



WASHBURN LAWYER

Washburn University School of Law Alumni Magazine | Summer 2024



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Linda Elrod, BA '69, JD '72 poses in her office. Photo by Jeremy Wangler



WASHBURN LAWYER

We welcome your suggestions about this publication. Letters to the editor and news of jobs and honors are always welcome. Please include your name, class year, address, and daytime phone number.

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A New Era

Hello, everyone:

I am excited to officially write this letter for the first time as the permanent dean of our beloved law school. I am incredibly honored to lead the law school and am grateful for everyone's trust in me. We are looking ahead to the next academic year, and it is a promising future.

As we head into what will likely be one of our largest classes in recent years, I want to pause and reflect on what got us to this point: you, our alumni. While we will highlight a few of you in this publication, we know there are many more of you out there as well doing remarkable work and contributing to the reputation of Washburn University School of Law far and wide. We remain grateful for your continued support and commitment. If you are not already a member of the Washburn University School of Law Alumni Association, I invite you to consider joining today.

I also want to take a moment to thank **Tom Adrian, BBA '66, JD '69**, our outgoing chair for the Alumni Association's board of governors. He has contributed to the law school tremendously, not only during these past two years as chair but throughout his time as an alumnus. His leadership during his term as chair is appreciated, and I hope you'll join me in sharing your gratitude.

Another noteworthy departure is that of Professor **Linda Elrod, BA '69, JD '72**, known to many of you as Cricket. Professor Elrod has dedicated 50 years of her career to Washburn and the law school. Her commitment to family law and education is unmatched and her retirement will leave big shoes to fill. We'll do our best to continue her legacy of excellent teaching and service, but she will certainly be missed in these halls.

Change is inevitable, but even with these departures I know the law school will continue to advance and provide an exceptional education to the next generation of attorneys. With new partnerships, innovative Centers for Excellence, and collaborations with other stakeholders, I am confident we will continue to evolve to meet the needs of modern students. I invite you to not only share the law school with students aspiring to become lawyers, but also to reach out to me. As I always say, this is your law school, and I am always eager to hear from you.

Jeffrey D. Jackson, BBA '89, JD '92
Dean, Washburn University School of Law

Greetings!

It is with a great sense of pride that I share this, my last letter to you as chair of the board of governors. I am pleased with the momentum we have built during my two years as chair, and even more excited to know that I leave this position in more than qualified hands. I know **Troy Stremming, BBA '91, JD '94** will continue to help lead our law school in an excellent direction. The future remains bright at Washburn University School of Law.

The first half of 2024 has already been an exciting time at Washburn. In February, I had the chance to be sworn in to the U.S. Supreme Court not just with fellow alumni, but also with my daughter, **Lisa McPherson, '94**. As you'll see in this edition of the magazine, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I encourage you to be a part of it when the law school hosts again in 2026. We anticipate a date for the next trip being released at the end of this year.

Shortly after we returned from Washington, the announcement was made that one of our own law school graduates would be taking on the role of dean of the law school. I am pleased to share that **Jeff Jackson, BBA '89, JD '92** was named in that role. He served as interim dean during my tenure as board chair, and I am confident that his leadership will continue to advance the law school's mission in the future. "To prepare outstanding lawyers and legally trained professionals to serve their local, national, and global communities with excellence, integrity, and professionalism" will continue to be the focus of Washburn Law.

In the two years since I began in this role, I have had the privilege of seeing our new home, the Robert J. Dole Hall, open and now an entire year of celebrations taking place in this new space. From the prestigious alumni awards in the fall to the champagne reception following commencement, I can attest it was worth the wait. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors are all utilizing the welcoming space to further advance the study of law. Even more exciting is that we anticipate one of the largest incoming classes in recent memory. Once those students start and enrollment can be confirmed, I am certain Dean Jackson will update you.

There is much to be proud of and to look forward to at Washburn School of Law. I hope you will join me in continuing to share the exciting initiatives taking place and be a part of the future of Washburn Law.

Respectfully,

Thomas A. Adrian, BBA '66, JD '69
Chair, Washburn University School of Law
Alumni Association Board of Governors



The Washburn University School of Law Alumni Association Board of Governors was first created in 1952. Our mission is to promote the interests of the Law School by engaging our alumni through service to the Law School and the Association, participating in alumni events and programs, remaining connected, and assisting to further scholarship funding. Appointments run July through June.

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Linda Elrod in Robert J. Dole Hall. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

The End of an Era

Celebrating the 50-Year Career and Retirement of Professor Linda Elrod

By Annie Flachsbarth

In the realm of child and family law, one name stands out above the rest: Distinguished Professor **Linda “Cricket” Elrod, BA ’69, JD ’72**, of Washburn University School of Law.

With a career spanning six decades and a passion fueled by personal experiences, Elrod has been instrumental in shaping legal guidelines and orchestrating groundbreaking initiatives that prioritize the welfare of children and families across the nation. In addition, she’s had a profound commitment to innovating and advancing legal education and has been an influential mentor of countless lawyers.

As Elrod closes the chapter on her remarkable contributions to Washburn Law, we look back at all that made her tenure so impactful.

A Trailblazer for Children and Family Law

Throughout her 50-year career, Elrod’s contributions to family law have been transformative. Personal encounters with divorce as a teenager created a lifelong belief that children should have a voice when their custody is at issue. Her belief that children need emotional and financial support from both parents led

her to a 30-year tenure on the Kansas Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Child Support.

“I think that family law is one of those areas where you can really make a difference in people’s lives, especially the lives of children who are often the most vulnerable in high-conflict custody cases,” Elrod said. “The work we do can help create better outcomes for families and ensure that children are placed in safe and supportive environments.”

Driven by that commitment to protect children and empower families, she helped craft the law and has written several books and articles on child and family law issues. Her contributions as an author are both impressive and significant. Her books, “Kansas Law and Practice” and “Child Custody Practice and Procedure,” are widely cited in courts across the country, including the Kansas Court of Appeals, Kansas Supreme Court, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Her co-authored textbook, “Family Law: Cases, Comments and Questions,” has been used at 35 law schools.

Throughout her career, she has advocated for systemic child and family law reform. She is past chair of the American Bar Association Family Law Section, served on the ABA Family



Elrod through the years. Photos submitted

Law Section Council from 1988-2016, and was co-chair of the ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Advisory Board. She coordinated an international, interdisciplinary think tank, called the “Wingspread Conference” in 2000. Experts tackled the problems with high conflict custody cases, resulting in a published whitepaper: “High Conflict Custody: Reforming the System for Children,” which has served as a model for reform in several states. She was also the reporter for drafting the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act in 2006, the Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act in 2016, and she has been the reporter for the Joint Editorial Board on Uniform Family Laws since 2015.

Elrod is passionate about effecting change on a global scale. She was an official observer at the Hague Convention on “The International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance” in 2007. She’s also presented at the International Society of Family Law since 1994 – even serving as the keynote speaker at the 5th World Congress on Family Law and Children’s Rights in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2009.

50-Years at Washburn

The impact Elrod made as a professor at Washburn Law is of equal stature to her many accomplishments.

Elrod’s teaching career began in the summer of 1973, when she was asked to teach summer school only one year after graduating. In March of 1974, while working at the Kansas Supreme Court and seven months pregnant, she accepted Dean Spring’s plea to teach a four-hour property course for an ill professor during her lunch hour. Two weeks later she was offered a full-time position. She was the only woman professor teaching doctrinal courses from 1974-79. Students awarded her the William O. Douglas Outstanding Teacher Award in 1979. Over the years, she’s also taught at other universities, including the University of San Diego in Paris and Washington University in St. Louis. Yet Elrod’s loyalty to Washburn Law kept her returning to nurture its growth and competitiveness nationally.

As the creator and director of the Washburn University School of Law Children and Family Law Center, Elrod has always looked to enhance student educational opportunities whenever possible. With support from administration, Elrod

brought the ABA “Family Law Quarterly” to Washburn Law. She oversaw the nationally recognized publication as editor-in-chief for an impressive 24 years, from 1992-2016. The publication offered students editing experience and credentials and garnered recognition through student wins in the Schwab Essay Contest.

“I stayed at Washburn because I worked with wonderful people who respected what I was doing,” Elrod said. “Washburn has always put students first, and I felt supported in doing something that made a difference. Whenever I had an idea, I was lucky to have deans who always asked, ‘How can we help?’”

One of Elrod’s favorite accomplishments was helping to create the Study Law in London Summer Program which ran from 1985-1994 in Uxbridge, then from 1994-2004 in West Hampstead, London, before it was relocated to Utrecht, The Netherlands. The popular program provided students with invaluable global learning experiences, and a team-teaching approach which underscores Elrod’s commitment to nurturing a vibrant academic environment.

In addition to being known as an expert in child and family law, Elrod is also known as a gracious host. She regularly held gatherings at her home to foster connections and inspire learning beyond the classroom. These events brought together students, judges, and legal professionals, creating a community of camaraderie among all those who attended.

A Timeless Legacy

Of all her accomplishments, one of Elrod’s proudest achievements lies in the success of her former students, many of whom have risen to prominence as competent lawyers leading impactful changes on children’s issues. Noteworthy accolades include three alumni occupying seats on the prestigious Kansas Supreme Court, alongside numerous others serving as district court judges, family lawyers, and dedicated child advocates.

For Kansas Supreme Court Justice **Eric Rosen, ’84**, the depth of Elrod’s influence was far reaching.

“When I started at Washburn Law, I was a non-traditional student, working, raising kids, and navigating law school – which was a foreign language to me. Taking her domestic relations class, her adept teaching and clear communication made family law come alive for me. That experience resonated deeply and guided my legal career,” Rosen said.

For Rosen, Elrod’s expertise and guidance transcended the classroom.

“As I transitioned into private practice – from being a public defender to a prosecutor to various legal roles – I applied the principles she instilled in me. Whether handling divorce cases or facilitating adoptions, the foundation laid by Professor Elrod influenced my approach, shaping the way I navigated complex legal scenarios,” Rosen said. “She was not just an educator; she



was a mentor whose lessons have stayed with me throughout my professional journey.”

From the point of view of a judge, Rosen saw firsthand the impact that Elrod’s work on the Family Law Committee and the resulting Shawnee County Family Law Guidelines made.

“Professor Elrod was instrumental in creating much better situations for children of divorce,” Rosen said. “There are many different aspects of the human condition that needed to be considered in divorce cases. Professor Elrod saw that and helped create a system with predictable outcomes, which provided a much healthier situation for those involved. She was instrumental in setting up the whole system that we have in place, not only in Topeka and Shawnee County but across the state.”

A Legacy of Excellence

Elrod now passes the torch to Professor Gillian Chadwick to direct the Children and Family Law Center. As the associate director of the center for the past seven years, Chadwick has had the opportunity to witness Elrod’s dedication firsthand.

“Professor Elrod built this community and this resource from nothing,” Chadwick said. “Her vision, grit, and wisdom pulled it all together, and it offers such an important resource. The impactful work that the center has done really speaks for itself. And it’s been great to learn from her and see all that she does.”

Even though she’s retiring, Elrod shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, she intends to continue engaging with academic circles, such as the International Society of Family Law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Project, where she has connections with scholars worldwide. She will also continue editing her three books, working out of the emeritus office in Robert J. Dole Hall. Her desire to remain active reflects her enduring commitment to advancing knowledge and collaborating on critical family law matters on a national and global scale.

“She is really a wonderful colleague. She’s very enthusiastic and energetic, and she’s not at all shy about sharing her authentic opinions, but she’s also willing to listen to differing opinions. I will definitely miss her presence on our faculty,” Chadwick said.

As Elrod’s time as the longest serving law professor at Washburn Law School ends, she’s looking forward to spending more time with her children who are both active in the performing arts in New York. Beyond that, she’s still deciding what is next on her docket.

“This is my first time retiring – I’ve never done it before,” Elrod said. “I have loved teaching and am ready for what is next. But to quote Jimmy Buffett, ‘It’s been a lovely cruise.’”





Washburn in the Capital

U.S. Supreme Court Swearing-In Held in February

By Dannie Harris-Cooper

The opportunity to be sworn-in to the United States Supreme Court is a special event that only few have the privilege of experiencing during their career. For nearly 20 alumni from the Washburn University School of Law, that once-in-a-lifetime experience came to fruition this February.

Joined by family and friends, alumni from across the country converged on Washington, D.C., to be sworn-in to the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court. Even though the swearing-in ceremony prompted the trip to the United States capital, the weekend was filled with memories created around three days of events. Some alumni even made the swearing-in ceremony a family affair.

The Hon. **Daniel D. Creitz, '85**, and his son, **Daniel S. Creitz, '13**, were sworn in to the Supreme Court together.

"To be able to share this experience with my son was a special moment I will always cherish," Judge Creitz shared. "I'm proud to see him forging his own path as an attorney while continuing the family tradition of practicing law. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and to be able to share it as a family made it that much more significant."

The father-son duo were not the only pair to be sworn in with a family member. Outgoing chair of the board of governors, **Tom Adrian, BBA '66, JD '69**, was sworn in alongside his daughter, **Lisa McPherson, '94**, while their family witnessed the milestone event. It also happened to be held on Adrian's birthday.

Joining as a special guest was **Cheryl Brown Henderson, H '03**, whose father filed suit in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case. "Witnessing the swearing in ceremony before



Alumni and their families tour the United States Capitol building. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

the United States Supreme Court was a symbolic pilgrimage on behalf of my late father Oliver L. Brown who was among the courageous plaintiffs in *Brown v. Board of Education*," she said of the experience. Henderson has been traveling extensively this year to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the case.

Then-interim dean, **Jeff Jackson, BBA '89, JD '92**, was also one of the attorneys being sworn in. He traveled with the group only a week before the announcement of his new role as permanent dean of the law school. **Linda Elrod, BA '69, JD '72**, joined the group as the movant, reading the names to the Supreme Court justices. University president JuliAnn Mazachek, alongside husband Keith, were also in attendance.

Throughout the weekend, alumni and their families also had the opportunity to visit national landmarks, with tours of the White House, U.S. Capitol building, and many of the monuments during a nighttime tour.

"My wife, Courtney, and I had an outstanding time," **Michael Riley, '91**, shared. "Having worked in D.C. and visited often through the years, I've been fortunate to be part of some great experiences in our nation's capital, but this topped them all. The work of the Washburn staff in putting together meaningful events and tours made for a great time in D.C., but being sworn in before all the justices was truly special."

The Washburn University School of Law hosts the Swearing-In Ceremony bi-annually. The dates for the 2026 event will be announced at the end of 2024. If you are interested in being a part of this trip and would like to learn more, please reach out to Anne McNerney, assistant director of development and alumni relations for the School of Law, at amcnerney@wualumni.org.



Michael Riley, '91, pictured on the steps of the Supreme Court with his wife, Courtney Riley, and Dean Jeff Jackson. Photo by Jeremy Wangler



"Intellectual Property Practice in the Age of Emerging Technologies" forum on Nov. 15, 2023. Photo by Ryan Purcell

Intellectual Property and Technology Law

New Center for Excellence Launched

By Angela Jonas

When it comes to the new Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center, Patricia Judd has big plans. After opening at the Washburn University School of Law last fall, the center became one of the few spaces of its type in the region, creating exciting opportunities for students, alumni, and anyone interested in intellectual property and technology issues.

"Few schools in the area have a center that brings this type of programming to alumni, practitioners, and students," said Judd, who has served as a professor of law at Washburn for 13 years and teaches many of the law school's IP courses. "I think the center will give Washburn a name in the IP and tech fields, throughout the region and nationwide."

As the law school's only full-time faculty member dedicated to IP, Judd first proposed the creation of the center in 2022 to complement the law school's intellectual property certificate



Patricia Judd

program, which began in 2020 and graduated its first class the following year. Many other certificate programs at Washburn Law have a center associated with them, and Judd felt it was time for IP to follow suit. Judd's proposal coincides with a growing interest in IP law nationwide.

"Given the rising interest in IP among students over the last 10 years, the field has become a growing area of focus for Washburn," Judd said. "There are a lot of good jobs in IP impacted sectors, and technology law is burgeoning before our eyes. We thought it was time to have a center dedicated to making Washburn a focal point for those areas of the law."

Developing Strategic Goals

Like other centers at the law school, the IP and tech center fosters interactions between students and practitioners by hosting speaker programs, and creating social engagements for students to mingle with practicing attorneys, augmenting student invitations to bar events and continuing legal education programs. First and foremost, Judd is excited about the opportunities this will create for students, particularly as they seek externships and post-graduation jobs.

“The center gives visibility to the law school among IP and tech law practitioners and companies,” Judd said. “The center will provide meaningful IP and tech-related opportunities to students during law school, such as engaging with innovative guest speakers, taking advantage of a wide array of IP and tech-focused courses, or participating in advocacy conversations about timely and topical issues. Students can point to the opportunities they had through the center when interviewing for jobs and take the experiences they have gained into their legal careers.”

Through their engagement with the center, students will be empowered to establish connections and network with alumni and other students with similar interests, which will help build a community of like-minded individuals.



Jonnette Oakes

“I am excited about the center because it provides a great space to collaborate and engage,” said Washburn Law student Jonnette Oakes, who is a candidate for the IP certificate. “As a student interested in the field, this center fosters a needed enrichment to the educational experience. I believe this center will serve as a foundational piece to students seeking to learn more and build upon a foundation to their educational journey.”

Once students graduate, the center can continue to serve as a touchpoint for them to stay connected to Washburn through programming, education, and events. It also provides a “home” for IP alumni at the law school and creates networking opportunities with IP and technology lawyers across the country. In addition to benefiting current and former students, Judd says the center helps attract new students as well.

“We have a lot of prospective students inquiring about these areas of the law,” she said. “The establishment of the center shows them there is a cohesive program in those areas here at Washburn. The center gives us a platform to illustrate that

there is an IP community here in the building and beyond, and that they have opportunities to join that community if they choose Washburn Law.”

“Given the rising interest in IP among students over the last 10 years, the field has become a growing area of focus for Washburn.”

— Patricia Judd

The center also appeals to nontraditional students such as **John Spisak, '22**, who worked as an engineer for 15 years before coming to Washburn. He earned his IP certificate and now works as an attorney at Spencer Fane in Denver, Colorado. He said encouragement from faculty, his engineering background, and exposure to IP courses were essential in his decision to pursue intellectual property law.

“There are a lot of unique aspects to IP litigation where it’s more expert-focused and technical, and it can be intimidating for students who don’t know a lot about it,” Spisak said. “It’s important in law school to be exposed to these things and know these opportunities are there. For nontraditional students like me, the center would be a favorable thing. It will do more to help better prepare Washburn graduates for careers in IP.”

An Event to Remember

Last November, the center officially celebrated its opening with an event that included a free CLE program on artificial intelligence that drew attendees from across the country, thanks to in-person and virtual offerings. The presenters included five Washburn University School of Law alumni who are practicing IP in different settings, including law firms and as in-house counsel at big corporations like 3M and Elanco.

While an emerging issue like AI presents challenges for individuals in multiple industries, the panelists focused on how they think AI will impact law practices, including how their employers are incorporating AI into their work and how it is impacting issues such as inventions, creations, and brands. Judd said they kept the topics practical so that the program would appeal to students and practitioners.



Paige Reese

“It was memorable because we had folks talking about different aspects of IP practice and how AI is impacting them day to day,” she added. “Everybody is grappling with this right now, including those of us in academic institutions. It was interesting to hear the panelists’ perspectives, emanating from their different practice settings and the varied industries with which they work.”

Among the speakers was **Paige Reese, ’21**, who was part of the first class of IP certificate recipients and now works at Husch Blackwell in Kansas City. She cites the relationships she developed at Washburn as instrumental to her career advancement, particularly when she expressed interest in becoming a patent attorney.

“The connections that I made and the willingness for professors to help is huge,” Reese said. “What makes Washburn different and sets it apart is how nice everybody is. Within my first year of school, when I said I wanted to be a patent attorney, everybody was so helpful. I had a great community in law school, and they set me up for success to be a patent attorney now.”

With the center having recently completed its first year in operation, Reese is excited to see how it will help students learn, make connections, and expand their horizons in an ever-growing field.

“With new developments in technology, it’s always changing, and every day is an opportunity to learn something new,” she said. “I’m excited to see that Washburn is diving into that and being on the forefront of these developments and educating students on the importance of IP. Giving students the knowledge base to be better attorneys in the future is going to be huge.”

Boosting Washburn’s Profile

While the center primarily aims to benefit Washburn students, faculty, and alumni, it will also boost the profile of Washburn as an institution by placing the law school alongside other prominent IP centers nationwide. This will help with everything from student and faculty recruitment to attracting potential donors.

“The launch of the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center represents a pivotal moment for Washburn Law,” said **Jeff Jackson, BBA ’89, JD ’92**, law school dean. “This initiative signifies our dedication to providing students with a cutting-edge educational experience and empowering them to excel in an ever-evolving legal environment.”

As the center becomes more established, Judd looks forward to creating synergies with other Centers of Excellence at Washburn to host joint programming and complementary courses that will benefit students working toward multiple certificates.

Because IP is relevant to so many industries and related topics like AI are so far reaching, the center also aims to conduct outreach to the broader Topeka community, particularly small business owners who want to learn more about developing and protecting their intellectual property.

“IP and technology law developments affect people outside of law school. You start talking about AI and that affects everybody,” Judd said. “We are hoping to bring some of our programming to others within the broader Washburn University community and the local community in eastern Kansas.”

At the end of the day, Judd is most proud of the various ways the center will allow students to advance personally and professionally, as they represent the future of IP law both in Topeka and across the country.

“I’m most excited about the opportunities that the center will create for our students,” she said. “I think it will enrich their law school experiences and open some doors for them, and those are the main goals. Washburn is a student-centered institution, and we are trying to create this space for them to follow their interests and launch their careers.”



Students pose ahead of the most recent ITAP experience. Photo by Ryan Purcell

Tapping Into Potential

For One Intense Week, ITAP Gives Students Trial Run with Practicing Legal Professionals

By Chris Marshall

In her home country of Nepal, Rashmi Neupane first set out to be an attorney because she wanted to be a voice for the voiceless.

But in Washburn's Intensive Trial Advocacy Program, her first time simulating a full trial in an actual courtroom, she was speechless herself.

For 15 seconds, she stopped to take in her surroundings, standing silently as the judge prompted her to talk.

"It was so surreal to me that all my dreams and everything I ever wanted was starting to come true," Neupane said. "The judge was indicating it was my time to speak, but for 15 seconds, I was out of words. I just wanted to appreciate everything that was happening in the moment."

That's the power of ITAP, an intense, week-long program that gives aspiring attorneys the chance to take what they've learned in the classroom and apply it in the courtroom. For many Washburn Law students, the full mock trial in the Shawnee County Courthouse is often the first taste of what it's like to try a case in a courtroom setting.

Lawyers and judges work with students in small group workshops each day, culminating with a final trial day, as students conduct a jury trial to verdict in a simulated case

they prepared during the week. The result is an experience that makes lifelong dreams suddenly feel more attainable for students like Neupane, who studied law for five years in Nepal before coming to Washburn to receive her master of laws (LLM).

In August, she starts her role as victim and witness coordinator at the Topeka prosecutor's office.

"Having completed this course, I feel confident and prepared," she said. "It helped my ability to respond to challenges and build trust with individuals. I'm eager to apply my passion for helping others and using my skills in this position."

Neupane, whose parents boarded their first international flight to see their only daughter walk at graduation in May, first came to the United States with the intention of eventually taking the bar exam to practice in New York.

But an externship with her mentor, **Kelly Trussell, '07**, chief of prosecution for the City of Topeka, opened her eyes to what's possible right here in Kansas, and the past year at Washburn, capped by ITAP, led her to rethink her career plans.

"I don't want to leave Topeka," she said. "The people I've met from Washburn and Topeka have become my aspirational figures. That's the reason I want to be in this community. I feel

so blessed, I want to be in the community where I graduate from and serve and help where I can.”

For Neupane and 40 other students, this year’s ITAP was contained in one jam-packed week, which started the day after graduation. But the planning to pull it off begins as early as January for **Shawn Leisinger, ’99**, associate dean for centers and external programs, and Joseph Mastrosimone, director of the Center for Excellence in Advocacy.

The duo brings together practicing lawyers, judges, and more to spend five working days – often these professionals’ only week off for the summer – to give the next generation a feel for what to expect in the real world.

“It’s a group of folks who come every year and take an entire week off from their busy lives and practices to work with the students. It’s pretty impressive to see,” Leisinger said. “We’ve got a number of them who went through ITAP years ago and are coming back to pay it forward and give back to the profession.”

Because of the coordination and effort required to gather so many professionals at the same time and place, few law schools in the country offer a program similar to ITAP. This is one of a number of opportunities for Washburn Law students to develop skills, including interscholastic competitions such as mock trial, negotiations, client counseling, and moot appellate court. There’s also a semester-long trial advocacy course, which ITAP condenses down to one week.

“When you compress it, you’re gaining a feel for what a trial is like, where it’s all-encompassing and the folks are working all day with us,” Mastrosimone said. “Then the students are getting ready at night for the next days of workshops, and they’re all in for six days. So, it is simulating in some sense, what a trial feels like in a way that probably the 13-week semester version of the course just can’t do.”

Caley Brand, a Wichita native, took the week off from her internship at the Sedgwick County district attorney’s office to participate in ITAP this summer. She called it the most impactful class she’s taken at Washburn.

“Each attorney shares their tips and strategies, and that’s probably the most effective thing in the class,” she said. “Just the diversity of opinions and improvements that can be made. One might think you’re doing well, and another might have more criticism. It’s a mixed array of opinions to make yourself a better person and helps with finding your own identity in the courtroom.”

With the knowledge Brand gained from the experience, she feels more prepared than ever to enter the workforce, and perhaps one day return the favor as a sitting professional in a future ITAP session.

“I connected with an attorney there who spoke about his law school experience and how similar it was to mine,” she said. “It gave me hope and inspiration for the attorney I can become one day, and then eventually, share my story with someone else and inspire them to do the same.”



Students participate in the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program. Photo by Ryan Purcell

Law and Environment

Interest in Outdoors Influences One Attorney's Career Path

By Angela Jonas

When **Chris Steincamp, '93**, drives along the many sprawling highways in Kansas, he sees firsthand the impact of his work as an environmental attorney. In more than three decades of practice, he has helped clean up pollution across the Sunflower State, making the landscape cleaner, safer, and more beautiful for everyone in the region. His work has also served as a perennial conversation starter.

"People drive by stuff every day that I've helped clean up and don't know anything about it," Steincamp said. "But when I drive by it, I bore my children and my wife with stories about what I did there."

Since he graduated from Washburn University School of Law, Steincamp has practiced at Depew Gillen Rathbun and McInteer in Wichita, focusing primarily on environmental law, oil and gas law, and estate planning. Many of his clients are companies in Kansas that need counsel in multiple areas and want to work with a familiar face, giving him the opportunity to delve into a variety of small business concerns.

"One thing that's exciting about environmental law is the stakes are typically pretty high," he said. "These are complicated, expensive issues, and anytime you're dealing with something that involves a lot of money or impact on your client, it raises the pressure quite a lot. There's no stumbling through it – you've got to be paying attention the whole time."

Environmentalist at Heart

Growing up in Great Bend, Kansas, Steincamp's first interests were spending time outdoors and learning about the earth, which led him to pursue an undergraduate degree in geology. He comes from a science-oriented family, with his father working as a geologist and his aunt as the regional counsel for the Environmental Protection Agency for 20 years. Both of these early influences steered him toward his current career path.

"I think essentially all geologists are environmentalists at heart," he said. "Our work is going out and being in contact with the earth – it's an outdoor profession. Having the science background gives me a leg up. Environmental law involves a lot of chemistry, biology, and geology. Having the science background makes it a lot more fun because I understand what's going on."



Chris Steincamp

regarding pollution in downtown Wichita, where he served as liaison counsel for all of the defendants. While the workload was immense, it allowed him to be front and center for every aspect of the case.

"It ate up my life for several years, but it set me on a path to gain the respect of my peers and get a great amount of experience," he said. "I've been involved in a lot of cases where doing environmental law has enabled me to have an impact on the state and the local community that I feel like I can be proud of. I've been involved in cleaning up a lot of pollution, and we've been able to have a very positive impact on our local environment."

Steincamp notes that with such high-stakes issues, the lawyers on both sides of the argument are at the top of their game, which has prompted him to stay plugged into the ever-changing scientific and regulatory environment. Remaining connected with Washburn has also helped him stay abreast of what current students are learning.

"When you're dealing with those types of issues, you have really good lawyers on the other side, which makes it really challenging but also really fun," he said. "Really good lawyers don't miss too many issues and make good points on behalf of the other side. It keeps you on your toes."

Environmental Law Evolution

Throughout Steincamp's career, he has witnessed a number of dramatic changes in environmental law that have shaped the way he approaches problems with his clients. First and foremost, he said, the science behind environmental law has

advanced exponentially, leading to a greater understanding of how to address many pressing issues. Environmental concerns have also become more ingrained in everyday business practices, which has led to a more proactive approach in curbing pollution and determining liability – or as Steincamp said, “just going out and taking care of things.”

“The thing about major pollution issues is they typically don’t get better on their own,” he added. “They spread and get into more and more things, and the ability to clean them up gets more difficult. One of my focuses is evaluating liability issues – conducting an initial analysis of the problem, determining where the liabilities are, and deciding who else should be involved in addressing the problem.”

This commonsense approach was not always the norm. When Steincamp was in law school, he learned a shocking statistic: in the business world, 80 percent of the money spent on environmental matters went toward litigation, while only 20 percent was spent on actually doing something to clean up the environment. In Steincamp’s career, he has seen a shift toward statutes that lead to less litigation and more action, which helps both businesses and the environment.

“Some of the early statutes created a lot more harm because they engendered an enormous amount of litigation as opposed to cleaning things up and fixing things,” he said. “It’s not good for business. If you’re going to spend 80 percent of your money fighting about what you’re going to do and then in the end, if you lose, you’re going to end up cleaning it up anyway – it makes more sense to go do something immediately that will make it quit getting worse.”

Steincamp is also concerned about the way cities are developed. A large swath of urban areas that were heavily industrialized are now polluted, and not much economic activity exists there. Instead of utilizing this existing land, developers build new factories on the outskirts of town where they don’t have to worry about the liability associated with pollution. Steincamp believes this is a mistake, noting that the legislative environment is shifting to keep pollution where it already exists and promote economic revitalization in blighted areas.

Going forward, Steincamp believes technology and better regulatory structures will lead to fewer significant environmental problems and make addressing pollution more efficient and manageable. He acknowledges that as a country, the United States has managed to ameliorate many of the environmental concerns that began with industrialization in the 1950s and 60s. As new and unexpected challenges arise, Steincamp champions environmental protection but cautions against legislation that is overly burdensome to the American way of life.

“We have a very nice lifestyle in the United States,” he said. “Our environmental stewardship is as good as anywhere in the world. We want to have laws that work as well as they possibly can to both allow industry to do what it needs to do and protect the environment. Legislating ourselves out of our lifestyle will ultimately have a negative impact. That’s not an easy task – it’s a hard line to draw.”

Staying Connected

As Steincamp continues to grow and evolve as a professional alongside environmental law, he recognizes that many people had a hand in his success. When it comes to his time at Washburn, he is grateful primarily for the guidance and mentorship of his professors including former law school Dean James Concannon, Bill Rich, Charlene Smith, and **David Pierce, ’77**, who is internationally known as an oil and gas lawyer and taught Steincamp in nearly half of his law school courses.

“I had a great experience at Washburn. I had a lot of really good professors who taught me a lot,” Steincamp said. “Having been a geologist and worked professionally before I went to law school also helped me because I was more mature, but having excellent professors and a positive experience set me up to be successful.”

Over the years, Steincamp has remained in contact with his professors, and he also stayed connected to the law school by recruiting Washburn students and alumni for clerks and new lawyers at his firm. Last year, he taught a course on environmental regulation in the oil and gas industry at the law school, and he was excited to meet engaged students who represent a bright future for environmental law. He encouraged them to learn as much science as they could and put forth the effort to do well in their classes.

“Being connected to what students are learning is important for our law firm,” he said. “The educational part of it is important for all of us. There’s no substitute for having good lawyers. If there’s something I can do to promote good lawyers practicing environmental law in Kansas and across the country – that’s better for everyone.”

Graduate School of Law and Politics

Graduate School of Economics



Faculty member Craig Martin poses with students in the most recent Osaka class. Photo submitted

International Law

Students Gain New Perspectives Through Study Abroad Opportunities

By Angela Jonas

Sometimes the best way to get to know the United States legal system is to step outside it. This was the case for **Molly Morgan, '23**, who traveled abroad to Osaka, Japan, while a student at Washburn University School of Law. During her time in Asia, Morgan studied constitutional rights in Europe, Canada, the United States, and Japan, which provided invaluable insight into what America is doing well and where there is room for improvement.

“Studying abroad helps you think more holistically about legal issues and the world generally,” said Morgan, who is an attorney on the renewable energy team at Foulston Siefkin in Wichita. “From the Osaka trip alone, I’ve connected with so many people and learned so much. Having that experience can open a lot of unexpected doors. It makes you better in your practice because you’re able to consider issues from a different perspective.”

Traveling to Osaka is one of three study abroad opportunities available to students at Washburn Law. The three-credit, three-week course allows students to study comparative law at Osaka University, which is one of the top-ranked schools in the world. During this time, Washburn students learn alongside

classmates from Japan and other countries, giving them the chance to look at familiar topics in a new light.

According to Craig Martin, Washburn Law professor, who has taught the course in Osaka since its inception in 2018, the



Current students in Osaka. Photo submitted

immersion of students into a new culture and way of life is one thing that sets Washburn's study abroad programs apart from others.

"A lot of law schools have study abroad programs that involve a faculty member taking students to an exotic location and teaching the same course they would have taught on campus," Martin said. "The real difference with Washburn is our programs involve taking a course in a university on the ground in a different country with students from that country and all over the world. In this way, our students are confronted with different perspectives."

Washburn also offers a two-week winter intersession course at the University of the West Indies in Barbados, which recently shifted to this format from a six-week summer course to increase student interest after registration lagged following the pandemic. During this experience, Washburn students take comparative and international law classes and travel the island and Caribbean region.

"The most rewarding part is seeing them interact with the students from the host university and watching their minds expand," said Antonina Kowalska, Washburn law professor, who travels with students to Barbados. "They find a lot of common ground and learn to navigate areas of difference in a respectful way. It's also fun to see them build their travel skills. This is often their first chance to build independent travel and cross-cultural skills outside the United States."

Washburn Law's third study abroad opportunity allows students to spend a whole semester attending the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands. It functions as an exchange program, welcoming students from Maastricht to Washburn. Martin said this program is so valuable because it gives students exposure to "ground zero for international law," as the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court are both located in the Netherlands.

"Studying a foreign legal system deepens your understanding of your own legal system in the same way that anthropologists have long known that studying a different culture gives you a deeper and richer understanding of your own culture," Martin said. "There are certain assumptions we take for granted that seem very unnatural somewhere else, and we have to think about why we do things a certain way."

Following the pandemic, enrollment has been down for study abroad opportunities. Martin said funding to subsidize programs and defray the cost of travel and accommodations is essential for many students to have these invaluable opportunities to gain skills that will give them a personal and professional boost.



Jim Slattery (center) outside Verkhovna Rada building (Ukraine parliament). His work was inspired by his study abroad experience in 1968. Photo submitted

"A lot of our students come from modest socioeconomic means," Martin said. "We try to keep the difference between the cost of doing a course on campus and abroad as low as possible. But students still have to come up with a few thousand dollars, and for some that's a heavy lift. The International and Comparative Law Center has a fund for this purpose, and it allows us to give students a better opportunity to have the experience of a lifetime." Martin added that he is hopeful that alumni will consider contributing to the fund to help make study abroad possible for more students.

For many Washburn alumni, studying abroad has provided a solid foundation and essential skills to build a successful career. **Jim Slattery, BS '70, JD '74**, traveled to Amsterdam while a student at Washburn, and he found the experience both thrilling and tense, as the Soviet Union had just invaded Czechoslovakia. He went on to serve as a U.S. congressional representative for Kansas from 1983-1995 before practicing at Wiley Rein in Washington, D.C. Now he has a private consulting firm handling high-stakes international affairs, and he remains a strong supporter of Washburn's study abroad programs.

"It is so important for us to maintain working relationships with our international partners and competitors," Slattery said. "I believe there's nothing better to help prepare students for the world they will be working in than an international educational experience. It's so important to understand how other countries view and react to the United States and have some sense of how the rest of the world sees us. We want to be a global leader for good in the world."



Left to right: Justices K.J. Wall, Jr., Caleb Stegall, Eric Rosen, '84, Marla Luckert, BA '77, JD '80, H '23, Dan Biles, '78, Evelyn Wilson, '85, and Melissa Taylor Standridge, hear cases in the Heath Family Appellate Courtroom. Photo by Ryan Purcell

Bridging Theory and Practice

Washburn Law's Unrivaled Path to Success in Government

By Annie Flachsbarth

At Washburn University School of Law, the convergence of rigorous academics and dynamic real-world exposure, all set against the vibrant backdrop of Kansas' bustling capital city, cultivates a fertile landscape for future legal minds to flourish and leave an indelible mark on the field of law – especially within the realm of government.

Leading this charge is the esteemed Robert J. Dole Center for Law and Government, where innovation meets tradition to create proficient legal professionals and civic leaders. This epicenter of excellence not only equips students with unparalleled theoretical knowledge but also immerses them in practical, hands-on learning opportunities. The result is a transformative educational journey that sets Washburn Law students apart, preparing them to navigate and shape the complexities of government and legal practice with confidence and expertise.

Law and Government

Central to the Robert J. Dole Center for Law and Government is its robust curriculum designed to prepare students for a wide range of public service careers. Courses such as Legislation,

Administrative Law, Local Government, and Federal Indian Law form the core curriculum, ensuring students receive a comprehensive education in government-related legal studies.

According to Associate Dean for Centers and External Programs **Shawn Leisinger, '99**, the government law center is in place largely because a significant portion of Washburn Law School graduates go into government work.

“At last count, approximately two-thirds of the county attorneys across the state graduated from Washburn. Even four out of seven of the current Kansas Supreme Court justices are Washburn Law grads,” Leisinger said. Many Washburn graduates pursue careers as prosecutors throughout the state and elsewhere. “We also have a lot of graduates go on to do public defense work and government agency work. We are nationally recognized for producing government lawyers.”

To enhance the educational experience in the field, the center offers a certificate in law and government, allowing students to concentrate their studies on public policy and government affairs. The certificate serves as a gateway for aspiring legal professionals to gain practical insights into the complexities of

governance while honing their legal acumen. Through a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experiences, students are equipped with the skills necessary to navigate the intricate landscape of law and government with finesse and expertise.

Available since 2010, the law and government certificate serves as credentials signaling a student's expertise in the field to future employers. According to Professor David Rubenstein, director of the law and government center, the certificate's true value lies in the knowledge gained from the coursework.

"It's not merely about obtaining the certificate itself, but rather the educational journey and specialization it represents," Rubenstein said. "Like a law degree, it's the substance of the program that truly matters, shaping students' skills and knowledge."

Obtaining the law and government certificate proved to be an exceptional opportunity for recent graduate **Dillon Schreckler, '24**. Initially, Schreckler was interested in multiple areas of law, but the certificate program helped him narrow his interests while opening a world of new possibilities.

"The Washburn law and government certificate and program gave me open access to an area of the law that you usually only see on TV," Schreckler said. "It offers practical options for law school students who want to get involved in the space, and it can help jumpstart a career where other schools and other faculty may not have that experience."

With proximity to key institutions such as the Kansas state government, the Kansas Supreme Court, and the Kansas Court of Appeals, students like Schreckler are presented with unparalleled opportunities for internships and placements that provide hands-on experience. In fact, in his time at Washburn Law, Schreckler interned for four judges – one on the state Supreme Court, one on the state appellate court, one on the federal district court, and one on the Federal Court of Appeals – experiences which created a dynamic learning environment that goes beyond traditional classroom settings.

"We are known statewide for producing lawyers who are ready to practice when they leave law school. And that's something we're proud of," Leisinger said.

Courtroom Turned Classroom

One of the most distinctive learning opportunities that students interested in law and government can experience takes place in the state-of-the-art Heath Family Appellate Courtroom. This is not just any courtroom; it is a student's front-row seat to witness the legal system in action. Designed



Students listen as the Kansas Supreme Court justices hear cases. Photo by Ryan Purcell

to accommodate a variety of scheduled dockets and court hearings, the courtroom setup is student-centric, with a gallery where students can observe real-time arguments of actual cases.

Most importantly, the courtroom is equipped with a spacious bench capable of accommodating all Supreme Court justices simultaneously. Thanks to a partnership with the Kansas Supreme and appellate courts, students have the opportunity to hear oral arguments from those courts in action. The judges typically handle three to four cases in the morning and afternoon, covering various topics with different attorneys. This learning experience allows students to witness a range of cases, arguments, and legal proceedings, providing practical insights into the reality of courtroom dynamics, trial procedures, and legal advocacy.

After attending sessions, selected students receive debriefings and have the opportunity to engage with the judges in Q&A sessions over lunch.

As one of the students invited to participate in this rare glimpse into the inner workings of the state's highest courts, Schreckler couldn't pass up the opportunity. Although he was in Washington, D.C., at the time participating in Washburn Law's Third Year Anywhere program and working for Senator Roger Marshall, he jumped at the opportunity and immediately booked a flight back to Kansas so he could attend.

The experience was a pivotal moment for Schreckler as he interacted with justices and gained firsthand exposure to oral advocacy – a crucial skill for any aspiring lawyer. This immersive encounter provided him with profound insights into the art of making compelling arguments, handling challenges with finesse, and adapting swiftly to unexpected situations.

“Observing oral arguments in front of the justices provided me with invaluable insight into the world of seasoned advocates,” Schreckler said. “It taught me not just about making a case, but about conducting myself as a lawyer. It also helped me understand how important it is to reframe arguments, pivot gracefully, and think on the fly. It definitely shaped my perspective on effective legal representation.”

According to Leisinger, the experience is an invaluable chance for students to actually see and understand how the legal process unfolds within the courtroom.

“By demystifying judges and judicial officials, we aim to show that they, too, once sat in the same student desks, working their way up to objectively fulfill the demanding role of applying the law,” Leisinger said. “Then, through judicial externships and observational opportunities, students forge personal connections with the courts and gain invaluable insights into the practical dynamics of legal proceedings. You don’t get that from reading a court opinion.”



Students participate in a Q&A session with the justices. Photos by Ryan Purcell

In addition to witnessing their work on the bench, Schreckler reflected on the unique opportunity to engage with prominent figures in the state’s justice system in a more casual setting.

“It was awesome to pick the brains of some of the smartest people in our state who deal with the biggest issues that come before the justice system,” Schreckler said. “I was lucky to sit with Justice Stegall, and I talked with him about his background, what it takes to clerk after law school, what his recommendations were for someone who was just getting out of law school, and what a law school student should do as a 3L in order to maximize their experience. I really enjoyed being able to have that one-on-one time, but also having the ability to listen to all the perspectives of the justices on the Kansas Supreme Court.”

Other entities like the Kansas Board of Tax Appeals and Kansas Bureau of Investigation intend to host in the on-campus courtrooms for hearings and arguments, offering students a comprehensive view of different legal areas and administrative processes. Through these experiential learning initiatives, and programs like the law and government certificate, Washburn continues to shape the next generation of legal minds, empowering them to navigate the complexities of the legal arena with confidence and agility.

For new graduates just starting out in their career like Schreckler, Washburn’s commitment to providing these opportunities provides insights and exposure that wouldn’t otherwise be possible.

“A Washburn Law degree opens you up to the world – you can do anything you want,” Schreckler said. “As long as you put your mind to it, and you’re willing to put in the work, Washburn offers the opportunities to be successful.”

News Briefs

New Dean Announced

Following an extensive national search, Washburn University School of Law has selected **Jeffrey Jackson, BBA '89, JD '92**, to assume the role of dean permanently. Jackson began serving as interim dean in the spring of 2022, following the departure of Carla Pratt. He provided key leadership to law school faculty and staff as they helped to imagine and then moved to a new state-of-the-art home, Robert J. Dole Hall, in July of last year. He also led the addition of a seventh Center for Excellence, the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center.

“During the past two years, Dean Jackson has proven that he is a strong and thoughtful leader who deeply values the prestigious legacy of the Washburn School of Law and its importance to the legal communities we serve,” said JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn. “Appointing an alumnus to lead the Washburn University School of Law gives this announcement special meaning. We are so proud of Jeff and his accomplishments, knowing the future of the Washburn School of Law could not be in better hands.”

Prior to serving as interim dean, Jackson was a law professor as well as the director of the Center for Excellence in Advocacy



Washburn University School of Law Dean Jeff Jackson and Washburn University President JuliAnn Mazachek. Photo by Ryan Purcell

at Washburn School of Law. He earned his bachelor in business administration from Washburn University in 1989 and graduated cum laude with a juris doctor from Washburn School of Law in 1992. In addition, Jackson holds an LL.M. in constitutional law from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

Strategic Partnership with Emporia State University

Washburn University School of Law has announced a new partnership with Emporia State University. This collaboration is aimed at elevating legal education, fostering community engagement, and empowering aspiring legal professionals across Kansas by allowing students to complete a bachelor's degree as well as a law degree in six years.

The 3+3 program, where students spend three years at each school, is the fifth such agreement between Washburn Law and other Kansas institutions including Washburn University, Baker University, Fort Hays State University, and Pittsburg State University. Like the other partnerships, this collaboration

between the two institutions underscores their shared commitment to excellence, innovation, and service to their communities.

Washburn University President JuliAnn Mazachek expressed excitement about the opportunities this partnership presents.

“At Washburn, we believe in the transformative power of legal education to shape future leaders and advance the public good,” Mazachek said. “By joining forces with Emporia State, we are poised to create new pathways for students to explore the law, engage with their communities and make a meaningful impact in Kansas and beyond.”

Alumni Award Update

An inaccurate biography of Marcia Johnston, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award, ran in the Winter 2024 edition of the Washburn Lawyer magazine. The correct biography is below.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Marcia (Harley) Johnston, BA '71, JD '74

During the years Marcia (Harley) Johnston attended law school, few women were pursuing their juris doctor. There were only four women in her graduating class, and she became the first woman to represent the school in the National Moot Court Competition and was a member of the team that won the local and regional Jessup International Moot Court Competitions.

Following graduation, Johnston began a private practice with fellow classmate **Jane (Werholtz) McAllister, '74**, in Topeka, in which they practiced together until 1977. Gravitating toward areas of business law, particularly tax law, led to her becoming a senior tax counsel in-house at a major natural gas and pipeline company in Houston. Marriage and a subsequent move to Calgary, Alberta, followed in 1981. Upon her completion of becoming a Canadian citizen and passing two law school final exams and the Alberta Bar Exam, Johnston was admitted to the Law Society of Alberta. She switched her practice to corporate securities law, with an emphasis on oil and gas corporation clients. In 1985 she ceased membership as



Marcia Johnston with JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn University, and Jeff Jackson, dean, Washburn University School of Law. Johnston received her award in October of last year. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

a Kansas lawyer and became a sole practitioner in Calgary and developed a boutique securities practice which grew to nine lawyers by 2000 and merged with Gowling Lafleur Henderson, LLP, one of Canada's largest national law firms with over 700 lawyers in 2000. In 2004, Johnston received the honor of being designated a Queen's Counsel, Learned in the Law, for the Province of Alberta, an honorary title granted by the lieutenant governor.



Legacy Graduates

Graduates Joined by Family and Fellow Law Alumni

Photos by Nick Krug

Each graduating class from Washburn University School of Law holds at least one legacy graduate, a graduate who has a family member who also graduated from the law school. This year, several members of the graduating class were legacy graduates.

Commencement was held on May 11. Joining them during this momentous occasion, several of these legacy graduates posed for photos with their family members, also alumni of the law school, prior to the ceremony.



Joel Geoffrey Amend, '24, pictured with Geoff Amend, '95



Brianna Kay Brin, '24, pictured with Kaylene Brin, '92



Tristin Dierking, BA '20, JD '24, pictured with the Hon. Laura Lewis, BA '00, JD '04



Cameron Edens, '24, pictured with Ronald Kibbe, '83



Quinn McLean Hughes, '24, pictured with Stephany Hughes, '97, Ian Hughes, '21, and Patrick Hughes, '94



Margaret Marie Sparrow, '24, pictured with Yvonne Sparrow Smith, '23

Golden Reunion

Alumni Gather to Share Memories and Celebrate Achievements

Coming together during commencement weekend, 10 classmates returned to Washburn's campus to celebrate milestone reunions. The celebrations, honoring the classes of 1954, 1964, and 1974, honor alumni for their 70, 60, and 50-year milestones. With receptions and tours, the highlight of the weekend for the Golden Graduates is participating

in the commencement ceremony, wearing a special alumni graduation gown and receiving their commemorative alumni anniversary medallion. Following commencement, these alumni joined the new graduates in celebrating at Robert J. Dole Hall for a champagne reception.



Pictured left to right: R. Austin Nothern, '64, Warren Wood, '74, Roy Worthington, '74, the Hon. James Long, '74, Bernie Bianchino, BA '70, JD '74, H '11, the Hon. Jerome Hellmer, '74, Wendell "Bud" Cowan, '74, Frederick Lawrence McAulay, Jr., '74, Michael Lennen, '74, Thomas "Tim" Owens, '74. Photo by Johanna McDaniel



The Hon. James Long receives his medallion during commencement. Photo by Ryan Purcell



The Hon. Jerome Hellmer is congratulated by Washburn University President JuliAnn Mazachek. Photo by Ryan Purcell

Class Actions

The following alumni are those whose updates were reported to the school before April 30, 2024. Update your address at alumni@washburnlaw.edu and submit your news at washburnlaw.edu/alumninews.

1966

William Kurtis, Chicago, Illinois, was featured at the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas.

1969

Thomas Adrian, Newton, Kansas, has established a new law firm, Adrian Law, LLC., in North Newton.

1975

Terry Beck, Topeka, was awarded the Warren W. Shaw Distinguished Service Award at the annual Topeka Bar Association meeting.

1976

L. Daniel Rector, Monument, Colorado, has been chosen as a Colorado Super Lawyer for 2024.

1977

Ronald Smith, Larned, Kansas, has retired.

The Hon. John Weingart, Hiawatha, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 22nd district.

1978

The Hon. Bruce Gatterman, Larned, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 24th district.

The Hon. Rebecca Sanders, Topeka, was awarded the Honorable E. Newton Vickers Professionalism Award at the annual Topeka Bar Association meeting.

1981

The Hon. Glenn Braun, Hays, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 23rd district.

1980

Joseph Cosgrove, Jr., Austin, Texas, was appointed to the Broadband Development Office board of advisors by Gov. Greg Abbott.

1984

The Hon. J. Charles Droege, Overland Park, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 10th district.

1985

The Hon. Daniel Creitz, Erie, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 31st district.

The Hon. Nicholas St. Peter, Winfield, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 19th district.

The Hon. Michael Wright, Warrenton, Missouri, is currently serving as a judge in the eastern district of the Missouri Court of Appeals.

1986

The Hon. Benjamin Sexton, Abilene, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 8th district.

1987

Kevin Arnel, Wichita, is currently a managing partner at Foulston Siefkin LLP.

The Hon. Jeffry Larson, Emporia, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 5th district.

1989

The Hon. Kim Cudney, Washington, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 12th district.

1991

The Hon. Jeffrey Goering, Wichita, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 18th district.

1992

Jeffrey Jackson, Lawrence, Kansas, was promoted to dean of Washburn University School of Law.

1993

The Hon. Steven Ebberts, Topeka, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 3rd district.

1994

Mark Burenheide, Topeka, is the senior vice president & trust officer at CoreFirst Bank & Trust.

The Hon. Amy Harth, Paola, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 6th district.

1995

Mark Kubinski, Boise, Idaho, has accepted the position of lead counsel at the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses.

The Hon. William Mott, Wellington, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 30th district.

1996

The Hon. Clinton Peterson, Liberal, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 26th district.

1998

Matthew O'Connor, Lenexa, Kansas, is currently an office counsel attorney at Hinkle Law Firm, LLC.

William "Brad" Sutton, Assaria, Kansas, has been named the new city prosecutor for the city of Salina.

1999

The Hon. Kevin Berens, Saint Francis, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 15th district.

2000

Scott Hildebrand, Lindstrom, Minnesota, is currently city administrator in the city of Landfall.

Naomi Stacy, Pendleton, Oregon, is now an associate judge for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

2001

The Hon. Lori Bolton Fleming, Pittsburg, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 11th district.

2002

Robert Casad Jr., Frederiksberg, Denmark, is now working as the director of Casad & Associates ApS.

Andrew Kynaston, Las Vegas, Nevada, was named on the best divorce attorneys of Las Vegas list by Forbes.

2003

Rodger Turbak, Olathe, Kansas, was promoted from associate to member of Lewis Rice LLC.

2004

The Hon. Chris Kellogg, Leavenworth, Kansas, is a senior associate attorney at Strange Law Firm.

The Hon. Laura Lewis, Meade, Kansas, has been reappointed as a Kansas Supreme Court chief judge in the 16th district.

2009

Erin Bruce, Burke, Virginia, is currently employed at Squire Patton Boggs.

Sean Whitmore, Katy, Texas, has been appointed the criminal district attorney at the Waller County Criminal District Attorney's Office by Gov. Greg Abbott.

William Schmidt, Lenexa, Kansas, is now an IRS appeals officer.

Tiffany Hogan, Ellenwood, Georgia, has been promoted to division vice president of forward planning for D.R. Horton, Inc.

2010

Brett Busch, Loveland, Colorado, is currently working as a litigation attorney for Coan, Payton & Payne, LLC.

2011

Krista Turner, Wichita, is currently an attorney at Triplett Woolf Garretson, LLC.

2012

Kyle Donnelly, Olathe, Kansas, is currently practicing at Avek IP.

John Westerhaus, Rockville, Maryland, has been elected to partnership at Kutak Rock LLP. He is a member of the firm's employee benefits and executive compensation practice group.

2013

Christina Hansen, Wichita, started a new job as an assistant United States attorney for the District of Kansas.

2018

Courtney Cyzman, Prairie Village, Kansas, is currently an associate attorney at Logan Logan & Watson, L.C.

2019

Cameron Bernard, Topeka, is now an associate at Foulston Siefkin LLP.

2020

Kyler Wineinger, Lawrence, Kansas, is currently the assistant general counsel and litigation counsel at Kansas Corporation Commission.

2022

Courtney Ress, Colby, Kansas, is now working as an attorney for the Law Office of John D. Gatz.

2023

Jackie Hanzok, Topeka, was awarded the Outstanding Young Lawyer Award by the Topeka Bar Association in April 2024.



In Memoriam

Washburn Law mourns the passing of the following alumni whose deaths were reported to the school from Nov. 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

Duane West, BA '55, JD '55, Garden City, Kansas, on Dec. 6, 2023, at age 92.

William Haynes, BBA '52, JD '57, Topeka, on Jan. 3, 2024, at age 92.

Thomas Medill, Jr., BA '51, JD '58, Seneca, Kansas, on March 26, 2024, at age 94.

Ronald Myers, BA '59, JD '62, Ottawa, Kansas, on Jan. 17, 2024, at age 85.

Paul Humann, '64, Davie, Florida, on Feb. 5, 2024, at age 86.

Donald Barry, '65, Topeka, on Nov. 28, 2023, at age 86.

Eugene Ralston, '66, Topeka, on April 23, 2024, at age 83.

Kent Smith, '66, Atlanta, Georgia, on Oct. 19, 2023, at age 82.

Barry Billington, '67, Micco, Florida, on Nov. 5, 2023, at age 80.

Robert Vohs, '69, Wichita, on March 22, 2024, at age 81.

The Hon. Thomas Smith, BA '66, JD '70, Hugoton, Kansas, on Dec. 10, 2023, at age 80.

Russell Ash, '72, Topeka, on Nov. 10, 2023, at age 77.

Russell Reichert, '72, Farmingdale, New Jersey, on April 11, 2024, at age 76.

The Hon. William Malcolm, '74, Clay Center, Kansas, on Oct. 15, 2023, at age 74.

John McNee, BA '71, JD '74, Jacksonville, Arkansas, on Dec. 12, 2023, at age 74.

Thomas Henderson, BBA '70, JD '75, Topeka, on Feb. 6, 2024, at age 75.

John Michael "Mike" Kennalley, '76, Wichita, on Oct. 7, 2023, at age 72.

Lt. Col. Walter Ross, '77, Smithfield, Virginia, on Oct. 1, 2023, at age 71.

Edwin Wheeler, Jr., BA '74, JD '77, Marion, Kansas, on Dec. 18, 2023, at age 72.

Vernon "Rick" Buck, Jr., '78, Emporia, Kansas, on Jan. 30, 2024, at age 71.

Larry Mogge, BBA '75, JD '78, Topeka, on Jan. 30, 2024, at age 71.

C. Bickley Foster, '84, Wichita, on Dec. 23, 2023, at age 95.

Kevin Swain, '96, Torrance, California, on Oct. 19, 2023, at age 59.

Robert Drean, '96, Clermont, Florida, on Feb. 14, 2024, at age 81.

Mary Stanley-Reeves, '02, Smithville, Missouri, on March 28, 2024, at age 78.

Deborah "Renee" Gotviagehya, BA '99, JD '03, Nevada, Missouri, on Jan. 11, 2024, at age 56.

Robert "Joe" Pilgrim, BA '13, JD '16, Lawrence, Kansas, on Feb. 4, 2024, at age 47.

Hannah Wooffer, '18, Kansas City, Missouri, on Oct. 29, 2023, at age 34.

Remembering Duane West



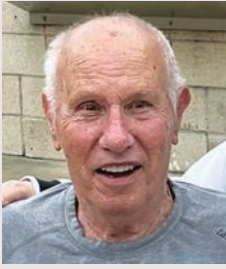
Duane West, BA '55, JD '55, of Garden City, Kansas, died on Dec. 6, 2023. He was 92.

West began his education at Garden City Community College before transferring to Washburn University School of Law where he obtained his juris doctor in 1955. Following

graduation, he returned to his hometown of Garden City where he remained involved in the community. He had an active practice there from 1955-1998.

During West's career, he was the chief prosecutor for the Clutter murders. The case, subject of the novel *In Cold Blood*, would open West to inquiries for the rest of his life. He was an active member of many organizations within his community and took an interest in music, composing the musical "Dream Your Dreams" in the 1970s. He served as a city commissioner in Garden City for 13 years and mayor in 1978 and 1981.

Remembering Don Barry



Don Barry, '65, of Topeka, died on Nov. 28, 2023. He was 86.

Barry earned his bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University in 1959, where he attended on a basketball scholarship. He would serve in the United States Army, stationed at Fort Riley, before going on to attend

Washburn University School of Law, receiving his juris doctor in 1965. During his time in law school, he was comments

editor for the Law Journal, member of the 1963 Moot Court team and a member of Delta Theta Phi legal fraternity.

Spending most of his career in Topeka, Barry would practice at the law firm Crane Martin Clausen Ashworth, later becoming Crane Martin Clausen Hamilton and Barry, where he would begin practicing with his son in 1990 for almost 30 years.

Barry and his wife, Margorie, were generous donors to Washburn, establishing the Donald D. and Margorie A. Barry Scholarship Fund for Athletics.

Remembering Kent Smith



Kent Smith, '66, of Atlanta, Georgia, died on Oct. 19, 2023. He was 82.

Smith received his bachelor's degree from Northwestern State College in Alva, Oklahoma, graduating with honors before attending Washburn University School of Law. He would go on to graduate cum laude in

1966 where he was on the Washburn Law Journal editorial board. In 1992, he was named the university's first Alumni Fellow in law and served as a member of the Law School Alumni Association board of governors.

Upon graduation from law school, Kent served as law clerk to **Judge Delmas C. Hill, BA '29, JD '29, H '58**, on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. After that, he was an attorney for the Atomic Energy Commission and then the law firm of Smith, Currie, and Hancock before founding Smith & Fleming. He was recognized nationally and earned several awards for his work in construction law.

Smith and his wife, Karen Smith, gave generously to the law school over the years. Together, they honored Hill by naming the Hon. Delmas Hill Reading Room in the library, and made an additional contribution to name the Kent and Karen Smith Student Commons.





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Save the Date — Friday, October 18, 2024

Washburn Law Alumni Awards

Graduate of the Last Decade

Kaitlin Alegria, BA '12, JD '15, M '21

Honorary Life Membership

Melissa Masoner

Cindy Rogers, BA '69

Distinguished Service Award

Thomas A. Adrian, BBA '66, JD '69

Lifetime Achievement Award

Natalie G. Haag, '85

Hon. Bill W. Ossmann, '77

Law Legacy Family

The Berkley Family: Bill Berkley, BBA '72, JD '75, Brandon Berkley, '03, Paul Berkley, '56, Robert Berkley, '53

The Scott Family: Elisha

Scott, '16, John Scott, '47, Charles Scott, '48

