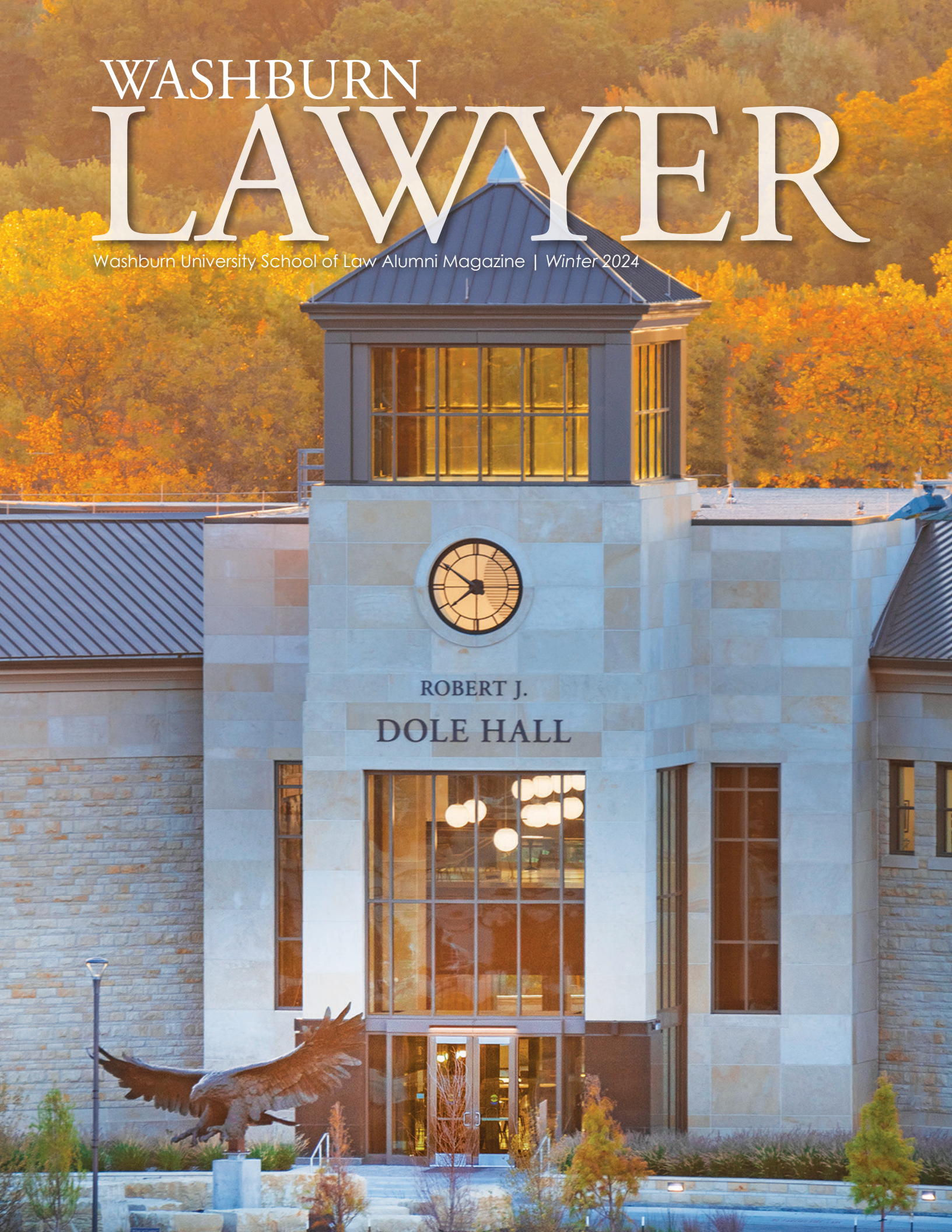


# WASHBURN LAWYER

Washburn University School of Law Alumni Magazine | Winter 2024



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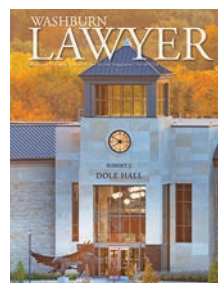
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An ariel view of the new School of Law building as the sun rises.

*Photo by Jeremy Wangler*

# A Bright Future Ahead



## 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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Hello, everyone:

What a wonderful feeling to be writing to you for the first time from our new home! I know many of you have been with us on this journey from the beginning. The time finally came, and we have wrapped up our first semester on the corner of 21st Street and Washburn Ave. We remain thankful to those alumni and friends who made this dream a reality. If you have not made it to see the incredible new space for yourself, I invite you back to campus to take a tour and see it firsthand.

This past summer, we held the grand opening event for Robert J. Dole Hall. As you'll see throughout this edition of the magazine, the state-of-the-art building is providing the best opportunity for our students to be successful. Each classroom is equipped for lectures to be recorded or viewed via Zoom, an enhancement for every course but particularly beneficial to our Third Year Anywhere program. Two courtrooms provide ample opportunities for our students to gain real-world experience, as does the new Washburn Law Clinic. Numerous study spaces throughout allow students to find a quiet spot to study. And as an added bonus, the natural light throughout the entire space enriches the learning environment and offers a wonderful setting for events, countless of which have already taken place since the grand opening.

The numbers emphasize the advantages of the new hall as well. This semester saw an increase in enrolled 1L students and transfers. I expect this growth in enrollment to endure as we continue to expand recruiting areas and share the vision of Washburn University School of Law. We have a reputation for producing practice-ready lawyers and we will continue to build that reputation and spread the word.

More good news has come from this semester, too. The two most recent bar exam results have reflected some of the highest pass rates in recent memory. If you recall in previous communications, we began an initiative where all students would be equipped with Barbri test prep. It is now part of their tuition and each student has the test prep materials at their hands in time to prepare for that next step in their career as attorneys. Their success is the reason we do what we do, and I am ecstatic to see this initiative produce such success.

One final update worth noting in this edition is that of the new dean's search. It has been my pleasure to lead the Law School during this pivotal time in our history. To ensure that the Law School is set up for continued success, Dr. JuliAnn Mazachek, Washburn president, is leading a national search for our next permanent dean. As we have already shared, this confidential search is being conducted by a search firm, Anthem Executive. Because of the nature of a confidential search, it may seem as though information is sparse, but you should expect to hear more about the process soon.

As you can see, it has once again been an exciting semester at the Law School. But what is even more exciting is the future of our beloved alma mater. I am confident that we will remain on a positive trajectory. As we look ahead to the future, I invite you to reach out to me if you have any questions. I will always stand by my statement: This is your law school, and I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey D. Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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

# Greetings!

As an alumnus, I'm very excited to see the activity going on this year as we look toward the future of Washburn Law in our new home. I want to congratulate the school on an increase in the 1L class this year, and we are excited for more good news in the years to come as incoming law students see the great space and meet the excellent faculty in the School of Law.

The search for the new dean is well underway. I know as alumni, we all care deeply about our law school and who is serving as dean. We look forward to hearing the updates on the search process, and I know that campus leadership will take careful and thoughtful consideration for new leadership and making sure Washburn Law continues its tradition of teaching excellence.

We were all shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of long-time Washburn Law professor and dean Jim Concannon. Thanks to a small group of his friends and former students, his mark on this law school will live on forever through the naming of the James M. Concannon Dean and Professor of Law fund. In recognition of Dean Concannon's 50 years of service to Washburn, the Law School Foundation recently transferred \$500,000 to enhance this newly created deanship, the first ever named deanship on Washburn's campus. To date, \$2.3 million has been donated to the Concannon Deanship toward the \$3 million needed to name the fund. If you would like to give to the deanship fund in memory of Concannon, visit [wualumni.org/schooloflaw](http://wualumni.org/schooloflaw).

Finally, the board this fall approved a new slate of alumni award winners and honored them on Oct. 13, 2023. It is a pleasure to go through that practice each year and see the nominees from your peers. We truly are a community who admires and acknowledges others' work, and we are excited to honor each of you for your accomplishments. Congratulations to everyone. You can read more about each recipient on page 30.

Thank you again for all you do for the School of Law.

Respectfully,

Thomas A. Adrian, '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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# An Ideal Opening

## *Ribbon Cut on the New School of Law Building over the Summer*

*By Dannie Harris-Cooper*

Over the summer, the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Washburn University School of Law saw their dream of a new home become a reality. Robert J. Dole Hall was dedicated on July 21, 2023, after much anticipation and an extensive fundraising campaign, formally known as Ideal Place, that brought together more than 1,000 alumni and donors who contributed \$13.4 million for the project.

“Years ago, a handful of us dreamed of the day we might be here, surrounded by Washburn Law friends and family, dedicating a brand-new, state-of-the-art law building,” said JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn University. “We know great things sometimes take a long time and are worth waiting for. We are grateful for the dedicated work and persistent vision it took by so many to bring this dream to life for the future generations of law students.”

Ideal Place was indicative of a contemporary approach to education. The facility is designed for the way legal education has evolved classrooms are configured to accommodate the needs of individual classes, and there are many spaces for students to meet to work collaboratively. In addition, two courtrooms allow students to refine their practice skills. These upgrades allow students to continue their education from anywhere they can access the internet, capitalizing on the Third Year Anywhere initiative that began in 2019. The program allows students to finish their third year of law school remotely, gaining experience in a location they plan to practice in after graduation. Classrooms are equipped with the technology needed to embrace this form of distance learning.

Named after one of Washburn’s most well-known graduates, **Sen. Robert Dole, BA ’52, JD ’52, H ’69, H ’85**, the new home’s upgraded technology will be an asset to those who, like Dole, may face challenges on their educational journey. With an injury to his right hand during World War II, Dole earned his law degree while teaching himself to write with his left hand. During that time, he would use a bulky device to record lectures and learn the material. Now, the ability to record lectures in the new facility will allow all students to revisit those lectures at any time.

The building also embraces the history of the Law School and the impact of Washburn attorneys. A four-part mural by artist Michael Toombs hangs prominently over the entryway staircase. The artwork, aptly titled “Non Nobis Solum,” highlights the role of Washburn lawyers in the landmark *Brown v. Board* case. Another nod to history is the light fixtures in the Michael C. Manning Trial Courtroom. The fixtures are replicas of the lights in the federal courtroom where the *Brown v. Board* case originated in Topeka.

“When Washburn University was founded as Lincoln College in 1865, it embraced a commitment toward education for all, regardless of gender or race,” said **Jeff Jackson, BBA ’89, JD ’92**, interim dean, School of Law. “From **Charles Scott, BA ’48, JD ’48, John Scott, BA ’42, JD ’47**, and **Charles Bledsoe, ’37**, three Washburn lawyers who filed the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, to lawmakers such as Sen. Bob Dole and **Rep. Jim Slattery, BA ’70, JD ’75**, who helped fight for and secure passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in Congress, our alumni have been using the skills and knowledge gained at Washburn to ensure equal opportunity for all.”

Several special guests joined the Washburn community for the opening of the building, including Sen. Roger Marshall, Sen. Jerry Moran, and Gov. Laura Kelly. Notably absent was James Concannon, who died one month before the ribbon cutting. The 50-year impact of the former dean and professor will continue to be felt for generations of students and alumni, as evidenced by an anonymous donor who made the James Concannon Dean’s Suite in the new facility a reality. One of Concannon’s well-known phrases is positioned above the door as guests depart the suite, “Don’t think great thoughts. Read the statute.”

The gratitude toward the alumni and friends who brought the new building to life cannot be understated. Their gifts will allow future generations of Washburn attorneys to succeed with a premier legal education that will last a lifetime.

“Today at last, the Washburn University School of Law has the home that it needs, that it deserves, and that it has earned,” **Marshall Meek, MBA ’17**, president, Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation shared during the ribbon cutting event. “Thank you, all of you, for making today possible.”



ROBERT J.  
DOLE HALL

WYSS BURNS



TO THE STARS THROUGH  
DIFFICULTIES

# Commemorating a Legacy

## *Years of Service Honored in Naming of New Law Building*

*By Angela Lutz*

One of Washburn University School of Law's most distinguished alumni is now immortalized in the newest building on campus. Officially dedicated this summer, the Robert J. Dole Hall is equipped with the latest advances in technology and accessibility to help propel Washburn and its students to success for many years to come. The stately building is also a beacon to the legal profession, boosting Washburn's national profile and serving as a fitting tribute to Dole's lifetime of service.



Robert Dole

At Washburn and across the country, the accomplishments of **Dole, BA '52, JD '52, H '69, H '85**, are well known. A World War II veteran, Dole earned his law degree at Washburn after returning from military service. He went on to become a highly respected senator for the state of Kansas for nearly 30 years, developing a reputation for his down-to-earth yet

tough persona and ability to work across party lines. For these reasons, JuliAnn Mazachek, president, Washburn University, said naming the new law school building after Dole was an obvious choice.

“Sen. Dole is the consummate alumni, statesman, politician, civic leader, and person who has contributed to our state and our nation,” Mazachek said. “He was always such a great supporter of Washburn University, and we believe he was someone who represented what Washburn Law at the core was all about.”

While serving in the military, Dole suffered an injury that impacted mobility in his right hand and arm, forcing him to relearn how to write with his left hand and making law school note taking exceedingly difficult. Throughout his life, Dole was an avid disability rights advocate, including playing a prominent role in the 1990 passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. In the new law school building, students can record and revisit lectures as needed, allowing them to learn at their own pace.

Mazachek believes the new technology is an excellent way to honor Dole's legacy by making legal education more accessible to all students. The building also has dedicated spaces to accommodate collaborative learning and group work and features courtrooms and technology identical to what students

will encounter in the real world. This gives them a head start in their future careers – and makes them more aware of the duty they have as public servants.

“We wanted the building to reflect the high quality of education we provide at Washburn, so when students walked in they were aware of the tremendous responsibility they have,” Mazachek said. “We want them to know this is important and that we take it seriously, and they're going to be the best prepared they can possibly be.”

The classrooms also have state-of-the-art technology that allows students to capitalize on Washburn's Third Year Anywhere initiative, enabling participants to complete their third year of law school from anywhere they can access the internet. Distance learning gives burgeoning lawyers the invaluable opportunity to gain experience and familiarity in the location where they plan to practice after graduation. Mazachek believes the building's many technological advancements and modern amenities will attract more students and top faculty to Washburn.

“That will be great for our community – so many of our attorneys who graduate from Washburn stay right here in our state,” she said. “They are leaders and public servants who



Photo by Jeremy Wangler

meet the needs of Kansas, just like Sen. Dole did throughout his career. We are glad this building will help us continue that mission.”

In addition to the building, donors also established the Robert J. Dole Plaza that prominently features a sculpture from Omaha-based artist John Lajba. The piece, titled “To the Stars Through Difficulty,” stands on granite from the same quarry used for the World War 2 Memorial in Washington, DC that Sen. Dole championed.

For Dole’s family, the new law school building is an ideal way to honor the man they loved personally and admired professionally. Dole and his wife, Sen. Elizabeth Dole, were married for 46 years until his death in 2021. She also had a successful political career, serving as a North Carolina senator and U.S. secretary of transportation. She believes despite his inherent humility, her husband would be proud to see his name on the new building.

“After World War II, Washburn University became the threshold of a new chapter of public service for Bob,” she said. “His law studies, in particular, inspired a new path in life, dedicated to ensuring that every American had a fair shot at achieving the American dream. While ever humble, I

know Bob would be proud to see his name on the wall of an institution where future generations will discover that same sense of service and how they can use their education to better the world around them.”

“The new Robert J. Dole Hall gives Dad a permanent place at Washburn – the foundation that launched his legendary career and helped him become one of the most influential and respected public servants of our time,” added Dole’s daughter, Robin Dole.

As Washburn students and faculty begin to utilize the new building and take advantage of all it has to offer, Dole’s legacy will live on in the success of this joint project between Washburn and the university’s alumni and donors, which Mazachek said is the result of a shared vision and commitment to the future generations of Washburn Law.

“I had the great fortune of working with Sen. Dole for many years, and he is someone you aspire to be like and lead like,” Mazachek said. “He always had Kansas at the heart of what he could accomplish and what could make our nation the best. I have such respect for him and the difference he made for our country, and it was truly an honor to be able to name the building after him.”

Photo by Jeremy Wangler





Students utilize new classrooms. Photo by Jeremy Wangler



Guests tour the new common spaces at the building opening. Photos by Nick Krug

# Double the Courtrooms

## *State-of-the-Art Courtrooms Provide Educational Opportunities and Unique Space*

*By Angela Lutz*

When students enter the two new courtrooms at Washburn University School of Law, they are often awestruck. With sleek wood paneling, pendant lights, and the latest technological equipment, the recently dedicated Heath Family Appellate Courtroom and Michael C. Manning Trial Courtroom are being used for the first time by Washburn Law students and faculty this fall.

For Joseph Mastro Simone, Washburn Law professor and Center for Excellence in Advocacy director, the impact is nothing short of monumental.

“When students start coming to Washburn, I love to see their faces when they walk into the courtrooms,” Mastro Simone said. “I think it’s incredible for students to have so many new opportunities, and it will help Washburn continue to recruit amazing students and faculty for years to come. Those courtrooms in my mind are the crown jewel of the new building.”

The new courtrooms are a marked improvement that aim to meet the needs of both trial and appellate court. Mastro Simone said having two dedicated spaces in the new Robert J. Dole Hall gives students more chances not only to hone their legal

skills, but also to observe real-life lawyers and trials as they occur. The Heath Courtroom was designed to seat the entire Kansas Supreme Court so they can hold hearings there, and they and a panel of the Kansas Court of Appeals have already utilized the space. Proceedings in the Heath Courtroom on Nov. 3, 2023, allowed students a rare opportunity to observe the court in action.

“Those are exciting opportunities for students to be able to just walk down the hallway and observe those hearings,” Mastro Simone said. “Afterward, the judges are usually very gracious with their time and will meet with the students and answer questions. It’s a great networking opportunity.”

In the Manning Courtroom, students will be able to practice their pre-trial and trial advocacy skills and prepare for national mock trial competitions in a courtroom that Mastro Simone said “looks like something out of a movie,” complete with seating areas for a judge, witness, and jury. Similar to the Heath Courtroom, the law school will invite local judges to hold a day of hearings or a trial in the space. This will give students another exceptional educational opportunity and boost Washburn’s national profile, as the courtroom is also ideal for hosting regional and national competitions.



Left: Michael C. Manning Courtroom. Right: Manning speaks to a group of students during the dedication of the courtroom. Photos by Jeremy Wangler



Left: Heath Family Appellate Courtroom. Photo by Jeremy Wangler  
 Right: Cynthia Heath welcomes the board of trustees to the courtroom. Photo submitted.

“Next year we’re hosting a regional trial advocacy competition,” Mastro Simone said. “We’re really excited to bring law students and faculty from other schools into our new home and show the place off.”

For the alumni who helped make the new courtrooms a reality, the decision to give back to Washburn University School of Law was all about helping future generations succeed. **Cynthia Heath, BA ’71, H ’22**, a former chair of the Washburn University Foundation board of trustees, donated because of the opportunities Washburn afforded her and her late husband, **David Heath, BA ’70, JD ’76**. In 2017, she issued a matching challenge that gave the law school building campaign the boost it needed.

“I made the gift to the law school because the law school gave my husband a second chance,” she said. “That second chance changed our lives, and it also changed the lives of many other people. I chose the Heath family name because it always takes many people to succeed in life, and I consider that a big family.”

As a first-generation college graduate, Heath knows that lifting up the lawyers of the future is more important than securing her family’s legacy, and she aims to accomplish that goal through her philanthropic endeavors.

“In the long run, this gift is about future students who will have a great opportunity to get a great education,” she said. “Making the gift facilitates other people’s legacies – it gives them the opportunity to have success. That’s what I’m proud of now – these students have a wonderful place to learn. They’ve

always had incredible programs at the law school, and now they have a place to showcase them.”

After a successful 44-year career that included arguing some of the most impactful commercial litigation and civil rights cases in Arizona and United States history, **Michael C. Manning, JD ’77, H ’07**, is proud to have contributed to the education and success of future generations of attorneys. He credits Washburn – and in particular former law school deans, James Concannon and Carl Monk – with showing him the immense good lawyers can do in their communities.

“Washburn gave me more than an excellent legal education,” Manning said. “Through a lot of little ways, it created in my mind the great impact and community good that lawyers can do. It really is a noble profession that can make things better for people and communities, and Washburn did that for me.”

As everyone settles into the new spaces, Manning is excited about the advantage the courtrooms will give Washburn Law students over their peers, as they are built to the exact specifications of courtrooms across the country and equipped with technology students will use in the real world. He is also proud to help future lawyers have a positive impact on their communities throughout their careers.

“The courtrooms will give students a leap in experience that some of their colleagues will not have,” he said. “This is a good venue for students to practice what will become their profession and later have an impact on the future of Topeka and the nation.”



The new mural commemorating Brown v. Board of Education hangs by the staircase in the new building. Photo by Nick Krug.

## Brown v. Board

### *Local Artist Creates Mural to Commemorate the Landmark Case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*

*By Sarah Towle*

When Robert J. Dole Hall was opened in July, the prominent mural representing the history of the Washburn University School of Law and its relationship to Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was also unveiled.

The mural, commissioned by Washburn Law with the support of generous donors, was completed by Kansas City-based artist Michael Toombs. Its title, “Non Nobis Solum,” represents Washburn’s motto of not for ourselves alone.

“Washburn University School of Law was a pioneer in offering legal education to all,” said **Jeff Jackson, BBA ’89, JD ’92**, interim dean, Washburn Law. “I am proud to have received my education here and to help lead this institution into the future, a future made brighter by its rich history and impact on civil rights. This one-of-a-kind piece showcases the history of Washburn School of Law and the role Washburn lawyers

played in advancing this landmark case, and I hope it inspires the next generation of lawyers.”



Michael Toombs

Toombs, who worked on the project, wishes to thank former Dean Carla Pratt, Jackson, and his own wife Marcia Pomeroy. He did extensive research while completing the mural. He said the foundation and thread through each painting is the surreal spirit of the historical times, where the realist paintings are embedded into the emotion of the sky. While the mural depicts the history and effects of the Brown v. Board decision, Toombs said it starts with Ichabod Washburn’s vision of financially saving an institution that believed it was important to educate people of color and women.

“Ichabod Washburn had such a powerful vision, and I don’t think he ever got a chance to internalize the impact of what he was trying to do,” Toombs said. “Laying the foundation for the future is what Washburn himself originally hoped for when he decided to support the college, and it was the kernel of inspiration that resonated through out all four panels of the mural.”

The mural hangs in the central staircase of the new building and each panel reflects an important snapshot of the history of *Brown v. Board*.

### *Panel 1 – The Birth of Integrated Education in Topeka, Kansas*

The first foundation panel reflects the time between 1850 and 1916. It is a partial dark and disturbing sky representing the anti-slavery and pro-slavery forces in 1850. This part of the panel carried through the Civil War to 1865. The lighter skies represent transitioning to the educational visions of the freedman and scholars and the beginning of Lincoln College celebrating the ending of slavery. Ichabod Washburn – a Congregationalist deacon, industrialist, and abolitionist back East – was the donor whose generous gift allowed the social and educational mission of Lincoln College in Topeka to thrive. He died before ever setting foot on the campus, but the college was renamed Washburn College and later Washburn University in his honor, and in 1903, a law school was established in Topeka that also bore this benefactor’s name. Like its namesake, Washburn University School of Law made a central part of its mission “the creation of a more just society.”

### *Panel 2 – The Challenge to Racial Segregation*

The foundational sky of the panel shared the dark and disturbing colors but began to open with blue at the top and a brighter yellow toward the bottom of the panel. This embedded painting shows one of the 13 plaintiff families in *Brown v. Board*, Lucinda Todd, and her young daughter, Nancy. Lucinda and her nephew, **Paul Brady**, BBA ’51, JD ’56, H ’04, were pro-integration activists in Topeka. They, and many others, met each evening around Todd’s table, a symbol in the painting of the community working together. Her involvement in the *Brown v. Board* case at the federal district court of Topeka inspired Brady to attend Washburn Law, and he became the first Black federal administrative law judge. **Elisha Scott**, shown on the first panel, was one of the first three Black Washburn Law graduates, earning his degree in 1916. His sons, **Charles**, ’48, and **John**, ’47, **Scott**, were also educated at Washburn Law as well as Charles Bledsoe, and all worked on the *Brown* case. They lost their case in the

United States District Court for the District of Kansas and appealed directly to the United States Supreme Court. The case was eventually heard there with lead attorney, Thurgood Marshall, arguing the case for the plaintiffs. **Loren Miller**, BA ’24, JD ’28, represented in the painting, was the lawyer who wrote an appellate brief for the case. **Sherman Parks, Sr.**, BBA ’49, JD ’55, the highest ranking Black judicial officer and the first Black appellate judge in Kansas, is also depicted in the painting.

### *Panel 3 – Enforcement of the Supreme Court’s Decision in Brown v. Board Holding that Separate Education is not Equal*

The foundational sky is turning from darkness into light, pastel colors bringing a bright environment for the next phase after the successful completion of the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board* case, decided in favor of the plaintiffs. This next phase was the enforcement case, called “*Brown II*,” in which the federal district courts are empowered by the Supreme Court to order local school districts to desegregate and integrate local public schools. Washburn Law faculty helped with the enforcement in Topeka Public Schools. The faculty members depicted are Bill Rich, Ron Griffin, Myrl Duncan, and Allen Easley. Many lawyers from around the country also participated and are depicted throughout the panel. Enforcement included busing children of color to schools that had been all white schools previously.

### *Panel 4 – History is Made in Topeka*

The foundational sky of the panel shows the promise in its bright sky embedded with the hope of never repeating the mistakes of the past as we move into the future. Washburn Law alumni worked to get the national park site in Topeka to commemorate the decision and to teach history to all who come to Kansas to visit. **Jim Slattery**, BA ’70, JD ’75, was in the United States House of Representatives, representing the 2nd District of Kansas, when he introduced the House bill that created the National Park Service site in Topeka. **Sen. Robert Dole**, BA ’52, JD ’52, H ’69, H ’85, was in the Senate at the time and introduced a Senate bill to secure the *Brown v. Board* of Education National Historical Park in Topeka. National Park Service Ranger Dexter Armstrong, shown on this panel, was an employee of the site and represents the evolving status of people of color. There is an intentional lack of density in this panel, which Toombs said is symbolic of the open-ended future yet to come with the hope of continued freedom for all. The spirit of Ichabod Washburn is walking toward the future.



Students study in the Hon. Delmas Hill Reading Room. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

# A Modernized Library

## *New Law Library Brings Cutting-Edge Services to Students*

*By Annie Flachsbarth*

The new Hon. Joseph C. Morris Library Suite, featuring a large reading room named in honor of the late **Hon. Delmas Hill, '29**, symbolizes an exciting new chapter in the school's history and recognizes the importance of evolving to meet the changing needs of students and faculty.

While the Washburn Law Library has always been much more than just a collection of books – often serving as a gathering point for students to study together – the new library is a vibrant amalgamation of spaces designed to foster collaboration, individual research, and multi-disciplinary learning. Despite a decrease in size from 35,000 to 10,000 square feet, the area has more than enough room to keep up with the needs of today's students and the ever-growing technological landscape.

From the moment visitors enter the library, they're welcomed by a modern circulation desk, self-checkout machines, and a common area equipped with movable furniture, offering students the flexibility to customize their learning environment and make the space more user-friendly. Nine online reservable study rooms equipped with the latest technology to screencast from laptops provide an intimate space for group work. In fact, the entire library design has been smartly planned to prioritize areas for student collaboration.

Professor Thomas Sneed, director of the Washburn Law Library, is particularly enthusiastic about the new space.

"In our old library, we had two study rooms, and they were probably our most popular spots," Sneed said. "We're excited to see these continue to be such a collaborative spot for students."

The library's collection has been strategically divided to ensure the most comprehensive materials remain in the new space. Sneed notes the smaller space usage has led to more efficient use of resources and a concentration on essential materials.

"We did weed some of our collection and then get rid of some things, primarily things that are widely available electronically," Sneed said. "So here we mainly have our monographs and Kansas research materials. The remaining materials will eventually find a home in the Carnegie building on Washburn's campus after a space has been slightly remodeled to accommodate the library's needs."

Optimizing the new space was a priority for library staff, which led to the need for a new rolling stack shelving system for the in-house collection. The innovative shelving eliminates the need for fixed aisles, allowing for ideal space utilization. With

the simple push of a button, stacks can be rolled apart, creating a single aisle. Sensors ensure the shelves aren't closed when someone is in an aisle.

"This allows us to have more shelving to use the space efficiently," Sneed said. "It's a technology that's not uncommon in libraries, but it's a new one for us."

## *New Spaces*

The new building and space allowed for some changes that have both students and faculty excited. At the top of the list, the renowned Washburn Law Journal now boasts an office within library premises. The proximity to resources is expected to stimulate effective collaboration and enhance the quality of research for the Journal staff.

"A lot of libraries would probably be excited to have their journal in the library because they are some of our biggest users of our resources," Sneed said.

Leaping into the digital age, a state-of-the-art recording studio is a remarkable library addition. It serves multi-faceted roles, including the ability to record continuing legal education sessions and online classes. The studio, with its professional lighting, backdrops, and cameras, is also available to students for mock trials, job interview practice, and other video recording needs.

At the heart of the library is the reading room, a calm oasis designed for focused study. The artfully designed room boasts comfortable seating, built-in tables, and plug-ins, providing students a tranquil space to immerse themselves in their work.

Sneed credited the library staff for their work to make the move as seamless as possible.

"Our staff did an amazing job getting ready to move. We had to touch almost every book in the old library – it was a huge job, and I can't give them enough credit," Sneed said.



Photo by Jeremy Wangler

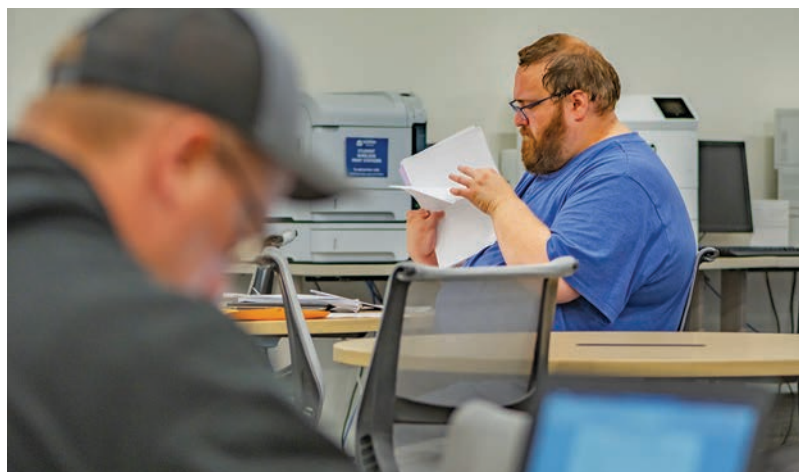


Photo by Jeremy Wangler

## *Investment in the Future*

Of course, the new law library wouldn't have been possible had it not been for the generous gifts of donors like **Kent Smith, '66**, and his wife, Karen, who gave \$500,000 to the law school's building project campaign to show their gratitude for the law school and to honor the late Hill.

Smith passed away only a few months after the opening of the new Robert J. Dole Hall. As a new attorney, he had clerked for Hill after law school and credited Hill for giving him a unique perspective on the law. Eventually, the two became close friends and colleagues and Hill even officiated their wedding. The fact that the reading room in the library was named after Hill was something Kent felt was well deserved.

In a previously published article, Smith, who passed away on Oct. 19, 2023, expressed his gratitude to Hill and to the law school:

"I understand they're going to continue having a room dedicated to Judge Hill in the new law school," Smith said. "I've been pretty generous with Washburn financially all along, but this time I decided to make a pretty special contribution, just to help the institution that's meant so much to me. Hopefully it will do the same for others, and I'm sure that it will."

The new Washburn University School of Law library is a potent symbol of modernization and innovation. With its versatile and thoughtfully planned spaces, the library is all set to enhance students' educational experience for years to come.

# A Day in the Life of the Dean

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Over the summer, Washburn University School of Law said goodbye to the longest serving faculty member in the law school's storied history. James Concannon's legacy will live on through his work, his mentorship, the endowed deanship in his honor at the law school, and the James Concannon Dean's Suite in the new Robert J. Dole Hall. The suite was made possible by an anonymous donor in honor of Concannon well before his death. While he did not have the opportunity to see the suite completed, he recognized that the space would be utilized by the law school's leaders for generations to come. *A Day in the Life of a Dean* offers a preview of some of the work taking place in the dean's suite.

## 8:45 *Arrival*

Interim Dean **Jeff Jackson**, BBA '89, JD '92, arrives on campus after dropping his son, Jon, off at Stofer Hall. Jon is a junior at Washburn University studying environmental biology. He lives at home and commutes with Jackson. Although the dean is just arriving at Dole Hall, his workday started earlier as he spent time at home with a list of three to four priorities for the day. Spoiler alert: he will only get to work on two of them.

## 8:50 – 9:10 *Settling In*

Jackson checks his emails and returns messages. There are countless projects underway relating to the law school, but the major one is preparation for the 10-year ABA accreditation visit in the spring.

## 9:10 – 9:30 *Report Editing*

As part of this process for the site visit, the school must fill out a 125-page survey detailing its policies, procedures, and practices to meet the ABA regulations, as well as a 25-page self-study that analyzes the effectiveness of these practices. All the administrative offices across the law school have been working to compile the information for their respective areas. **Shelby Grau**, BA '03, JD '07, formerly director of compliance and administration at the law school, and **Emily Grant**, associate dean, have been integrating the collected information into a draft report. The dean gets the easy job in the process: reviewing the information and editing the draft. It's a project best done in bite-sized chunks. This is one of them.

## 9:30-10:00 *Meeting with a Current Student*

Although he isn't teaching this semester, Jackson still meets with students who need advice on their legal careers. Today, he's speaking with a student about applying and interviewing for judicial clerkships. Because Jackson has clerked for judges on the Kansas Court of Appeals, Kansas Supreme Court, and the United States 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, students who aspire to clerk for those courts often ask him for advice about clerking.

## 10:00 – 10:30 *Meeting with a Prospective Student*

Another part of the dean's job is promoting Washburn University School of Law to prospective students. When a student visits campus, they first meet with either **Kaitlin Alegria**, BA '12, JD '15, MA '21, assistant dean of admissions, or **Priscilla Samarripa**, admissions director. Then a student ambassador takes them on a tour of the building. They will also often sit in on a class in session. At Washburn, each of the visitors meet with a professor one-on-one. Often, they will meet with the dean. Over this half hour, Jackson will talk to the prospective student (and sometimes the student's parents) about Washburn and what attending law school is like. This personal touch is something that Washburn is famous for, and it helps with recruitment for the law school.

## 10:30-11:00 *More Emails*

Now Jackson gets some time to breathe after his recruitment activities. He spends this time fielding and replying to emails that come in throughout the day about a variety of law school matters.

## 11:00 – Noon *Meeting with Director of Development*

Once a week, Jackson meets with **Patrick Mikesic**, executive director of development and alumni relations for the School of Law. A large part of the dean's job involves traveling and speaking with alumni, either in one-on-one visits or at larger alumni events. With the opening of the new building, Washburn Law has been fielding several requests from alumni and outside organizations who want to tour and utilize the building. On this particular day, the schedule of events for the week is heavier than usual. On Thursday, the United States District Court judges for the District of Kansas will be holding parts of their annual retreat at the law school, and Jackson will be tasked with greeting the judges when they arrive and conducting a tour of the school for them. The dean will also join in when the judges eat lunch with groups of students in the Kent & Karen Smith Student Commons and introduce the judges for a panel discussion with students. These types of

## Lessons from Jim Concannon by Jeff Jackson

I had the good fortune to be able to learn from Jim Concannon in a variety of settings. He was my law school dean, my faculty mentor, and my go-to source for advice as an interim dean. What I know about being a faculty member and a dean, I learned from Jim.

### **As a Student:** *A Dean Steps Up*

In the fall of 1990, I was a member of the infamous civil procedure class that lost its professor. It was an incredible story that you can read about in Jim's book. With no other choice, then-Dean Concannon stepped up to teach the class by combining it with the civil procedure class he was already teaching. This situation meant that, in addition to all of his duties as dean, he was teaching, and grading, 150 1Ls! Somehow, he managed to give all of us the personal attention for which Washburn is famous. I don't know when he found the time to sleep. But it was a job that had to be done, and so Concannon did it.

### **As a New Professor:** *Give Everyone an Even Shake*

We have blind grading here at the law school. That's a good thing, although it sometimes causes issues. There are occasions when, after you've finalized the grades and they are unchangeable, you find out that you gave a bad grade to a student that you really, really like. Maybe it's the student that you were really rooting for because they seemed so earnest. Maybe it's the student who answered all the questions you asked. At these times, a professor can begin to question whether they somehow made a mistake in grading, or whether blind grading even makes sense. It was Jim Concannon as my faculty mentor who drove home to me that I couldn't know everything about students. Some of those students who don't talk much in class

may be listening intently to every word, but are too worried about being wrong to speak up. Students who don't seem to be putting in the effort may in fact just be a swan – cool on the surface, but paddling like heck underneath. Students need to know that, as a professor, you're going to give them an even shake.

**As a Dean:** *When I accepted the job as interim dean, Jim gave me some words of advice that I've taken to heart. They are:*

**1. The dean has to be the biggest cheerleader** – In anything having to do with the law school, the dean is the person people want to hear from. That means the dean must be the public face. Most of the time that's fun, because it means you get to talk to interesting alumni, prospective students, and guests and you get to show off the school. Other times it's, well, not so fun. Either way, that's what I signed up for.

**2. Don't forget who actually does the work** – Although the dean is the one who often gets the spotlight, it wouldn't be there except for the work of others in the dean's suite. I may feel good about talking to a prospective student who seems eager to attend Washburn, but that student wouldn't be in my office except for the hard work that the admissions team put in to identify and recruit that student. And although I may feel important when an employer calls me for a final reference check for a student, the truth is my part is only the last bit of a process that started with Tammy King, assistant dean for professional development, and Kate Davis, assistant director, getting the student the interview in the first place and coaching the student through it.

**3. You don't know everything** – A big temptation for a law

professor, and for a dean, is to think that because you know a lot about one thing, you know a lot about everything. You don't. You can only succeed if you hire good people and let them do their jobs. I know that I can't navigate the tangle of students, professors, and space requirements in order to produce a class schedule nearly as well as Associate Dean Emily Grant can. And though I can read a balance sheet, I can't devote the attention to figuring out the law school's cash flow as well as the finance team can. I can talk to students, but I can't work through their degree requirements like the registrar team can. And I certainly can't begin to solve student problems like our student affairs team can. It takes all of us to run this place. Sometimes my part is just getting out of the way.



interactions are some of the highlights of the year for students. Later in the week, the Topeka Bar Association will be holding their monthly meeting at the law school. At that meeting, Jackson will be addressing the approximately 45 attorneys who attend and will update them on Washburn Law's programs

and students. That meeting will also finish with a tour of the building conducted by the dean. At the end of the week, the law school will be hosting its annual alumni awards, honoring distinguished alumni and friends of the school. Jackson will present the awards along with JuliAnn Mazachek, president,

Washburn University, and **Lucky DeFries, '78**, alumni association awards committee chair. Finally, the week will conclude with the board of governors meeting on Saturday morning. Jackson and Mikesic go through all the preparations and scheduling for these events to ensure they run as smoothly as possible.

### **12:15 – 1:30** *Faculty Meeting*

The faculty are meeting today to discuss the upcoming hiring season. Washburn Law has seen the recent retirement of several long-time professors and is looking at hiring up to five new professors this season. In preparation, the faculty gather and discuss subject priorities and strategies for attracting the largest number of possible candidates. And there's pizza.

### **1:30 – 2:00** *Still More Emails . . .*

Jackson uses this small break in the day to catch up on correspondence from the morning.

### **2:00 – 2:30** *Marketing Meeting*

Jackson meets with **Karli Davis, BA '06**, director of marketing and communications for Washburn Law, to go over the work on the Washburn School of Law website. Davis is overseeing a complete restructuring and modernization of the website to

make it more attractive and accessible. It's the first step of a university-wide overhaul of websites. Davis brings Jackson up to speed on the work that she and her assistant director, **Ryan Purcell, BA '05**, have been doing.

### **2:30 – 5:15ish** *Time for Dean-ey Things*

Today, this is a rare block of time with few interruptions. Jackson uses this time to edit the ABA site visit documents and look at the scholarship reports for a meeting tomorrow with Brett James, the Law School's budget and operations manager, and Alegria. They'll be figuring out how to allocate the available scholarship money to attract and retain students most effectively.

### **Evening**

The dean heads for home. Sometime between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. tonight, he'll check email one more time to make sure that no emergencies have cropped up and to think about and prepare a list of three to four priorities for tomorrow.

Interim Dean Jeff Jackson, BBA '89, JD '92, teaches in a new classroom. Photo by Jeremy Wangler





Students work in the new Law Clinic. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

# Advancing the Law Clinic

## *Students Continue to Gain Real-World Experience in the Newly Modernized Law Clinic*

*By Angela Lutz*

For more than 53 years, the Washburn Law Clinic has helped underserved members of the Topeka community gain legal representation while preparing students to become practicing lawyers. Now, thanks to the new law clinic space in Robert J. Dole Hall, the clinic will be able to expand its footprint to better serve its clients and Washburn University School of Law students, all made possible by alumni and friends like the Spigarelli family.

“The new space creates a welcoming environment for clients, who are often coming to the Washburn Law Clinic during some of the most difficult times in their lives,” said Michelle Ewert, law school professor and clinic director. “From the bright, open reception area to the spacious interview rooms with large windows, the building creates an atmosphere that is both inviting and professional.”

Founded in 1970, the law clinic’s mission is to help develop law students into thoughtful, skilled, ethical attorneys by allowing them to practice law and represent clients under the personalized supervision of an experienced faculty attorney.

This innovative arrangement allows students to gain vital experience by representing real clients in real cases while still being able to rely on the expertise and guidance of their instructors. Over the years, it has become a model for other law school clinics across the country.

Clinic participants are afforded this exceptional opportunity through special permission from the Kansas Supreme Court, which allows senior law students to practice law and represent clients in courtroom proceedings. When searching for a job after graduation, law clinic students will have a distinct advantage, as they will have already argued cases in court, questioned witnesses, and taken primary responsibility for their clients. In the new space, students will have even more opportunities to work together, hone their skills, and benefit their community.

“The student workspace and conference room allow space for collaboration as students work together to help solve their clients’ problems,” Ewert said. “The building features state-of-the-art technology, including a green room recording studio that clinic students can use to record presentations for community members and CLEs for attorneys.”

## SUPPORT WASHBURN LAW CLINIC

The Washburn Law Clinic plays a vital role in students' legal education, giving them real-world experience while also helping underserved clients who could not otherwise afford representation.

The clinic is the second-largest provider of pro-bono civil legal services in the state of Kansas – but additional funds would enable the clinic to expand and educate more students and serve more people.

To make a gift to the clinic, visit [wualumni.org/schooloflaw](http://wualumni.org/schooloflaw)

“The technology is the same as modern courtrooms use,” added **Debi Schrock, AA '87**, law clinic administration managing director. “When they graduate, our students will be prepared for courtrooms that are now coming loaded with technology, which is something that usually has a learning curve. The new space also gives us room to expand our offerings, which in turn will benefit the community.”

In addition to the students, the law clinic is an advantage to the Topeka community by providing pro bono services in the areas of family justice, immigration, civil law, and criminal defense to individuals who could not otherwise afford an attorney. This includes common concerns such as adoptions, guardianships, paternity actions, emancipations, divorces involving minor children, consumer issues, elder law, estate planning, and expungement of criminal records.

The clinic's meaning-driven work has always appealed to Sheila Reynolds, a former Washburn Law professor who taught at the law clinic for 31 years until her retirement in 2010. She donated to help make the clinic space a reality.

“I feel an intense loyalty to the law school,” she said. “I feel like I owe Washburn Law a lot for giving me an excellent environment to be a lawyer, so when it was time to raise money, I was happy to give. I hope this beautiful new building enables the faculty and staff and students to continue having

an environment that encourages Washburn's tradition of offering positive support for everybody.”

The clinic's mission also resonates with the Spigarelli family, who own a personal injury law firm in Pittsburg, Kansas, that consists of **Fred Spigarelli, '70**, and his daughters **Angela Spigarelli, '98**, and **Kala Spigarelli, '90**. Growing up poor in rural Kansas, Fred believes Washburn gave him opportunities to succeed where other schools might not have. Attending Washburn continues to be a tradition for the Spigarelli family, as Kala's sons are also recent graduates. For these reasons, the family was eager to be involved with the building project.

“Me, my dad, and my sister, Angela, all went to Washburn and graduated law school,” Kala said. “Dad has always believed that Washburn gave him the chance to realize his dream of becoming a lawyer when he thought nobody else would. He's always wanted to be involved with helping other people in the state go to law school, so that's why we decided to donate.”

For Schrock, who has worked at the clinic for more than 25 years and witnessed many drastic changes, the new space will help Washburn students excel as the legal profession continues to evolve – and encourage new students, faculty, and donors to keep the clinic's important work moving forward.

“This is something that was really necessary for our students to be competitive in the hiring market,” she said. “Being able to raise the money to have such a grand building speaks not only to the law school but the campus and the community as a whole.”



The lobby of the Law Clinic serves as an inviting space for clients. The Law Clinic has its own entrance to help maintain privacy. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

# News Briefs

## *New President Inaugurated*



JuliAnn Mazachek leaves the stage after being inaugurated as Washburn University's 15th president. Photo by Jeremy Wangler

For the first time in 25 years, Washburn University held a presidential inauguration. JuliAnn Mazachek became the 15th president on Feb. 1, 2023, and the first female to hold the presidential role in university history. State leaders, local officials, and members of the Washburn community gathered on campus on Oct. 27, 2023, for the distinguished event. Mazachek was announced as president in January and was welcomed back to campus after serving as president of Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. She had previously spent 30 years at Washburn in various leadership roles. During her short time as president, she has already launched several initiatives focused on the betterment of students and continuing to build relations between the university and the Topeka community. If you were unable to attend the inauguration and are interested in watching the event, a recording is available on the Washburn University YouTube channel – [youtube.com/washburnuniversity](https://youtube.com/washburnuniversity).

## *Washburn Law Launches New Center for Excellence*

Washburn Law has announced the establishment of its newest Center for Excellence, the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center. The center officially launched on Nov. 15, 2023, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of the law school's academic offerings and engagement in the legal community.

The Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center's establishment serves as a testament to Washburn's commitment to innovation and academic excellence. Positioned at the forefront of legal education, this center will serve as a hub for intellectual property law, technological advancements, and collaborative engagement within and beyond the Washburn legal community.

"We are thrilled to unveil the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center, an initiative that will not only enrich the educational experiences of our students but also foster a

robust platform for collaboration, innovation, and engagement within the legal landscape," said Patricia Judd, professor of Law and director of the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center.

The strategic importance of this center is underscored by its multifaceted objectives aimed at fostering alumni engagement, attracting donors, enhancing student opportunities, and amplifying collaboration with practitioners and institutions. The center is poised to make significant contributions to the legal profession and broader community.

"The launch of the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Center represents a pivotal moment for Washburn Law. 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," said Jeff Jackson, interim dean.

# The Honor Roll of Donors

The Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation and Washburn University School of Law extend their gratitude to each and every donor. Every gift makes a difference for the students. The Honor Roll of Donors is a way to recognize those who made gifts to Washburn Law during the fiscal year **July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.**

The Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation and Washburn Law have made every effort to

ensure the information in the Honor Roll of Donors is as complete and accurate as possible. However, if errors have occurred, please contact us regarding inaccurate information.

**Washburn University Alumni Association & Foundation**  
**1729 SW MacVicar Ave**  
**Topeka, KS 66604**  
**785.670.4483**  
**contactus@wualumni.org**

*Donor names listed herein are strictly for the purpose of acknowledgment by the Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation. Any other use is strictly prohibited.*

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Derstein  
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## \*Deceased

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'87, and Mark D. Hamilton  
H. David Starkey, '75  
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'85, Stauffer  
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Mary Stephenson, '94  
Col. Michael J. Stewart, '77  
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Stindt  
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Mikel L. and LeAnn R. Stout

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# Law Alumni Awards

## *Recognizing the Achievements of Our Graduates*

On Oct. 13, 2023, Washburn University School of Law alumni gathered to celebrate and honor this year's Alumni Award recipients. Awards were presented by **Lucky DeFries, '78**, past chair of the board of governors. Honorees were joined by family and friends to accept their awards, recognizing their service, dedication, and support to Washburn and their communities. The following is a highlight of our award winners and a brief bio of each recipient.

### *Graduate of the Last Decade Award*



**Angel Romero, '13**, was awarded the Graduate of the Last Decade award. This award honors recent Washburn Law graduates whose performance and commitment has set an example of professionalism and demonstrated leadership in their legal field, in their community, or to the School of Law.

Starting his post-secondary education at Washburn, Romero earned his bachelor of arts in political science and leadership studies certificate from Washburn University in 2010, continuing straight into law school, he completed his juris doctor in 2013. While at Washburn, Romero was a member of the Washburn Student Government Association, Mortar Board, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Sagamore Honor Society, and College Republicans. He was a student ambassador, resident assistant, and AmeriCorps Bonner Leader.

After graduating from law school, Romero worked as a data analyst for the Kansas Board of Regents. In 2015, he joined the United Way of Greater Topeka, now known as United Way of Kaw Valley where he works as the vice president of resource development. Romero is the chair of the Topeka Association of Fundraising Professionals board of directors, and serves on the boards of the Kansas Association for Youth Alumni Network, Northeast Kansas Amateur Astronomy League, and the Washburn University board of regents. He has previously served on the boards of Forge Young Professionals, Shawnee County Crime Stoppers, Topeka Civic Theatre, and Momentum 2022.

In 2022, Romero was named to the Leadership Kansas class of 2022. In 2018, he received the Topeka Emerging Leader Award, the Outstanding Young Professional in Fundraising Award, and the Outstanding Commitment to the Students of the Washburn Leadership Institute Award. In 2017, he was

named the Washburn University Graduate of the Last Decade. He is a 2011 honoree of Greater Topeka's 20 Under 40, and a member of the 2010 class of Leadership Greater Topeka.

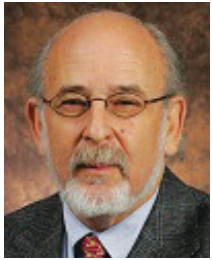


**Julie Covell, '13**, was also presented with the GOLD award. Covell is a graduate of the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Washburn University School of Law. Prior to attending law school, Covell worked as a high school teacher first in Manhattan, Kansas, and then in Puyallup, Washington. While

in law school, she served as editor-in-chief of the Washburn Law Journal and worked as a research assistant and a teaching assistant. She also clerked for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Topeka and interned for the Honorable David J. Waxse at the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

During the summer before her 3L year, Covell interned with the National Labor Relations Board. Following graduation, she joined the Board as an honors attorney. After completing a year of rotations through offices at the Board's headquarters in Washington, D.C., she returned to Kansas and the Board's Overland Park subregional office. As a senior field attorney in Region 14, she regularly handles the investigation and litigation of complex charges filed in the region. Covell has served as Region 14's bankruptcy coordinator and outreach coordinator. In addition to conducting several presentations about the National Labor Relations Act for external groups and members of the bar, she has led internal training for Board employees on legal writing and investigatory techniques. As an alumna, Covell has enjoyed meeting with prospective and current law school students to talk about why she chose to attend Washburn University School of Law, why she would make that same choice again if given the opportunity, and why they should consider a career in public service.

## Honorary Lifetime Membership



**Professor Michael Kaye** was awarded the Honorary Lifetime Membership award. The recipient of this honor is someone who has provided exemplary service to his or her profession, community, and Washburn Law. Kaye received his bachelor of arts degree from Case Western Reserve University in 1963. He later earned his

juris doctor from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law in 1966. He was the former director of the Center for Excellence in Advocacy at Washburn Law, Trial Advocacy and Criminal Procedure and was the coach of the Trial Advocacy Team. He began his teaching career at Washburn Law in 1979 and retired from the School of Law in 2016.

A long serving educator, his experience extends far beyond the classroom as well. He was a longtime NITA advocacy teacher and taught at NITA's Teacher Training Program in Harvard School of Law. He has also served as the NITA program director.

Kaye is an experienced public defender, was in private practice in California, and studied at the Comparative Law Institute in Grenoble, France. He was a visiting professor of law at Whittier College School of Law in 1990-91. He was elected as president for the 3rd Judicial District Criminal Defense Bar during the 2001-02 year.



**The Hon. Sarah Warner** was also awarded the Honorary Lifetime Membership award. A native of Kansas, Warner grew up in Pittsburg and would go on to earn her undergraduate degrees from the University of Kansas and later attend law school in Michigan, graduating magna cum laude. After serving as the sole

chambers attorney of the chief justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, she became a partner with Thompson Warner PA in Lawrence, Kansas, where she worked until her appointment to the Court of Appeals in 2019. She is a past president of the Kansas Association of Defense Counsel and Douglas County Bar Association, and a member of the Kansas Board for Discipline of Attorneys, and Kansas Women's Attorneys Association. She served the Kansas Bar Association as president of the Young Lawyers Section in 2014-15, was on the board of governors from 2015-2018, and as president in 2018-19. Warner has taught classes at Washburn since 2009, including a course in appellate practice she designed, and was named Washburn Law's Adjunct Professor of the Year in May 2018.

## Legacy Family



The McEntire Family was honored with the Washburn School of Law Legacy Family Award. This award honors the families who have carried the Washburn Law tradition across generations. It is bestowed on a family in which two or more members of the family – generational or through marriage – are law school graduates, and who as a group have distinguished themselves through service to Washburn School of Law, the legal profession, their communities, or public service. **Richard McEntire, '31, JD '34, James McEntire, BA '73, JD '77, Joann Corpstein, '88, and Helen "Lizzy" McEntire, '22,** were the members of the family receiving this award.

Richard McEntire, '31, JD '34, (deceased, 1958), remaining in Topeka his entire life, graduated from Washburn Law in 1934. After law school, he became a partner in the firm of Claussen and McEntire in Topeka, specializing in motor carrier work before the Kansas Corporation Commission. McEntire was named a United States commissioner for the District of Kansas in 1935. He was later appointed a special attorney by the KCC, where he presided over the proration of the vast Hugoton, Kansas, gas fields.

McEntire also served on the executive committee and on the special gas committee of the National Association of Railroad and Utilities Commissioners. He was secretary to the Kansas Day Club from 1939-45 and later served as an adviser to United States Treasury Secretary John Snyder at the World Bank and Monetary Fund Conference in Paris. His work was instrumental in the implementation of a Canadian extradition treaty, which ended fraudulent securities offers by promoters of Canadian mining ventures. He became vice chair of the SEC in 1950. He resigned from the SEC in 1953 to pursue the private practice of law. He passed away in 1958.

James McEntire, BA '73, JD '77, is currently a member of the firm of Sloan, Eisenbarth, Glassman, McEntire & Jarboe, L.L.C., with more than four decades of experience practicing law. He graduated from Washburn in 1973 and Washburn Law receiving his juris doctor in 1976. His practice primarily focuses on the areas of divorce, child custody and support, and related family law matters. He is a member of the American, Kansas, and Topeka Bar Associations, and the Family Law Committee of the Topeka Bar Association. He clerked for the Hon. John Rees of the Kansas Court of Appeals before joining the Sloan Law Firm in 1978 where he has remained ever since. He is an adjunct professor in the criminal justice department at Washburn University. He is a past president of the Topeka Kiwanis Club and past president of the Topeka Kiwanis Foundation. Jim served as a TBA director for four years and currently serves as the secretary.

Joann Corpstein's, '88, first career was in nursing. After graduating from the University of Saint Mary, she worked as a critical care nurse and a traveling nurse. In 1988, Corpstein graduated from Washburn Law and began her legal career in regulatory banking, as in-house counsel for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka, then the United States Treasury's Office of Thrift Supervision.

Corpstein transitioned her legal career to focus on issues facing the elderly and long-term care. She served as general counsel for the Kansas Department on Aging for nine years. Currently, she is the director of compliance for Midland Care Connection. Among other things, she is responsible for the corporate compliance and risk management programs. Corpstein has been asked to present at numerous state and national conferences on health care law topics. Corpstein is a member of the American Health Law Association and the American Health Information Management Association.

Helen "Lizzy" McEntire, '22, is a third-generation Washburn Law graduate and is committed to practicing law in Kansas. During her time as a student, she received countless scholarships including the Justice Alex M. Fromme Memorial Scholarship Award, intended for a student who is committed to practicing law in Kansas. As an editor for the Washburn Journal, she was also honored with a GNIP-GNOP Award for Best Note for her article, "A Proposed Solution to the Kansas Wage Gap: Why Salary History Inquiries Perpetuate Disparate Pay Along Racial and Gender Lines." Following graduation, she joined Husch Blackwell in Kansas City where she is currently practicing.

## *Lifetime Achievement Award*

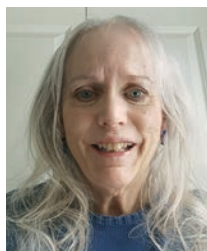


**The Hon. Steven Hornbaker, BA '70, JD '73**, received the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award is bestowed on graduates whose careers have been highly distinguished, and whose achievements and contributions are widely recognized as significant and outstanding in their field of endeavor,

whether it be in the practice of law, the judiciary, business, public service, education, or otherwise.

Hornbaker was a lawyer for 27 years for the firm Harper, Hornbaker, Abbott, Opat, and Altenhofen in Junction City, Kan. Hornbaker was appointed district judge serving in Geary County in 2000. The 8th Judicial District is composed of Dickinson, Geary, Marion, and Morris counties. In 2018, he was appointed by the Kansas Supreme Court of the Judicial Education Advisory Committee. The committee recommends and organizes education and training for Kansas appellate judges, district judges and district magistrate judges. Hornbaker retired in 2021 after more than 21 years of service.

Hornbaker served leadership roles in many organizations including Kansas Trial Lawyers (president, 1985), American Board of Trial Advocates (president, Kansas chapter, 1993), ABOTA Advocate (lead counsel on over 75 jury trials), Martindell-Hubble, AV Rating, Kansas Bar Association Member (1973-present) American Bar Association, Washburn School of Law board of governors, and was admitted to the US Supreme Court in 1985. He has one son, Andy, and has been happily married to Sue (Swanson) Hornbaker for 46 years.



**Marcia (Harley) Johnston, BA '71, JD '74**, also received the Lifetime Achievement Award. During the years Johnston attended law school, few women were pursuing their juris doctor. There were only four women in her 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 regional Jessup competition.

Following graduation, Johnston began a practice with fellow classmate Jane Werholtz where they practiced together until 1977. Gravitating toward areas of business and corporate law, particularly tax law, led to her becoming 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 and passing of the exam, she became the first American admitted to the Canadian

Bar. She switched her practice to corporate and securities law as well as oil and gas. In 1985, she became a sole practitioner and started a boutique securities practice which grew to nine lawyers by 2000 and merged with Gowling Lafleur Henderson, one of Canada's largest national law firms with over 700 lawyers in 2000. Johnston has served as president of the Association of Women Lawyers of Calgary and currently is interim director at MT>Align, a division of McCarthy Tetrault LLP Cochrane, Alberta, Canada.

## *Distinguished Service Award*



**The Hon. J. Thomas Marten, BA '73, JD '76, H '18**, received the Distinguished Service Award. This award is given to graduates of the School of Law who have particularly distinguished themselves and brought recognition to the school through their service to Washburn Law, the legal profession, their community, or public service.

A native Kansan, Marten received his bachelor of arts and his juris doctor from Washburn University. After graduating, he served as law clerk to retired Associate Justice Tom C. Clark of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. He then spent 19 years practicing law, with an emphasis in litigation, in Nebraska, Minnesota, and Kansas, including 14 years as a member of Bremyer & Wise, P.A. in McPherson, Kansas. Marten was appointed United States district judge for the District of Kansas by President Bill Clinton in 1996 – the judgeship was once held by his great uncle the late Judge Delmas Hill. Marten hung his uncle's photo, along with those

who held that post after him, on the wall next to where his black robe hung to remind him of those who came before him. He served as chief judge of the District of Kansas from April 2014 until May 2017. Judge Marten took senior status May 2017. He has been involved in a wide range of civil and criminal litigation.

Marten has served on the advisory board of the Sedona Conference and has completed terms on the Information Technology Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States and the board of directors of the Federal Judges Association. He has taught trial advocacy at various programs and workshops throughout the United States for more than 30 years and at Harvard Law for more than 25 years. Marten taught at Wichita State University and the Department of Justice Trial Advocacy Center, has lectured at National University of Ireland, Galway, and has been a frequent speaker at conferences and seminars throughout the country, including the American Law Institute-American Bar Association Antitrust and Employment Law Litigation and Antitrust. He served on the Judicial Conference of the United States Advisory Committee for the Federal Rules of Evidence for six years during the last few years of his judgeship. Marten, also a musician, has composed numerous songs and his three-piece string band, The Shoes, performed at the 2007 inauguration of then Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. He is a founding member of the Wesley E. Brown American Inn of Court in Wichita. He served on the School of Law board of governors, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the law school's Alumni Association, and was awarded an honorary doctor of law by Washburn.



# Class Actions

*The following alumni are those whose updates were reported to the school before Sept. 30, 2023. Update your address at [alumni@washburnlaw.edu](mailto:alumni@washburnlaw.edu) and submit your news at [washburnlaw.edu/alumninews](http://washburnlaw.edu/alumninews).*

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## 1968

**Robert Minter**, Wichita, was honored with the Outstanding Achievement in R.I.S.E. Values award at Friends University in September.

## 1970

**Lynn Johnson**, Kansas City, Missouri, has been named on the Best Personal Injury Lawyers in Kansas City of 2023.

## 1978

**Edward Nazar**, Overland Park, Kansas, has been promoted to Corporate Counsel, SVP at Equity Bank.

**Richard Yoxall**, Liberal, Kansas, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Southwest Kansas Bar Association in September.

## 1979

**Michael Kracht**, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, has retired as partner from Weber, Kracht & Chellew, and will maintain a consulting relationship with the law firm.

**The Hon. Steven Montgomery**, Spring Hill, Kansas, retired in July after serving 17 years in the 6th Judicial District.

## 1980

**The Hon. Charles Apt, III**, Iola, Kansas, became magistrate court judge for the 31st Judicial District in April.

**John Hageman**, The Woodlands, Texas, is now a senior director with Alvarez & Marsal's U.S. Energy practice in Houston.

## 1981

**Glenn Braun**, Hays, Kansas, was honored with the Distinguished Service Award in August by the Kansas Bar Association.

**William Ekey**, Odessa, Missouri, has been appointed to the Health and Educational Facilities Authority of the State of Missouri by Gov. Mike Parson.

**John Gatz**, Colby, Kansas, was recognized in August with the Professionalism Award by the Kansas Bar Association.

## 1983

**Stanley Spurrier, III**, Wichita, has been honored by Best Lawyers in America for 2023.

## 1984

**Lawrence Gurney**, Wichita, is now an administrative law judge in Wichita for the Kansas Department of Labor.

## 1985

**Robert Anderson, Sr.**, Ellinwood, Kansas, published a book titled, "Justice for Baby Roston."

**Leslie Hess**, Evergreen, Colorado, is now a broker associate at Sage + Sparrow.

**Gregory Hough**, Topeka, was honored with the Hon. Matt J. Whitworth Trial Excellence Award by the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association.

**The Hon. Michael Wright**, Warrenton, Missouri, has been appointed to a judgeship on the Eastern District Missouri Court of Appeals by Gov. Mike Parson.

## 1988

**Brian Boos**, Olathe, Kansas, has joined Foulston Siefkin's Overland Park office as a trial lawyer.

## 1989

**The Hon. Quintress Gilbert**, Macon, Georgia, the first female African American judge in Macon-Bibb's history, retired on Sept. 28, 2023.

## 1991

**The Hon. Jay Befort**, Topeka, has been appointed as judge in the 3rd Judicial District by Gov. Laura Kelly.

**Curtis Sneden**, Topeka, is now the director of economic development at the Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority.

## 1992

**Danielle Dempsey-Swopes**, Topeka, has been promoted to associate dean for student affairs at Washburn Law.

**David Farris**, Andover, Kansas, has merged his firm with Slape & Howard after 31 years of running his own practice.

## 1994

**Tracy Wilkinson-Vessigault**, Elk Grove, California, is now an administrative law judge at California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board.

## 1995

**Terence O'Malley**, Kansas City, Missouri, released the documentary, "Nelly Don: The Musical Movie." O'Malley was the executive producer, director, and writer for the film and the great-great nephew of Nelly Don.

## 1996

**The Hon. Michael Montero**, Winnemucca, Nevada, was honored with the Innovator of the Year award at Justice Innovation Awards.

## 1997

**Deena Hyson Bailey**, Wichita, has been named managing assistant general counsel of Cargill Law Department and assistant vice president of Cargill Protein - North America.

## 1998

**The Hon. Kristen Venhuizen**, Grand Forks, North Dakota, has been appointed to a newly created judgeship in the Northeast Central Judicial District by Gov. Doug Burgum.

## 1999

**Shawn Leisinger**, Topeka, is now associate dean for centers and external programs at Washburn Law.

**Deborah Volle**, Topeka, is now a testing proctor at Washburn University.

## 2001

**Andrew Smith**, Las Vegas, Nevada, is now assistant general counsel at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

## 2002

**Jodi Adolf**, Kansas City, Missouri, is now a partner at Norton Rose Fullbright.

**Melissa Dugan**, Chanute, Kansas, has been selected as a district magistrate judge by the 31st Judicial District Nominating Commission.

## 2003

**Wesley Ashton**, Rapid City, South Dakota, has been promoted to vice president of Black Hills Energy, overseeing operations in South Dakota and Wyoming.

**Glen McBeth**, Topeka, is now the instructional technology librarian at Washburn Law.

## 2007

**Shelby Grau**, Tecumseh, Kansas, is now assistant general counsel at Washburn University.

## 2008

**Cynthia Holthaus**, Topeka, has been promoted to chief of staff, director of government relations at Washburn University.

**Shawn Jurgensen**, Lawrence, Kansas, has stepped down from special counsel to Chief Justice Marla Luckert to become chief public policy officer/innovation director of the Council of State Governments in Lexington, Kentucky.

## 2009

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

## 2010

**Rebecca Alexander**, Lawrence, Kansas, is now the cataloging and reference librarian at Washburn Law Library.

## 2013

**John Hatcher**, Webb City, Missouri, is now a federal prosecutor for the United States Attorney's Office.

## 2014

**Benjamin Busboom**, Omaha, Nebraska, is now an attorney at Polsinelli.

**Eli O'Brien**, Wichita, has been honored by Best Lawyers in America for 2023.

## 2015

**Kaitlin Alegria**, Topeka, is now assistant dean of admissions at Washburn Law.

## 2018

**Brian Dollar**, Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas, is now a land surveyor at the United States Forest Service.

**Abigail Hoelting**, Shawnee, Kansas, is now at Americo Financial Life and Annuity.

**Shannon VanMatre**, Pueblo, Colorado, is now at Matlin Injury Law.

## 2019

**Kelly McCurdy**, Overland Park, Kansas, is now at Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP.

**Blake Porter**, Topeka, is now corporate counsel at Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka.

## 2020

**Katherine Davis**, Topeka, is now the assistant director of professional development at Washburn Law.

**Clarissa Harvey**, Kansas City, Kansas, is now a visiting assistant professor at Washburn Law.

**Nicolette Rodriguez Armstrong**, Kansas City, Missouri, is now a litigation associate at Stinson LLP.

## 2021

**Zachary Bealer** was posthumously named the 2023 American Immigration Lawyers Association Pro Bono Champion for Missouri/Kansas chapter.

## 2022

**Connor Brown**, Grandview, Missouri, is now an attorney at Sandberg Phoenix.

## 2023

**Gabrielle Frawley**, Lawrence, Kansas, has been selected to serve a one-year clerkship for the North Dakota Supreme Court for the 2024-25 term beginning Aug. 1, 2024.

**Melanie Harbaugh**, Topeka, has been hired at Gibson Watson Marino LLC.

# In Memoriam

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

**James Concannon, III**, professor emeritus, Topeka, on June 17, 2023, at age 75.

**Graydon Luthey, '54**, Tulsa, Oklahoma, on June 18, 2023, at age 92

**Calvin McMillan, BA '53, JD '58**, Wichita, on April 6, 2023, at age 92

**Delano Lewis, Sr., JD '63, H '00**, Las Cruces, New Mexico on Aug. 2, 2023 at age 84.

**John Sutherland, BA '61, JD '64**, Topeka, on April 22, 2023, at age 84

**Adam Alfred, '71**, Centennial, Colorado, on April 22, 2023, at age 80

**Jeffrey Smith, BA '70, JD '72**, Leicester, Vermont, on May 7, 2023, at age 79

**Douglas Wright, BA '70, JD '73**, Topeka, on July 27, 2023, at age 74

**O.J. Connell, III, '74**, El Dorado, Kansas, on Aug. 10, 2023, at age 80

**David Hall, '76**, Anthony, Kansas, on March 31, 2023, at age 74

**Wanetta "Kay" Adam, '76**, Centennial, Colorado, on April 9, 2023, at age 80

**Michael Jackson, '80**, Topeka, on May 23, 2023, at age 74

**Harold Fanshier, BA '71, BBA '78, JD '81**, Arlington, Texas, on July 16, 2023, at age 75

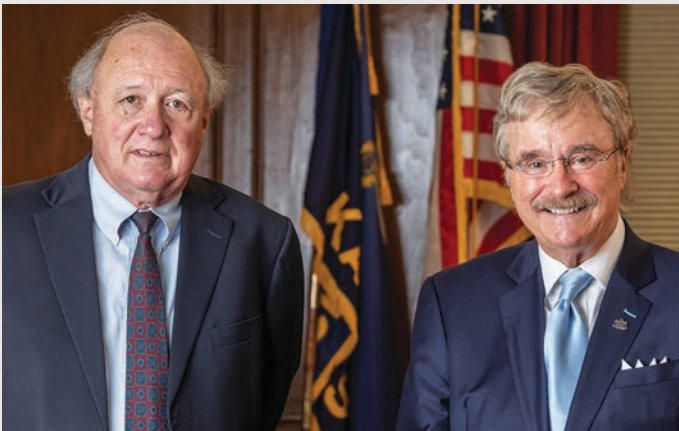
**Richard Sanborn, '81**, Derby, Kansas, on Aug. 15, 2023, at age 69

**Christopher Costello, '82**, Marion, Kansas, on July 13, 2023, at age 67

**Richard Pearce, '91**, Centralia, Kansas, on Sept. 25, 2023, at age 76

## Remembering James Concannon, III

In Memoriam by Michael C. Manning, JD '77, H '07



James Concannon with Michael C. Manning, '77. Photo by Earl Richardson

As our law school continues through its second 120 years, it is unlikely it or we will ever know another professor or dean who contributes as much to its students, its legacy, and to our profession as did Jim Concannon. For nearly 50 years, he taught us, inspired us, and then sent us forth into the profession he revered and was born to enhance with his unique gifts. He became the longest serving dean and longest serving professor, served 25 years as a renowned delegate to the National Uniform Law Commission, and devoted himself to his dear Melissa.

Jim's earliest history revealed that he was born to the Bar. He was a Summerfield Scholar at KU, matriculating to its law

school, and graduating second in the class of 1971. Just a year later Jim discovered his passion for teaching law. Fifty years ago, Jim became a full-time law professor.

Jim's dedication to Washburn Law, its students, and his profession was inexhaustible. He became dean in 1988 and guided the school to great prominence. Jim's deanship was a great gift to Washburn Law. In 1994, the National Jurist ranked Washburn Law as first in the nation for student satisfaction with faculty and two years later as the second-best law school in overall student satisfaction. Then, in 2003, Jim published his 756-page 100-year history of our law school. Many colleagues expressed sincere appreciation for his leadership during the time they worked for him.

Jim never pandered for praise or awards – praises and awards followed him and found him. In 1997, he received the Kansas Supreme Court citation for contributions to the judiciary. In 2001, he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from KU Law. The next year the Supreme Court awarded Jim its prestigious Justice Award. In 2017, the Kansas Bar Association conferred its Distinguished Service Award. But, there will never be enough awards or recognitions to adequately recognize the vast, enduring, and enhancing impact Jim had on our profession or the lawyers he inspired, educated, and entertained. All law professors know their field, but few are true masters. And far fewer are both masters of their field and have the gift Jim had of reaching into the souls of his students with wisdom and wit as he ignited a passion for excellence and ethics.

## Remembering Ambassador Delano Lewis, Sr.



**Delano Lewis, Sr., JD '63, H '00**, of Las Cruces, New Mexico, died on Aug. 2, 2023. He was 84. Lewis was a former president of National Public Radio and U.S. Ambassador to South Africa.

Lewis was born in Arkansas City, Kansas, and grew up in a segregated community, becoming interested in civil rights law at an early age.

After graduating from Washburn University School of Law in 1963, he would go on to hold positions in the Justice Department and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, kicking off an extensive career in Washington, D.C. During his time in Washington, he also served as a legislative assistant to Sen. Edward Brooke, the first Black senator popularly elected, and later worked on the staff of Del. Walter Fauntroy, D.C.'s representative in the House.

After 10 years in government, Lewis would later go on to become CEO of the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company in 1990. Following his time there, he would become the president of NPR, the first Black person to hold the position. He retired from NPR in 1998.

Lewis would not stay retired for long, and in 1999, he accepted the position to be the next ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. He continued in this role until 2001.

A longtime friend to the Law School, Lewis and his wife, Gayle, established the Delano and Gayle Lewis Endowed Law Scholarship. He also contributed to the Brown v. Board Legacy Fund for the new building project.





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