on that trip, and everything it represented to me. Studying law and working in the field of immigration has been my path to prosperity in this land of opportunity, but that's only one of countless paths available to those who study, work, volunteer, and remain committed to improving themselves and their standing. Finally, it's our civic responsibility to give back to the community and provide support and guidance to others, searching for their own paths to happiness and prosperity in this great country. I look forward to doing just that, proudly upholding my alma mater's mission of Truth and Service.



My family immigrated from the southern region of Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico to the United States around the mid-1980s. Guerrero, like many other southern Mexican states, is known for its Afro-Mexican population, rich historical background, and its significant involvement in the Mexican Revolution. My family decided to migrate to the United States in pursuit of a better future for themselves and their children. My parents settled down in Santa Ana, Calif., the city where my two siblings and I were born.

My parents faced many obstacles in their journey to the United States. They spent long days and nights crossing the desert between Mexico and the U.S. A lot of immigrants that cross the desert die of dehydration because of the extremely high temperatures and the lack of water. Fortunately, they made it into the United States and began to establish a life; a happy life; a productive life; an American life. Although my parents were building a foundation for their future children, their migratory status often prevented them from opportunities for which they would have been well qualified. To get away from the increasing amount of violence in Santa Ana, my parents decided to pack everything up and move to the East Coast. That's how we ended up in North Carolina.

Things got better, but they also got worse. The cost of living was (and still is) lower than in California, so that was a plus. However, being that North Carolina is a southern state where Jim Crow used to live, some of his influence still lingered into societal practices. I remember being called racial slurs during the early years of my upbringing. The phrase: "go back to your own country" burned confusion inside me. How could somebody want me to go back to a place where I was born? I was already home; how could I go back? I remember being picked on in elementary school because I spoke a different language and my skin had melanin. I remember hearing: "I can't be friends with you. You're an illegal Mexican." This is just a scintilla of what I used to face growing up.

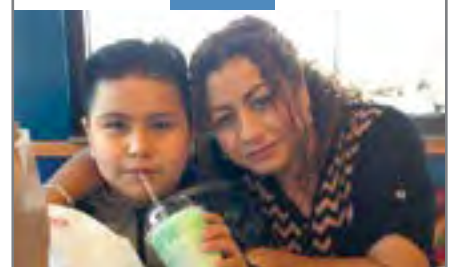
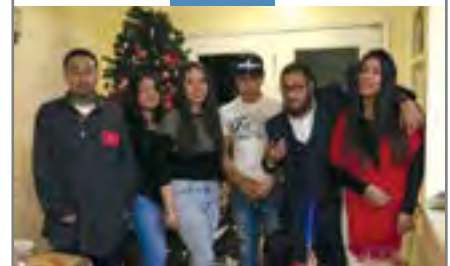
Another unfortunate event was my parents' divorce, which resulted in my mother raising three children on her own. Through my mother's hard work and dedication, she managed to raise: a daughter that earned a degree in Sociology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a son who preaches social justice and graduated from East Carolina University; and another son that is starting up his own tattoo business. My mother taught us: always fight against bullies and oppressors; even if you might fall down a few times, continue to fight and eventually you'll win. That's the reason why I chose North Carolina Central University School of Law.

I always hold dear the values that my mother gave to me and express pride for my Chicano culture (Chicano means a person whose parents were born in Mexico but they were born in the United States). With my law degree, I will continue to fight for social justice and do my part to eradicate Jim Crow's son; the New Jim Crow. I am a fighter just like my mother and all of the NCCU School of Law Alumni. The work only begins when we walk across that stage. **Si Se Puede. Si Se Pudo. Si, Yo Puedo.**

CHI-CA-NO (CHI-KAH-NOH) N. A PERSON WHOSE PARENTS WERE BORN IN MEXICO BUT THEY WERE BORN IN THE UNITED STATES.

A Chicano Kid WITH **BIG** DREAMS

BY JOSEPH GARCIA, 2L



Through The Fire: Transitional Issues Facing F1 Students

BY KOFI B. KUFUOR, 3L NCCU SCHOOL OF LAW

In 2008, at age 19 years and 7 months, I hardened my face and allowed myself to be herded through the queues at John F. Kennedy Airport. Instinct fueled this notion that in order to survive in this new land, one had to be tough, both on the exterior and in the interior. You see, I grew up in a patriarchy that extolled the perceived virtues of manhood, such as never being “eye red” or “shaken.” “Barima ba” literally translates to man-child and “barima ensu” means that a man does not cry. It is funny in hindsight. I laugh as I look back and put these perspectives down on paper. I also laugh because my nine years of living in this country as a foreign national have taught me that emotional intelligence coupled with toughness is necessary to thrive in this new environment.

Growing up in Accra, Ghana, presented unique challenges. I lived in a middle-class neighborhood lined with very carefully built homes. These featured eight-foot walls, secured with barbed wire and the ever-present “beware of dogs” signs. In some cases, also a security guard stood at the gates to give a particular owner some extra peace of mind.

I always compared these features to the American homes I would see in movies. I found it hard to understand why I had seen so many movie scenes of burglary and armed robbery over the years, yet American homes in most neighborhoods didn’t have the same security features as my neighborhood. I juxtaposed this with the typical horror-movie scene, where the group of friends (typically Caucasian) would walk knowingly into a dangerous situation in the name of adventure—or whatever other inconceivable justification plays out in those dumb movies. Nonetheless I considered the measures taken by my family and our neighbors as practical and necessary, especially coupled with the history of coups, stories of robberies in other neighborhoods, and constant fear-mongering chatter I heard from some family members and neighbors.

Suffice it to say that I was conditioned to be very careful about who I dealt with, what I shared with others and, most importantly, how I carried myself out in the world.

Fast forward to 2008. As I walked out of JFK Airport to await my aunt at the arrivals section, I practiced what I had



Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park. Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park (KNMP) is a National Park in, Accra, Ghana named after Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the founding father of Ghana.

been taught all these years with extra conviction because I was in America. America offered so much precedent on what might happen to a person of African origin who became careless about his reality. From history lessons, movies, family fears and daily news updates on civil and social injustices, I knew I had to be solid as a rock to make whatever dreams I had cooked up in Ghana into reality. In all honesty, I believe my fear of the unknown served me well. However I never figured out when was the right time to shelve it and begin engaging others.

I found myself in Rutland, Mass., living with a family friend and her three children: Mario, Aubrey and Bryanna. If you have ever spent a fall or winter in Massachusetts, you may sympathize with how miserable the weather is, especially for an 18-year-old Ghanaian boy accustomed to living under the scorching heat where the equator and the meridian



meet. Massachusetts provided ice storms, dry cold air and unforgiving wind chills. In 2008, an ice storm cut off power in the house for a whole week, forcing us to go live with a family friend in Worcester, Mass. I also felt fed up with being cooped up indoors and decided to go out for a run, regardless of the snow and ice. A couple of slips quickly helped me sort out which side of the street to run on. But the hardest part of those runs came when it was over. My frozen toes and hands would burn for over an hour. Even worse was taking a shower immediately—especially a warm shower, which only served to make it worse. Needless to say, I dreaded those runs and found myself embarking on them less frequently as the cold dragged on.

The natural outcome was that I started my undergraduate studies at Newberry College in South Carolina the following January about 30 pounds overweight. I had gone from my

soccer-playing weight of 165 to 200 pounds in less than five months. I didn't even recognize myself. That year was the worst year of soccer I ever experienced. I ended up losing my scholarship and having to pay out-of-pocket for expenses at a private institution for a year. Another side effect of that was depression. Now mind you, I came from a culture that didn't even recognize depression. I had no idea I was suffering from it until I was out of it a year later.

During the academic year I sat out. I met the family of a police chief who invited me to church and into their home. This was probably the single most important and restorative encounter I have had since being in America. They provided support in any way they could, and always made sure to reach out to me and offer assurance of their support.

The next winter, I found myself living in South Carolina, where the Confederate flag still hung from the State House, and streets and residence halls were named after prominent Confederate figures. I was guarded for quite some time, refusing to grasp the authenticity of the affection the police chief and family showed me. However, they never relented. They were persistent. To this day, if there is anywhere I call home in the U.S, it's Caldwell Street, Newberry, S.C.

With this family's support, as well as the support of other friends and family members, I worked on my craft that school year and made progress toward my political science degree. I was supported by my advisor, Professor Schweizer, and other helpful professors. I reclaimed my scholarship and played my last two years of varsity

soccer. After graduation, I moved to Durham to start law school at NCCU School of Law.

In summation, I say all of this to show that a lot of the decisions I have made affecting my life have stemmed from some fear of the unknown, and the insecurity I felt as I struggled to embrace this new world. However, it was an important process for me to unravel myself out of the restrictive comfort I found in my mental orientation.

That process allowed me to be fed by the many beautiful people I have come to know and those I will experience over time. In essence, one cannot doubt the importance of relationships in the molding of an individual. I am not saying I have cracked the code on the immigrant experience: I am still working it out. However, I know for certain that no man is an island.

...my nine years
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Alumni News

Tackling The Problem of Eviction Cases That Come Through Durham Courts

by Sarah Willets | INDY WEEK MAGAZINE



JESSE MCCOY '08

Durham County has the highest eviction filing rate among North Carolina's ten largest counties. A collaboration between Duke's Civil Justice Clinic, the Durham County Department of Social Services and Legal Aid of North Carolina aims to change that.

From July 2015 to June 2016, there was one eviction case brought to magistrate court for every 28 Durham residents. On average, 887 eviction cases were filed each month in that one-year-period. The total for the previous year was even higher, with an average of 916 filings per month.

The statistics are sobering in a county struggling to provide affordable housing for residents amid rising property values and gentrification. While evictions can be initiated because of a breach of a lease agreement or criminal activity, most cases simply come down to an inability to pay one month's rent.

"Both Raleigh and Durham are really popular areas for growth, and with growth people see opportunities to increase prices. ... As more development comes to the area, it's an issue that needs to be addressed," says Jesse McCoy, who as a supervising attorney with Duke Law School's Civil Justice Clinic launched the pilot eviction diversion program on August 1, 2017 along with Durham County Department of Social Services.

McCoy joined Duke's Civil Justice Clinic in April as the inaugural James Scott Farrin Lecturing Fellow and supervising attorney. He plays a substantial role in implementing the pilot Eviction Diversion Program.

A veteran Legal Aid attorney, he has extensive experience with landlord-tenant disputes in Durham County.

Modeled after a similar program in Michigan, it appears to be the only one of its kind in North Carolina. Charles Holton, director of the Civil Justice Clinic at Duke, was partly inspired to launch the program by Matthew Desmond's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Evicted*, which followed eight families trying to stave off eviction. He knew Durham had a high eviction rate, but when he got the data from the Administrative Office of the Courts, was dismayed to learn county had the highest rates per population two years in a row.

Under the program, when tenants receive a summons to appear in court for an eviction case, they also receive a brochure advising them to call DSS if they've missed a rent payment and need financial assistance. DSS would then connect the tenant to various emergency financial assistance programs to help pay the rent owed and refer the case to Legal Aid of North Carolina to be re-solved.

"Our focus is to keep people in their homes," McCoy says. The program could also provide more oversight of fair housing practices and use of public assistance by exposing tenants to DSS and Legal Aid employees.

"My hope is we will be able to find out who the bad actors and if there is abuse of the system," McCoy said.

Success of the program will be measured primarily by whether the number of summary ejectment filings in court goes down. Success of the program could lead to expansion in other areas.



Amanda Maris to Serve as District Court Judge

By Ford Porter | NC GOVERNMENT PRESS

On August 1, Governor Roy Cooper appointed **Amanda Maris** to serve as **District Court Judge for Judicial District 14** in Durham County.

"Amanda brings extensive legal experience and a true commitment to improving the Durham community to her new appointment," said Gov. Cooper. "I'm pleased to appoint her to the district court bench."

She will serve in the judgeship previously held by Judge Marcia Morey, who resigned on April 5 to take a seat in the North Carolina House of Representatives.

Maris has served as an Assistant Public Defender in District

"Amanda brings extensive legal experience and a true commitment to improving the Durham community to her new appointment" — Governor Roy Cooper

14 for ten years, and has worked in the District's Misdemeanor Diversion Program. She has also served as an adjunct professor at the North Carolina Central University School of Law and has experience in private practice.

Maris received a Juris Doctor degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Maris lives in Durham County with her family. A devoted community member, Maris serves on the board of two organizations that serve young people in Durham: Durham County Teen Court and Restitution Program and Rebound: Alternatives for Youth.



Dean Craig-Taylor with Judge Amanda Maris '06

Alum James S. Walker Appointed to University Board of Trustees

James S. Walker was appointed to the Board of Trustees of North Carolina Central University effective July 1, 2017. Walker is a 1988 graduate of the NCCU School of Law, earned his juris doctor degree summa cum laude and was a practicing attorney until 2000, when he became certified by the N.C. Dispute Resolution Commission as a Superior Court mediator. He is currently self-employed as a mediator. A Charlotte native, he also serves as a member of the N.C. Turnpike Authority Board. Appointed by the speaker of the N.C. House of Representatives, his term expires June 30, 2021.



James S. Walker '88

Alumni Briefs

“Remember your **series of successes**, that ladder that you climbed... **that destiny you are fulfilling**, and remember that North Carolina Central University has prepared you magnificently to go out and **conquer this world**.”

JUSTICE MICHAEL R.
MORGAN '79

Mercedes Pinckney Fabers '11, Appointed General Counsel



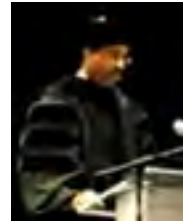
SC State University President James E. Clark announced the appointment of **Mercedes Pinckney Fabers** to his leadership team as General Counsel during a Board of Trustees meeting July 19, 2017.

A native of Ridgeville, South Carolina, Attorney Fabers is the former assistant general counsel of the College of Charleston.

She earned her undergraduate degree in political science from the College of Charleston, and was awarded her law degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law. Fabers also studied intercultural human rights at St. Thomas University School of Law, where she earned a Master of Laws degree.

Fabers is a member of the National Association of College University Attorneys, for which she served on the 2016-2017 membership committee.

Supreme Court Justice Urges Graduates to Never Forget the Past



North Carolina Supreme Court Associate Justice Michael R. Morgan '79, urged graduates never to forget the past or the people who helped them along the way.

“Class of 2017, when you begin to become overwhelmed, remember who you are, and remember the list of people who got you here,” Morgan said. “Remember your series of successes, that ladder that you climbed... that destiny you are fulfilling, and remember that North Carolina Central University has prepared you magnificently to go out and conquer this world.”

Morgan recalled his own graduation from NCCU School of Law in 1979, when he was told that the world didn't need any more lawyers. However, the warning fell on deaf ears.

“Don't worry about who else is out there,” he urged the graduates. “There's always room for one more good one.”



The North Carolina Advocates for Justice has awarded **Professor Leonard T. Jernigan, Jr. '76**, who teaches Workers' Compensation Law, the 2017 Charles L Becton Teaching Award. Professor Becton made the presentation at the NCAJ Convention in June.



Brandon Robinson '13 has been elected Chairman of the Western Carolina University Board of Visitors. Robinson, a Durham lawyer is a former recipient of the WCU Young Alumnus Award.



In September 2017, **John E. Stephenson '13**, accepted a position as the Director of Compliance with the Florida State University Athletics Department. He will serve as the primary compliance contact for assigned sports teams and administrative units within the athletics department. He will also be responsible for providing rules interpretations on a daily basis to coaches, staff, athletics departmental offices, student-athletes, and other entities that are responsible for compliance with NCAA rules.

Alumni News



Omari Crawford '13 of Cochran Firm Teams Up For Major Win

By Greg Land | DAILY REPORT
August 30, 2017

A DeKalb County jury awarded a post apportionment award of more than \$2.4 million to two women who were shot outside a Stone Mountain, GA nightspot. One of the plaintiffs was shot in the stomach and suffered serious internal injuries requiring multiple surgeries, and her friend was shot in the shoulder and hip.

Included on the team of attorney's for the plaintiff was NCCU Law alum Omari Crawford. The trial was the first time the trio of Cochran lawyers tried a case without a senior lawyer sitting first chair. Crawford, 31, started out with the firm in 2012 as a summer intern and signed on after earning his law degree in 2013. Brogdon, 27, joined the South Carolina bar in 2016 and Georgia's this year and has been with the firm two years. Co-counsel, Mecca Anderson, 40, has been practicing five years and served as a clerk with the Georgia Supreme Court, and then worked with plaintiffs attorney Darren Summerville before joining the Cochran Firm.

The total award topped \$3.5 million, but the panel allocated 30 percent of the fault to the unknown gunmen. Attorneys for the women said a late-night fight in January 2012 apparently sparked by a spilled drink erupted inside Jay's Place Sports Bar & Lounge in Stone Mountain.

On Aug. 17, after about two and a half hours of deliberation, the jury delivered "just what we asked

for," awarding \$3,504,080 in damages. Because the jury apportioned 30 percent of the liability to the unknown shooter, the final judgment totaled \$2,452,856.

Afterward, Anderson said three jurors "approached us with hugs and said they would hire us."

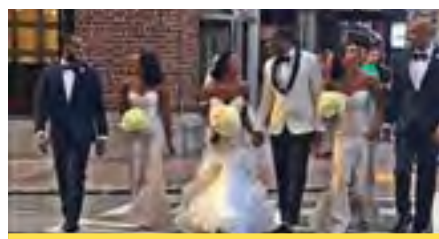


L-R Omari J. Crawford '13 with paralegal Candace Banks, Peter A. Brogdon II and Mecca S. Anderson. The Cochran Firm, Atlanta. (Photo by John Disney/ALM)

The lawyers said they did not know whether the defense would appeal.

"This was our first trial together as a trial team, said Anderson. Omari first-chaired, but we all shared the duties, and we all carried the weight at trial. It was a joy working together."

Alumni News



► **Cassandra S. Conover '85**

Virginia Commonwealth's Attorney Cassandra S. Conover of Petersburg retired at the end of March 2017 after more than a quarter-century in the position. Conover was the longest elected official to serve Petersburg.

Conover's rise in Petersburg started in August 1989, she soon became the city's first black public defender. After serving for 25 years and 11 months, Conover said she was ready for a new adventure.

Conover was in her dissertation phase for her Doctorate in Education at the time of retirement. She defended her proposal five weeks later.

► **Susan W. Trexler '17**

Susan Trexler was sworn in as the first Chief of Counsel in the Legal Office of North Carolina State Employees Credit Union in August, 2017. Trexler was sworn in by Chief Justice Mark Martin.

Pictured with Justice Martin, Susan Trexler, Dean Craig-Taylor

► **Judge Lori A. Dumas '92**

Named to Judicial Board Lori A. Dumas, Philadelphia First Judicial District judge, has been appointed to the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Board of Directors.

In 2015, she received the NCJFCJ Innovator of the Year Award, which honors an NCJFCJ member who is instrumental in justice for children and families and also advocates and advances its vision.

Dumas received her bachelor's degree in sociology from Duke University and Juris Doctor degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law, where she was a contributing author to the Law Review. She is also a Georgetown University Fellow, specializing in crossover court matters.

► **Samuel S. Goren '75**

The Broward League of Cities has renamed its leadership award after Goren, Cherof, Doody & Ezrol partner Samuel S. Goren.

The first Goren Presidential Award was presented at the group's annual gala to Goren

in recognition of decades of service to the nonpartisan group focused on improving government in Broward County's 31 municipalities.

Outgoing League President Greg Ross commended Goren for "providing us with leadership, guidance and counsel on legal matters at any hour of the day from any place." Ross added, "Your knowledge, commitment, professionalism and integrity will serve as benchmarks for future award recipients."

Goren's Fort Lauderdale firm represents 12 municipalities in Broward and Palm Beach counties and represents private clients with real estate, corporate, business and employment matters.

► **Malikah Hall '15**

Research Services Librarian, Lecturer-in-Law and Cornell Law Library Diversity Fellow

Malikah Hall graduated with highest honor from North Carolina Central University with a M.L.S. degree in May 2015. She also earned her J.D. from North Carolina Central University in May 2015. Malikah holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Chicago State University and an A.S. in Paralegal Studies.

► **Karen Komosa Bestman '16 and Cory Lanis Lewers Tie a Regal Knott**

Karen Bestman of Salisbury, N.C., and Corey Lanis Lewers of Long Island, N.Y. married Saturday, September 16, 2017. A lavish black-tie ceremony and reception was held at the Southern Exchange in the Weston Peachtree Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. The couple hosted a traditional Liberian Wedding Shower Friday evening at Riviera Events in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Ms. Lewers is a real estate-corporate attorney with Lazega & Johanson LLC in Atlanta. Mr. Lewers is a business analyst with RaceTrac Corporation in Atlanta, where the couple will reside.

► **Thomas Cuffie '78**

Thomas F. Cuffie '78, was honored as one of "Georgia's Most Powerful & Influential Attorneys" at the Law & Justice Awards Banquet. The ceremony was held at The Ritz-Carlton in Atlanta on July 29.



JOYNER



NUNEZ



ELMORE

119th Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Bar Association

The 119th Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Bar Association was held June 22-25, 2017 in Asheville.

NCCU Law's own were honored on June 23rd at the annual awards event in these categories:

Legal Legends of Color:

Professor Irving L. Joyner of the NCCU School of Law (Rutgers Law School)

Citizen Lawyer Award:

Ana Sofia Nunez '14, Fay & Grafton, Raleigh (NCCU School of Law)

Appointment:

Judge Richard A. Elmore '82 of the N.C. Court of Appeals (NCCU School of Law) was appointed as a vice president who will serve a one-year term.

Jay Chaudhuri '99, NC Senate District 16

Spearheads Tech Firm Infosys, Brings 2,000 Jobs To Wake County By Ford Porter

NC Government Press

Chaudhuri stated, "I was honored and thrilled in helping announce Infosys' decision to bring 2,000 jobs to Wake County." The entire process began with a phone call from Vice President of Global Government Affairs Anurag Varma, inquiring about whether our State would be interested in establishing an innovation center, "my response was a resounding yes!"



"I was honored and thrilled in helping announce Infosys' decision to bring 2,000 jobs to Wake County".

JAY CHAUDHURI

Call for Articles and Class Notes

Article and Class Notes Policy: Articles and class notes must come first hand from the graduates who have career news, a death, birth, marriage, or retirement to report. Please send in your information as close to the date of the new brief as possible. We welcome news that is no more than a year old. The Office of Development and Alumni Relations reserves the right to determine the usage of all submissions based on content and space. Photos will be accepted in print or digital formats at a resolution of no less than 300 dpi. You may email your articles and news briefs to ncculawdevelopment@nccu.edu, or mail them to the address at the bottom of this email. The NCCU School of Law Office of Development and Alumni Relations reserves the right to determine the usage of the images submitted based on quality, space and content.

Help us keep in touch with your fellow Legal Eagles and NCCU School of Law. If you have a change of address, please forward your current address, email address, and phone number/s. Return this form with your news or story idea to:

Address: NCCU School of Law
Office of Development and Alumni Relations
604 Fayetteville Street, Durham, NC 27707

E-mail: ncculawdevelopment@nccu.edu
Phone: 919-530-5244
Fax: 919-530-6610

Alumni News



JUDGE MARY RUDD
ROBINSON '80

Judge Mary Rudd Robinson Steps Down After Three Decades Of Service

Judge Mary Rudd Robinson '80 stepped down from the bench after 27 years of dedicated service effective December 30, 2017. Judge Rudd Robinson's career as a jurist began in Broward County, Fla. in 1984 with her appointment as a general master for five years. Judge Rudd Robinson then

made history as the first African-American woman to serve on the bench in Broward County.

There could be no one better qualified professionally or closer personally to Judge Mary Rudd Robinson than her husband and colleague on the bench—NCCU Law alumni Judge Michael Robinson '81. He offered his sentiments as seen through the eyes of a husband, colleague, and community servant.

"Mary Rudd Robinson is the best judge I've known to have served on the County Court in Broward County. I have watched her for 35 years inside and outside of the courtroom and her magistrate chambers. She matured and transformed into a brilliant jurist, who served the public with integrity, honesty, compassion, and a keen knowledge of the law."

"As great a jurist as she is, she is a better companion, wife, mother of three, and community servant. Mary spent much of her time away from the bench feeding the homeless, donating clothes and durable items to charitable organizations as well as mentoring young lawyers and high school students who aspire to attend college. She has taught judges at the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada and volunteered for years at the New Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where she founded the Care Package Ministry. When she's at home, she

enjoys playing the piano and singing."

Judge Mary Rudd Robinson shared these thoughts with the Westside Gazette Newspaper regarding her career.

"I believe the preservation of our civil liberties and human rights to be both fundamental and important. If we were ever to allow these liberties and rights to be destroyed, then it would amount to the erosion of a civilized society. This belief formed my basis and desire to enter law school. And in addition to that, I really wanted to help people with their problems through proper legal means."

"My greatest challenge was gaining the respect of members of the bar who were convinced that a black female could not possibly perform her judicial and quasi-judicial duties of maintaining the proper decorum, controlling her hearing or courtroom, controlling her dockets and ruling timely on matters before her."

"Judges must reflect the community's diversity, because diversity lends to the public's perception of fairness, equity and justice. People need to see judges who look like them when they seek legal redress through the courts or come to courts for criminal matters because it gives the public the perception that there is an understanding and recognition of cultural and historical and similarities of litigants."

Retired Judge Zebedee Wright served on the bench prior to Judge Rudd Robinson's arrival on Broward County's judiciary being among an earlier generation of African-American jurists locally. He made several observations upon learning of her impending retirement.



JUDGE LARRY D.
BROWN, JR. '08

Governor Roy Cooper Appoints Larry Brown New Judge in Alamance County

Governor Roy Cooper has appointed Larry D. Brown, Jr. '08, to preside in Alamance County District Court. Brown will serve as a District Court Judge for

Judicial District 15A.

Judge Brown shares his thoughts with fellow Legal Eagles on his historic appointment. "I thank the Honorable Governor Roy Cooper for appointing me as the next District Court Judge

for Alamance County, and to all of my colleagues and friends who supported me in this endeavor; I am forever grateful.

This Judicial appointment affords me an amazing opportunity to continue serving the wonderful citizens of Alamance County after dutifully serving with honor as an Assistant District Attorney and Defense Attorney. The appointment also has historical significance because when I get sworn in, I will be the first African-American Judge in the history of Alamance County. This is an honor for which I am extremely humble.

Justice should see no race, financial status, or gender. Justice must be

equally dispensed and equally accessible for all - these are qualities that epitomize everything our beloved Alma-mater stands for; Equality and Justice. Qualities for which I have based my legal career.

I thank GOD for North Carolina Central University School of Law for providing me the opportunity to follow my dream of becoming an attorney, and for preparing me to ensure justice is rendered in every case in which I preside. NCCU Law prepared me not only to practice law... but to practice life. Also, to understand we all may come from different backgrounds with varying stories but at our core, we all want to make this world a better place than whence we found it."

2017 was an exciting time for alumni receptions. We want to thank each and every alum and friend that attended this year! The Dean used the opportunities to share updates on new initiatives, events, and programs taking place at the law school. We look forward to reconnecting each year to see familiar and new faces, and learning about the wonderful things you all are doing. Alumni receptions are an ideal way to stay engaged with your fellow Legal Eagles, and to follow up on what's taking place at the law school. For those that were not fortunate to be able to attend, you were missed. We sincerely hope that you will make the event in your area this year. Below are a few snap shots of what took place at some receptions during the 2016- 2017 tour. We look forward to seeing you all next year! Keep up the great work Legal Eagles!

2017 Alumni Receptions



1 DURHAM | Hosted by Julian M. Hall '11 April 2, 2017, honored Judge A. Leon Stanback at the ALOft Hotel.

2 WASHINGTON | Hosted by Athena '94, and Jason Groves '96, April 17, 2017, at The Country Club at Woodmore in Mitchellville, Md.

3 RALEIGH | Hosted by Leonard Jernigan '76 at his home. Special guest presentation by Justice Michael R. Morgan '79, held on April 19, 2017.

4 FAYETTEVILLE | Hosted by R. Jonathan Charlston and Jose Coker '02 of The Charleston Group, and Nicole M. Cotton '08 on December 15, 2016 to honor special alumni shaping the Cumberland County judiciary. Honorees included Michael Williford, member of the UNC Board of Governors, and the following five judges: Superior Court Judge Gale M. Adams, District Court Judge Cheri Siler-Mack, District Judge Toni S. King, District Court Judge David H. Hasty, and District Court Judge elect Tiffany Whitfield.

5 LUMBERTON | Hosted by Mark D. Locklear '96 December 15, 2016, at Adelio's Italian Ristorante.

6 ELIZABETH CITY | Hosted by Judge Carlton Cole '87, on October 27, 2016, at the Island Breeze Grill.

7 ROCKY MOUNT | Hosted by Carol O'Garro-Moore '87, on October 18, 2016, at the Historic Booker T Theater.

8 GREENEVILLE | Hosted by Tyrell Clemons '09, October 18, 2016 at his Greenville firm.

If you are interested in hosting an alumni reception in your area, please contact the Office of Development and Alumni Relations at: afoushee@nccu.edu.

▼ **Alumni Association Meeting Schedule**

28 October 2017, 10:00 a.m.

24 March 2018, 10:00 a.m.

▼ **Alumni Reception Schedule**

WASHINGTON, DC AREA

1 November 2017

4:30–6:30 p.m.

JW Marriott Hotel

FAYETTEVILLE AREA*

7 December 2017

6:30–8:00 p.m.

CHARLOTTE AREA*

February 2018

ATLANTA*

March 2018

RALEIGH AREA*

April 2018

*DAY AND TIME TO BE DETERMINED

Calendar OF Events

2017-2018

monthly events

OCT

▼ **Board of Visitors Meeting**

12 October 2017, 9:00 a.m.

▼ **1L Pinning Ceremony**

16 October 2017, 6:00 p.m.

NCCU School of Law

NOV

▼ **Intellectual Patent Law Institute Conference**

4 November 2017

NCCU School of Law

▼ **Alumni Meet and Greet**

10 November 2017

Fish Bowl

▼ **Giving Tuesday**

28 November 2017

JAN

▼ **School of Law Birthday Celebration**

27 January 2018, 10:00 a.m.

FEB

▼ **NCCU School of Law – Law School Relations and External Affairs Committee**

CLE – Back to School With Your Professors

16 February 2018, 1:00-4:30 p.m.

COMMENCEMENT 2017

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES for The School of Law were held on Saturday, May 13, at King's Park International Church. NCCU Law graduate Justice Milton Tingling delivered the keynote address.

Tingling charged the graduates to “keep our minds open as attorneys—you are only limited by your own imaginations.” He talked about the numerous audiences he’s spoken to throughout his career, and how he often asks, what is the hardest thing you’ve had to do in life? In answering that question for himself, his reply is making decisions! “If you don’t make decisions for yourself, they will be made for you”. He emphasized as attorneys you will often make decisions that will impact the lives of others. Justice Tingling admitted he had received accolades throughout his career for being the first African-American lawyer to accomplish numerous things. However, he reminded them that though it is okay to strive to be the first to accomplish something, they should not lose sight of the ultimate mission. “Your mission should be to make sure you are not the last. With every blessing comes a responsibility, and yours should be to those that come behind you.”

Justice Tingling received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University in 1975. He received his Juris Doctorate, Cum Laude, from North Carolina Central University School of Law in 1982, the same year his father, the Honorable Milton F. Tingling, was elected to Civil Court in New York.



JUSTICE
MILTON
TINGLING

...keep our minds OPEN
as attorneys—you are only
LIMITED by your own
imagination.



He returned to New York, where he was admitted to the Bar in 1983 and clerked for three Harlem judges. Thereafter, Justice Tingling established a solo practice in Harlem. In 1996, he became the first black ever elected from the 7th Municipal Court District. In 2000, he became the first, and to date, the only North Carolina Central University School of Law Graduate elected to the New York State Supreme Court.

His most famous decision was striking down Mayor Bloomberg’s so called soda ban law.

In 2016, his daughter Aija Tingling, North Carolina Central University School of Law, Class of 2005, was elected to the Civil Court of the City of New York. The Tingling’s became the first three-generation family of black judges in the nation.

We are honored to welcome the 2017 graduates to the Legal Eagle family, and express our warmest CONGRATULATIONS to them!

Take a moment to view a recap of this year’s commencement exercises. Copy this link in your search bar: law.nccu.edu/commencement-exercises/

A TRIBUTE TO NCCU School of Law Judges

On August 31, 2017, The Supreme Court of North Carolina honored African-American justices of the Supreme Court during a historic celebration at the Supreme Court Law and Justice Building.

Our very own **G. K. Butterfield '74** and **Michael R. Morgan '79** were among those honored at this event of the courts 200-year history.

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW *Proudly Honors* ALUMNI JUDGES PAST AND PRESENT



Picture originally from NCAOC

From top, left to right: Justices Michael R. Morgan, Patricia Timmons-Goodson, Cheri Lynn Beasley, James A. Wynn, Jr., Chief Justice Henry E. Frye and G. K. Butterfield were honored on August 31, 2017.

2016 - 2017 APPOINTMENTS

Supreme Court Judges

Michael R. Morgan '79

Superior Court Judges

Vinston M. Rozier Jr. '01

District Court Judges

Larry D. Brown, Jr. '08
Shamieka Rhinehart '01
Amanda Maris '06

► NEW CHANCELLOR PROMISES BRIGHT FUTURE

The Promise of Twelve

Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D., was elected as the 12th Chancellor of North Carolina Central University on June 26, 2017. He was appointed interim chancellor in January 2017 after serving in the role of acting chancellor since August 2016. In these positions, Dr. Akinleye worked to expand the university's academic partnerships, including new agreements with community colleges, as well as introduced to the campus a robust online, distance-education program, NCCU Online. He also created K-12 initiatives and implemented a security strategy to increase safety for campus constituents.

Dr. Akinleye arrived at NCCU in February 2013 to serve as provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs. In that role, he established the Office of Faculty Professional Development and the Office of eLearning, successfully increased fulltime student enrollment and expanded the university's degree offerings. He led the development of NCCU's 2016-2021 Academic Strategic Plan aimed at raising the university's national and international academic profile.

Prior to his arrival at NCCU, Dr. Akinleye served as associate vice chancellor for Academic Programs and associate vice chancellor for External Programs at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW). While at UNCW, he expanded distance education and online programs through a public-private partnership with the company Academic Partnerships. Consequently, UNCW was the first public university in North Carolina to launch such an innovative online venture.

As interim dean, he consolidated one school and two departments—the School of Nursing and the departments of Health and Applied Human Sciences and Social Work—to create the College of Health and Human Services at UNCW.

Dr. Akinleye is a passionate advocate for student academic success. Throughout his career, he has participated in many projects at the university and national levels designed to facilitate student graduation and retention. He has attended and participated in the White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. He chaired the committee that helped create programs such as an early warning system, student-to-student and student-to-faculty mentoring that make retention and graduation a community

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Johnson O. Akinleye, Ph.D.

Dr. Akinleye is a passionate advocate for **student academic success**. Throughout his career, he has participated in many projects at the university and national levels designed to **facilitate student graduation** and retention.

The **EAGLE**
PROMISE
NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

commitment that engages and utilizes the talents and resources of all who work for the university.

Dr. Akinleye has attended several trainings and conferences focused on federal and legislative regulations and accreditation, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' (SACS) Committee Chairs Breakfast Roundtable. He also has served as chairman of On-Site Reaffirmation Committees for SACS. Additionally, he has participated in White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Dr. Akinleye has chaired a committee to create academic early-warning systems and mentoring programs for struggling college students.

He holds a bachelor's degree in telecommunications and a master's degree in media technology from Alabama A&M University, as well as a doctorate in human communications studies from Howard University. He has attended numerous leadership training programs, such as the Fellow in the Millennium Leadership Initiative (MLI) Institute sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Harvard Graduate School of Education for Leadership,



Courtesy of NCCU Public Relations

Management, and Administration of Higher Education, and the Rust Administrative Academy for Faculty Administration and Management of Higher Education.

As the new chancellor, Dr. Akinleye has six strategic priorities outlined for the university which he defines as The Eagle Promise. A new logo was unveiled at the 2017 University Conference lending imagery to the

new strategic plan.

Outside of his academic career, Dr. Akinleye is well known as a motivational speaker, consultant, writer, editor and documentarian who has produced works for independent and government agencies, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). He is also active in civic, cultural and church-related organizations and business advisory groups. He serves on the boards of Made in Durham and Step Up Durham.

Dr. Akinleye is married to Juanita Akinleye, a registered nurse, and they have two adult children, Nikki and Peter.

Strategic Priorities of Chancellor Johnson O. Akinleye



IMMIGRANT DEMISE



Detained immigrants are searched after being captured by U.S. Border Patrol agents on August 16, in Roma, Texas. Border security has become a main issue in the U.S. under the new White House administration. The president initially promised to “build a wall,” at Mexico’s expense to fortify the U.S.-Mexico border.

In response to a presidential TWEET in August...The Mexican government again stressed its position that it will not pay for the proposed border wall.

Aug 28, 2017 ... The Mexican government again stressed its position that it will not pay for President Donald Trump’s proposed border wall.

IMMIGRANT DEFENSE

NCCU Law Clinical Assistant Professor Scott Holmes, who supervises the Civil Litigation Clinic and teaches Restorative Justice, wrote in this abstract about how Durham police use the charge of resisting arrest as a form of racial control.

Resisting Arrest and Racism - The Crime of “Disrespect”



Not all officers behave this way. Some of them do not stretch their authority to its limits, and then assert their power in arrogant disrespect. Unfortunately, some defenders of this police behavior minimize this symptom of systemic racialized oppression by individualizing the

problem—police misconduct is a matter of “a few bad apples,” they say. These apologists forget the full aphorism, “a few bad apples spoil the barrel.” This behavior is not the result of a few “bad apples,” it is police power used to control people of color, rather than keeping communities safe.

A suspected immigrant in Arizona or a black male cycling the streets of Durham; and numerous others who dot the U.S. landscape in varying shades of color experience similar injustices. Holmes’ analysis shines a glaring light on this class and color-based dilemma in his article.

This kind of situation happens repeatedly in my community and around the country, sometimes with deadly consequences. It deserves careful attention and understanding from multiple points of view. It is layered with psychology, history, culture, economics, politics, and the law. The fundamental values at stake are described as “respect” or “trust” concerns of “officer safety” and “racial profiling,” “equal protection of the law.” Although people can demonstrate respect even when there is none, police can only earn real respect over time with demonstrated fair treatment and professional integrity.

—C. SCOTT HOLMES

A Fond Farewell to Charles E. Smith

Professor Charles E. Smith was showered with well wishes during a retirement celebration on the evening of June 10 at the Doubletree Suites Hotel by Hilton. Dean Craig-Taylor and the Office of Development and Alumni Relations welcomed the exuberant guests who filled the venue to capacity. Professor Brenda Reddix-Small lauded her predecessor for establishing an impressive and unshakable foundation in the areas of intellectual property, and patent and trademark law for countless students. Smith was also noted for trailblazing the field for African American lawyer's in this area. Guests speakers included former students,

Stephen Redmon '87, senior legal advisor and organizational transformation coach, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Dale Davis '04, executive counsel, Intellectual Property, GE Power-Gas Power System, Greenville, S.C.; and Robert Raynor, Jr. '81, a practicing attorney in New Bern, N.C.

Each speaker described Smith as visionary, selfless, and generous of his time, means and wisdom. Those sentiments were echoed in compelling remarks from faculty members Irving Joyner and Fred Williams. Dean Craig-Taylor drew laughter from the room when she humorously gestured to Smith,

that the law school would look forward to his return with the incoming new chancellor.

Professor Smith's family and friends enjoyed an entertaining and festive evening filled with expressions of gratitude for his longstanding dedication, and contributions.



Pro Bono Director Page Potter retires after 15 years

After nearly 15 years, Page Potter stepped down as director of the Pro Bono Program on July 31. Potter started at NCCU Law in Fall 2002 as half-time assistant

director of Academic Support and half-time pro bono coordinator; she became full-time pro bono coordinator in Fall 2005, when additional full-time positions were added in academic support, and Pro Bono Director in 2007.

Prior to 2002, the Pro Bono Program consisted of the one-credit Pro Bono Clinic

course, the one-credit Street Law course, and the VITA project. It was headed by Lydia Lavelle, who also served as assistant dean for Student Services and director of alumni relations. Over the years the program has grown to encompass as many as 15 pro bono projects each year, including VITA, the Innocence Project, Elder Law Project, Driver's License Restoration Project, Legal Aid Ambassadors, Legal Aid Expunctions Clinics, the Citizen Schools Mock Trial Apprenticeship, Lawyers 4 Literacy, Lawyer on the Line, Truancy Court, and Teens N Transition. NCCU Law pro bono projects received the N.C. Bar Association's Student Group Pro Bono Award in 2011, 2012, and 2016. Potter continued to teach the Pro Bono Clinic course, renamed the Public

Interest Externship in 2012, and the Street Law course each semester, and starting in summer 2006 also directed the Legal Eagle Law Camp for middle and high school students each summer.

Potter is looking forward to working part-time, taking courses at the North Carolina Botanical Garden, and of course, volunteering. She says, "It has been a privilege and an honor to work with my talented, dedicated and respected NCCU Law colleagues and with such wonderful students, and to help forward the uniquely important mission of NCCU School of Law. I treasure the relationships I have made here and will always be proud to count myself one of the Legal Eagle family."

Law School Launches New Immigration Course

By Kimberly Cogdell Grainger | PROFESSOR OF LAW

North Carolina Central University School of Law purposefully remains on the forefront of current issues affecting the local, state and national community. Related to this, a new course was developed entitled Immigration Law and Social Justice.

This course is a part of the Justice in the Practice of Law Certificate Program offered by the law school. The course covers issues specific to obtaining legal status, citizenship, asylum and refugee status, with a particular emphasis on immigrants of color. The course was offered for the first time in the summer of 2017 and was taught by Professor Kimberly Cogdell Grainger. Students in the course were particularly interested in how they could contribute to the challenges faced by immigrants in North Carolina.

An additional focus for the School of Law is creating practice-ready attorneys. This is consistent with the new requirement of the American Bar Association for students to participate in experiential learning during law school.

Students in the class conducted legal research, prepared client communications and drafted legal documents for sample clients in



Shown here are 2Ls Joseph Garcia, Iris Morales, and Professor Kimberly Cogdell Grainger

similar fashion to what they would perform as practicing attorneys. A major aspect of the course was a workshop entitled Immigration 101, which was sponsored in conjunction with the Virtual Justice Project.

Students in the course developed handouts for the workshop that informed participants about the process for obtaining legal status. Guest speakers included representatives from Pisgah Legal Services, BB&T community outreach, and the Mexican Consulate.

NCCU School of Law will continue to be a leader in responding to the pressing issues of our time.

Alumni News

'Students Defend DACA' Panel Shines a Light on Local Dreamers

By Kaylee Sciacca | **CAMPUS ECHO ONLINE**
October 3, 2017

Raíces Latino/Hispanic Organization hosted "Students Defend DACA," a panel discussion with professionals, community members and N.C. Central University students, in the NCCU School of Law on September 26.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a type of administrative relief from deportation meant to protect young undocumented immigrants that entered the country illegally. The program, which is subject to renewal every two years, provides those enrolled with a work permit and protection from deportation.

The policy was established by the Obama administration in June 2012 and rescinded by the Trump administration in September 2017. By that time, more than 785 thousand Dreamers (the informal title for those enrolled) had been granted approval.

The event, hosted in conjunction with Águilas Afro-Latino, Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc. and Phi Beta Sigma, Inc., allowed both policy and personal questions to be posed to the panel. The panel itself was facilitated by Office of Diversity and Inclusion director Emily Guzman.

NCCU Law professor Irving L. Joyner, was the evening's keynote speaker.



Members of Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc. and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. pose with the Panelists (Left) from 'Students Defend DACA' on Tuesday, Sept. 26. Photo By Kaylee Sciacca/Echo Co-Editor-In-Chief.

"Those in power are serving the will of others and not our will," Joyner said before the panel began. "They are going to continue to do that until you become enraged, until you become organized, and go out there and kick them out of office."

"I really hope that Congress, under the gun (of presidential pressure) gets to do something. It's not a partisan issue." **North Carolina Justice Center** representative and attorney Raul Pinto said when asked about what he hopes government will do to lessen the impact of rescinding DACA for its recipients. "You've seen the bills that have come out addressing DACA recipients and trying to provide a more permanent protection for them from both the Republican and Democratic parties. It shouldn't be a controversy to do the right thing."



Alumni Giving



NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

We would like to share some exciting news about the decision to enhance our planned giving program through our agreement with N.C. Gift Planning, LLC. Under this new agreement, N.C. Gift Planning, LLC will issue life income gifts such as Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRT's) and Charitable Gift Annuities (CGA's) on behalf of NCCU School of Law. This will be a major addition to our fundraising program.

Other Ways to Give

■ Remainder Trust

A charitable remainder trust (CRT) is an irrevocable trust that generates a potential income stream for you, as the donor to the CRT, or other beneficiaries, with the remainder of the donated assets going to School of Law or other favorite charities.

■ Gift Annuity

A charitable gift annuity is a way to make a gift to support North Carolina Central University School of Law. You simply transfer cash or property to NCCU School of Law and in exchange, we promise to pay fixed payments to you for life. The payment can be quite high depending on your age, and a portion of each payment may even be tax-free.

■ Bequest

A bequest is one of the easiest gifts to make. With the help of an attorney, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift to be made to family, friends or North Carolina Central University School of Law as part of your estate plan, or you can make a bequest using a beneficiary designation form.

Our Areas of Greatest Needs

■ Annual Fund

The School of Law's annual fund enables alumni and friends to support academic programming, scholarships, fourteen clinics and student life. The cumulative impact of our generous donors is staggering. Giving to NCCU School of Law every year ensures that the annual fund impact is continuous and consistent.

■ Scholarship

The ability to attract and support the best and the brightest students, regardless of their financial circumstances, is of the utmost importance to the law school. In the past year, we have doubled the amount of money raised for scholarships, and we will continue to do even more. To help create scholarships for these deserving students, please make a gift today.

■ Bar Prep

The School of Law offers several courses and workshops that focus on substantive areas frequently tested on the bar exam, as well as, strategies proven to help increase bar passage. Our commitment extends post-graduation and is designed to meet the needs of our graduates. We endeavor to remove any obstacles during the summer so that our students can be laser focused on preparing for the bar exam. The Bar Prep Fund affords us that opportunity.

Please give us a call at 919-530-7400 if you would like further information about these exciting giving opportunities.

SAVE THE DATE : Alumni Weekend
Thursday, May 10 – Sunday, May 11, 2018

For more information, contact the NCCU School of Law Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving at 919.530.5386.

Memorials

Remembering Attorney Jamie Wilkerson (1980-2017)

Warren County's First County
Attorney

From Staff Reports | WARREN RECORD



**North Carolina Central University (NCCU) School of Law
Adjunct Legal Writing Professor.**

The daughter of Warren County educators the late James and Carole Wilkerson, Wilkerson graduated from Warren County High School in 1998. There, she was a member of the National Honor Society and pursued other interests including band, French Club and Health Occupations Students of America.

Wilkerson earned an undergraduate degree in English from Spelman College in Atlanta, and a master's degree in library science from North Carolina Central University in Durham. In 2011, Wilkerson graduated from law school with honors, passed the North Carolina State Bar Association examination, was sworn in as an attorney and opened a law practice in Warrenton.

Wilkerson worked as a media coordinator at a Henderson elementary school and WCHS before entering law school at NCCU in 2008. During law school, she served as a research assistant and tort tutor for professors and was staff editor of *The Law Review*.

As an attorney in her home county, she handled domestic cases, contracts and some criminal cases. Wilkerson also served as a legal writing specialist at NCCU, where she taught two undergraduate law courses.

Ironically, one of her library science professors was Cheryl Reddish, who now serves as Warren County Memorial Library director.

Wilkerson also had an opportunity to tell 9th District Court Judge Quon Bridges how his career day speech had influenced her.

She had been operating her home practice for several years when Warren County government opened the application process for an in-house county attorney early last year. Wilkerson knew that she had to apply.

"I wanted to serve Warren County in a different capacity," she said. "I would move into other areas of law. It would be challenging. That's what I look for in work."

Wilkerson said that she was ecstatic and thankful when she learned that she had received the appointment.

"The only downside was that I couldn't share this with my parents, but I shared it with my family," Wilkerson said. "They were thrilled."

FALLEN EAGLES



Marilyn R. Bissell '80 - Judge Bissell passed away on April 17, 2017 at her home in Aiken, S.C. She began her long and varied political career in 1972 in the N.C. General Assembly where she served four terms for Mecklenburg County. In 1977, she began Law School at NCCU and graduated in 1980 with a Juris Doctorate. She was admitted to the N.C. Bar and established a law practice in Charlotte. From 1980 to 1984 she served on the Mecklenburg County Commission. From 1984 until 1996 she served as a District Court Judge.



The Honorable Jesse Edgar Demps '82 - Judge Jesse Demps of Portsmouth, Va. passed away on April 15, 2017 in Norfolk. He worked as a Public Defender and Attorney in the Hampton Roads area for over 30 years. He also served on the bench as a judge in cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Accomack and Virginia Beach. He was well respected among the legal community far and wide. Jesse leaves behind a legacy of laughter and his love for his family, beautiful women, golf and good food.

Charles Bernard Miller '73 - The Rev. Charles Bernard Miller, 69, departed this life on Saturday, April 8, 2017 at Novant Hospital in Huntersville, N.C. after a long illness.



James Smith Whitlock III '14 - James Smith Whitlock III passed away on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at his home in Raleigh, N.C. He is survived by his mother, Nell; his father, Jim; his brother, Andrew; and his dog, Winston, and will be missed by his many family members and friends. James will always be remembered for his generosity and kind spirit.

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF LAW

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