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September 2008 Alumni Newsletter

New York Law School

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ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Your Lifetime Network of Support | October 2008



Building Buzz

From top to bottom and in-between, the Law School's new building is rapidly taking shape. The building has been "bottomed out" and "topped off," says Associate Dean Harry Althaus.

Bottoming out refers to the final concrete pour being completed on the lowest level of the below-grade portion of the building: the L-4 level of the structure, which will be part of the Mendik Library, approximately 65 feet below street level.

On August 11, the structure was topped off—the last steel beam was set in place on top of the building's fifth floor structure. Members of the Law School staff, faculty, and Board of Trustees inscribed the painted beam before it was hoisted to the top of the steel structure and welded in place.

Framing and drywall have been completed in the building's bathrooms, as well as electrical and mechanical closets of the "tail" section of the building, facing Worth Street. The glass curtain wall and the stone facade of the tail section above the first floor were completed the first week of August, and raised slabs in classrooms in this section are currently being completed.

Materials for the HVAC system and the glass curtain walls for the West Broadway and Leonard Street facades are being fabricated and stored off-site. Elevators are being stockpiled and stored off site, in preparation for upcoming installation.

Also, the Law School has contracted with the design firm Poulin + Morris Inc. for exhibit and information design in the School's new building. Poulin + Morris's clients include the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Columbia University, and Carnegie Hall.

Did you know?

Professor David Johnson's Virtual Company students helped draft a bill that was signed by Vermont Governor Jim Douglas into law on June 6, 2008. The new legislation establishes protocol for creating long-term online businesses.

Meet the Network

Given Much, Giving Back Even More: John J. Reddy Jr. '79



If you're a New Yorker involved with the legal profession, you've noted that the name of John J. Reddy Jr. is highly visible these days. Reddy is President of New York Law School's Alumni Association and on the Board of Trustees. He also is an adjunct professor at the Law School, where he teaches Estate Administration. He frequently lectures on estate law for other organizations as well, including the New York Bar Association, American Bar Association, and New York Trial Lawyers Association.

Writing is one of Reddy's fortes, and he writes frequently on the subject of estate law. A trusts and estates expert, he co-wrote an award-winning article on best practices in this area. The 2007 award was announced in January by *Probate & Property* magazine. He also co-authors a regular column for the *New York Law Journal*.

While maintaining a busy law practice, Bekerman & Reddy, just steps from New York Law School, Reddy remains firmly committed to public life. As Counsel to the Public Administrator, he was recently brought into a probate proceeding. His office discovered that certain funds had been taken illegally, and \$650,000 was recovered for charities named in the decedent's will.

Why does Reddy stay involved? He says he never forgot the adage "Of those to whom much is given, much will be expected."

For Reddy, now is an ideal time to meet those expectations. "This is an exciting time at the Law School," he notes. "With the new building, we are creating a new relationship with better defined roles for alumni, faculty, and students."

New York Law School Heritage

Barbara Watson '62

In 2008, with Barack Obama as the Democratic nominee for president, it may be difficult for some of his young supporters to imagine what a different country America was 90 years ago. But in 1918, the year Barbara Watson '62 was born—despite the World War I service of more than 300,000 African Americans, including 1400 commissioned as officers—African Americans faced unspeakable acts of racism. Just two years before, W.E.B. Dubois organized a march of 10,000 people down Fifth Avenue to protest the continued lynchings of and discrimination against African American people.

Despite the prevailing and corrosive racism of the times, Watson, the country's first African American Assistant Secretary of State, was born into a family distinguished by its many accomplishments. Her father, James S. Watson (Class of 1913), was the first African American judge in New York State. Her brother was the first African American aeronautical engineer.

Watson earned an undergraduate degree from Barnard College in 1943. After graduation, she was an interviewer for the United Seaman's Service from 1943 to 1946. For the next 10 years, she was the owner and executive director of her own modeling agency, Barbara Watson Models. She was later coordinator of student activities and foreign student advisor at Hampton Institute in Virginia.

After graduating third in her class from New York Law School in 1962, Watson was selected by a group of distinguished jurists as the most outstanding law student in New York City. The law degree afforded her the skills and

knowledge to pursue new opportunities, many in government. She was a statutory aide with the Board of Statutory Consolidation and later served as Assistant Corporate Counsel to the City of New York and Executive Director of the New York City Commission to the United Nations, acting as a liaison between the United Nations and various city agencies.

In 1966, President Lyndon Johnson appointed her to the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs in the U.S. State Department. In 1968, she was appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, becoming both the first woman and the first African American to serve in that position. In fact, she served under four presidents: Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter.

In 1980, President Carter appointed her Ambassador to Malaysia. A skillful negotiator, Watson facilitated several important trade agreements while in that position. A tireless advocate of African and Caribbean countries, Watson received many awards and honors for her efforts. One such honor was the designation of Commander of the National Order of the Ivory Coast.

Barbara Watson died in 1983, and her funeral in Washington was attended by many dignitaries. Ninety-three honorary pallbearers included ambassadors, senators, congressmen, and mayors, as well as the heads of many educational and political organizations.



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for the

NEW YORK LAW SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

TO CELEBRATE AND SHOW OFF
OUR NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING.

Alumni in Brief

Danielle Butler '00



Danielle Butler '00 was seven years old when she saw the movie *Jaws*. As it did for many Americans, the movie had a profound effect on the little girl from Bellport, Long Island. But instead of inspiring terror of shark-infested waters, Butler was instantly hooked on becoming a marine biologist.

Now a thriving maritime lawyer who was inducted to practice before the United States Supreme Court at age 32, Butler wryly recalls her first assignment as a first-year associate at Holland & Knight LLP. She was sent on a closing of a 150-foot motor yacht in the Bahamas. “Post the closing, the buyer served me a five-course lunch, and we popped a bottle of champagne,” she recalls. “I thought to myself, wow, I’m going into a great area of law!”

Yet law school wasn’t even on her horizon until a former marine biology professor, also a lawyer, advised her to explore an area that was relatively undiscovered by many lawyers: maritime law. It was a field, her professor said, particularly ignored by women.

“Every spring I go to a Marine Law Association annual meeting, and every year I’m one of only a few women,” says Butler. “Being the minority in this case benefits my practice. I leave with a feeling of amazement because my future is really endless in this practice area.”

After six years as an associate at Holland & Knight and then Hill, Betts & Nash LLP, Butler saw a growth opportunity in May of 2008 to “move my practice area and legal team up to a higher level” when she moved to her current firm, Fowler White Burnett P.A., where she is a shareholder in the Maritime Practice Group. The firm has about 20 maritime lawyers, with Butler and three other attorneys devoted exclusively to private yacht ownership matters. Here, she practices a unique combination of maritime law and fireworks law.

That’s right, fireworks law. Her family, the Gruccis, owns a 150-year-old fireworks company, Fireworks by Grucci, that produces national and international fireworks displays. “My grandfather told me that we have black powder running through our veins,” she laughs.

In her maritime practice, she handles both litigation and transactional work surrounding the ownership of “huge, privately owned motor yachts, which can cost anywhere from 5 to 200 million dollars depending on the size and interior.” Butler drafts purchase agreements, new construction contracts, and charter agreements; handles yacht financing; advises on ownership structures and tax issues; and registers the yachts domestically or internationally.

Not a day goes by when she isn’t “shocked by the things I see in this industry.” For example, one of her clients has a 220-foot yacht, and he recently purchased a “shadow” boat for the yacht. “All the shadow boat does is follow the yacht and hold all the toys—the jet skis, motor scooters, and the helicopter. Or it might house the nanny or the masseuse.”

The litigation aspect of her work ranges from litigating or arbitrating maritime liens, insurance claims, and shipyard claims to defending owners against injury claims filed by both passengers and crew members.

“To be a great attorney and have a full practice, you need to be more than just smart. You need to be a salesman, advertiser, therapist, and most important, a people person.”

ALUMNI

CONNECTIONS

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For Alumni SAVE THESE DATES

- **Monday, October 6, 2008**
Washington, D.C. Luncheon
- **Friday and Saturday,
November 14–15, 2008**
Reunion Weekend 2008
- **Thursday, December 4, 2008**
Alumni Holiday Party

Please visit www.nyls.edu/alumni for more information.

NEW YORK LAW SCHOOL

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CONNECTIONS

Campaign Committee Steers New York Law School to a Bright Future

Arthur N. Abbey '59

Chair, *Breaking New Ground. Again.* Campaign
Chair, New York Law School Board of Trustees
Senior Partner, Abbey Spanier Rodd & Abrams LLP



You might think that a person preparing for an imminent trip to Rwanda might not have any time for New York Law School. Throw in a full-time career as a partner at a successful New York boutique law firm, and for most people, that would be excuse enough to look the other way when the Law School asked for help. But Arthur N. Abbey '59, who left for a gorilla-watching safari at the end of August, followed by a junket to South Africa, somehow finds the time to do just a little bit more. One of New York Law School's most generous alumni in both the time and funds he donates, Abbey recently signed on as one of the members of the Campaign Steering Committee. He will work with Vince Carbonell '00, among others.

Abbey explains that it is important for the Law School to attract volunteers from different generations to connect with the members of their own class. "The campaign will involve graduates over the last 50 or more years, and people react best to contemporaries. Having a large cross-section chronologically volunteering with the campaign makes it easier for New York Law School to become the school it can be and will be."

Abbey's responsibilities on the Steering Committee are to raise money and "incentivize" others on the committee to raise money and figure out how best to implement the campaign, he explains.

One of the most exciting developments on the horizon for the Campaign Steering Committee is offering tours of the new building, which Abbey says can happen as soon as a model is created and a clear, safe path is available.

"They say one picture is worth a thousand words," Abbey says. "Well, one visit is worth a million words. I was recently there, and I was overwhelmed by the size and scope of the new building. It's simply amazing. It's greater than any of us ever expected."

Abbey says the possibilities for what potential donors can name and endow are virtually endless. "There's something on the menu for everyone."

In early August, the last steel beam was put in the building and painted white, Abbey says. Faculty, students, and others affiliated with the Law School were invited to sign it or even write something about the School. Of course, Abbey was on hand to write his regards to his alma mater. "I wrote that it had taken us 100 years to get to this point, and we don't know where the next 100 years will take us. But the future looks bright, very bright indeed."

Vincent Carbonell '00

Member, New York Law School Board of Trustees
 Founder and President, United Reprographic Services



Watching his father, Ricardo Carbonell, a trade union activist, help thousands of employees taught Vincent Carbonell '00 to always understand that employees are the core of the business. It is the hard work of employees that makes any business great, and eventually grow and prosper, Carbonell says. That is a lesson he has taken to heart in his own business, a reprographics company currently doing the blueprinting for the Freedom Tower, and in the pro bono work he does. For the latter, Carbonell donates his legal skills in areas as diverse as consumer law, business law for startup companies, and criminal law.

“It gives me the opportunity to utilize my education at New York Law, and to give back to the community by helping people who cannot afford legal advice and representation.”

Giving back is an important part of Carbonell's life. Although he graduated only eight years ago, he has established the Carbonell Fellowship in Law and Policy and is also on the Campaign Steering Committee.

Carbonell's role on the Campaign Steering Committee is to help create and put into action ambitious goals for the School.

“We will be brainstorming new ways to create avenues for alumni and others to get involved in supporting our efforts not only to assist in the building of our new facility, but also to create ways to support the students through scholarships, fellowships, and other innovative methods.”

It was his own rewarding experience at the Law School that inspired Carbonell to maintain close ties. From the first visit, Carbonell liked what he saw.

“The staff, faculty, and operations were very student-centered; they made you feel very welcome. Rather than an austere environment to study law, this was a warm community to live the experience of law.”

Law school courses only cemented Carbonell's sense that New York Law School was a great fit. His courses were memorable and enjoyable. James Simon “made [constitutional] history exciting, and encouraged debates at every turn of the page!”

Two courses—Secured Transactions and Statutory Interpretation with Professor Sinclair—“taught you to parse every word, comma, and semi-colon to fully understand the drafter's intent, and to understand that sometimes the true battles in adversarial combat were won by who could read where the comma was placed!”

After graduation, Carbonell attended an event at which Dean Richard A. Matasar spoke. After listening to Dean Matasar, Carbonell was moved to get further involved with the School.

“He exuded this love of our institution, and was and is a great inspiration to lead me to do whatever I can do to help our school grow and meet the new challenges ahead.”