William McClain’s career has been marked by success despite the odds, from his role as the first black city solicitor of a major U.S. city to becoming the first black common pleas court judge in Cincinnati. Now 97, McClain, ’37, reflects on lessons learned from a lifetime spent overcoming obstacles—all made possible, he says, by a simple “winning attitude.”

When I was young, there were not many professions open to a black man. You had to be a lawyer, doctor, dentist, or minister. Everything else had too many barriers. So I chose the law to break down racism, segregation, and discrimination in the legal profession.

I couldn’t change my black face or what I was born into, but I could change my future. I knew there was a positive way to win, no matter the obstacle.

There’s a duality in life. There’s a winter and a summer. There’s always a good and a bad, a sweet and a sour. Your challenge is to find the opposite to the negative. Sometimes, you can turn a negative into a positive.

The defining moment in my life was when I won the national oratory contest [the National Interstate Oratorical Association competition, held at Northwestern University on April 28, 1934]. I knew if I could win a national contest as a black youngster, with the background that I had, that I could achieve anything if I found a strategy to do it.

In law school, I was the only black student. I had to struggle. I studied by myself because I could not live on campus.

I always thought there was a vulnerable spot in the armor of my opponent. My challenge was to find that weakness.

I missed passing the bar exam by a few points the first time and didn’t have any funds to re-take it. But Theodore Berry, who would become the first black mayor of Cincinnati, had heard about me when I won the national oratory contest. So after I finished law school, I went to Cincinnati [where McClain took—and passed—the bar exam] to practice law with Ted. He became my benefactor and my angel.

By sitting in the second chair, I learned a lot. I did all the work that lawyers hate to do. I investigated cases, talked to witnesses, and did all the research for the city trial lawyer. I also studied all I could about municipal law.

I started my career by filing a civil rights suit. When I was filing the case in court, the common pleas judge said, “Other lawyers can fight the larger race problem. But you should fight the professional problem and break down discrimination within the law.”

Becoming a member of the bar made me feel like a first-class citizen. I was denied twice because of my race. When I got in, I’d broken down the final barrier of my profession.

Before I die, I hope to meet President Obama, because he’s had a winning attitude, too. I want to sit down and compare notes with him about how he was able to overcome the negative part of racism and make it positive to become the first black president of the United States. I’m sure we share some things in common.

I feel that you owe legacy. That’s why mentoring is important to me. It was the legacies I received from others that made me what I am. I’m repaying the past by helping those in the present with their futures.

I’ve had a fine life. I married a beautiful lady, and we’ve been married for 67 years. I thank God for giving me the strategy, courage, and ability to survive and make a contribution to life and to history.

In 1951, McClain became the first black member of the Cincinnati Bar Association. Besides holding positions as Cincinnati’s city solicitor and Hamilton County Common Pleas Court judge, he also served as judge and civil trial referee for the Municipal Court of Hamilton County. McClain is retired from the law firm of Manley Burke, a position held since 1980. He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor and the Great Living Cincinnatian Award. McClain received an honorary degree from the University of Michigan in 2002.
Chris Christ, one of the architects for merging Community and Leila Hospitals in Battle Creek, Michigan, was honored with the Michigan Health & Hospital’s 2010 Health Care Leadership Award.

The Class of 1961 reunion will be September 16-19, 2011.

Neil R. Mitchell of Salt Lake City was a visiting professor at the Udmurt State University in Izhevsk, Russia, in the autumn semester of 2010. He is semi-retired and a member of the Michigan, Illinois, Texas, and American Bar associations and the American Chemical Society.

The Class of 1966 reunion will be September 16-19, 2011.

Dr. Boris Kozolchyk was selected to speak on secured transactions reform at FinNet 2010 in October at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Senior District Judge Howard D. McKibben of the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada was honored at the 2010 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference and presented with the prestigious Ninth Circuit Professionalism Award from the American Inns of Court.

Lawrence Glazer re-examines the FBI’s investigation of John Swainson and delves into his 1975 trial in detail in his book, Wounded Warrior: The Rise and Fall of Michigan Governor John Swainson. He relates the little-known story of Swainson’s rehabilitation and return to public life as a historian.

Lee Hornberger, with the Arbitration and Mediation Office of Lee Hornberger in Traverse City, Michigan, was the featured speaker at the October 20 Community Mediation Services Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony in Gaylord, Michigan. His presentation focused on ethics in mediation.

The Class of 1969 reunion will be September 16-19, 2011.

The Hon. J. Richardson “Rick” Johnson, a circuit judge in Kalamazoo, Michigan, has received the first Judicial Excellence Award from the Michigan Judges Association.

Retired Air Force Colonel Richard J. Erickson has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Military Officers Association of America, the nation’s largest veterans’ organization for active duty, National Guard, Reserve, former, and retired officers and their families.


The Class of 1970 reunion will be September 16-19, 2011.

On October 4, 2010, the legal team of Stephen R. Drew and Adam C. Sturdivant, of the law firm Drew, Cooper & Anding in Grand Rapids, Michigan, won a sexual harassment/hostile work environment jury trial against Consumers Energy. They represented the plaintiff, Theresa Wald, and after a two-week trial, the jury returned a verdict in favor of the plaintiff in the amount of $7.9 million in a 7–1 decision.

Bruce F. Howell, counsel to the law firm of Bryan Cave LLP in Dallas, has been elected chair of the Health Law Section of the State Bar of Texas.

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Bruce F. Howell, counsel to the law firm of Bryan Cave LLP in Dallas, has been elected chair of the Health Law Section of the State Bar of Texas.
Daniel P. Ducore received a 2009 Presidential Rank Award from President Obama for Meritorious Service in the Senior Executive Service. He is an assistant director in the Federal Trade Commission’s Bureau of Competition, and is in charge of enforcing the FTC’s competition orders.

The Class of 1976 reunion will be September 16-19, 2011.

Patrick E. Mears, chair of Barnes & Thornburg LLP’s Finance, Insolvency & Restructuring Department, and fellow law partner John T. Gregg, recently collaborated on two significant book projects for the bankruptcy and insolvency industry. They coauthored a chapter entitled “Chapter 11 Cases Involving Automotive Suppliers and their Customers” for the Collier Guide to Chapter 11: Key Topics and Selected Industries and coauthored the book Michigan Security Interests in Personal Property.

Joanne R. Lax, a member of Dykema Gossett’s Health Care practice group in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, has been reappointed as a vice chair of the American Health Lawyers Association Long-Term Care, Senior Housing, In-Home Care, and Rehabilitation Practice Group for the 2010–2011 year.

Eric Martin of Indianapolis has been named president and chief executive officer of Music for All Inc., one of the nation’s leading advocates for the arts and producer of events for high school bands and orchestras.

Mark A. Filippell has written the Mergers and Acquisitions Playbook (Wiley, 2010), which provides practical tricks of the trade on how to get maximum value for a middle-market business. He is co-founder and managing director at Western Reserve Partners, a mergers and acquisitions investment banking boutique in Cleveland.

Jay A. Kennedy has been named partner with Warner Norcross & Judd LLP. His primary practice area is corporate tax planning in the Southfield, Michigan, office.

The Minneapolis-based law firm of Gray Plant Mooty is pleased to announce that The Minnesota State Bar Association Tax Law Section has honored shareholder William D. Klein with its Distinguished Service Award.

President Obama has nominated Terry Lewis to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Lewis is the principal of LIA Advisors, LLC, a private consulting firm providing advisory services in housing and community economic development.

Susan Segal, the Minneapolis city attorney, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the International Municipal Lawyers Association, an organization with 2,500 members across the United States and Canada. She is in her second term as Minneapolis city attorney.

G.A. Finch, a senior partner at Hoogendoorn & Talbot LLP in Chicago, recently was appointed to the board of directors of the Chicago Bar Foundation, the advisory board of the John Marshall Law School Center for Real Estate Law, and the advisory board of Victoria Court Reporting Service Inc.

Ron Heller has been appointed to the Land Use Commission of the State of Hawaii. He continues to practice law with the Torikildson Katz firm in Honolulu. Recently, he also completed his first Tinman Triathlon.

Iris K. Linder has joined Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC as a shareholder in the law firm’s Lansing, Michigan, office. She joins the firm’s Business and Corporate Practice Group and her practice focuses extensively on corporate and securities work.

Guy E. Whitesman, partner and chair of the Business & Tax Division of Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A., has become chair of the Tax Section of The Florida Bar.
Houck Leads Navy JAG Corps’ Diverse Practice

By Sandra Svoboda

He runs a law firm with 2,300 employees and is the top administrator for trial and appellate court systems that operate around the world, every moment of every day.

Some of the attorneys who report to him advise commanders and senior policymakers about how to achieve military objectives. Others, such as prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges, argue or decide cases of military justice. Still more of his staff help sailors and their families with legal aid.

“There hasn’t been a day in the 25 years that I’ve been serving on active duty as a Navy lawyer that I haven’t gotten up and felt good about the cause I’m serving,” says Vice Admiral James Houck, ’85, who since August 2009 has been the U.S. Navy’s Judge Advocate General (JAG), the top lawyer in that branch of the military.

In the time since he crossed the Quadrangle at Michigan Law, geopolitical forces have changed and so has some of the work the JAG corps performs. Many of the hundreds of JAG attorneys stationed around the world serve on ships at sea as they always have, but today, others are “literally with boots on the ground,” as Houck describes it, in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Horn of Africa. They not only execute their traditional role of advising military commanders but also ensure that the rule of law is followed.

Far from the U.S./Soviet–dominated Cold War of the past, a much more diffuse arena with legal naval operations now takes place on battlefields, in the capitol buildings of countries struggling to promote new governments, and in hearing rooms for detainees from distant fronts.

“The biggest change would be the United States’ role as a partner as opposed to a unilateral actor on the world stage,” Houck says.

His work as a judge advocate has taken him around the world—his tours have included Bahrain and other parts of the Middle East—and he has lived in several United States locales, including Washington, D.C. As the U.S. Navy’s top lawyer, he oversees roughly 2,300 people: attorneys, active duty personnel, paralegals, reservists, and civilian employees among them.

“I’ve had the chance to be a legal advisor to a number of U.S. Navy fleet commanders, to work on Capitol Hill in the office of legislative affairs, to be a strategic planner, and to be a prosecutor and defense attorney,” Houck says. “It keeps you professionally alive in the sense that you have to really invest yourself in these experiences.”

A native of State College, Pennsylvania, Houck graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and then qualified as a surface warfare officer aboard the USS Caron. Through the Navy’s Law Education Program he attended Michigan Law, where he earned his J.D., and he later earned a master of laws in international and comparative law from the Georgetown University Law Center.

He credits his Ann Arbor education with opening his view of the world, allowing him to learn about personal interactions and interpretations of events that have helped him with the critical thinking required in his profession.

“I think the real value of my experience at Michigan was the way it exposed me as a military officer to a very diverse range of thinking from my professors, from my classmates. It was the diversity of the points of view that was a broadening experience for me as a military officer,” Houck said. “People can have very divergent points of view on a topic that at first glance may only seem to have one solution, and people can bring such differing points of view that it causes you to think about problems in a different way.”

He had a chance to reminisce with some current Michigan Law students who entered the JAG’s moot court competition in 2010. “I was thrilled about that, but I was even more thrilled when they actually won the competition,” Houck says.

Houck, now 53, will retire after his three-year JAG stint.
Verse and Versatility

Now, what type of animal asks after facts?
—so I’m a lawyer. Maybe charming,
direct yet as circumspect as any other lawyer
going on about concrete forces of civil
society substantially beyond anyone’s grasp
and about money, …

—Lawrence Joseph, “Admissions Against Interest”

For Lawrence Joseph, ’75, the seemingly disparate worlds of poetry and the law fit well together, just as they once did for the American modernist poet Wallace Stevens. Joseph is the author of six widely acclaimed books—five books of poetry, and Lawyerland, a book of prose. As a lawyer, he currently is the Tinnelly Professor of Law at St. John’s University School of Law in New York City.

Now, the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library has acquired his literary, professional, and personal papers, which will be housed at the Hatcher Graduate Library.

For Joseph, it is the latest honor in a long and successful career. His journey began in Detroit, where he was born; his grandparents—Lebanese and Syrian Catholics—were among the first Arab American emigrants to Detroit in the early years of the last century. The city, with its hard edges and burned wreckage, would inform his poetry for decades to come.

“I write of Detroit, which I use metaphorically as being emblematic of a number of things: labor and capital, race, violence,” he said in a recent speech. He has written of tool and die factories, Hamtramck, Highland Park, of the 1967 riots, of a junkie shooting and wounding his father at his store in 1970.

Joseph earned a B.A. in English literature at U-M in 1970, and won first prize in poetry in the Hopwood Awards. A Power Foundation Fellow at the University of Cambridge, he received a B.A. and M.A. in English language and literature, then attended Michigan Law.

Here, he met some of his major influences, such as then-Dean Theodore St. Antoine, ’54, who taught Joseph’s labor law class in the spring of 1974. He says St. Antoine, as well as Professors Joseph Sax, Joseph Vining, and Yale Kamisar, “are as professionally important to me as anyone in my life.”

Detroit beckoned Joseph home again after he earned his degree from Michigan Law, first as a clerk for Justice G. Mennen Williams, ’36, of the Michigan Supreme Court, later as a professor at the University of Detroit Law School. In 1981, Joseph moved to New York City, where he practiced law at the firm of Shearman & Sterling before becoming a professor at St. John’s University School of Law. He teaches courses on labor and employment law, jurisprudence, tort and compensation law, and law and interpretation, and has written and lectured in these areas.

New York City also has become an integral part of Joseph’s work, particularly after the World Trade Center attacks of 2001, which occurred just a block from his apartment. “There are few writers toiling on the edges of ground zero better equipped to express what happened,” noted a New York Times writer.

Joseph’s writing has been honored by two major symposia, “The Lawyerland Essays” (Vol.101, Columbia Law Review, November 2001), and, more recently, “Some Sort of Chronicler I Am: Narration and the Poetry of Lawrence Joseph” (Vol. 77, Cincinnati Law Review, Spring 2009). His latest book, The Game Changed: Essays and Other Prose, will be published this year by the University of Michigan Press. In one of the essays, “Being in the Language of Poetry, Being in the Language of Law,” he weaves together his two professions with references to court cases such as Sierra Club v. Morton and Laird v. Tatum, along with excerpts from several of his poems.

Joseph also includes in the essay this quote from his predecessor in the fields of law and poetry, Wallace Stevens: “…I don’t have a separate mind for legal work and another for writing poetry. I do each with my whole mind, just as you do everything that you do with your whole mind.”—KV
1982

Thomas E. Cavalier of Barris, Sott, Denn & Driker in Detroit has been elected chair of the Litigation Section for the State Bar of Michigan for the 2010–2011 term. He has been actively involved with the Litigation Section Council since 1999.

David Lauth has joined UnitedHealth Group in Minnetonka, Minnesota, as senior associate general counsel, employment law. UHG, a Fortune 25 company, is one of the nation's largest health insurers. Lauth previously was a partner with Dorsey & Whitney LLP in Minneapolis, where he was a member of the Labor and Employment Group.

Butzel Long attorney and shareholder Daniel B. Tukel recently was inducted as a fellow to The College of Labor and Employment Lawyers. Based in Butzel Long’s Detroit office, he is chair of the firm’s Labor and Employment Law Department.

1983

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a new comprehensive tobacco control strategy, “Ending the Tobacco Epidemic: A Tobacco Control Strategic Action Plan.” Cliff Douglas, lecturer in the U-M School of Public Health’s department of health management and policy, and director of the University’s Tobacco Research Network, co-chaired the working group that developed the plan and will participate in the plan’s implementation.

Mark G. Malven, the leader of Dykema Gossett’s Technology Transactions Practice in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, has been elected chairman of the Information Technology Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

1984

John R. Mussman has joined the Financial Services Regulatory Group of Reed Smith LLP as counsel in its Chicago office. He will bolster the firm’s representation of banks and other financial services industry clients by advising them on changes in federal and state banking law.

Michael C. Blaney has joined Winstead PC in Houston as a shareholder in the Corporate, Securities/Mergers, and Acquisitions practice group.

Butzel Long attorney and shareholder Robert A. Boonin was elected treasurer of the Labor and Employment Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

1985

Butzel Long attorney and shareholder George Tzametopoulos has joined Baker Hostetler’s Chicago office as a partner in its Litigation Group.

Stanley Jaskiewicz of Pennsylvania and his son Peter were featured in a book, Get Out, Explore, and Have Fun! How Families of Children with Autism or Asperger Syndrome Can Get the Most out of Community Activities, by Lisa Rudy (Jessica Kingsley, 2010).

1986

The Class of 1986 reunion will be September 23-25, 2011.

1987

Michael S. Ashton of Fraser Trebilcock in Lansing, Michigan, was elected as treasurer of the Administrative and Regulatory Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

James F. Scales has become a member of the law firm of Mika Meyers Beckett & Jones PLC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He practices in the areas of estate planning, municipal, real estate, construction, and property tax.

Mary Jo Newborn Wiggins, associate dean for academic affairs and a professor of law at the University of San Diego School of Law, has been named the Class of 1975 Endowed Professor by the university. She also recently coauthored Questions & Answers: Bankruptcy with bankruptcy judge Bruce A. Markell.

1988

President Obama has appointed Marty Castro to be a commissioner on the United States Commission on Civil Rights. He is the president of Castro Synergies, LLC, which provides strategic consulting services to corporations, entrepreneurs, and nonprofit organizations. In 2009, he was appointed to chair the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

1989

Raymond I. Bruttomesso Jr. has been elected a shareholder of the Devine Millimet law firm, which has offices in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. He is a member of the firm’s Intellectual Property Practice Group.
1991

**The Class of 1991 reunion will be September 23-25, 2011.**

David E. Christensen, a partner with Gursten, Kolotonow, Gursten, Christensen and Raitt, P.C. in Farmington Hills, Michigan, has been elected to serve as the chairperson of the Negligence Section of the State Bar of Michigan during 2010–11.

Michael Haddad has been elected president of the National Police Accountability Project for 2011. He is a civil rights–trial lawyer in his firm, Haddad & Sherwin, in Oakland, California. His law partner is his wife, Julia Sherwin.

1992

Liesel Brand Stevens has become a shareholder/director of Ray Quinney & Nebeker in Salt Lake City. She continues to practice in the areas of employment and commercial litigation.

1993

Alyssa A. Grikscheit has joined Sidley Austin LLP as a partner in the Latin America and investment funds, advisers, and derivatives practices. She will be based in the New York office and will focus on cross-border transactions and alternative investment funds.

Kevin O’Gorman has been elected division chair of the American Bar Association Section of International Law. He is a partner at Fulbright & Jaworski LLP in Houston, practices international arbitration and litigation, and also serves as arbitrator.

1994

Dominic Cianciolo, cinematic director for NetherRealm Studios, is finishing production on in-game cinematics for the reboot of the video game Mortal Kombat. This is his second Mortal Kombat title, including the 2008 bestseller Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe. He also co-wrote the script for the upcoming game’s cinematics, his first major video game screenwriting credit.

Anthony R. Comden has joined Miller Johnson in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the firm’s Employment and Labor Section.

Peter Hardy recently published a legal treatise through BNA Books regarding the litigation of criminal tax, money laundering, and Bank Secrecy Act cases. Criminal Tax, Money Laundering, and Bank Secrecy Act Litigation draws in part on his experience as a former federal prosecutor and current defense attorney.

1995

Andrew W. and Danielle B. Mayoras are coauthors of Trial & Heirs: Famous Fortune Fights! (Wise Circle Books, 2009), which helps people learn from celebrity errors so they can protect their heirs. Andrew is a probate attorney and Danielle is an estate planning attorney. Both are shareholders with Barron, Rosenberg, Mayoras & Mayoras, P.C. in Troy, Michigan.

1996

**The Class of 1996 reunion will be September 23-25, 2011.**

Nathaniel Cade Jr., a partner in Michael Best’s Litigation Practice Group and co-chair of the firm’s Tort Liability Practice Group in Milwaukee, was appointed to serve a three-year term on the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility. Cade previously served a similar role on the State Bar of Wisconsin’s Professional Ethics Standing Committee for seven years, including three as chair.

Thomas B. Cochrane joined the Ohio Northern University College of Law faculty as adjunct professor teaching labor law. He continues to serve as associate general counsel to the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, AFSCME Local 11, in Westerville, Ohio.

Linda Colfax was elected to the San Francisco Superior Court bench in the June 2010 citywide election. On January 3, 2011, after serving over 13 years as a San Francisco Public Defender, she was sworn in and began her new role as a Superior Court judge.

Rafael R. Lagos was appointed as an associate justice of the Sandiganbayan (court of appeals) by the president of the Philippines, Benigno S. Aquino III.

Ariella Nasuti has written a novel, *The Ninth Wave* (Smashwords, 2010). The novel grew out of an independent study about Irish land tenure that she did with the late Professor A. W. Brian Simpson at Michigan Law.

Miller Johnson attorney D. Andrew Portinga in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been appointed chair of the United States Courts Committee for the 2010–11 bar year by the State Bar of Michigan.

1997

Jennifer Cass Barnes was appointed to replace retiring Judge Scott Newcombe on Michigan’s 74th District Court for the second half of 2010.
An Unplanned Road to International Trade Law

By Pat Materka

If Susan Esserman, ’77, had known that she would serve as Deputy United States Trade Representative during the Clinton Administration, she certainly would have taken the international trade law course taught by Professor John H. Jackson, ’59.

“Michigan was one of the few schools in the country to offer it, and by the leading authority in what would become my field,” she recalls with amusement. “John and I participated on a panel together at the Law School’s 150th Anniversary celebration [in 2009] and had to laugh at the irony.”

Back in the 1970s, Esserman expected to become a civil liberties lawyer. She finished an externship at the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, D.C., working on women’s rights, and a clerkship at the U.S. District Court, where she had the opportunity to work on a large antitrust matter. She sought to pursue that interest after joining the law firm of Steptoe & Johnson, where she now is a partner, chair of the International Department, and a member of the firm’s Executive Committee.

“Antitrust is the thread that led me into international trade,” she explains. “I love the area because it is a blend of law, politics, policy, and economics. The field is continually evolving, as longstanding trade tensions and disputes arise in new contexts and World Trade Organization rules have extended to new areas not previously covered by international disciplines.”

Her practice is focused in three areas: helping U.S. companies to navigate the regulatory barriers they face in foreign markets, particularly in India and China; assisting foreign companies to expand their participation in the U.S. market; and representing U.S. and foreign companies in trade litigation.

While some people immediately link India with outsourcing, Esserman takes a broader perspective. “India is a very important strategic ally. Our countries have so much in common in terms of democratic ideals and cultural heritage. India is a rapidly growing market that presents huge opportunities for American exporters. Plus, Indian companies have invested significantly in the U.S., creating thousands of American jobs. Outsourcing is a very small part of the relationship.”

Esserman’s expertise in international trade led to her appointment as assistant secretary of commerce for import administration and later to three additional senior positions: general counsel to the U.S. Trade Representative, general counsel at the Department of Commerce, and deputy U.S. trade representative.

As deputy U.S. trade representative—the second-ranking official at USTR, with the standing of Ambassador—she was responsible for developing U.S. trade policy and negotiations in the World Trade Organization and with Europe, India, Russia and the former Soviet Union, Africa, and the Middle East.

“I loved representing the United States,” she says. “It was a thrill, actually, to serve the country in an international forum.”

In addition to her international trade and regulatory practice, Esserman continues her interest in nonprofit matters. She is a managerial trustee of the International Association of Women Judges, an organization that aims to protect and empower women through the judicial system. She also sits on the boards of the U.S.-India Business Council and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. She and her husband, Andrew Marks, ’76, a partner at the D.C. firm of Crowell and Moring, have three sons.

She enjoys close ties with the Law School, where she has been a guest lecturer and is an advisory board member to the Directors College for Global Business and Law. “Openness to the world is critical to every segment of practice,” she tells students. “‘International’ developments do not just affect the international trade and international law areas. They affect literally every practice area from corporate law to arbitration.”

And drawing from her own experience, she adds: “Keep an open mind about your practice focus. You may wind up in a place you never expected.”

Project to Update the Alumni Printed Directory

Michigan Law is working with its partner, Publishing Concepts Inc. (PCI), in an effort to update alumni contact information. This is a project that most law schools undertake approximately every five years. This new directory will be the Law School’s 12th edition.

Over the next few months, all graduates will receive a postcard from PCI requesting that alumni contact the PCI call center. During the call, alumni will be asked to update their contact (mailing address, e-mail, telephone, etc.) and professional information (job title, employer, and practice areas). Alumni may indicate what information is shown to fellow graduates and/or current students on the password-protected online directory (our AlumNetwork), and what data should remain concealed and only available to the Law School.

Many thanks in advance for your participation in this project. By updating your information, the Law School will be able to send you invitations to programs and events of particular interest to you. Most important, up-to-date alumni information provides you and your fellow alumni with the opportunity to connect and re-connect with one another.

Please call the Office of Alumni Relations if you have any questions or concerns: 734.615.4500.
The Swiss Parliament appointed Christopher Gasser—a partner in the intellectual property practice of the Zurich office of Staiger, Schwald & Partner Ltd.—part-time federal judge of the newly established Swiss Federal Patent Court.

Federal Patent Court.

eral judge of the newly established Swiss offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator.

The Four Ms. Bradwells, the One Ms. Clayton

Betts Zhukovski, ’82, and Mia Porter, ’82, shared a room in the N section of the Lawyers Club in their 1L year. Later, they moved into a house on Division Street along with Laney Weils and Ginger Cook Conrad. All summer starters, they met on their first day of Law School in May 1979 during a Constitutional Law class in Room 100 of Hutchins Hall. They drank coffee from Dominick’s and ate fragels and studied in the Arb or torts class.


The four main characters—Betts, Mia, Laney, and Ginger—are best friends since their years at Michigan Law who have been brought together by the Supreme Court confirmation hearing of Betts. The process uncovers a 30-year-old secret, and the old friends must find a way to deal with the exposure of the secret, which could derail Betts’s chances of serving on the High Court.

The characters aren’t based on anyone in particular, Clayton says, though their living situation is drawn from her own life (two characters live in N32, just as she and her roommate did during their 1L year, and they later join two other characters in a house on Division Street, just as Clayton and her roommate did in their 3L year). A real-life hot-tub/wine-tasting party also appears in fictionalized form in the book. And the island that is featured prominently in the novel is called Cook Island, named for Law Quad benefactor William W. Cook.

Her Michigan Law experiences also led to the title of the book. She found a mention of Bradwell v. State of Illinois—“I came across it in my old Constitutional Law textbook. Why I still have my Constitutional Law book, I don’t know.”

In the 1873 sex discrimination case, Myra Bradwell applied for admission to the Illinois Bar but was denied. U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Joseph P. Bradley wrote that the “natural and proper timidity and delicacy which belongs to the female sex evidently un-...
A Helping Hand for Haiti

By Lara Zielin

On January 24, 2010, 12 days after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake flattened southern Haiti, Hardy Vieux, J.D./M.P.P. ’97, found himself in the Dominican Republic staring west across the border into Haiti, facing chaos and devastation unmatched by anything he’d witnessed before.

“It was a cacophony of noise and sensory overkill,” Vieux says. “There were so many people—hurt, sick, destitute. Convoys were going in and out of the country kicking up dust. The smells are hard to describe. They were just . . . overwhelming. Guns were displayed openly but it’s not clear they belonged to anyone affiliated with an official institution. Folks just had weapons.”

Using the little Spanish he knew as well as Haitian Kreyol, Vieux was able to shepherd himself and his company of Family Health Ministries (FHM) volunteers—comprising mostly doctors—into the country. The doctors set up their medical practice immediately, their Hippocratic mission clear. Vieux might not have been medically trained, but his purpose was no less plain. He was going to do whatever it took to help his homeland.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, to Haitian parents, Vieux was back in Haiti by the age of seven months. “My parents were young, unemployed, and barely knew the English language,” says Vieux. “They decided my paternal grandmother should raise me.”

It was his grandmother, Vieux says, who instilled in him a sense of giving back that motivated his mission to Haiti, not to mention countless other volunteer and pro bono activities that have earned him, among other honors, the District of Columbia Bar Association’s 2010 Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year award.

When I was little, my grandmother, almost nightly, would go into the street and round up local women who had set up shop by day and at night had nowhere to go,” Vieux says. “They decided my paternal grandmother should raise me.”

The first of his family to attend college, Vieux graduated from Duke University in 1993, then came to Michigan, where he received joint law and public policy degrees.

This past January, in the middle of taking temperatures, weighing children, getting blood pressure readings, and doing general triage work outside Haiti’s FHM clinic (“they gave me just enough medical training to be dangerous,” Vieux jokes), Vieux was fielding calls on his Blackberry from clients back in Washington, D.C., where he is of counsel at Blank Rome LLP. “In the midst of all this suffering, I was getting e-mails about discovery disputes and I thought, I just can’t focus on this right now.”

With the help of his firm, Vieux was able to find that focus, which wasn’t the only way his firm assisted him during this time. Before his trip to Haiti, Blank Rome collected cash to buy supplies for Vieux’s trip, bought him a satellite phone, paid for his vaccinations, and supplied money for his family (Vieux lost five relatives in the quake). His firm has also prioritized pro bono work for its staff, enabling Vieux to spend hundreds of hours on cases that otherwise would not have a champion, including one in southwest Virginia, where Vieux worked to reduce the 35-year sentence of a teenager sent to prison for murder.

“Maybe I watched too much television growing up,” Vieux says, “but the image of To Kill a Mockingbird stood out for me. For many of us law students, it’s a quintessential image. For many lawyers, pro bono work is a significant part of what we do.”

Vieux is already planning a 10-day trip to Haiti in May of 2011 with FHM and a team of medically trained Duke alumni, despite recent cholera risks post–Hurricane Tomas, which slammed Haiti in November.

“That the country has fared as well as it has thus far is a testament to the people and probably a bit of a miracle,” Vieux says. “Nothing will impede me from returning or doing what I can. You make your peace with the risks.”
Working Toward the Greater Good, 30 Years Later

By Rebecca Freiligh

Last spring, on a windswept beach in North Carolina, a small group of Michigan Law alumni gathered together for the first time since 1979. They did what old friends usually do at beach houses: cooked meals together, walked, ran, read, kayaked, and played games (including a 1970s version of Trivial Pursuit put together for the occasion).

But this group shared a deeper commitment than leisure. In law school, they were participants in a student-led seminar about using the law for social change guided by David Chambers, now the Wade H. McCree Jr. Professor Emeritus of Law. They had come to law school, after all, vowing to help the poor and to make a difference in society. At Michigan they found like-minded people in the National Lawyers Guild, the ACLU, and Chambers’ seminar, which Travis Payne, ’78, calls “my favorite experience in law school and one of the most significant.” Reunited, they found they had kept their promises.

“I was really pleased to see how people in this group have maintained their commitment to doing things toward what we envision to be a greater good,” says Stuart Lev, ’78, who represents death-row prisoners in the federal public defender’s office in Philadelphia.

Each seminar participant has kept the faith in his or her own way. Two have been deeply involved in law reform: Steve Rosenbaum, ’78, in the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department, and Jim Morales, ’79, first with the National Center for Youth Law and now counsel to the San Francisco Redevelopment Authority.

Others have focused on helping individuals: Lev, the death-row defender; Bob Gillett, ’78, since 1983 the director of Legal Services of Southeast Michigan and who still represents clients; Sheila Haughey, ’79, a partner in a tiny Charlottesville, Virginia, firm, who calls her clients “ordinary people with ordinary and even extraordinary problems”; and Payne, owner of the 1955 Chevy Nomad that chauffeured the group to dinner, and partner in a two-man firm in Raleigh, North Carolina, that does worker’s compensation and personal injury litigation (to pay their bills) and civil rights and employment law (to feed their souls). Rick McHugh, ’78, is a staff attorney with the National Employment Law Project, and Morley Witus, 1978, a firm practitioner in Detroit, is president of the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association.

True to their commitment, most found the heart of the weekend in the meaty discussions set up by Gillett and Chambers, the event organizers. The group was astonished when Gillett produced the original papers and memos they wrote for the seminar. They dived into the first discussion topic, “Hanging in There, Getting By, Selling Out,” reviewing their professional lives and their feelings about their work. To Haughey’s delight, “It was almost like picking back up in Law School again.”

Gillett adds, “I was amazed at the depth and quality of the conversations. It really gave people the opportunity to reflect on their lives, in a way you don’t have a lot of opportunities to do.”

Between the fun activities, the friends continued their deep conversations, including a session on race and gender equity—issues significant in all their work—but another on how social change has itself changed in the last 30 years (these days, do you take your cause to the streets or Tweet about it?).

From the perspective of Chambers, himself a retiree (from legal education, though not, as a recent first-time novelist, from writing), one of the most interesting discussions had to do with retirement: Only one of the group expressed a plan to leave his current job. That may be partly about economics; public service salaries don’t make for plush or certain retirements. But Chambers, who for some 40 years conducted a longitudinal survey of Michigan alumni job satisfaction, thinks there is more to it. “There are three kinds of attitudes about going to work: it’s just a job, it’s a career, or it’s a calling. These people have a calling.”
Greg Rappleye, ’76, wrote poetry in high school. “But,” he observes, “I think everybody does that.” Unlike everybody, however, he returned to it decades later and has won prizes for his work.

Rappleye, who is corporation counsel for Ottawa County, Michigan, and teaches in Hope College’s English department, has published three books of poetry, completed a fourth manuscript, and drafted a novel. He received an M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College in 2000 and published two more books: A Path Between Houses (University of Wisconsin Press, 2000) and Figured Dark (University of Arkansas Press, 2007). His latest manuscript, Tropical Landscape with Ten Hummingbirds, draws on the life and work of 19th-century painter Martin Johnson Heade.

Rappleye’s legal writing and creative writing, seemingly at odds, have influenced each other. “What I learned from being a lawyer is don’t take criticism too personally, and don’t get so attached to what you’ve written,” he says. Writing poetry helps Rappleye to craft “really, really good resolutions” which, he observes, tend to “have a sonnet-like form.”

Rappleye’s poetry, lyrical yet unflinching, is permeated with images and metaphors of darkness and light. The poet’s fascination with these themes stems from his own struggles with macular degeneration and glaucoma. Yet, as he notes, “What a great metaphor.” In “Orpheus the Prophet,” a poem from his latest manuscript, he writes:

name one songbird, nestled at last among the darkening trees, who will not prophesy the night.

Darkness, Light, and Hummingbirds

By Clarissa Sansone

2001

The Class of 2001 reunion will be September 23-25, 2011.

Joseph E. Giles recently joined Barclays Capital in Chicago to help grow its Education and Business Services investment banking franchise. In his new role, he will work closely with companies in those two sectors, primarily advising on merger and acquisition transactions and a variety of equity and debt financings.

Samir Parikh recently joined the faculty of Northwestern Law School of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, as an assistant professor of law.

2002

Héctor Arangua has been named partner of Jáuregui, Navarrete y Nader, S.C. in Mexico City. His practice focuses on project finance, structured finance, mergers and acquisitions, and securities law for both Mexican and foreign clients.

Scott Hairston has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the Chicago office. He is a corporate attorney with a focus on mergers and acquisitions, corporate restructurings, and general company representation, with particular expertise with companies and transactions in the hospitality industry.

Matthew D. Johnson has been named partner with Warner Norcross & Judd LLP. He specializes in mergers and acquisitions, private security offerings, joint ventures, and related corporate matters in the Grand Rapids, Michigan, office.

Jordan L. Lipp has been named partner at Davis, Graham & Stubbs, LLP in Denver. He also was chosen as the Colorado Lawyer of the Year by the Colorado Civil Justice League, Colorado’s tort reform coalition.

Caroline Reckler has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the Chicago office. She is an insolvency attorney and has experience in a wide range of restructuring matters, both in- and outside of bankruptcy, including representations of private and public companies in all aspects of chapter 11 proceedings.

Michael Rielo has been named partner at Latham & Watkins in the New York office. He is a finance attorney specializing in corporate restructuring.
Varner, ’94, Appointed to State Board of Education

In the 2010 documentary Waiting for Superman, the filmmaker highlighted a failing educational system, mixed with some glimmers of hope. Daniel Varner, ’94, took a special interest in the film, which “shows that success can be achieved in the poorest of communities, so there is really no excuse for failure anywhere.”

Varner has developed that perspective during the past couple of decades, as co-founder of Think Detroit PAL—a partnership with the Detroit Police Department and community volunteers designed to build character in young people through athletic, academic, and leadership development programs—and as a program officer with the Education and Learning Team of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Now, he has moved onto a bigger stage for his thoughts about school reform: Then-Gov. Jennifer Granholm appointed Varner to the State Board of Education in October.

Obstacles to building a vibrant educational system, he says, have included fear of innovation, outdated assumptions about the lengths of the school day and the school year, inconsistent involvement by parents, ineffective school governance models, ill-prepared teachers, and collective bargaining agreements negotiated with teachers, among others. Assessments of learning can be extremely valuable, he notes, but current tests measure only whether students have learned something, not their ability to apply or communicate it.

He also is not a fan of the way that Michigan schools are funded, because they are forced to create a budget before they know how much money they will receive from the state in the next fiscal year.

“The truth is,” Varner says, “that our educational systems can probably serve every community better. I don’t think there are many schools that are performing at as high a level as they possibly could.”

In particular, he says, “I would love to see our state’s education system producing consistently high outcomes for low-income students, and especially for low-income students of color.”

Varner is optimistic that the state can improve its educational system, and he points to University Preparatory Academy, Chrysler Elementary, and Renaissance High—all in Detroit—as examples of successful schools that could be models for other schools around the state. Something dramatic needs to happen, he believes, to raise the quality of schools and the achievement levels of students.

“I’m wildly curious and interested in school reform efforts, and how to maintain and support high-achieving schools,” Varner says. “I’m excited about the opportunity to make a difference.”

—KV
2007

Jennifer Berman has been honored at the Sanctuary for Families Above & Beyond Pro Bono Achievement Awards & Benefit in New York City for handling numerous immigration cases for Sanctuary for Families clients, supervising colleagues on many other cases, and for strengthening the pro bono partnership between Sanctuary for Families and Latham & Watkins, where she is an associate.

2008

Lyzzette M. Bullock, an attorney in the Phoenix office of Quarles & Brady, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of NiLeL, Inc., which uses high-performance mapping to identify and mitigate social, economic, and environmental problems in poor communities. She is a member of the commercial litigation group.

2009

Jason Miller has joined the Litigation practice of Sherman & Howard in the Denver office.

2010

Andrew G. Gioia has joined the law firm of Rubin, Fortunato & Harbison P.C. in Paoli, Pennsylvania, as an associate. He will assist in handling a variety of matters related to post-employment litigation and arbitration of restrictive covenants, trade secrets, and commercial litigation.

Brandon C. Griffith has joined the law firm of Miller Canfield as an associate in the Real Estate Group in the Troy, Michigan, office.

Carla M. Lee has joined Polsinelli Shughart PC in the Kansas City, Missouri, office in the business department with an emphasis on science and technology.

Kela Shang has joined Kaufman & Canoles, P.C. in the Richmond, Virginia, office as an associate. His practice will focus on corporate and public finance matters.


Paul Porter recently joined the London office of Allen & Overy LLP, where he will continue his international capital markets and mergers and acquisitions practice. He previously practiced with Allen & Overy in Hong Kong.

Andrea C. Wiltroot joined Winthrop & Weinstine, P.A., as an associate with litigation experience in federal and state courts.

Judith Cothorn has joined the Cincinnati office of Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP. She will practice as an associate in the Intellectual Property Practice Group.

Ron Garber has joined the corporate and mergers and acquisitions groups of Fredrikson & Byron in the Minneapolis office.

Suzanne L. Wahl of the Ann Arbor office of Miller Canfield recently received the Outstanding New Lawyer Award given by the Washtenaw County Bar Association.

Lyzzette M. Bullock, an attorney in the Phoenix office of Quarles & Brady, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of NiLeL, Inc., which uses high-performance mapping to identify and mitigate social, economic, and environmental problems in poor communities. She is a member of the commercial litigation group.

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Balancing Act

Like all Michigan Law grads, Anna Leipsic worked her way through a legal smorgasbord during her three years in Ann Arbor. And since graduating in 2006, she’s had an opportunity to go back for seconds on a couple of the entrées.

“I took classes at Michigan in all sorts of different subject areas, but focused on a lot of international law,” she said. She also served on the Michigan Journal of International Law.

That changed after she took a job in 2006 as a securities litigator at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, where she also found herself drawn to pro bono work on a variety of asylum cases—thus beginning her balance between working for corporate clients and doing pro bono work.

One particularly thorny case involved a Nicaraguan victim of domestic violence who was seeking asylum in the United States. The work paid off, as the Cleary team, partnered with the ACLU, is heading toward a negotiated settlement. Leipsic and two of her colleagues at Cleary were recognized for their work late last year with an Above and Beyond Award from the Sanctuary for Families Center for Battered Women.

The award wasn’t the best part. “I really feel, without sounding too dramatic, that it’s been the highlight of my legal career,” Leipsic said of her pro bono work. “It gives you such a good feeling. My practice has always been more with corporate clients, so it’s refreshing to work with individuals.”

Leipsic served as law clerk to Judge Harold Beer Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York in 2008 and 2009. Now an associate with Fross Zelnick Lehrman and Zissu, Leipsic is taking on another challenge: putting her background in the arts—including a degree in art history—to work representing clients in trademark and copyright cases.—JM