

LOQUITUR

The Alumni Magazine for Vermont Law and Graduate School



CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE





LOQUITUR

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FRONT COVER

(LEFT TO RIGHT) DEAN BROMBERG,
DEAN RUSHLOW, PRESIDENT SMOLLA,
AND DEAN MCCORMACK.

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INSIDE FRONT COVER

CENTER FOR JUSTICE REFORM CIRCLE.

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BACK COVER

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA SHEA JD/MELP'24

A NEW LEADER FOR A NEW ERA

Vermont Law and Graduate School President Rod Smolla and VLGS leadership have a clear vision for the school's new era.

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ANIMAL KINGDOM

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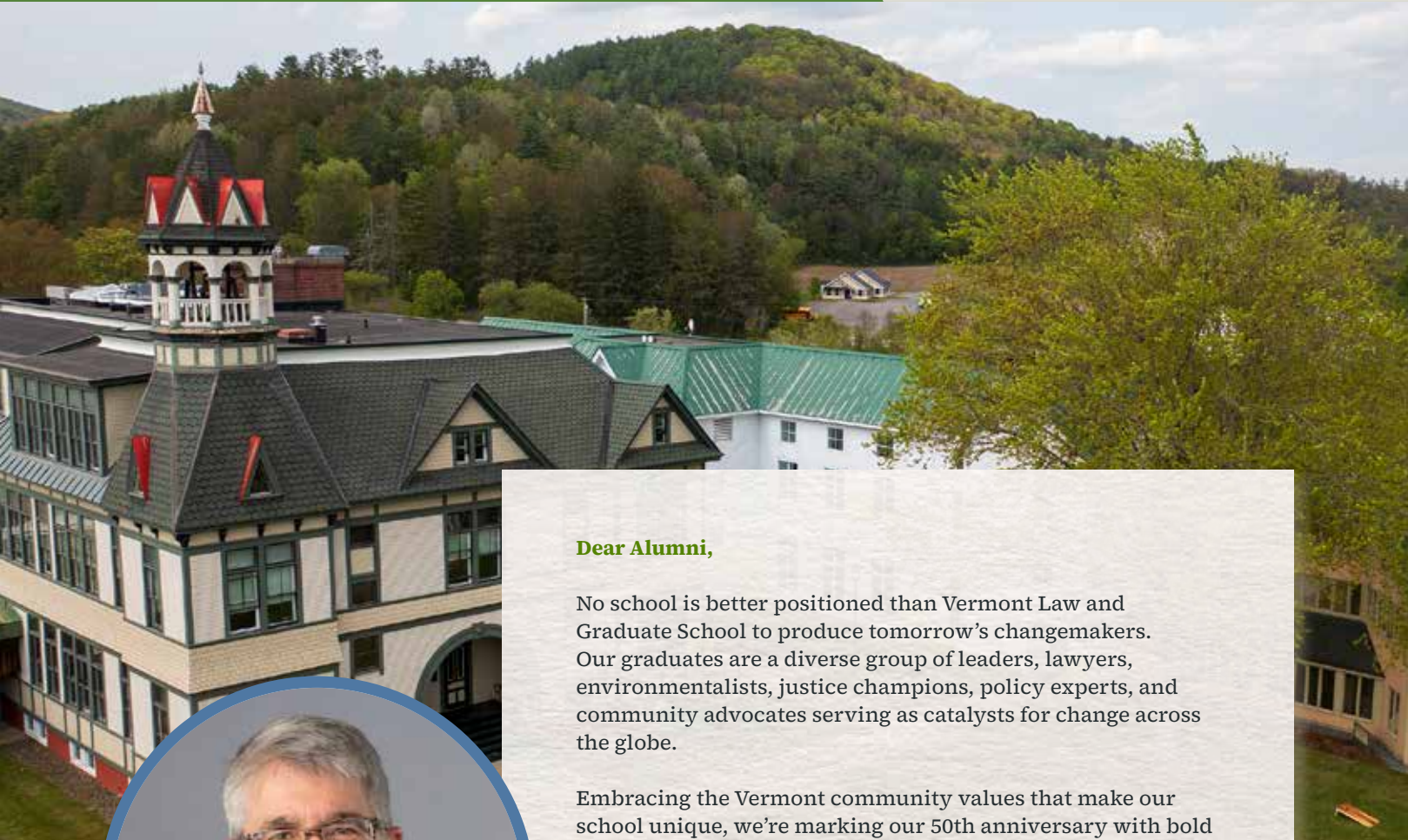
CALL OF THE WILD

The career paths of two Vermont Law School alumni took very different tracks, but would converge years later—in the wilderness.

By Corin Hirsch

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PRESIDENT SMOLLA IN BURLINGTON, PHOTO BY LEE KROHN; LITTLE RED BARN FARM ANIMAL SANCTUARY, PHOTO BY MOLLY MCDONOUGH; COLORFUL FOLIAGE IN WOODBURY, PHOTO BY MAX GRUDZINSKI.



Dear Alumni,

No school is better positioned than Vermont Law and Graduate School to produce tomorrow's changemakers. Our graduates are a diverse group of leaders, lawyers, environmentalists, justice champions, policy experts, and community advocates serving as catalysts for change across the globe.

Embracing the Vermont community values that make our school unique, we're marking our 50th anniversary with bold action to pursue global change. We dare to achieve a virtuous circle of support—from graduates like you, your family and friends, and all who care to protect our world from injustice and environmental distress.

Our 50th Anniversary Campaign offers many ways to make an impact—from annual and planned giving options, to legacy bequests, to the naming of campus buildings.

There is nothing like the power and compassion of the VLGS community. It will help you grow and give you the confidence to go out and better our world. And your support will ensure the legacy of VLGS for the next 50 years.

Please join us and donate today!

Dave Celone JD'92
Vice President, Alumni Relations and Development

We envision a time when all students can readily access and afford a VLGS education to become leaders and catalysts for change with the full support of our alumni, faculty, staff, community members, and friends around the world.

Mission

To educate students in a diverse community that fosters personal growth and that enables them to attain outstanding professional skills and high ethical values with which to serve as lawyers and environmental and other professionals in an increasingly technological and interdependent global society.

Strategic Goals

With four overarching goals, our Campaign will enable VLGS to fully support its Strategic Plan, to ensure the school will thrive over the next half-century and beyond. These goals include:

- Transforming into a graduate institution that houses both a law school and a graduate school
- Establishing a new president position to serve as chief executive
- Developing three new public policy master's degrees and enhancing existing ones
- Launching an Online Hybrid JD (OHJD) program for working professionals



Make an Impact!

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RODNEY A. SMOLLA, PRESIDENT, VERMONT LAW AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

A STATE OF MIND

For fifty years, people from around the world have journeyed to join the community that is now named Vermont Law and Graduate School. My personal reasons for undertaking this pilgrimage are much the same, I suspect, as the reasons that motivated most of you. Yes, I was drawn to the state of Vermont. But more profoundly, I was drawn to a state of mind.

I have found what I was looking for. I hope the same may be said for all of you, and for future generations who will undertake the journey.

The state of mind that is uniquely Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS) is captured by its motto—law for the community and the world—and by its mission—to educate students in a diverse community that fosters personal growth and enables them to attain outstanding professional skills and high ethical values.

We are now embarked on an exciting strategic plan to ensure the vitality of that mission for the next fifty years. It is ambitious, as all worthy striving is ambitious. In the words of the architect Daniel Burnham: “Make big plans, aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever growing insistency.”

With such growing insistency, we are now pursuing big plans, and for big reasons. Our physical environment is challenged by a crisis that threatens our posterity. Our moral environment is challenged by threats to the most fundamental values of a decent society: respect for human dignity, autonomy, and the rule of law.

We are dedicated to recruiting and educating a new generation of leaders committed to causes larger than themselves. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” And we are dedicated to filling yet another urgent necessity: the world desperately needs professionals with the intellectual and practical skills to study, design, and advocate wise policies relating to climate change, environmental policy, and social justice.

This does not mean that we are only seeking future “public interest” lawyers and professionals. It does mean that no matter what specific arena of law, business, politics, or policy they may someday enter, our graduates will be imbued with a sense of the public interest.

Vermont Law and Graduate School occupies a distinctive place in the panoply of higher education. It is indeed a unique state of mind. I invite you to join in our noble rededication to that state of mind, as with pride we celebrate our history, and with audacious ambition, forge our future.

Rodney A. Smolla
President, Vermont Law and Graduate School

“We equip our students with a full toolbox of knowledge and skills for making change. In this time of climate crisis and its disproportionate impacts on people of color and low-income communities around the world, training leaders in environmental protection and community resilience is critical to our future.”



*- Jennifer Rushlow
Dean, Maverick Lloyd
School for the Environment*



Dave Colwyn

Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment

Last fall, Vermont Law and Graduate School launched the Vermont School for the Environment, a specialized public policy professional school to concentrate on cutting-edge solutions to today’s urgent environmental challenges. VLGS then received a \$2.5 million gift from the Maverick Lloyd Foundation, and to recognize this transformational gift, changed the name of the Vermont School for the Environment to the **Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment**.

The entirety of the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment’s interdisciplinary graduate curriculum puts climate change and racial and economic justice at the center of the learning experience—a lens critical to understanding the issues and developing the solutions to address the world’s most pressing problems.

“Our School for the Environment is the runway for tomorrow’s environmental leaders to launch their careers,” Jennifer Rushlow, dean of the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment, said. “We equip our students with a full toolbox of knowledge and skills for making change. In this time of climate crisis and its disproportionate impacts on people of color and low-income communities around the world, training leaders in environmental protection and community resilience is critical to our future.”

Part of the creation of the school includes two new degrees: a Master of Climate and

Environmental Policy (MCEP) and Master of Animal Protection Policy (MAPP). These are in addition to the existing Master of Energy Regulation and Law (MERL) and Master of Food and Agricultural Law and Policy (MFALP) degree programs that are now part of the School for the Environment.

The school will build on VLGS’s long-running expertise in domestic and international environmental, clean energy, food and agriculture, and animal protection law and public policy. Courses are designed to prepare students to succeed in the job market—public, private, or nonprofit sectors—through practical skills, rigorous training and exceptional experiential learning opportunities.

“At no time in history has the need for well-trained professionals equipped with the intellectual and practical skills to study, design, and advocate wise public policies and practices on matters relating to climate change and environmental protection mattered more to the world,” said VLGS President Rod Smolla. “The faculty and students who will power the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment will be catalysts for progress in what may be the single most important policy arena facing humankind.”

Online Hybrid JD (OHJD) Program Running Strong

When Vermont Law and Graduate School’s new **Online Hybrid JD program** was announced, admission officials worried that a goal of 15 students in the inaugural March 2022 cohort might be difficult to achieve given the shortened recruiting timeline. As it turns out, that wasn’t a problem. When classes began on Aug. 29, the program was filled to capacity with 20 students—the maximum number of students allowed by the American Bar Association when it approved the new program. The ABA has since increased the allowed capacity to 100 students annually.

Developed to make it easier for working professionals to earn their law degree in environmental law or restorative justice, the program is delivered through a mixture of online classes and three brief, in-person residential sessions. The OHJD offers the same rigorous legal education as the school’s residential JD, but with flexibility that allows working professionals to earn a law degree without giving up their ability to earn an income or having to move to Vermont.

“The Online Hybrid JD is perfect for experienced, working professionals who want to boost their careers or start a new one in the law,” says Vermont Law School Dean Beth McCormack. “The program’s flexibility means that students can earn their JD while still meeting the many other obligations in their lives. The ability to keep working, to take care of their families, to minimize student debt, that’s a game-changer.”

The OHJD offers students the opportunity to choose a general practice track or specialize in one of four areas in which VLGS is widely known for—and that represent some of society’s most pressing issues: environmental law, food and agriculture law, energy law, or restorative justice.

“We chose these four specializations because our faculty and staff are known to be among the best educators on these topics in the U.S. The world needs legal experts and leaders who can tackle today’s difficult problems,” said Dean McCormack.

The OHJD program may be completed in as little as three years and one semester (a total of 10 semesters). The classes are delivered in synchronous and asynchronous formats. Synchronous classes are held virtually in the evenings, Monday through Thursday, 6:30 to 9 p.m. ET. The asynchronous classes enable students to interact with classmates and faculty through discussion, projects, and feedback with no set meeting times. Students participate in in-person (Thursday through Sunday) residencies held at the school’s downtown Burlington, Vt., location during the first, sixth, and final semester. At the end of the program, students will be prepared to take the bar and practice law in most states.

The program builds on the school’s decade-plus track record of delivering successful, impactful, online degrees. VLGS established the nation’s first online master’s degree program in environmental law in 2011.



VLGS Celebrates Grand Opening of New Burlington Location

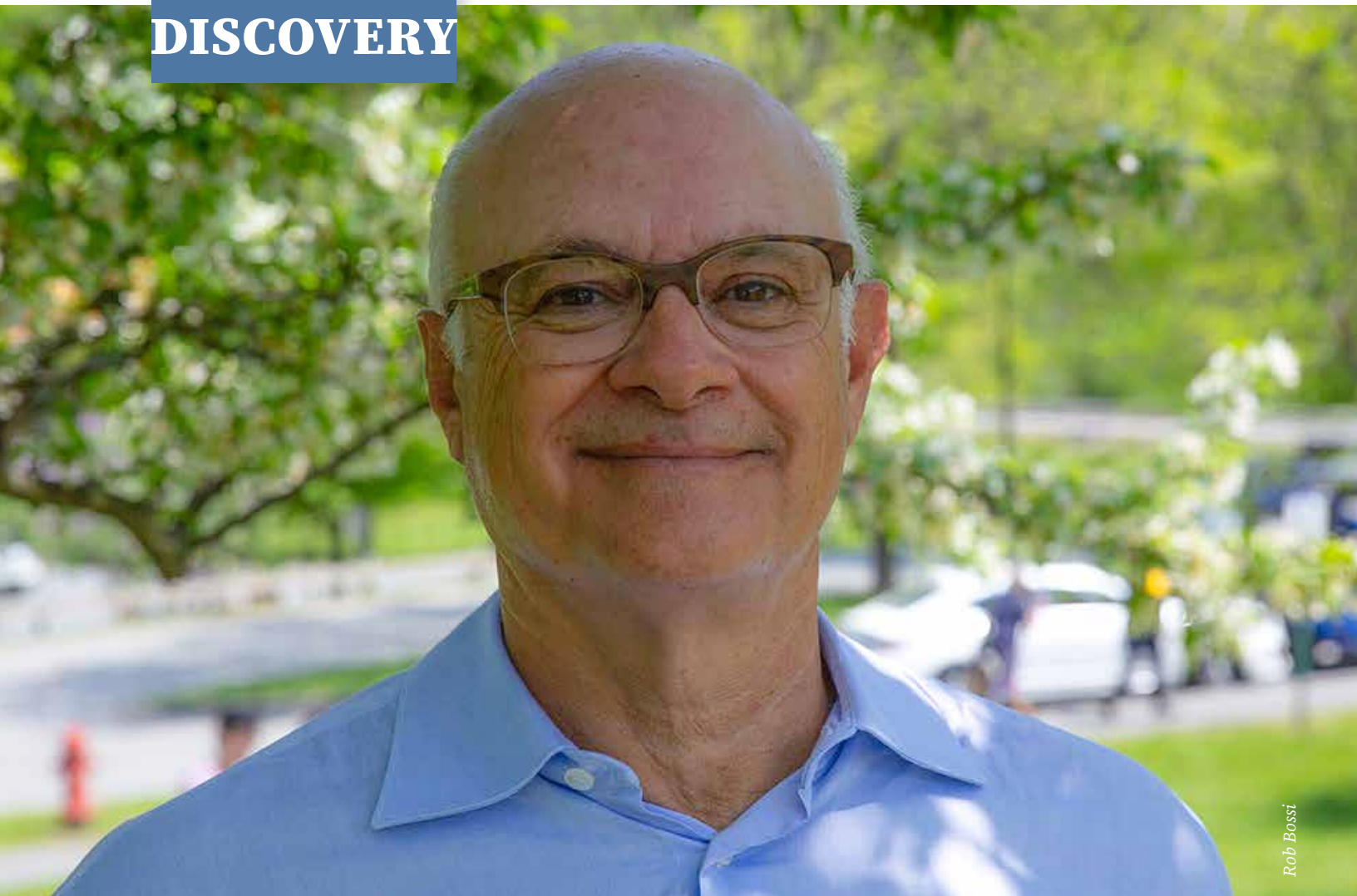
On June 22, 2023, VLGS celebrated the grand opening of its new Burlington location. Located on College Street just blocks from Burlington City Hall, Church Street Marketplace, and the shoreline of Lake Champlain, VLGS – Burlington will host residencies for the Online Hybrid JD program, an admissions office, and classes through the Center for Justice Reform and National Center on Restorative Justice.

The grand opening also marked the celebration of the new Center for Justice Reform Clinic. Funded by a \$975,000 federal grant secured by Senator Bernie Sanders through the Fiscal Year 2023 Congressionally Directed Spending process, the new clinic will merge the school's immigration assistance work and broader justice reform work to reduce recidivism, address mass incarceration, and improve community-based restorative alternatives at all intercept points, from pre-charge to post-conviction, across the state of Vermont.

VLGS marked the grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house reception featuring a "Cocktails with the Constitution" lecture by VLGS President Rod Smolla, who provided an update on recent Supreme Court decisions. Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger, as well as representatives from the offices of Senator Bernie Sanders and Senator Peter Welch, joined President Smolla and Dean Beth McCormack for the press conference and ribbon cutting. 🍷

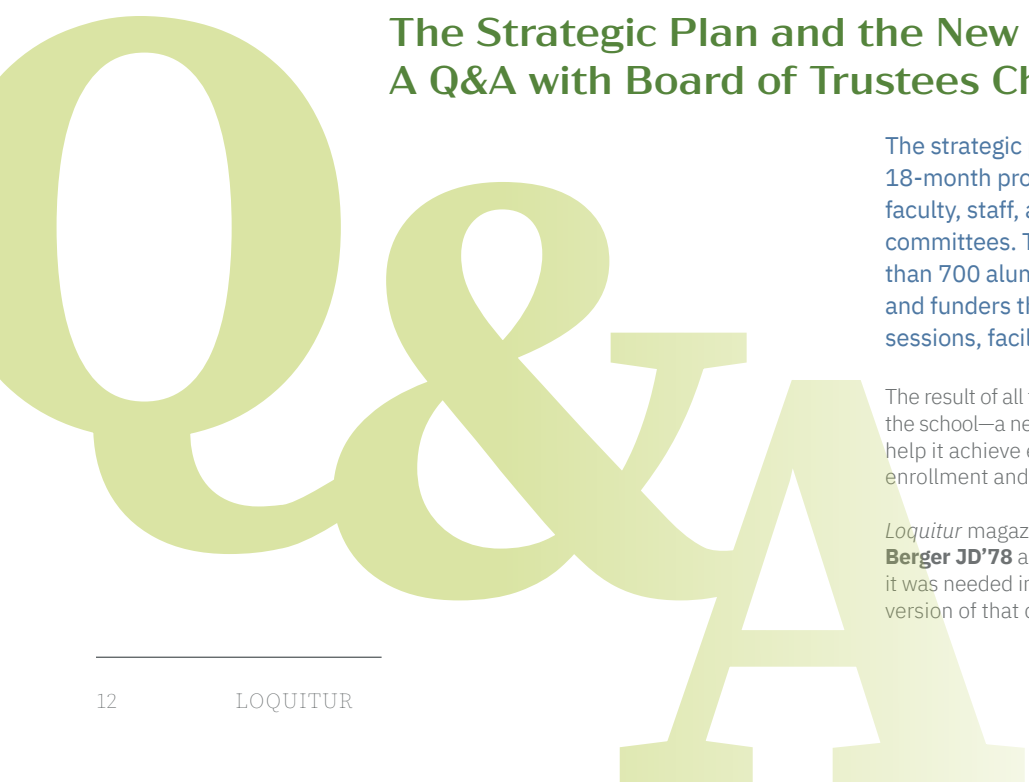
VLGS BURLINGTON





Rob Bosst

The Strategic Plan and the New VLGS: A Q&A with Board of Trustees Chair, Glenn Berger JD'78



The strategic plan announced in 2022 was the result of an 18-month process that ultimately included more than 60 faculty, staff, and trustees participating in working groups and committees. They solicited and received feedback from more than 700 alumni, students, prospective students, staff, faculty, and funders through surveys, town halls, focus groups, Q&A sessions, facilitated discussion groups, and more.

The result of all that work was a number of important new changes for the school—a new name and graduate school among them—designed to help it achieve economic sustainability and ensure further growth in enrollment and institutional reputation.

Loquitur magazine spoke with VLGS Board of Trustees Chair **Glenn Berger JD'78** about the plan, what excites him most about it, and why it was needed in the first place. The following Q&A is a condensed version of that conversation.

“WHAT MADE THE BIGGEST IMPRESSION UPON ME WAS THE WAY THE SCHOOL CAME TOGETHER TO WORK ON THE PLAN. WE HAD ALL THE CONSTITUENCIES INVOLVED AND PEOPLE PUT A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO THE PLAN. IT WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED OVERNIGHT.”

– GLENN BERGER JD'78

Was there anything you learned during the strategic plan/reorganization process that really stuck out to you?

What made the biggest impression upon me was the way the school came together to work on the plan. We had all the constituencies involved and people put a lot of time and effort into the plan. It was not something that happened overnight. It took almost two years to develop, to consider all the options and do a professional job. It was a great experience to see the school come together in a period of time when I think everyone understood what was at stake. Not everyone agreed on everything all the time, but once a vision formed, we had consensus across the board to go in the direction we went.

To you, what is the most exciting part about the strategic plan?

To me the most exciting part is the reorganization of the school by splitting out the graduate programs from the JD program. We are reinventing ourselves to a certain degree by doing that. It puts more emphasis on the graduate programs, so that they are equal with the JD program. That is a big change for the school, and I think it's going to be a very positive one. Another thing that excites me is bifurcating the dean and president position so that we now have two deans—one for the law school and one for the graduate school—and one president for the entire institution. I think that is a long overdue change that will help the executive functions of the school tremendously.

Why was it necessary to undertake the strategic planning process, and ultimately, go in this new direction?

I think to understand that you have to go back to 2019 when I first became chair of the board of trustees. At that point in time, the school didn't have a sustainable financial model. We weren't generating the revenue we needed in order to ensure that the school would be viable in the long term. And that wasn't just Vermont Law School, but a larger trend in higher education in general, and law schools in particular. There were fewer and fewer

students applying to law schools and a significant drop in applications over a ten-year period that many law schools were experiencing, including us. The board decided we needed to come up with a plan to attract more students and create a sustainable financial model, which is why we started the strategic planning process.

How does elevating the master's programs strengthen the JD program and the school itself?

The bottom line is that separating out and emphasizing the graduate programs will support and help maintain the JD program. Again, if you go back to the basic premise, which is that we needed more revenue for the school to survive, an energized graduate program will support the JD program in a big way by helping to create a sustainable financial model for the entire school going forward. I think for everybody, alumni especially, it's important for the school to continue to operate far into the future.

What does the future look like for VLGS?

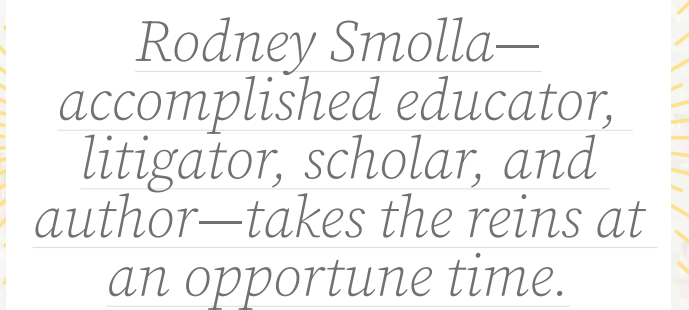
I think it looks a lot brighter than it did before we started this process. Not to say that there won't be hiccups along the way; that's the nature of the business of being an independent institution. But we've always been entrepreneurial, and we are headed in the right direction. I think this is going to be a very successful strategic plan.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

While developing the strategic plan, a lot of thought went into separating the dean and president positions and there was some initial pushback to that, but from what I've seen since [VLGS President] Rod Smolla came on board, it has been extremely successful. I think we were fortunate to find Rod; he's the perfect person for the job. He brings not only impeccable academic credentials, but a lot of experience managing academic institutions and it's already paying off. ■



**A
NEW
LEADER
FOR A
NEW ERA**



*Rodney Smolla—
accomplished educator,
litigator, scholar, and
author—takes the reins at
an opportune time.*

BY DAVID GOODMAN



RODNEY SMOLLA, INAUGURAL PRESIDENT OF VERMONT LAW AND GRADUATE SCHOOL (VLGS), DIDN'T PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE, BUT HE HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE LEADING THEM.

Hailing from a large family of Nebraskan farmers, Smolla's father was one of 10 children, and his mother was one of 17. None of his relatives attended college. When Smolla wasn't helping on the farm, he was playing football. His talent on the gridiron earned him a scholarship to Yale University, and he continued his academic career by attending Duke University School of Law.

Officially beginning his term in July 2022, Smolla joined VLGS from Widener University Delaware Law School, where he served as dean and professor of law since 2015. He was previously president of Furman University, and dean at Washington and Lee University and University of Richmond law schools.

Smolla takes the helm at a turning point for the 50-year old school. On June 21, 2022, the school formally announced its reorganizing as a graduate institution housing two schools—law and graduate, and new name, Vermont Law and Graduate School.

In addition to launching the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment, which houses the environmental master's programs within the graduate school, several new degrees have also been introduced: a Master of Climate and Environmental Policy, a Master of Animal Protection Policy, a Master of Legal Studies, and an LLM in Animal Law.

The change, which officially took effect on July 1, 2022, was the culmination of an 18-month long process to devise a new strategic plan that involved input from faculty, staff, alumni, students, and the board of trustees. The plan affirms "an all-in commitment to public interest law and policy" and is buoyed by an anonymous \$8 million donation to the school.

Jennifer Rushlow, dean of the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment and faculty director of the Environmental Law Center, notes that the new degree offerings continue a tradition of the school as an educational pioneer. "We were one of the first law schools to offer a master's degree within a law school. Now, our graduate program is robust, and we see a lot of potential for it to be even more so. We are expanding to not just be a law school that will have a graduate school, but to offer a university structure where there are multiple schools within the institution."

Part of the transformation of the school includes separating the roles of president and dean. With Smolla in the newly created position of president, in 2023 Beth McCormack was appointed as dean of the law school, and Dan Bromberg joined the team as dean of the graduate school.

"Separating the president and dean position was necessary to reflect who we have become; a law school and a graduate school," says Dean McCormack, who served as interim president and dean of the institution for a year and a half. "Now, the dean of the law school can focus on leading and strengthening the JD program, the dean of the graduate school can focus on leading the master's programs, and the president has the space to focus most on external matters and revenue generation.

Keeping all of those responsibilities in one person was no longer best for the institution given how complex we have become."

Smolla explained, "I'm the external person trying to drive admissions, bring more students to the school, market the strategic plan, and dramatically increase fundraising. I'm excited about selling people on the future of the school and its importance to the world, because of its identity as a leading place to protect the environment and its emerging identity for social justice issues, including restorative justice."

"I think the school has been one of the gems in legal education and it has a really bright future. I'm excited to be the voice of that message."

A PASSION FOR LAW AND FREE SPEECH

Rodney Smolla was born in 1953, a year before the United States Supreme Court handed down its landmark civil rights decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*. "Think of how different we are today than how we were then," Smolla muses. "The tremendous progress in race relations, equality for women, LGBTQ+ rights, protection of rights of the accused, the robust commitment to freedom of speech—that's all since I was born." He attributes much of that social change to the power of the law. "There is no country in the world where the court system and the idea of rights has a bigger impact on a nation's identity. That's very powerful and I felt so lucky to be a small piece of it, to teach and write about it, and argue cases about it."



VLGS president Rodney Smolla and his partner, Anja.



SEPARATING *the* PRESIDENT *and* DEAN POSITION *was* NECESSARY *to* REFLECT WHO WE HAVE BECOME; *a* LAW SCHOOL *and a* GRADUATE SCHOOL.

DEAN BETH McCORMACK

Smolla had not planned on being a lawyer. "I had never met a lawyer in my life," he exclaims. He developed a passion for American history and political science as an undergraduate, which led him to Duke. "Most people don't love law school, but I did," he says. He took a keen interest in constitutional law, then clerked for a judge on the Fifth Circuit and went into corporate law in his hometown. But Smolla "yearned for academic life." This led him to teach at DePaul University College of Law outside Chicago, and he has also served as a faculty member at William & Mary, University of Illinois, and University of Arkansas law schools, and as a visiting professor of law schools at Duke, University of Georgia, University of Indiana, Denver University, and University of Melbourne.

Smolla has continued to be a practitioner while maintaining a busy academic career. He became an appellate lawyer specializing in First Amendment and constitutional law, often working pro bono or for a local ACLU. All the while the lanky, easygoing attorney with a hint of a midwestern accent harbored a secret: he was afraid of public speaking. "I evolved as someone who was terrified to go into court to now loving it," he says. "Every time I have a chance to argue a case, I am thrilled.

It's part of my identity. I was a relatively rare legal academic and among a handful of law professors who was both a teacher and writer and also appeared in court three to four times a year to argue cases."

Smolla became a First Amendment lawyer by "pure accident." He was working for a law firm in Chicago that was representing the Catholic Church, which wanted to sue an author for defamation over a novel that was a thinly veiled exposé of priest sexual abuse, which Smolla says was "prescient."

"Nobody in this law firm knew anything about First Amendment and defamation law, and I didn't know much about it," he says. "I was sent to research it just as a lot of modern free speech law was forming in the 1970s. The only treatise on defamation was 40 years old." Smolla went on to write a textbook on defamation, as well as more than 100 articles published in law reviews and other publications, and has been arguing cases about it and freedom of speech, civil liberties, and constitutional law ever since.



VLGS *has a HISTORY of*
EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS.
THIS INSTITUTION *has the*
POTENTIAL *to* LEAD HIGHER
EDUCATION *into a* NEW ERA *of*
RIGOROUS, INCLUSIVE, *and*
ACCESSIBLE GRADUATE
EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY *in*
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
and JUSTICE REFORM.

DEAN DAN BROMBERG



Rob Bossi

One of the most famous cases that Smolla was involved in was *Hustler Magazine v. Falwell*, in which televangelist Jerry Falwell sued *Hustler* for a parody that it published in which Falwell was depicted as an incestuous drunk. Smolla wrote an amicus brief for *The New York Times* and was part of a team that helped prepare the lawyers representing *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt. Smolla told a gathering of reporters and attorneys at the time, “I know the mainstream media has no will power to be on the side of *Hustler* and Flynt. But you need to participate because if you don’t, *The New York Times* will be sued for an opinion piece, or “Saturday Night Live” for parody. The idea that through satire or opinion you would be liable and offend a famous person, that flips the First Amendment upside down.” The case would become the subject of a 1996 film, “The People vs. Larry Flynt.”

Smolla’s other notable cases include representing the families of the victims of a triple murder who sued the publisher of the book “Hit Man,” a supposed manual for how to commit murder. Smolla went on to write a book about the case, “Deliberate Intent: A Lawyer Tells the True Story of Murder by the Book,” which was made into a television movie in which actor Timothy Hutton played the role of Smolla.

In 2022, Smolla was one of three attorneys representing Dominion Voting Systems in its defamation suit against Fox News, which repeatedly aired false stories alleging that the company’s machines had altered votes in the 2020 election. In early 2023, Fox agreed to settle with Dominion for

\$787.5 million, one of the largest settlements in a defamation case in U.S. history.

“I’ve been a scholar that has written about defamation law for 40 years,” Smolla told the *Valley News*. “This was the most important case I’ve ever been involved in, not just for the monetary stakes but for the importance for the country in setting the record straight.”

“Even though I have become most well known as a First Amendment scholar and litigator, I love every part of constitutional law,” Smolla says. “Issues of presidential power and federalism, economic regulation, race and gender, and LGBTQ+ rights—there’s a whole spectrum that forms American constitutional law and I care a lot about it. It’s a huge part of our American identity.”

A NEW ERA

Founded in 1972 and first holding classes the following year, VLGS boasts one of the top environmental law programs in the country. “It’s famous for environmental law and being unique in a small town and being an independent school,” says Smolla. “I was watching the recent struggles the institution had and I was rooting for it.”

The school’s challenges are not unique. In 2021, the size of the law school applicant pool nationwide dropped five percent from the previous year (though there was a 13 percent rise in applicants in 2020). Vermont Law School has struggled with declining enrollment, but its graduate programs have been growing.

There is a smaller pool of students to fill the class and the competition among law schools is fierce to get the best students you can,” says Glenn Berger JD’78, chair of the school’s board of trustees. “The financial issues and what people are looking for in the world has changed. Now we have online learning and that is becoming more popular for many reasons, so it changes how we learn and teach.”

“Why attend VLGS versus another institution?” Berger asks. “With the strategic plan, we try to address that. We are essentially changing the way we teach, changing what we are teaching, and we are emphasizing the graduate programs more than in the past because that seems to be where more people are applying.” The JD program “is still our jewel in the crown,” he asserts, “but you have to change with the times.”

VERMONT LAW AND GRADUATE SCHOOL
TIMELINE OF A STRATEGIC PLAN



The new part-time Online Hybrid JD program is a key innovation. The program includes a mixture of online classes and three brief, in-person residential sessions. “The program has opened up a new dynamic population of students for us; students who work full time and who are unable to move to Vermont for three years,” says Dean McCormack. “The students in our first class were from all over the country, have jobs in the public and private sector, and are drawn to VLGS because of our expertise in environmental law and justice reform. The program utilizes best practices in online learning and builds on our decade-plus of experience offering online degrees. As one of only 18 ABA-approved law schools to offer such a program, the interest from prospective students has been profound.”

Smolla embraces online learning. “One of the few silver linings of the Covid crisis was that the American Bar Association [the accrediting body for law schools] realized you can be very effective with online education. Vermont will be one of the pioneers with this program.”

“It’s a new world and all of higher education has to adjust,” Smolla declares.

“Vermont Law and Graduate School has a history of empowering changemakers,” said Dean Bromberg. “This institution has the potential to lead higher education into a new era of rigorous, inclusive, and accessible graduate education, especially in environmental policy and justice reform.”

Dean Rushlow says the changes are driven by core values of the school that have been updated. “We are revisiting what we need to offer our students: environmentalism as it is today, not environmentalism in the 1970s. Climate change, environmental justice, and the racial impacts of environmental degradation will be at the center of everything we do. We want more people going into the world who reflect our environmental problems today and who are most impacted by those problems.”

She added, “This is an important way that we can ensure our long-term sustainability.”

ADVANCING EGALITARIANISM OVER AUTHORITARIANISM

Vermont Law and Graduate School looked for a new leader to help usher in a new era for the school. Laurie Beyranevand JD’03, professor of law and director of the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, co-chaired the presidential search committee. “Rod has a long and extensive background in higher education which we thought would be really beneficial. One thing that stood out to us was that he had been a law school dean and a university president. That is the skillset that we need right now.”

Dean Rushlow added, “We are so excited about all the experience that [Smolla] brings in running academic institutions. Having someone helping us ensure we deliver top-notch education, that we are seizing every opportunity we can as an academic institution—we will really benefit from having someone who comes from that world.”

“In addition to being a seasoned academic, he is a practitioner, which suits us well as a practice-based institution,” she noted, “and his practice is based in civil rights and social justice. That speaks to our identity and will be a great addition to our leadership.”

Smolla’s former colleagues reflected on his leadership style. “His style is to surround himself with other equally competent people, to whom he freely delegates (and whom he doesn’t micromanage), so that he can focus his energies on big picture issues affecting the future of the organization,” stated Robert T. Danforth, the John Lucian Smith, Jr. Memorial Professor of Law and the Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration at Washington and Lee University. “What Rod brings to an organization is charisma and vision. He is always looking for the next big idea to help shape the future of an organization.”

“Rod’s lifelong attachment to practicing law, as well as studying it, means that justice is not an abstract concept to him,” said Jim Gibson, Sesquicentennial Professor of Law at the University of Richmond School of Law. “It’s real, and practical. Kind of like Rod himself.”

I BELIEVE IN PROGRESS,
and I BELIEVE *the* NEXT
GENERATION *of* VLGS
LAWYERS *and* POLICY-
MAKERS *will* LEAD
that PROGRESS.

PRESIDENT RODNEY A. SMOLLA

President Smolla said of his leadership, “On a scale of authoritarian to very egalitarian, I’m very egalitarian. I don’t have much of an ego. It’s common for me to come into a meeting with an idea of what we should do and come out of it with the exact opposite idea. I don’t have an investment in having it follow my idea.”

“When you first take a new job, you get asked a thousand times, ‘What is your vision?’” he mused. “I’m always resistant to that. It shouldn’t be mine. It should be the group’s. I don’t come in with it all figured out.”

Smolla believes that Vermont Law and Graduate School can be part of the solution to what currently ails society.

“The country and the world need people dedicated to human rights and dedicated to the rule of law. And they need people who are able to understand the world from an opponent’s point of view and engage in civilized dialogue.”

Smolla has not lost faith in the role of the law to make change, even in the wake of the Dobbs decision that ends constitutional protection for abortion.

“I am not naive, and I share the disappointment of many with the Court’s most recent term. But this day too shall pass. I believe in progress, and I believe the next generation of VLGS lawyers and policy-makers will lead that progress.”

Is he worried about the fate of democracy? “I’m guardedly optimistic,” Smolla declared. “There are threats. The fact that so many people believe the Big Lie is frightening. The fact that there are people who are drawn to nativism and anti-immigration impulses and a lack of respect for minorities is worrisome. But this is a country that has a history over the long haul of moral progress and legal progress. And I’m optimistic that we’ll continue, and what Madison called the ‘better angels of our nature’ will prevail.”

“I really do believe that,” he insisted. “And I think part of my passion for places like Vermont Law and Graduate School is the hope that you can imbue that sense of spirit in this next generation of lawyers and leaders.”

David Goodman is an award-winning journalist and host of the public affairs radio show and podcast *Vermont Conversation*.



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The Leaders’ Circle giving society recognizes the commitment and contributions of donors who support VLGS at a leadership level, year after year. By making a gift of \$1,000 or more each year for five years, you can play an important role in the school’s financial health, while making a meaningful statement about how much you value the Vermont Law and Graduate School education.

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ANIMAL KINGDOM

Building on its long commitment to animal law and policy, and the groundbreaking work of alumni in the field, Vermont Law and Graduate School has launched a new Animal Law and Policy Institute.

BY REBECCA BEYER



Rob Bossi

When **Monica Miller JD'12** stood before New York's highest court to argue that an elephant named Happy should be released from the Bronx Zoo under the centuries-old common-law writ of habeas corpus, she was coming full circle on a path set in motion when she was a student at Vermont Law School.

Back then, Miller was a volunteer for the **Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP)**, which was created by Steven Wise in 1996 to secure legal rights for animals. Wise taught one of the world's first animal rights law courses in VLS' summer program, but Miller first met him when she attended an animal law conference where he was a featured speaker.

One of Miller's main roles as a student volunteer was to research which states might be most amenable to NhRP's novel attempts to apply habeas corpus—also known as the Great Writ—to animals. As the first state high court anywhere to consider habeas for a nonhuman animal, New York was her top choice, and Happy's case was one of several the organization has filed in the state. It was also the first to be accepted on appeal by the New York Court of Appeals.

"We've petitioned to get our cases before the court of appeals numerous times," Miller explains. "To have them finally take it was a victory."

Victories in the relatively new field of animal law are hard to come by. In part because animals are legally considered property, it can be difficult to move cases challenging their treatment or confinement past even purely procedural obstacles such as standing. But Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS) graduates like Miller have been pushing

the boundaries of animal law for decades in the United States and around the world. And, thanks to the newly launched **Animal Law and Policy Institute (ALPI)**, the next generation of advocates is well on its way.

"I'm very excited to embrace the energy and optimism of new people entering this space," said Laura Fox JD/MELP'13, a former Humane Society of the United States attorney who is heading up the institute's new **Farmed Animal Advocacy Clinic**. "As we get more people involved, we'll generate more creative ideas and new ways of viewing problems."

VLGS has long been a leader in animal law and policy. In the years since Wise's course led it to become one of the first law schools to offer a course on the subject in 1990, it has continued to feature animal law programming ever since, especially during summer sessions. However, students have always wanted more and, with support from several funders, the Animal Law and Policy Institute formally launched with Professor Delcianna Winders, former vice president and deputy general counsel for the PETA Foundation, at the helm as director. Winders is a leading scholar who has practiced animal law for more than fifteen years and taught the subject for nearly as long. She has also taught at Pace and Lewis & Clark.

The program offers an expanded summer curriculum, including a class on undercover investigations, a 14-credit animal law concentration, the clinic, and an animal protection policy master's degree that was offered for the first time during the 2023-2024 academic year.



"I'M VERY EXCITED TO EMBRACE THE ENERGY AND OPTIMISM OF NEW PEOPLE ENTERING THIS SPACE."



~ Laura Fox JD/MELP'13

The Animal Law and Policy Institute is a stand-alone entity housed within the Environmental Law Center. That organizational structure is designed to facilitate collaboration between the closely connected movements (factory farming is a major contributor to climate change, for instance), but also to ensure that, when the interests of animals and the environment are not fully aligned, each is adequately represented in the VLGS community and beyond.

"It's really a recognition that animals have a central role to play when we're thinking about environmental law and doing that in a way that centers animals so they are not swallowed up by human or other interests," Winders says.

Winders and Jennifer Rushlow, dean of the Maverick Lloyd School for the Environment and faculty director of the Environmental Law Center, say the program's creation was in part a response to student and alumni demand, with Winders actively soliciting ideas and feedback from the VLGS community in designing the curriculum.

"The groundswell of support and interest from the students has been amazing," Rushlow says. "My office is near Delci's, and I've never seen so much student traffic in and out of an individual faculty member's office. They can't get enough of her. She's such a hero to them."

Students won't have to look far for other heroes in the field. Even before there was a formal animal law and policy program, the institution attracted aspiring attorneys with an interest in the topic. Today, those alumni are animal law trailblazers: Fox helped secure a settlement that will make it more difficult for puppy mills to sell dogs on PuppyFind.com; **Will Lowrey JD'17** won an important appellate ruling directing local prosecutors in Pennsylvania to bring a cruelty case against a dairy farm; **Geneva Page JD'01** sued the University of California over its failure to release information about the care of animals used for testing by a company owned by Elon Musk; **Michelle Bender MELP'15** launched a program dedicated to pursuing a rights-based approach to the protection of oceans and ocean life; and **Randall Abate JD/MSEL'89**, the assistant dean for environmental law studies at the George Washington University Law School, wrote a book titled, "What Can Animal Law Learn from Environmental Law?" and delivers lectures on related topics all around the world. And that's not counting alumni in leadership



WILL LOWREY JD'17

LAURA FOX JD/MELP'13

positions at the ASPCA, PETA Foundation, Humane Society of the United States, Center for Biological Diversity, and many other organizations.

Except for Abate—who was a student before animal law was offered at VLGS and came to the field much later—each of those graduates says the school was instrumental in helping them get their footing.

Page read about Wise and his course in a magazine she found in an airplane seat-back pocket. Even though there weren't any other animal law offerings at the time, she applied to the school because she was also interested in environmental law, for which VLGS was then—as now—highly ranked.

"I kind of had the blind faith that I could white-knuckle it and make it work" in animal law, she laughs. "There was no path."

Once on campus, however, Page applied every opportunity she had for independent study to animal law research, including papers on the consequences of treating animals as property and search and seizure procedures for humane officers and the application of RICO laws to dog-fighting enterprises.

"I didn't even know what was out there," she says. "I was trying to teach myself."

Fox pursued a Master of Environmental Law and Policy in addition to a JD because so many of the animal law courses were offered through that program. One of those courses was taught by a U.S. Department of Justice attorney focused on prosecuting utility companies whose power lines interfered with birds. When she told the attorney she had written a paper on the impact of wind turbines on wildlife, he offered her a summer internship with him in Missoula, Montana.

"It was the best experience of my life," she says. "I loved every second of it."

Lowrey came to VLGS after two decades working in business when he realized he was spending as much time volunteering for animal rights and animal welfare issues as he was at his full-time job.

"I was laser-focused on animal law," he says.

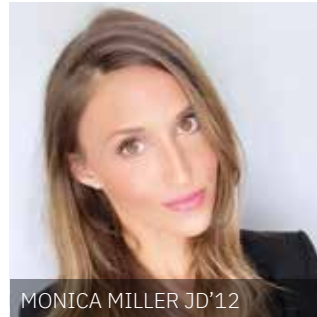
In addition to chairing the Animal Law Society, which won best student chapter of the Animal Legal Defense Fund under his direction, he won second place in the 2016 National Animal



RANDALL ABATE JD/MSEL'89



MICHELLE BENDER MELP'15



MONICA MILLER JD'12



GENEVA PAGE JD'01



PAMELA VESILIND JD'08

Law Competitions for his mock bill restricting ownership of exotic animals. Professor **Margaret York JD'15** coached Lowrey in the competition (Lowrey was a guest speaker in York's undercover investigations class). For his semester in practice as a student, Lowrey worked in the animal crimes unit of the Virginia attorney general's office.

Bender's career has progressed on two tracks. After taking a class with Adjunct Professor Don Baur—who was a leading expert in both animal and environmental law who taught Ocean and Coastal Law in the school's summer program for a quarter century, and who mentored innumerable aspiring animal lawyers—she continued to work with him on cases seeking to protect marine mammals under existing federal and state laws. But she also discovered a different approach to conservation in a course on earth law with Linda Sheehan, former executive director of the Earth Law Center, where Bender now works.

"One of the premises of the course was that our environmental laws and policies are deeply flawed because they allow pollution—just at a regulated pace," Bender says. "They're designed to slow degradation rather than reverse and restore it."

At the **Earth Law Center**, Bender launched an ocean rights program that seeks to apply a rights-based approach to ocean animals and governance. The rights-based approach—also the strategy in Happy's case—has been gaining momentum. In 2008, Ecuador became the first country in the world to include the rights of nature in its constitution, and in 2017, New Zealand recognized the Whanganui River as a legal person.

Although the idea is new in the "Western construct," Bender says, "Indigenous communities have had this foundational belief and have been advocating for stewardship structures for centuries."

Rushlow says the new Animal Law and Policy Institute has revealed the "huge community" of VLGS graduates working in the field. And now that community is united behind the institute and Winders.

"I could not be more pleased that Delci is leading the charge on this very exciting, innovative program," Abate says. "She's an ideal leader. She has a grand vision for what this program can and should be."

"ANIMAL LAW AT VLGS IS VERY MUCH FRONT AND CENTER. THE ANIMAL LAW STUDENTS ARE HERE FOR A REASON; THEY'RE FOCUSED ON A GOAL."

~ Delcianna Winders



Rob Bossi



Winders praised the alumni and current students for their commitment to animal law and policy issues.

At other schools, animal law can feel “off to the side, a little bit siloed,” she says. But at VLGS, “it’s very much front and center. The animal law and policy students are here for a reason; they’re focused on a goal.”

Those students include **Ashely Monti JD/MFALP’22** and **Michelle Amidzich JD/MFALP’22**, the school’s first two students to graduate with a concentration in animal law; and **Vanessa Beane MELP’22**, who participated in an animal law practicum Winders taught as a precursor to Fox’s clinic.

As part of the class, Beane researched wildlife compounds that charge photographers to take pictures of captive animals who are often mistreated. The photos are then promoted—sometimes unwittingly by animal welfare organizations—as if they had actually been taken in the wild. Beane’s paper makes recommendations to help eradicate the practice, including the use of accurate captions, an acknowledgement that the animals in the photos are captive, and the removal of falsely labeled photos from stock photo agency archives.

“Animals are not for our enjoyment,” Beane says. “People are not entitled to these photos; we’re not entitled to see these animals. In no way should these horrible practices be occurring just for people’s enjoyment.”

Beane, who wants to work on behalf of captive animals, praised Winders as a mentor and teacher.

“She’s incredible,” Beane says. “She really aims to equip her students with the skills to go forth in a career.”

That’s the idea, Winders says.

“We’re trying to make sure we’re meeting students’ interests,” she says. “We want to help them identify job opportunities and make connections.”

In an interview shortly after her arguments on behalf of Happy the elephant, Miller says her entire career can be traced back to VLGS. She used a final paper for her animal law class with **Professor Pamela Vesilind JD’08** to do research for Wise, who then asked Miller to volunteer for the NhRP and later offered her a job as the organization’s first staff attorney before she had even graduated.

When Miller argued Happy’s case before the New York Court of Appeals, it was the first time someone other than Wise had handled an NhRP argument in court. In June 2022, five justices of New York’s high court joined a 17-page ruling finding that Happy was not entitled to even a hearing on habeas relief. But two other justices wrote more than 90 pages in dissenting opinions.

Happy’s captivity “is an affront to a civilized society, and every day she remains a captive—a spectacle for humans—we, too, are diminished,” Judge Jenny Rivera wrote in her dissent.

“We see the ruling as a victory,” Miller says. “As a result of Happy’s case, we are now armed with two compelling dissents from the highest court of New York and a majority opinion that recognizes the extraordinarily cognitively complex nature of elephants and calls upon the legislature to take action for elephants.”

Miller says Happy’s case is “unquestionably the most important thing I’ve ever done.” And that’s coming from someone who argued a separation of church and state case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2019 for the American Humanist Association.

The reason?

The majority decision from the Supreme Court was a “step away from church-state separation,” she says. In contrast, the Happy case—even though it wasn’t successful—is a “step forward into the future of animal rights.”

CALL *of the* WILD

The career paths of two Vermont Law and Graduate School alumni took very different tracks, but would converge years later—in the wilderness.

by Corin Hirsch





In the fall, the nearly 6,000 acres that stretch east and west across Woodbury Mountain in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom are a technicolor blanket of crimson, gold, and evergreen, at least from the air. Beneath that canopy are snake dens and beaver dams, saw-whet owls and black bears, as well as headwaters for both the Lamoille and Winooski Rivers.



To the casual eye, it's quintessential Vermont forest. What's less visible along the ridges and wetlands here is a history that spans generations—from timbering to fishing and hunting—as well as a pool of carbon, some 500,000 tonnes, stored in its trees and soil. All of this piqued the interest of the **Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT)** when they learned that the longtime owner of the tract, the Meyer family, was exploring options to change the land's use.

"It's rugged country with lots of special features," says Andrew Meyer, whose grandfather, Hugo Meyer, purchased the tract in the 1950s and managed it as timberland. "Woodbury Mountain itself is a wondrous area of backcountry, waterfalls, wonderful wildlife, and ridges. There's a nice ridge line along the top, lots of hardwood, some in areas that hasn't been touched because it's hard to access. Once you get there, it becomes rugged in terms of feeling like you're in the middle of nowhere."

Over time, the family became interested in divesting from long-term timber holdings, and as they looked at options, including selling easements, they were approached by **Jon Leibowitz JD'11/MELP'08**, NEWT's executive director. NEWT had become interested in maintaining the land as "forever wild," a designation that would not only preserve its character but could impact climate resilience.

"Old and wild forests, on average, soak up more carbon on an annual basis than a young and managed forest," says Leibowitz. "When it comes to one of the greatest needs of human society right now, which is figuring out how to deal with climate change and reduce carbon in the atmosphere, old and wild forests are very valuable. Wild forests are among the most effective and scalable natural climate solutions at our disposal."



In late 2021, after a complex year-and-a-half long process, the land became the largest privately owned "forever wild" preserve in the state, renamed Woodbury Mountain Wilderness Preserve. NEWT was its new owner and it was Leibowitz' former VLGS acquaintance, **Merrill Bent JD'11**, who provided a key assist during a collaboration that might have seemed unlikely just a few years prior when each cut a different path after graduation.

The Seeds of a Save

For Leibowitz, who grew up in Miami, a post-college stint with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps at Elmore State Park steered him toward Vermont Law School. "It was there I really fell in love with Vermont," recalls Leibowitz, who entered with an eye toward environmental law. "I had a vision of being a lawyer at a big environmental group

like the Sierra Club or NRDC, and working to protect large tracts of public wilderness," he recalled.

As a 3L, Leibowitz took a class with Professor **Jessica Jay JD'97/MSEL'99** that focused on land trusts and conservation easements, and "became intrigued with the idea of land conservation through private, transactional work, and using the land trust model to achieve conservation." After earning his JD and Master of Environmental Law and Policy degrees, he began a fellowship with the Montezuma Land Conservancy in Colorado. About five years later, he saw the executive director opening at the Montpelier-based NEWT. "I was very lucky," commented Leibowitz, who landed the job and moved back east. "I immediately hired Merrill as our staff attorney."

NEWT had been founded in 2002 to fill a perceived gap in land conservation, which had long centered on managing land for

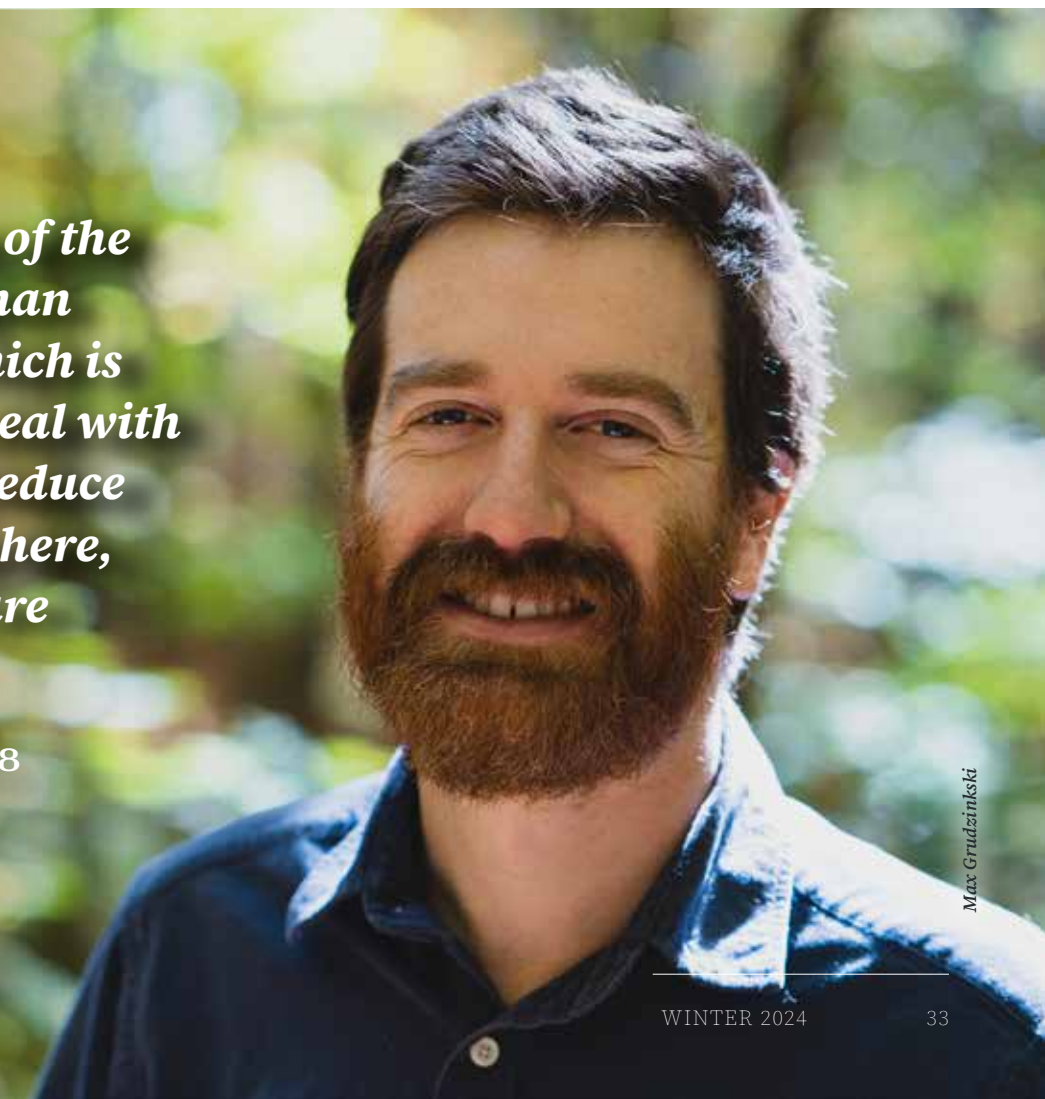
multiple uses, from forestry to recreation to biodiversity. Instead, NEWT's aim was to let land mature at its own pace, without interference from logging or mechanized recreation. "There was no other land trust in the Northeast at the time that was exclusively focused on conserving nature for nature's sake, the intrinsic value of nature," Leibowitz says.

Relying primarily on private and institutional donations, NEWT has protected over 82,000 acres across five New England states and New York, where about five percent of land is protected as "forever wild." Some of that is outright owned by the organization. "We are in the real estate transaction business. It's just that the end result of what we do is conservation rather than development," explains Leibowitz. "Once we buy a piece of land, it won't get logged ever again."

With their work extending across multiple states, transactions and conservation

“When it comes to one of the greatest needs of human society right now, which is figuring out how to deal with climate change and reduce carbon in the atmosphere, old and wild forests are very valuable.”

~ Jon Leibowitz JD'11/MELP'08



Max Grudzinski



easements can involve a lot of moving parts. “We need to be aware of tax laws across six states, and we have to have attorneys in every one of our states, or barred in multiple states, to represent us,” he says.

Bent, who grew up in the Northeast Kingdom as the daughter of two Vermont Law School graduates, hadn’t necessarily considered environmental law and conservation as part of her career plan. “I never took a single environmental law course at Vermont Law School,” she says. “Instead, I thought I was going to be more of a general practice person—maybe have a practice of civil and family and criminal. That [plan] really evolved organically.”

After she graduated in 2011, she worked as a judicial clerk in the appellate court in Albany, N.Y., before joining the firm of Woolmington, Campbell, Bent & Stasny in Manchester Center in 2013. “I have the luxury here to work on what I genuinely want to be working on, and to evolve my specialties,” Bent says. “I represent

a lot of different towns in Vermont, which is one of the most interesting practice areas. I also represent conservation organizations and civic and community-minded individuals making positive changes and contributions to the state.”

Bent’s work touches on zoning, housing, and permitting, as well as assisting with real-estate transactions. For NEWT’s sometimes complex conservation projects, she became integral to the due diligence process. “I document for [Jon], I do the paperwork, I assist with the due diligence, but he’s the one out there coming up with these amazing plans and executing them,” she says.

Anatomy of a Land Deal

When the Meyer family first put out feelers for how to conserve the tract around Woodbury Mountain, a colleague of Leibowitz’s

introduced him to Andrew Meyer, who had been involved in the land’s management over the decades. “Cutting less than the growth rate had been [Hugo Meyer’s] philosophy,” Meyer says. Occupying part of what’s called the Worcester-to-Kingdom linkage, the string of tracts also acted as a wildlife bridge of sorts, providing passage for foxes, deer, fisher, and dozens of other species as they moved around in response to development or changing climate. “It’s been a good place for wildlife, a corridor from east to west.”

The family worked with the state of Vermont and the Vermont Land Trust on protecting neighboring land as a managed forest. “Good conservation, but very different than what we do,” Leibowitz says. NEWT shared with them the “forever wild” conservation approach, along with its unique parameters and rules, eventually winning them over.

The scale of the sale was enormous, and meant raising at least \$6.5 million, as well as intricate

title research. “We do a thorough title search to try to understand the history of the property and make sure that the title is clean,” Leibowitz says, so that boundary lines, easements, and prior or ongoing property-rights disputes are clear.

In Vermont, title searches are done on the town level—and for a tract as vast and unique as Woodbury, Bent drew on a team of attorneys in a handful of towns. “It’s always better [in Vermont] to have somebody local look at a title because they better understand the local records offices and how they operate,” denotes Bent. “You have to go through a process, searching grantor and grantee all the way back at least 40 years, and you have to make a lot of discretionary determinations about the quality of the title.”

As NEWT raised money, selling carbon credits became integral toward financing the sale. “Allowing somebody to offset their carbon emissions by purchasing carbon credits, which requires the underlying carbon bank—for lack of a better word, the forest—it requires the owner of the forest to covenant and agree and promise that they won’t do certain things in that forest that would impact the amount [of carbon offset] available,” Bent continued. “It’s an incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and basically monetizes good stewardship of the land.”

In the end, over 130 donors contributed to the purchase during the leadup to the sale in November 2021, and NEWT partnered with two organizations, one each in Quebec and Utah, through its Wild Carbonô program. “Carbon credits are not going to solve climate change, but they are also providing necessary capital to do good conservation work. They truly helped this transaction work in generating a serious amount of income,” Leibowitz says. “We’re trying to avoid the worst of climate chaos and help the biodiversity extinction crisis. Access to capital is important, and carbon markets are providing a place to do that. It was a real-world example of carbon credits being used to actually conserve wilderness.”

In late 2021, NEWT also purchased an adjacent 500 acres, called the Eagle Ledge Addition, that was a puzzle piece of sorts linking parts of the original tract. In 2022, NEWT added another 123 acres and, this year, plans to add another 160 acres. Besides a planned hiking trail, the land will be left as it is. “We’re simply protecting the land, and then taking a step back and allowing nature to direct the ebb and flow of that landscape,” says Leibowitz. “The more we learned, the more we felt it was aligned with our belief of what we felt was important not only for the land, but the whole region as far as conservation of wilderness,” says Andrew Meyer. “It’s a good model for the state to have pockets [of land] that are dedicated to wildlife and parts that are managed well. They balance each other.”



WOODBURY WILDERNESS, SOUTH OF SUMMIT. JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, newildernesstrust.org



SMALL STREAM. JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, newildernesstrust.org



WETLANDS NORTH OF EAGLE LEDGE. JERRY MONKMAN/ECOPHOTOGRAPHY, newildernesstrust.org



“The owner of the forest [agrees and promises] that they won’t do certain things that would impact the amount of carbon offset available. It’s an incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and basically monetizes good stewardship of the land.”

~ Merrill Bent JD’11



WITH THANKS FROM THE JD EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Vermont Law and Graduate School thanks all of our dedicated alumni externship supervisors during the 2021–2022 academic year. We greatly appreciate your time and commitment to our students and our program.

If you, or any individuals in your network, are interested in hosting a VLGS externship student in the future, please email JDexternships@vermontlaw.edu.

- Steven Brown JD'05
- Honorable Karen Carroll JD'88
- Honorable William D. Cohen JD'84
- Honorable Harold E. Eaton, Jr. JD'80
- Tim Fair JD'12
- Jamey Fidel JD/MSEL'01
- Alexander Funk JD'13
- Margaret Galka JD'18
- Priya Gandbhir JD'12/LLM'13
- Petra Halsema JD'11
- Adam Hescocock JD'07
- Zachary Hozid JD'17
- Justin Kolber LLM'07
- Jon Leibowitz JD'11/MELP'08
- Jordana Levine JD'04
- Honorable Margaret Mangan JD'86
- Brian R. Marsicovetere JD'99
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- Breanna Weaver JD/MELP'17
- Kirk Williams JD/MSL'95
- John Zaikowski JD/MSEL'02

“My externship was essential. It was more than just an experience I could include on my resume. My supervising judge cared about me as a person and continues to provide mentorship to me now. The exposure to a wide range of people and areas of law improved my understanding of what’s required of me as an attorney.”

~ Chianna Hart JD'22




“Performing the externship was hands down the most valuable experience I had while at VLGS. Being able to work directly with alumni gave me great perspective on the value of my education.”

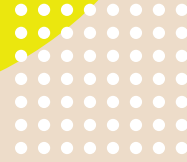
~ William Stocker JD/MELP'21

CATALYSTS *for* CHANGE

A Gallery of VLGS Alumni



Ed Keable *JD'86*



Nearly four years ago on his birthday, Ed Keable was about to leave for a ski vacation with his husband, when then Sec. David Bernhardt of the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) called him into his office.

Keable had spent seven years as a staff attorney in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate Generals' Corps; six years as a staff attorney with DOI's legal office; and seventeen years leading DOI's legal office in three different positions, serving at the pleasure of the secretary. Upon entering Bernhardt's office that day, Keable was greeted with a major opportunity—an offer to become the superintendent of **Grand Canyon National Park** in Arizona.

With his husband's blessing, Keable said yes, and soon began overseeing one of the most important and iconic places in the world. From staffing to drinking water to wildfire management to trail maintenance, and so much more, Keable oversees the programs that touch the 5+ million people who visit the park annually.

"The first time I visited the Grand Canyon as a tourist in 1994 and walked up to the rim to see the canyon, I had one of those experiences that many of our visitors have," Keable recalled. "I was overwhelmed by the beauty and the grandeur. I had a random thought that it would be really great to live and work at the Grand Canyon because it's such a special place. And then 26 years later, I got the call."

Through the park, Keable is committed to making change in two key areas: climate change and in respect to Indigenous people.

On the climate side, Sec. of the Department of the Interior Deb Haaland appointed Keable as the National Park Service's representative on the Grand Canyon Adaptive Management Work Group, which is addressing the water use issues in the Colorado River basin by making

recommendations to the secretary about the timing and volumes of discharges from the dam. Lakes Powell and Mead have dropped to historic lows, and the working group is attempting to help the secretary make difficult decisions regarding competing interests for water uses such as drinking water, agricultural, hydropower, and environmental protection.

"I've been given an opportunity to advocate for environmental interests in the Colorado River basin," Keable said. "As I use that opportunity to find solutions, it's important to determine how to strike a balance for the environment with other real and meaningful uses of water in the basin. I am leaning into the tradition of compromise in this advisory process and speaking to the better angels that we all can, and must, bring to these difficult decisions that we have to make as a result of changes to the climate that are impacting the environment in which we live."

In regard to Indigenous people, Keable points out that the Grand Canyon and surrounding lands were home to 11 tribes of people from time immemorial. When the federal government decided the geographical area would become a national park, they did not seek the Indigenous people's consent, and they physically moved many of them out of the park—some as far away as New Mexico. For the next 100 years, he said, the National Park Service managed the park in a way that has actively and passively kept Indigenous people out of the park, "in a way that made them unwelcome in what is essentially their home."

"Indigenous people have a connection to the Grand Canyon that is more than historic, it's spiritual and cultural," Keable said.

To begin addressing these wrongs, the park is changing its approach. With help from the nonprofit **Grand Canyon Conservancy**, they've been engaging with an inter-tribal

working group composed of representatives of the 11 tribes associated with the Grand Canyon. As a starting point, the park took over a former tourist observation tower, and with the inter-tribal working group, is turning it into the first inter-tribal cultural heritage site in the national park. This space will provide opportunities for Indigenous people to sell crafts and art, and to share their history and culture with park visitors through first-person interpretive programming. It will also allow the park to encourage its visitors to visit tribal lands near the park to further promote economic development. Called the Desert View Watch Tower, it is located near the park's east entrance.

"We're focused on how we can reengage with Indigenous people as we manage the park," Keable said. "Frankly, it took years for the park to build trust with Indigenous leaders... because of how we managed the park for 100 years. But we were able to rebuild trust over time by listening to and incorporating ideas that Indigenous people brought to the Desert View Strategic Plan." As an example, tribal leaders developed a theme—"We are still here"—for the strategic plan. Since many park visitors don't know the history of Indigenous people and their connection to the land—that process is ongoing historically, spiritually, and culturally.

Keable credits his father, a general practice lawyer, as an inspiration. He loved helping people so much that he would represent them regardless of their ability to pay. When Keable arrived at Vermont Law School, he spent a semester working at the clinic, assisting people who were struggling to pay rent. Keable was drawn to the school because of its social justice focus.

"That same social justice focus informs how I serve the American people today as the Grand Canyon superintendent."



Dr. Lalaina Rakotoson *MSEL'95*



Dr. Lalaina Rakotoson is the founder and board vice president of Madagascar's Development and Environmental Law Center (DELIC), a public interest environmental law group that has promoted environmental justice for more than 25 years. Through her work, Rakotoson has helped stem some of the negative environmental impacts by changing the natural resources governance policy in Madagascar for the better.

Rakotoson, a Fulbright scholar, founded DELIC in 1996 after being inspired by Vermont Law School's—now Vermont Law and Graduate School's—very own Environmental Law Center and Environmental Law Clinic. Rakotoson created DELIC within the law school at the University of Fianarantsoa and was the first to bring this concept to Madagascar. Today, there are three clinics, and Rakotoson and her team are working to introduce a mobile clinic as well.

"I am glad I could bring back something for my country," Rakotoson said. "In 1999, jointly with another returning Malagasy lawyer who went to VLS after me, a conference was organized to evaluate the effectiveness of environmental law in Madagascar. It was sponsored by the National Office for the Environment, the University of Fianarantsoa, and DELIC. The United States Agency for International Development was also able to support the travel of two VLS professors—David Firestone and Karin Sheldon—to attend the conference."

The second edition of that environmental law conference was held in 2022—analyzing environmental justice in Madagascar—when Rakotoson was the policy specialist for the USAID Environmental program Hay Tao. She

was solicited by Pact Madagascar to serve in this role between 2018 and 2022.

Rakotoson said her experience at VLS inspired another student, **Diane Henkels JD'97/MSEL'98**, to spend eight months in Madagascar's Ranomafana National Park and at the University of Fianarantsoa, learning about Malagasy environmental law.

Through Rakotoson's steadfast commitment to the cause, DELIC has continued to grow over the years. The organization received its first grant in 2008 from the **MacArthur Foundation** to support the expansion of its environmental justice work throughout Madagascar. Rakotoson secured the grant while completing her doctoral program in California, and she chose VLS to be the U.S. fiscal manager for the grant through its three-year term.

In 2010, DELIC joined **The Access Initiative**—a global network of more than 300 civil society organizations and more than 50 countries from all continents focused on promoting environmental democracy—and it currently serves as Madagascar's lead organization within the network. Additionally, DELIC is Madagascar's national chapter for the **Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance**, a consortium dedicated to addressing climate and environmental challenges.

Rakotoson has further strengthened her international relationships by sitting on the East Africa Board of Advisors for the **Global Greengrants Fund**, where she has represented Madagascar since 2016. Along with 24 other international leaders, the board offers grants for community organizations in Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia to

address environmental justice issues. In March 2024, Rakotoson hosted the board's annual meeting in Madagascar for the second time.

Reflecting on her career, Rakotoson is incredibly grateful for the many opportunities she gained through her VLS experience, including the ability to earn a full-tuition scholarship. She excelled in her coursework, absorbing as much information as she could. In Rakotoson's first semester on campus, she received the VLS Excellence Award for her work in her environmental ethics class.

"I so enjoyed my time at Vermont Law, especially my environmental law class taught by Professor David Firestone," Rakotoson said. "Professor Firestone published a book titled, 'Environmental Law for Non-Lawyers.' I remember any time he finished reading an excerpt from the book, he would always say, 'What does it mean in English!?' For me, learning in English as my third language is one thing, and speaking legalese as a fourth language is another thing!"

Rakotoson looks forward to continuing to deepen the connection with Vermont Law and Graduate School—perhaps through establishing a research partnership and exchange on environmental justice in Madagascar. "It's exciting to think about exploring opportunities to extend VLGS's collaboration with DELIC," she shared.

Ricky Armand

JD'12

As a personal injury attorney, Ricky Armand has the opportunity to help clients through some of the most challenging times in their lives. And when resolution leads to a monetary settlement, it can be one of the most life-changing moments in his clients' lives.

"A lot of the time, it's the largest amount of money they've ever seen at one time," Armand said.

Armand works for **Kelley | Uustal**, a nationally recognized law firm known for its track record of winning large verdicts and settlements from personal injury cases. He focuses on cases that range from slip-and-falls to catastrophic injuries and wrongful deaths. One of the things he likes about this area of practice is that anyone can afford to hire him, because it's based on a contingency fee, where Armand's firm receives a percentage if the client wins. In many other areas of law, clients must come up with a retainer to begin the process, which can make representation out of reach.

One of Armand's more memorable cases involved a family where a woman was killed by her ex-partner, and the father of her two sons. The mother of the woman—the grandmother to the children—arrived at the woman's apartment complex to pick her up one morning for work. When she did not come down to the car, the mother went to the door. There, she saw the ex holding a gun, and she screamed, but the man still shot and killed her daughter right in front of her. He then came after her, but she was able to run and escape. The perpetrator is spending life in prison, and the children were left with no parents.

The grandmother and grandfather took in the grandchildren, and worked with Armand to sue the apartment complex. During the discovery process, Armand learned the complex was supposed to have a security officer on duty, but they had called out sick that day and there was no replacement. He argued that had that officer been on duty, the tragedy could have been prevented. Armand said it wasn't a slam dunk case—the apartment complex argued a "victim-targeted" defense—but he and his team successfully litigated it. Armand will never forget the moment when he and the grandparents, after an eight-hour mediation, reached a seven-figure settlement. "I recall the grandparents crying," he said. "We all choked up a bit."

The case personally resonated with Armand as well.

"I remember the Sunday before mediation was Father's Day," Armand said. "I remember lying down next to my own sons that day. After they fell asleep, I started to get a little emotional, I was holding them tight. The young boys in the case lost both of their parents. Their father killed their mother."

Armand, who is of Haitian descent, believes it is important to speak to young people of color to serve as a role model. "When you see me, it's proof that it's possible," he said. "Here I was thinking that to be successful I had to go into music, sports, or some other form of entertainment." Armand wants young people who look like him to know there are other avenues to success.

Armand credits **Vice President Shirley Jefferson JD'86**, who is a Black woman, as the reason he found Vermont Law School, now Vermont Law and Graduate School. He met her at a law school fair in Houston, Texas, and said her warm, motherly vibe made him feel welcomed. "She's a fighter and always tries to protect her students," he said.

More than a decade later, Armand is still paying it forward by mentoring and supporting the next generation of lawyers of color.

Patricia Whalen

JD'79

After graduating from Vermont Law School, Patricia Whalen worked for Legal Aid, where she assisted low-income Vermonters with domestic violence issues and issues with public benefits. Today, she is a retired international judge, who works from her home as part of a seven-member judicial team for the **International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ)**. She is helping Afghan women judges who are Taliban targets escape Afghanistan and relocate to a place where they can rebuild a life.

While those two roles are separated by decades, time zones, and a hemisphere, Whalen can draw a direct throughline from her work helping disadvantaged Vermonters to helping survivors of one of the world's most notorious regimes.

"I have had amazing legal opportunities to be honest," Whalen, of Westminster, Vermont, said. "I have not had one boring legal day."

Whalen and her organization have helped approximately 200 judges and their families—more than 1,000 Afghans total—escape the Taliban and relocate outside of the country.

Women judges are high level targets for extremists. Not only are these women highly educated and serving in positions of power, they are also the individuals who sentenced many of the Taliban and ISIS-K members in terrorism cases. When the U.S. withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, those on terrorism and other criminal charges escaped from prison and are seeking revenge.

Whalen first began working with Afghan women judges in 2003, a few years after the United States invaded Afghanistan. She attended an IAWJ conference in Washington, D.C., where she met an Afghan judge, Marzia Basel.

"I said, how can I help?" Whalen recalled. Basel told her she needed judicial training, and that while the U.S. had offered some training to Afghan judges, it had taken place in high-security, advanced courts, which were intimidating. Whalen invited her to Vermont,



where our "unfussy" courtrooms and slower pace would remove some of the barriers to legal training.

From 2004 to 2014, as the project director for the Vermont Afghan Women Judges Judicial Education, a project of the IAWJ and the Rural Women Leadership Institute of Vermont, Whalen and her colleagues brought 35 Afghan women judges to Vermont for training.

In recent years, her involvement with Afghan judges turned to evacuations, when these women became prime terrorist targets. The threats to them are severe—a judge Whalen knew personally was assassinated. Initially, Whalen's team of seven were working around the clock, seven days a week to coordinate evacuations. Her team works with a network of safehouses, translators, and intelligence agents to move these judges to safety.

"The time of promoting an independent judiciary is coming to an end," Whalen said. "What they're at risk of is something far worse than death—it is being erased. They live in a back room, they can't go out, they're isolated from work, their broader family. They've had everything taken from them. And that is the refugee story."

The drive to help these women stems from Whalen's friendship and kinship with the Afghan judges. Early in her own career, Whalen was appointed as a family court magistrate, and in this work, she remembered what her VLS professor Lowell Schechter had

said: Don't only think about the domestic implications of an issue you're working on, think about how it works globally. Whalen joined a then-fledgling organization, the IAWJ, and through her connections there she was invited to work at The Hague on the family maintenance treaty. From there, she went to Bosnia and worked on the war crimes tribunal.

The experience wasn't so much different from family court," Whalen said of the war crimes cases. "It's good people who once lived with each other now doing unspeakable harm to each other."

Whether working locally or internationally, Whalen's passion for humanitarian work is apparent. Her steadfast commitment to helping others has not gone unnoticed. Most recently, she was recognized with the American Bar Association's 2023 World Order Under Law Award for providing visionary leadership in international law. Additionally, the IAWJ was awarded the **2023 Bolch Prize for the Rule of Law** in recognition of the organization's dedicated support of Afghan women judges. Through her role with IAWJ, Whalen was invited to the ceremony to accept the award.

"Working on this (Afghan) project has been as basic as any humanitarian kind of relief," she said. "These are people who need help. They're our friends, they're our colleagues, and I feel an acute responsibility as well, mostly that they're at risk now because of their belief in us...I feel like we've abandoned them."





Erin Meezan *JD/MSEL'97*

performance of the ecosystem and then identifying what strategies could be implemented to make the factory attain similar outcomes. That might mean incorporating a green roof, chopping up the parking lot and planting grass, and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions on site.

For many manufacturing companies, getting to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions is an ambitious goal, if it is even a goal at all.

Erin Meezan, former vice president and chief sustainability officer at Atlanta-based flooring producer Interface, helped the company achieve net-zero, and took that even further. She led the company to shift from a set of zero impact goals to embrace new corporate sustainability goals focused on being regenerative. The big focus, she explained, was decarbonizing manufacturing and raw materials, which is realized through engaging suppliers and employees across the business value chain, and measuring and reporting against key goals and targets.

With seven factories around the globe, and five focus areas (factories, people, raw material supply chain, products, and broader value chain), Meezan mapped out a regenerative future, sparking promise for the impact on the climate. Looking at factories is a good example of how this works in practice. Meezan and her team piloted an approach to setting regenerative goals for factories by using ecosystems as a model. They identified high-performing ecosystems near factories, such as a pine longleaf forest located close to their U.S. manufacturing site in LaGrange, Georgia, and measured its performance.

If, for example, that forest stores 3,000 pounds of carbon per acre, this metric was used as a benchmark for what the organization's facilities should be able to do," Meezan said. The next step was conducting a gap analysis from the factory's current performance to the

A similar approach to regenerative goals was also used to set targets for Interface's products. "We had worked for many years to get our carpet tile carbon footprints to zero, so the next move was for us to set goals for products that would take us beyond zero, and to see if we could design and manufacture flooring products that were carbon negative." These carbon negative products were launched in the U.S. in 2021 and are now available globally. For each level of the company, they defined adaptations, with the goal being the product stores more carbon than it emits.

Meezan's work continues to gain widespread attention. She was featured in an award-winning independent feature-length documentary, "**Beyond Zero**," which tells the story of Interface's sustainability quest, and her efforts have been profiled in *The New York Times Magazine* as part of a carbontech revolution.

In September 2022, after 18 years at Interface, Meezan accepted a new role as chief sustainability officer at JLL, a professional services firm specializing in real estate and investment management. "The scale of JLL was really appealing," Meezan shared. "With an estimated five billion square feet under management, and the number of opportunities that exist to influence what clients are doing to decarbonize and solve emissions reductions to stabilize the climate—it felt like a natural fit."

JLL ambitiously stepped out to become the first in the industry, and one of the first few companies globally, to set a net-zero science-based target. The organization aims to achieve a 95 percent reduction of Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions by 2040, with an interim goal of achieving 51 percent of those reductions by 2030. Through dedicated action plans, internal change management, stakeholder education, and comprehensive data management, Meezan and the JLL team are on track to reach these aggressive targets.

First in the flooring industry, and now in real estate, Meezan's work is having ripple effects as competitors and other companies set their own targets. "Now more than ever, we see the impact sustainability efforts are having across industries, with innovations created at one company being scaled across the industry, and that shift keeps me really optimistic about the future."

Meezan credits Vermont Law for teaching her the skills necessary to be successful. "Every day, I'm advocating for why it's a good idea to pursue sustainability in business," she said. "I am a representative for the environment, and I rely on the knowledge and advocacy skills that I learned at VLS to create a plan and put it into action."

Her success proves that companies, and not just government or advocacy organizations, can step up and lead the way on environmental progress.

"I think that is the proudest thing," Meezan stated. "I can say I basically led Interface to get to net-zero, and to not rest on their laurels, but to declare that they're going even further. Now, on this new journey with JLL, I'm excited to overcome different challenges and create deep, impactful change."



Sebastian Garcia *JD '19*

Telecommunications, cyber policy, and even space policy touch our lives daily, yet few of us know much about them.

Sebastian Garcia, attorney advisor with the Federal Communications Commission, has stepped up to become an expert in the field, lending his knowledge and research to help shape and inform federal telecommunications and space policy. Garcia is part of the Spectrum Policy Branch within the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology.

"Working in the federal government, contributing to major rulemakings, and supporting priorities like the lunar communications network allows me to broaden my horizon and make an impact in an area that's really meaningful." While he started his role with the FCC in September 2023, Garcia isn't a stranger to navigating the complexities of space, cyber, and telecommunications regulatory matters.

A former American Political Science Association-MCI Telecommunications Congressional Fellow, Garcia was a member of the legislative staff of Senator Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, working with the Communications, Media, and Broadband Subcommittee and the Space and Science Subcommittee, both of which are part of the Senate Commerce Committee.

"In that role, we conducted oversight of NASA policy, space policy—not on a broad scale, but more granularly," Garcia said. "Things like their budget, their Artemis program that's taking us to the moon and Mars, conducting oversight of that and ensuring that they're doing things in a manner that takes taxpayer dollars into account...and ensuring that they're abiding by safety principles and responsibility principles."

He finds this work to be fascinating.

"Being able to contribute, at least on a minute level, to how the United States is getting to the moon and



Mars from a policy level is a super interesting thing to work on. Collaborating with constituents and NASA officials, conducting oversight hearings over NASA, and asking questions about how all of this is being done is enthralling."

While earning his JD, Garcia studied abroad in Trento, Italy, where he noticed a lot of issues that popped up were related to telecommunications and space. He realized that the United States was behind from a legislative perspective. Garcia then participated in an externship with Aerojet Rocketdyne, and he went on to earn an LLM in space, cyber, and telecommunications law at the University of Nebraska—one of only two such programs in the country. He has also interned at NASA.

"Space, cyber, and telecommunications law and policy all tie into this broader change that we're witnessing happen right now. All three of them are strategic imperatives for the U.S. to master if it wants to maintain its global position. Having attorneys who can confidently move among space, cyber, and telecommunications, knowing that they're all connected in some way, is an important change that's happening in the legal community. People are starting to recognize that these programs are going to be game changers as we move forward."

As for space travel, Garcia is absolutely in. "Any possibility or any chance to travel to space, I'll take it for sure."

A MESSAGE FROM THE VLGSAA



Dear friends,

Community: *a sense of; partners within; a physically defined boundary; the countless traits that define a group of people.*

However you define or enjoy a community, the vital role it plays in one's well-being and existence is undeniable. At our most basic level of need, we seek connections—to each other, to a cause, to the greater good, to a community. At Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS), we pride ourselves on the philosophy of law for the community and the world, and long have we recognized community as the durable foundation and bedrock principle guiding our beloved institution.

This unwavering tenet has transcended decades of classes whose students have enjoyed the VLGS experience. We carry that mantra with us into all parts of the world and workforce, bettering our own communities in both large and small ways.

Our alumni community is almost 9,000 strong, with members working in influential roles from the World Wildlife Fund to the U.S. Department of Justice, and many amazing organizations in between. VLGS alumni advocates are hard at work every day, continuously improving the lives and livelihood of countless others.

Vermont Law and Graduate School is an institution with a remarkable ability to foster an environment that decade after decade, almost effortlessly, creates genuine connections. This vaunted accomplishment is even more impressive in this demanding day and (digital) age. Perhaps VLGS's most meaningful achievement is our alumni community—all the unique individuals who choose our brave and mighty school which resides in a bucolic Vermont valley, and who graduate as learned advocates, but also as better humans.

I recently heard the term “friendraising,” as opposed to, or realistically used in conjunction with, fundraising. I believe it perfectly intertwines with our emphasis on meaningful relationships. These are very exciting times at VLGS as we enter another era of educating the Earth's changemakers and preparing our students to make a difference in all corners of this world.

I hope you'll consider joining the alumni community in whichever way—maybe by attending an alumni webinar or hosting a regional event—resonates most with you and your experience. We look forward to your involvement!

Gratefully,

Meg Munsey JD'05

*Immediate Past President and Current Member
VLGS Alumni Association Board of Directors*

To learn more about the VLGSAA, please [click here](#).

CLASS NOTES

Share your news with us!

Whether you were recently promoted, landed your dream job, got married, are retiring, or you have other exciting updates, we want to know! Share your news and photos with us by emailing alumni@vermontlaw.edu or by visiting connect.vermontlaw.edu/alumni-news.

1976

Mark Portnoy
mhportnoy@gmail.com

After 46 years in private practice, **Gary Schaff JD'76** plans on retiring but hasn't pulled the plug yet.

1977

Thomas Donnellan
tomlaw333@gmail.com

Andy Kossover JD'77 was honored by the New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NYSACDL) with a Lifetime Achievement Award at its annual dinner on January 18, 2024. In addition to his outstanding criminal practice, as legislative chair for NYSACDL and the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA), Andy spearheaded successful legislative campaigns



ANDY KOSSOVER JD'77

for Rockefeller Drug Law Reform and New York's new Discovery Laws. He also represented former New Paltz Mayor Jason West, who was at the vanguard of the same-sex marriage movement by performing same-sex marriages prior to the landmark Supreme Court decision of *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). Andy recently completed his term as co-chair of the NYSBA's Task Force on the Modernization of Criminal Practice. He remains a member of the NYSBA Criminal Justice Section Executive Committee and is the criminal justice chair of the new Cannabis Law Section.

Bill Sarris JD'77 retired in the fall of 2017. He began some new adventures and challenges. Initially, and during the school year, in New Haven, Connecticut, Bill tutored second and third grade students with learning deficiencies. In the summers of 2021 and 2022, he volunteered at a Y camp teaching archery, basketball, and swimming. Since becoming a Florida resident a few years ago and residing in Bonita Springs, he has been tutoring Guatemalan and Mexican third graders. Before turning 76 in July 2022, he and his wife, Lisa, together with their children, children's spouses, and six grandkids traveled to Greece and the Greek islands. They spent nearly three weeks exploring and having fun at the beach! Life and health have presented their

difficulties, but they feel blessed and keep learning and moving forward. To all his classmates and friends at VLS, Bill sends peace and love.

1978

Robin Bren
rsbren@gmail.com

1979 45TH REUNION JUNE 2024

alumni@vermontlaw.edu
Please email the Alumni Office if you are interested in serving as class secretary.

John Woodland JD'79 reports that they are back in Vermont. After 16 years in what they had hoped would be their retirement home on the Clark Fork River, it was time to leave Montana. A lot of factors played in, but you might say they are climate refugees. Too many smoke filled summers, a Stage II evacuation notice, and too many days over 100 degrees—it was time to go. His wife's health and aging out of the lifestyle they had adopted played a role as well. House shopping from 2,000 miles away during the summer of 2021 was difficult and they certainly had to make some compromises. After two attempts in Montpelier fell apart, they ended up in Brattleboro, a

CLASS NOTES

place John knew from his years at Marlboro College. They are now fixing up the house they bought and enjoying the ability to walk downtown and to the Wantastiquet trailhead. John has met up with classmates **Martha Smyrski JD'79** and **Jean Kiewel JD'79**. He has also maintained contact through the years with **Robin Bren JD'78**. After years as a co-chair of 350 Montana, John is working with 350 Brattleboro and practicing with the Brattleboro Zen Center.

1980

Scott Cameron
jscameron@zclpc.com

Joel Burcat's JD'80 fourth novel, "Reap the Wind," came out on February 6, 2024. Published by Sunbury Press, Inc., it is an action/adventure thriller in which three lawyers set out from Houston heading to Cincinnati in a rented Lincoln Town Car. They must drive across Texas and the Midwest in the midst of the worst climate change-induced hurricane of the century so Josh Goldberg can be with his girlfriend who is giving birth to their baby. They have to survive a hurricane, tornado, hailstorm, driving rain, and each other to get there. Josh's travel companions are his best friend—an alcoholic, drug-addicted lawyer—and his boss who connives to derail his plans so she can get to Philadelphia for a business meeting. The odyssey is dangerous on many levels and may be a suicide trip. Learn



JOEL BURCAT JD'80

more about Joel and his work at joelburcat.com.

The fourth edition of **Thomas Clancy's JD'80** book, "Cyber Crime and Digital Evidence: Materials and Cases," was published by Carolina Academic Press in the fall of 2022.

Michael Kessler JD'80 is featured in a recent issue of *Vanguard Law Magazine* for his work as managing assistant general counsel for the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). He discusses his career journey, the current state of the energy industry, and some of MISO's priorities.

1981

Tim McGrath
timbomcg@juno.com

Bill Kakoullis JD'81 reports that he joined the firm of Nicoletti Spinner Ryan Gulino Pinter LLP as a partner on December 1, 2021.

1982

Larr Kelly
photolarr@verizon.net

John Shea MSEL'82 has been named to the 2024 Lawdragon Green 500: Leaders in Environmental Law.

1983

Martha Lyons
martha.lyons@broomecountyny.gov

Ralph Hopkins JD'83 and his daughter, **Ciara Hopkins JD/MERL'22**, participated together in the Vermont Sun Triathlon at Lake Dunmore, Vermont, on July 18, 2021. They both made the podium, taking second place in their respective age groups. In addition, Ralph retired in August 2019 after 35 years of federal service (5 years Air Force JAG and 30 years U.S. Department of Justice).

Susan Sively JD'83, after practicing law in New York City for more than two decades, has retired from the NYC Department of Human Resources (HRA) Office of Legal Affairs, and now lives in Southern Vermont.

1984 40TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Chase Van Gorder
chase@vglaw.com

Lou Helmuth JD'84, deputy director of Our Children's Trust; **Anne Hedges MSL'93**, director of policy and legislative affairs at the Montana Environmental Information Center; and **Shiloh Hernandez JD'08**, who served as co-counsel on the case when he worked for the Western Environmental Law Center, were involved in the *Held v. State of Montana* landmark decision. A state trial court in Montana ruled in favor of the 16 youth plaintiffs, declaring that the state violated the youths' constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment. The case is significant in many ways, including that—unlike other climate change lawsuits to date—it proceeded to trial. The week-long trial resulted in a well-developed factual record establishing the state's culpability in furthering climate change by enabling fossil fuel extraction and consumption. The case is also evidence that constitutional claims may have legs in states that provide a



RALPH HOPKINS JD'83 AND HIS DAUGHTER CIARA HOPKINS JD/MERL'22

CLASS NOTES



LEFT TO RIGHT: LOU HELMUTH JD'84, ANNE HEDGES MSL'93, AND SHILOH HERNANDEZ JD'08

constitutional right to a healthy environment.

Dominique Pollara JD'84 was honored by the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates as the 2021 Trial Lawyer of the Year at its annual President's Dinner on June 19, 2021.



DOMINIQUE POLLARA JD'84

1985

alumni@vermontlaw.edu

Please email the Alumni Office if you are interested in serving as class secretary.

Kevin Bernstein JD'85 of Bond, Schoeneck & King was named 2023 Lawyer of the Year for Environmental Law in Syracuse, New York, by *Best Lawyers in America*.

Dr. Bob Robertson MSL'85—president and chief executive officer of the University of the Cayman Islands—has been selected as an international scholar by the Canadian government. This is a distinguished honor in

which he will participate in a senior academic administrator mission to Canadian universities. Bob is also a member of the VLGSAA Board of Directors.

John Mercer JD'85 completed his 33rd year at Williams Mullen, and after 14 years as chair of the Real Estate and Finance Section, he transferred those duties to one of his section colleagues. John now devotes his workday to his clients, without the distractions and demands of section and firm administration. On a professional note, John is honored to be recognized again in *The Best Lawyers in America*®, *Virginia Super Lawyers*, *Chambers USA*, and he was named to the 2021 class of 'Leaders in the Law' by *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*. But more importantly, and most rewarding, in the past few years, he and his wife rejoined in the marriage of one of their daughters and celebrated the birth of their other daughter's second child. John reports that, without a doubt, being a grandparent is the best!



KEVIN BERNSTEIN JD'85

1986

Pat Zimmerman
pattyzim@comcast.net

Bob Maxwell JD'86 continues to serve as regional and national counsel for vehicle manufacturers in products liability suits. In 2022, he won defense verdicts in jury trials involving serious injuries to a Navy officer in New London, Connecticut (*Ryan Brown v. Hyundai*), and a triple death case in Prestonsburg, Kentucky (*Pamela Bauer v. Hyundai*). Bob is based out of New Orleans, Louisiana.

1987

Mark Ouellette
mouellette01@gmail.com

At the conclusion of Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan's term in January 2023, **Ron Gunzburger's JD'87** position as senior advisor (political director) came to an end. Since then, Ron became chief of staff for the nonprofit StoryCorps. Most people know StoryCorps from its weekly oral history segment featured on NPR. Ron is also overseeing the group's One Small Step initiative, which facilitates one-on-one conversations between Democrats and Republicans—not to talk politics, but to find common ground and see the humanity in each other. While Ron's office is in Brooklyn, he mostly works remotely from his home in Annapolis.



RON GUNZBURGER JD'87

Erika Nizborski

David Hasbrook JD'87 wants the VLS Ultimate Justice community to know how proud he is of his kids, Austin and Julia, for playing ultimate frisbee since they were kids and continuing into college. In 2022, David reported that Austin was captain of the University of Utah Zion Curtain and Julia was center handler for the UC Santa Barbara Burning Skirts, who finished tied for third at college nationals for the second straight season. David and his wife, Joanne, have enjoyed attending games among other things.

1988

Sandi Allen
sandraallen1792@gmail.com

1989 35TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Kim Montroll
kimmontroll@gmail.com

Randall Abate JD/MSL'89 started in July 2022 as the assistant dean for environmental law studies at The George Washington University Law School.

Kim Montroll JD'89 accepted the position of catalyst at large with Recovery Café Network, a model for long-term healing in communities with a commitment to serving people who have experienced trauma and the results of trauma, like homelessness, incarceration, addiction, and other mental health challenges. Kim accompanies individuals and groups exploring bringing a Recovery Café to their local community. Currently, there are more than 60 Recovery Cafés across the United States and Vancouver, Canada. The power of this model is that each Recovery Café is launched by a local group, responding to the suffering and injustice in their own community. Kim also serves as chair on the founding board of Recovery Café DC.

CLASS NOTES



KIM MONTROLL JD'89

1990

Mario Gallucci
mfg7102@aol.com

1991

Peg Stolfa
margaret.stolfa@gmail.com

Cynthia Argentine MSL'91 is delighted that her children's book "Night Becomes Day: Changes in Nature" has received national recognition! It was named a "Best Children's Book of the Year" by Bank Street College of Education in the STEM category for kids ages 0 to 5. It was also a finalist for a Golden Kite Award in the category of nonfiction for younger readers. With poetic language and vivid photos, the book celebrates nature's power to transform. Visit Cindy's website if you'd like to contact her or learn more: cynthiaargentine.com



CYNTHIA ARGENTINE MSL'91

Terry Emmens JD'91, a partner at Barclay Damon, was listed in the 2023 and 2024 editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*. Terry is Barclay Damon's elder law and Medicaid planning team leader, primarily concentrating his practice on helping seniors get the care they need.

1992

Margaret Olnek
molnek@vermontlaw.edu

Nanci Smith JD/MSL'92 had her first book—"Untangling Your Marriage: A Guide to Collaborative Divorce"—published by Roman & Littlefield in October 2022.

Patrick Trostle JD'92 joined Robinson+Cole as a partner in January 2024. He is working with the firm's Bankruptcy + Reorganizations Group in the Hartford, Connecticut, office.



PATRICK TROSTLE JD'92

1993

Lainey Schwartz
geowoman3@aol.com

1994 30TH REUNION JUNE 2024

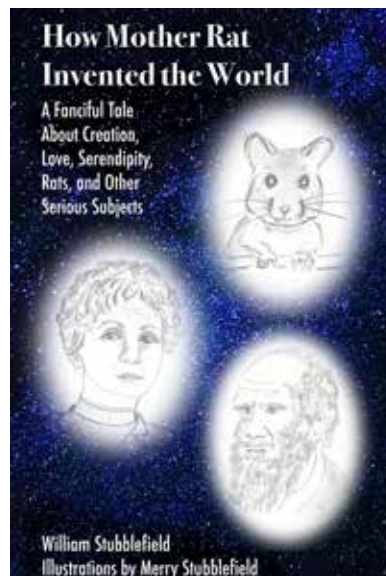
Joseph Galanes
joseph.galanes@gmail.com

Matt Matule JD'94 was highlighted in Skadden's Winter 2024 Alumni Update. Read the article by [clicking here](#).

CLASS NOTES

William McCausland JD'94 has been serving as a managing director in the risk and investigations practice at FTI Consulting since August 2021.

Merry Stubblefield JD'94 continues to run Fabulous Felines, an Albuquerque charity for the benefit of cats. She founded the charity in 2006. Information about the organization can be found at fabulousfelines.org. Merry and her husband have published a children's book titled, "How Mother Rat Invented the World: A Fanciful Tale About Creation, Love, Serendipity, Rats, and Other Serious Subjects," that can be enjoyed by all ages. The book is a loving fantasy about nature, animals, science, and the remarkable world we inhabit. It can be found on Amazon, or it can be ordered through your local bookstore. Additional information is available at wmstubblefield.com.



MERRY STUBBLEFIELD JD'94

1995

Karen Moore
kj.moore@judicial.state.co.us

Lisa DeMarco MSI'95, senior partner and CEO of Resilient LLP, was recognized as a 2022 "Global Elite Thought Leader" in climate change law by Who's Who Legal.

Eva Zimet JD'95 is back to the arts. Eva is the author/illustrator of "The Lost Grip," a poetry collection (2020, Rootstock Publishing), and "Lucy Dancer," an illustrated children's book (2019, Rootstock Publishing), and various poems published in many journals. Eva also recommends tango! Eva has found it more effective than mediation for individuals and couples, as it is a profound experience in listening and responding, and it is exceptionally satisfying for all. Visit [Winooski River Tango](https://www.winooski.org) on Facebook, and follow Eva on IG and Twitter. Eva hopes to get in touch!

1996

Scott Fewell
scott.fewell@liquidmeasurement.com

Meredith Lathbury Girard JD/MSEL'96 has been serving as the executive director of Shore Legal Access, formerly known as Mid-Shore Pro Bono, since the fall of 2021. The nonprofit supports and assists individuals and families who are unable to afford representation in civil legal matters and provides connections to community services.



MEREDITH LATHBURY GIRARD JD/MSEL'96

Travis Stills JD/MSEL'96 received the 2024 Kerry Rydberg-Jack Tuholske Award. He was honored on Friday, March 1, during the 42nd annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference in Eugene, Oregon.

1997

Cheryl Deshaies Davis
cdeshaies@deshaielaw.com

Jonas Kron JD/MSEL'97 was named to Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business list in 2022. He is the chief advocacy officer for Trillium Asset Management.

Skye MacLeod MSEL'97, a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh, North Carolina, was named to *Business North Carolina* magazine's 2022 and 2023 "Legal Elite" edition for her litigation practice.

On October 30, 2019, Vermont Governor Phil Scott swore **Kerry McDonald-Cady JD'97** in as a Superior Court Judge after appointing her to the Vermont Judiciary. Kerry, husband **Christopher Cady JD'97**, and their children, Jack and Mary, were present with family, friends, legal colleagues, and members of the judiciary at the Newfane courthouse for the ceremony.

1998

Thomas Leary
thomas.f.leary@gmail.com

Michael Formica JD'98 was appointed to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Board by Governor Glenn Youngkin in 2022. The DWR is responsible for managing the state's inland fisheries, wildlife, and recreational boating. The 11-member board is comprised of Virginia citizens who are knowledgeable about wildlife conservation, hunting, fishing, boating, agriculture, forestry, or habitat. Michael was also recognized as a **top lobbyist** by the National Institute for Lobbying and Ethics and he received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award from the American Agricultural Law Association. Additionally, Michael had a case argued before the U.S. Supreme Court (*National Pork Producers v. Ross*, N. 21-468 - he was second chair) and he secured an injunction against Massachusetts' implementation of a ballot initiative (*Massachusetts Restaurant Association v. Healy*).

CLASS NOTES

1999 25TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Joy Kanwar
joy.kanwar@gmail.com

The 25th Reunion Class of 1999 got started early with a mini reunion on February 21 at Carlita's Cocina in South Royalton, Vermont, with **Pete Kopsco JD/MSEL'99**, **Rich Levitt JD'99/MSEL'00**, and **Liz York JD'99**. VLGS's Reunion Weekend is June 28-30. Save the date and make plans to return to campus to reconnect, recharge, and renew old friendships!

Pam Logsdon Sibley JD/MSEL'99 has retired from the practice of law, and has chosen to live a fabulously adventurous retirement exploring South America from her new homebase in southern Ecuador. You can see what she and her husband Matt are up to on Facebook.

2000

Kristy Caron
kristycaron@gmail.com

Anna Fry
ada fry@aol.com

Kimberly Bryant MSEL'00 joined the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Central Office in Richmond, Virginia, as the land policy and regulatory coordinator in August 2022.

The U.S. Department of Energy selected **Agustín Carbó JD'00** to serve as the first-ever director for the Puerto Rico Grid Modernization and Recovery Team. Prior to taking on this role, he served as a director for energy transition with the Environmental Defense Fund. Agustín also has experience working with the Puerto Rico Energy Commission, Puerto Rico Solid Waste Authority, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Kristy Caron JD'00 was elevated to partner at Fox Rothschild in the spring of 2023. Her practice focuses on



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PETE KOPSCO JD/MSEL'99, RICH LEVITT JD'99/MSEL'00, AND LIZ YORK JD'99 AT CARLITA'S CANTINA IN SOUTH ROYALTON, VERMONT.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT, KERRY MCDONALD-CADY JD'97, JACK AND MARY CADY, AND CHRISTOPHER CADY JD'97 AT KERRY'S APPOINTMENT TO THE VERMONT JUDICIARY.



PAM LOGSDON SIBLEY JD/MSEL'99

CLASS NOTES



BEN GRAWE JD'00

providing strategic advice to individuals and businesses on corporate, tax, and real estate matters.

Ben Grawe JD'00 was elected to DeWitt LLP's Executive Committee in 2022. He continues to serve as a partner and chair of the firm's Environmental Practice Group.

Kat Spitzer's JD'00 novel, "Florida Girl," has been released and is available. She also founded a new business, Dream School College Counseling, to aid students and families in the college preparation and application process. Visit her author and business sites at katspitzer.com and dreamschoolcc.com.



KAT SPITZER JD'00

Rebecca Watson O'Connor JD'00—director of the nonpartisan American Society for Reproductive Medicine's Center for Policy and Leadership—was selected as Congressman Jamie Raskin's (MD-08) guest for President Biden's State of the Union address on March 7, 2024.

2001

Karen Domerski Murray
kmurray9515@gmail.com

Jason Brandeis JD/MSEL'01 is now senior counsel at the Anchorage, Alaska, law firm Birch Horton Bittner & Cherot. His practice primarily involves cannabis business transactions and regulatory compliance. Jason was previously a tenured associate professor of justice and legal studies at the University of Alaska.

Mike Humphrey JD'01 was hired by The Trust Company of Tennessee in 2022. He works out of Knoxville as a trust relationship manager. In this role, Mike serves as a point of contact among trust clients, beneficiaries, and advisors.

2002

Paige Bush-Scruggs
pscrudds@hlhlaw.net

Anne Barrett JD'02 became senior campaign director and liaison to the Executive Office of the President with the University of Arizona Foundation



MIKE HUMPHREY JD'01

in 2022. Her husband, **John Barrett JD'02**, is a professor of practice and director of the Natural Resource Use and Management Clinic at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law.

2003

Shannon Maher Bañaga
vlsmaher@yahoo.com

Laurie Beyranevand JD'03—director of the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at VLGS—discussed how to read food labels in a recent interview for *Authority Magazine*. Check out the insightful discussion at [this link](#).



LAURIE BEYRANEVAND JD'03

Richard Hennessey JD'03 is a partner in the Boston office of Morrison Mahoney. He represents some of the nation's leading insurance carriers in a variety of civil litigation matters involving commercial property policies, professional and general liability policies, homeowners' policies, and builders risk policies.



RICHARD HENNESSEY JD'03

2004 20TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Shannon Callahan
sslowey@gmail.com

Spencer Hanes
spencer.hanes@duke-energy.com

As of February 28, 2022, **Heather Bonnet-Hébert JD'04** took over ownership of the firm that she joined in 2018 as part of her law partner's succession planning in advance of retirement. In conjunction with this transition in ownership, the law firm name changed to Feingold Bonnet-Hébert, P.C. It is a small, boutique practice based in historic New Bedford, Massachusetts, with a focus on high-level work in complex civil litigation, estate and settlement trust planning, real estate development and permitting, economic development, and assisting small businesses with issues that arise throughout the business life-cycle. As part of the commitment to providing excellent service to their diverse client base, the team often collaborates with other local and national firms to bring in additional case-specific expertise, as needed.

Sarah Mangelsdorf MSEL'04 joined Goldberg Segalla's Toxic Tort group in St. Louis, Missouri, in August 2022.

2005

Meg Munsey and Kelly Singer
vermontlaw2005@gmail.com

Joseph Andriano JD'05 was elected to represent the Addison-Rutland District in the Vermont House of Representatives on November 8, 2022, and he was sworn into the position in January 2023. After VLS, Joe was in private practice; taught law and ethics at Clarkson University, Loyola Marymount University, and Middlebury College; and was a Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia. Joe also owns and operates his own law firm located in Orwell, Vermont, primarily focusing on estate planning and business law, particularly the

conversion of businesses to employee-owned co-ops. He lives in Orwell with his wife, Sarah, and their two cats.



JOSEPH ANDRIANO JD'05

Risa Borowick Brown MSEL'05 has been elevated to partner at Fox Rothschild LLP. Based in the firm's Denver office as part of the litigation team, she represents owners, developers, contractors, design professionals, commercial landlords, and other construction and real estate sector clients in a broad range of commercial litigation in state and federal trial courts, in arbitral forums, and on appeal. Her experience includes disputes involving construction and design defects; recovery and subrogation; constructive changes, acceleration and delay;



THE HONORABLE JERRY EDWARDS JD'05

breach of contract and indemnity; title insurance claims; easement and property line boundaries; and landlord-tenant issues.

Joe Campagna JD'05 was appointed to the King County Superior Court in August 2022 by Washington State Governor Jay Inslee. Prior to his appointment, Joe served as a judge in the King County District Court.

Jerry Edwards JD'05 was confirmed as a U.S. District Court Judge by the U.S. Senate. He is the first Black federal judge to serve on Louisiana's U.S. Western District Court. As a first assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District, he was nominated for the judgeship by President Joe Biden in June 2023.

Matthew Garcia JD'05 was selected as a 2022 recipient of the Vermont Bar Association's Pro Bono Service Award, which is given annually by the VBA's Board of Bar Managers to laud lawyers who provide extraordinary legal services to indigent and disadvantaged clients in the community. Learn more by [clicking here](#).

Evan Mulholland LLM'05 has been named director of the newly organized Healthy Communities Program at the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA). The Healthy Communities Program

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formalizes MCEA's commitment to environmental justice. Through the Healthy Communities Program, MCEA attorneys and advocates work in partnership with frontline community groups who bear the burden of concentrated pollution and environmental injustice.

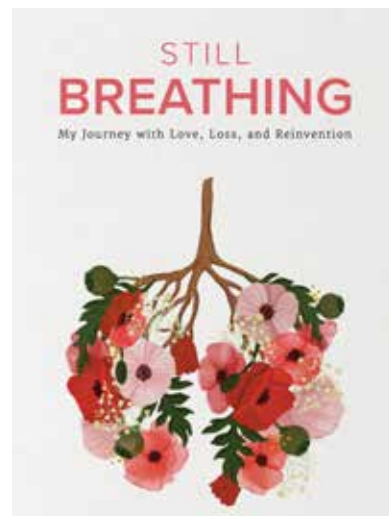
In the fall of 2023, after 18 years of public service, **Tim Sullivan JD'05/MSEL'06** switched jobs, moving from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to Beveridge & Diamond PC.

2006

Ashley Carson Cottingham
ashleybrey@gmail.com

Ebony Riggins
erriggins@gmail.com

Katie Joy Duke JD'06 published her debut memoir, "Still Breathing: My Journey with Love, Loss, and Reinvention." The book is available wherever books are sold. Katie left lawyering in 2016, after her daughter Poppy died, to become a full-time writer, mindset coach, and motivational speaker. Check out her website katiejoyduke.com for more information about her book, coaching practice, and speaking opportunities. She lives north of Seattle, Washington, with her husband, daughter Moxie, and scruffy dog Wilson.



KATIE JOY DUKE JD'06

Alexandra (Alex) Goncalves Pena JD/MSEL'06 is the legal services director of the American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Immigrant Rights Program in Newark, New Jersey. Specializing in removal defense and asylum law, Alex brings over sixteen years of direct legal service experience to AFSC and a proven track record of leadership and innovation in nonprofit organizations. Before joining AFSC in the fall of 2023, Alex was the inaugural fellowship director for Immigrant Justice Corps—the nation's first immigration legal services fellowship program.

David Hall JD'06 now serves as the director of corporations for Vermont's Secretary of State Office. David previously spent 15 years in the state's Office of Legislative Counsel.

To round out 2022, **Christopher Lawrence MSEL'06** finished a detail assignment managing the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board—a group of experts from industry, academia, and other organizations that advise Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm. In that role, Chris worked with senior department staff to identify areas of strategic importance for the board to focus on and worked with them to facilitate the development of recommendations on grid modernization. Chris currently serves as the chief of staff to the administrator for the Western Area Power Administration.



CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE MSEL'06

After 14 years of owning and managing a not-for-profit property management company, **D. Chic MacMaster JD'06** sold his interest in the entities and retired at the end of 2021. The business was founded as a grassroots effort and dedicated to the premise that through the combined efforts of a few, a much greater sum, and therefore effect, could be achieved. Over the years, the business provided housing to more than 45 families, including law students, single parents, and individuals. Many of them were on a low or fixed income, and the relief provided enabled most families to live and thrive. While not your "typical" legal profession, it was more of a consolidation of a lifetime's work and experiences. This endeavor served to help fulfill a broader goal of improving the place and manner in which we all live—AKA: The Greater Good.

Daniel Roberts JD'06 is a partner at Youngman Roberts Suen LLP in Walnut Creek, California. He can be reached at droberts@youngman.com or 925.430.5885.

Brian Turner JD'06 assumed the role of president and CEO of the Preservation Society of Charleston in April 2022.

2007

Greg Dorrington
gregdorrington@gmail.com

Liz Lucente
liz.lucente@gmail.com

Maureen Bayer JD/MSEL'07 joined Jordan Ramis PC, a full-service business law firm in the Pacific Northwest, as a shareholder in the spring of 2022. She is part of the firm's environmental and natural resources group, working with clients facing environmental issues related to regulatory compliance, site contamination, and business transactions.

After six years on the clinical faculty at Yale Law School and the Yale School



MAUREEN BAYER JD/MSEL'07

of the Environment, **Josh Galperin JD'07** moved to the University of Pittsburgh School of Law for a visiting professorship in order to transition to traditional, doctrinal teaching. After three years at Pitt, Josh moved to the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University, where he is an assistant professor teaching environmental, administrative, and, for the time being, contract law.

Arturo Hernandez, III, JD'07 is an associate at Missouri-based firm McMahon Berger. He joined the firm in the spring of 2022, and he handles all facets of labor and employment law.

Andrew Kohn JD'07 and his family have relocated from Ohio to Stowe, Vermont, and have assumed ownership of the **Brass Lantern Inn**. He looks forward to returning to Vermont and welcoming Swans, current and past, at the base of Mount Mansfield.

Adam Lee JD'07 is serving his first term in the Maine House of Representatives and sits on the Judiciary Committee. He lives in Auburn with his wife, Heidi.

Jes Olson JD'07 started as the head of global affairs for the Americas at Topsoe in May 2023. Topsoe is a global leader in catalysis and process technology driving optimal performance within chemical processing, hydroprocessing, and emissions management. Previously, Jes was the vice president of policy at CALSTART.



JES OLSON JD'07

Raven Perry-Beach JD'07 was honored with the 2023 Female Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the Catalyst Center for Business and Entrepreneurship. She is the managing attorney of Beach Law Practice, which specializes in personal injury, bankruptcy, veterans' affairs, and probate/estate planning.

Kathleen Udo JD/MSEL'07 joined Blank Rome's New York office in its nationally recognized real estate practice group in June 2022. Her practice concentrates on managing complex, multi-faceted commercial real estate transactions, including regulatory compliance.

Liz Lucente JD/MSEL'07 was honored by Smart Energy Decisions as an industry leader as part of its inaugural Women in Smart Energy (WISE) Awards in 2022. Liz is the senior manager for strategic partnerships and corporate responsibility at Target.



LIZ LUCENTE JD/MSEL'07



RAVEN PERRY-BEACH JD'07

2008

Samantha Santiago-Paez
santiago.samantha@gmail.com

Jamie Williams
willjamie@gmail.com

Bill Eubanks LLM'08 was selected as the 2023 recipient of the prestigious Kerry Rydberg-Jack Tuholske Award. The award is presented annually to a lawyer who exemplifies the best in public interest environmental advocacy. Bill was honored at the 41st annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.

2009 15TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Jennifer McDonald
jenniferkmcdonald@gmail.com

John Miller
johnmillerjr@gmail.com

Shelby Busó JD/MELP'09 is the chief sustainability officer for the City of San Diego. Before moving into this role in April of 2022, Shelby was the chief resilience officer for Miami, Florida.

In 2023, **Torend Collins JD/MELP'09** was appointed by the Biden-Harris Administration to serve as the senior advisor for infrastructure strategy within the U.S. Department of the Interior. Torend was previously the regional intergovernmental and external affairs specialist for

CLASS NOTES

Appalachia at the U.S. Department of Energy.



TOREND COLLINS JD/MELP'09



DR. SHAYLA CRENSHAW MCCRAY JD'09

Dr. Shayla Crenshaw McCray JD'09 earned a doctoral degree in educational leadership from the University of Alabama. "This degree is a continuation of my concerted efforts to open doors for the disenfranchised and provide innovative ideas that can improve the holistic wellbeing of students who are in dire need," she stated. Shayla also graduated from Alabama's Superintendent Academy and serves as director of student services for the Bessemer City School System.

Jeff Davis JD'09, and **Christal JD'10** and **Peter JD'09 Keegan** recently enjoyed time with their families at Kailua Beach on Oahu, Hawai'i.

Tracey Lewis JD'09, senior policy counsel for Public Citizen, was **selected** to the inaugural cohort of the Financial Stability Oversight Council's Climate-related Financial Risk Advisory Committee.

Tamara Toles O'Laughlin JD/MELP'09 was named president and chief executive officer of the Environmental Grantmakers Association in 2021. Tamara was also selected as a 2021 **Soros Equality Fellow** through the Open Society Foundations. She, and the eight other fellows, spent 18 months developing new ways of tackling challenges rising from care work, immigration policies, and racial disparity.



TAMARA TOLES O'LAUGHLIN JD/MELP'09

2010

Cara Cookson
Cara.cookson@maine.gov

Laurie Wheelock
lauriewheelock@gmail.com



FAMILIES OF JEFF DAVIS JD'09, AND CHRISTAL JD'10 AND PETER JD'09 KEEGAN

Kira Bryers JD'10 and Edward Lynes are over the moon to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter, Penelope Annabel Lynes, on January 17, 2022. Penelope was 6 pounds, 9 ounces, and 20.25 inches long and is a joy! They have settled into family life along with their dog, Bailey.



PENELOPE ANNABEL LYNES

Mun Clifford JD'10 was promoted to attorney-in-charge of Legal Aid Society's Citywide Housing Justice Practice in 2022. Learn more by [clicking here](#).

Dustin Brucher JD'10 launched Panel/Board Design & Assembly, a boutique design/build furniture shop in Denver, Colorado. Incorporating mid-century and modern elements, Panel/Board creates bespoke heirloom-quality furniture for residential and commercial clients throughout the U.S. Dustin has been marrying 3D design and CNC capabilities with hand tooling and finishing since 2016, and Panel/Board's launch takes advantage, building upon classic design principles with modern techniques. You can find his work at panelboardshop.com.

After two decades serving in the government and nonprofit sectors, **Sarah Buxton JD'10** joined Vermont-based firm Tarrant, Gillies & Shems in March 2023.

Tom Paul JD'10 was elevated to partner at Barclay Damon in January 2024. He is a member of the Environmental, Energy, and Regulatory Practice Areas. Tom is also part of the firm's Outdoor and

CLASS NOTES



TOM PAUL JD'10

Wildlife, Renewable Energy, and Oil and Gas Teams.

Laurie Wheelock JD'10/MELP'07 was nominated by New York State Governor Kathy Hochul and confirmed by the NYS Senate to join the New York Power Authority's Board of Trustees. Laurie is excited about the nomination and looks forward to serving on this important board that's tasked with building renewable energy projects throughout the state to help meet its green energy targets.

Hayley Williamson JD'10 and **Scott Souers JD'10** welcomed their second child, a daughter, Isla Wren Souers, on June 16, 2021. Isla is the little sister to Nolan Wolf Souers, who they welcomed on March 4, 2016. Additionally, Scott was elected Superior Court Judge of Alpine County, California, on June 7, 2022. This is the first time he ran, and they are thrilled that he gets to serve in this role.

2011

Sarah Browne
sarah.mcguire18@gmail.com

Amanda George-Wheaton
amanda.georgewheaton@yahoo.com

Christian Barker MELP'11 was named one of *Billboard Magazine's* top music lawyers in 2023.

John Cavanaugh JD/MELP'11 was elected a Nebraska State Senator in 2020 to represent the 9th District in Omaha. John sits on the Natural



JOHN CAVANAUGH JD/MELP'11

Resources, Agriculture, General Affairs, and Rules Committees.

Ashley DeVerna JD'11 has been elected to the position of partner at her firm, Husch Blackwell LLP. She specializes in complex litigation and insurance coverage matters.

2012

Susan Lettis
susanlettis@gmail.com

Lauren Marks
lauren.miller.e@gmail.com

Tyler Franklin JD'12 was elevated to partner at Rubin and Rudman. Tyler joined the firm as an associate in 2016 and is a member of the Environmental, Litigation, and Real Estate Departments.

John Kreckel JD'12, a sustainability advocate, was featured in Manufacturing USA's "Modern Makers" series.



KAREN SCHMIDT JD/MELP'12, EMBER TILTON JD'12, WITH DAUGHTER ELIZA JEAN TILTON

As the director of membership and workforce development at REMADE Institute, John connects institute members with research activities and coordinates training for their workforce. Learn more by [clicking here](#).

Elizabeth Schilling JD'12 and **Falko Schilling JD'11** welcomed a baby boy, Falko Cedar Schilling, on January 17, 2022.

Karen Schmidt JD/MELP'12 and **Ember Tilton JD'12** welcomed their first child, Eliza Jean Tilton, in December 2021. Karen and Ember were married on September 15, 2020, in Montpelier, Vermont. The couple moved back to Vermont in 2019 after living and practicing law in Alaska for many years. Ember works at Martin, Delaney, & Ricci Law Group in Barre, Vermont, while Karen works remotely on environmental and public lands issues for Alaska law firm Besseney & Van Tuyn LLC. Karen and Ember are excited to raise their



FALCO SCHILLING JD'11, ELIZABETH SCHILLING JD'12, AND THEIR SON FALCO CEDAR SCHILLING

CLASS NOTES

daughter in their new home among the mountains and rivers of Vermont.

Reed Sirak JD'12/MELP'09 was named a partner of Benesch Law in January 2023. He oversees a variety of transactional, compliance, and litigation-based environmental, safety, and health matters at the firm.

Renee Staudinger Calabro JD'12 and her husband, Dan, had a baby girl, Ava Lucille Staudinger Calabro, on May 7, 2022.

2013

Brian Durkin
brian.o.durkin@gmail.com

Rae Kinkead Eschen
rmkinkead@gmail.com

Doug Dagan JD/MELP'13, Suburban Propane Partners' vice president of strategic initiatives – renewable energy, was named to The Biofuels Digest's **Bioeconomy 500** for 2023, which highlights leaders of the bioeconomy's development and project deployment.

Laura Fox JD/MELP'13 has been named a distinguished alumna of George Mason University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Learn more by [clicking here](#). Laura currently serves as the Douglas M. Costle chair in environmental law and director of the Farmed Animal Advocacy Clinic at VLGS.



LAURA FOX JD/MELP'13



FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): MRS. GRACEY CAROL, MRS. KATIE THOMAS CAROL JD/MELP'13, TRACEY LEWIS JD'09; BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): ARIAN LESSANI (BRIANNE'S HUSBAND), BRIANNE FISCHER JD'13, MARY CLEMMENSEN JD'13, CINDY HURT JD/MELP'13, LARRY KUCHLIN, MARISSA KNODEL JD/MEM'14, PROFESSOR LAURA FOX JD/MELP'13, SHANNON ECKMEYER JD/MELP'11, AND DR. KYLE FOX (LAURA'S HUSBAND)

Presented by Projects for Peace and the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation at Middlebury College, **Joseph Kaifala JD'13** was selected as the inaugural recipient of the **Projects for Peace Alumni Award**. He was a member of the initial group of Projects for Peace grant recipients with his 2007 effort, "Education as a Project for Peace in Sierra Leone: Constructing a Library in Conakry Dee."

Peter Keays JD'13 was elected shareholder of Hangley Aronchick Segal Pudlin & Schiller in January 2022. Based out of the firm's Philadelphia office, he represents corporate, municipal, and nonprofit clients in a wide range of regulatory, transactional, and litigation matters arising under federal and state environmental laws.

Katie Thomas Carol JD/MELP'13 married Gracey Rhude Carol on September 23, 2023, in San Diego, California. Many Swans were in attendance to celebrate the day. Guests included **Brianne Fischer JD'13** and her husband Arian Lessani, **Mary Clemmensen JD'13**, **Cindy Hurt JD/MELP'13**, **Larry Kuchlin**, **Marissa Knodel JD/MEM'14**, **Professor Laura Fox JD/MELP'13**, **Shannon Eckmeyer JD/MELP'11**, and Dr. Kyle Fox (Laura's

husband). Not pictured, but also in attendance were **Shauna Thompson-Degagne MELP'11** and her husband, Joshua Degagne.

J. Tyler Ward JD/MELP'13 was selected as the 2023 recipient of the Kentucky Bar Association's Service to Community Award, which is presented by the Young Lawyers Division. Tyler, who leads Ward + Associates, was recognized for playing a crucial role in assisting local community members following extreme flooding throughout eastern Kentucky in 2022. He and his team offered free legal assistance to those who needed to apply for FEMA aid.



J. TYLER WARD JD/MELP'13

CLASS NOTES



KATHERINE BUCKLEY JD'14

2014 10TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Cristina Mansfield
cristinaleila@hotmail.com

Whitney Standefer
whitneystandefer@gmail.com

Katherine Buckley JD'14 made partner at Gale Gale & Hunt, LLC, a boutique law firm in Syracuse, New York, that focuses mainly on medical malpractice defense. Katie also participated in the NYSBA Taskforce on Racism, Social Equity, and the Law as part of the health subcommittee. The group's **final report** was approved by the NYSBA House of Delegates in January 2023.

Emily Migliaccio JD'14 and **Andrew Fowler JD'14** welcomed a new Fighting Swan, Rory Joseph, on August 20, 2021!

Lindsay Speer MELP'14 is now the senior energy planner at the Central New York Regional



RORY JOSEPH FOWLER



LINDSAY SPEER MELP'14

Planning and Development Board, where she directs EnergySmart CNY, a NYSERDA-funded Central New York Regional Clean Energy Hub. Lindsay previously directed the HeatSmart CNY campaign—one of NYSERDA's Clean Heating and Cooling Communities Campaigns on behalf of Alliance for a Green Economy, a nonprofit based in Syracuse, New York.



CHRISTOPHER SMITH JD'14

Christopher Smith JD'14 is a contributing author to the "**Cannabis Law Deskbook**," which offers an in-depth accounting of the complexities found in the ever-evolving field of cannabis law. It is authored by public sector attorneys and staff who have been on the front lines in the growing number of states implementing groundbreaking cannabis adult-use and medical programs.

Taylor Smith MELP'14 accepted a position as team coordinator on the Rockefeller Foundation's Power and Climate Team based in New York City. She supports The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, which aims to accelerate and scale equitable energy transitions in low- and



TAYLOR SMITH MELP'14

middle-income countries serving as an on-ramp to opportunity for one billion people, while averting carbon emissions, expanding energy access, and creating jobs in the process. She supports project and organizational management for the HQ team, including creating and maintaining effective workflow processes; engaging partners; tracking budget, contracts, and grant payout; as well as coordinating global events.

2015

Crystal Abbey
cnabbey88@gmail.com

Alona Tate
wiseoesq@gmail.com

Lindsay Bourgoine MELP'15 was named a 2023 Community Solar Champion by the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA). She is one of 22 advocates and legislators from six states recognized with this prestigious honor. Lindsay currently serves as the director of policy and government affairs for



LINDSAY BOURGOINE MELP'15

CLASS NOTES

ReVision Energy, a Certified B Corp with a mission to make life better by building a just and equitable electric future.

Amy E. Davis JD'15 married Andrew M. Higley on June 19, 2021, in Moretown, Vermont. Andrew is an alumnus of New England College of Law, and both practice law in Vermont. **Jessica Cain JD'15** also served as a bridesmaid with several other Swans in attendance. The couple resides in the Northeast Kingdom.

Bradley Flynn JD'15 is a partner with the Philadelphia-based firm Montgomery Law. He focuses his practice on all aspects of education law, including special education, civil rights, higher education, Title IX, anti-bullying safety plans, and advocating on behalf of children with disabilities, as well as handling criminal defense and family law matters. He splits his time between Norway, Maine, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Ashley Johnson (Welsch) JD/MELP'15 was promoted and appointed the supervising regional attorney for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 3, in 2021. Ashley had



GEORGIA, AUDEN ROBERT, AND IDA YORK

previously been an assistant regional attorney since 2016.

David Scott JD'15 was promoted to partner at Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP. His environmental law practice emphasizes transactions, permitting, and regulatory compliance. David works out of the firm's Roseland, New Jersey, office.

Meg York JD'15 welcomed her third child, Auden Robert York, on December 12, 2021. Meg, her wife Jocelyn, and their two older children, Ida and Georgia, are completely smitten. In 2023, Meg joined Family Equality as senior policy counsel and director of LGBTQ+ family law and policy.

2016

James LaRock
jamesmlarock@gmail.com

Doug Cortés LLM'16 is the director of the Business Innovations Clinic and a visiting assistant professor of clinical education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law, where he also teaches Bankruptcy Law. Doug completed the requirements for his LLM in Energy Law in residence at VLS during the 2015–16 school year. He spent the majority of his time at the Institute for Energy and the Environment, where he was a senior research associate. After graduating with distinction, Doug returned to his native home state of Arkansas.

Melissa Payne JD'16, formerly Kent, is celebrating her third anniversary with husband, Josh, in June and is an attorney with The Cochran Firm.



DOUG CORTÉS LLM'16



AMY E. DAVIS JD'15 AND HER HUSBAND ANDREW M. HIGLEY

CLASS NOTES



DR. MADHAVI VENKATESAN MELP'16

Dr. Madhavi Venkatesan MELP'16, distinguished VLGS professor and alumna, was named *USA TODAY's* 2024 Massachusetts Woman of the Year. Her influence extends from shaping minds in the classroom to leading the battle against single-use plastics—positioning Cape Cod at the forefront of nationwide plastic reduction efforts. Learn more by [clicking here](#).

Joel West Williams LLM'16 was appointed by the Biden-Harris Administration to join the Department of the Interior as the deputy solicitor for Indian Affairs on April 21, 2022. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and was previously an attorney with the Native American Rights Fund.



JOEL WEST WILLIAMS LLM'16

2017

Catie Davis
catiedavis.cd@gmail.com



HANNAH BRUBACH JD/MELP'17 AND MATTHEW CARR JD/MELP'17

Hannah Brubach JD/MELP'17 and **Matthew Carr JD/MELP'17** were married in the Shenandoah Valley on September 10, 2022. True to the values that brought them together at VLS, Hannah and Matt hosted a sustainably sourced wedding, including serving invasive blue catfish and providing metal water bottles to hotel guests. Fellow Swans **Ashleigh Krick JD/MERL'17** and **Mary Clemmensen JD'13** joined the couple on their special day.



DR. JOHN SUTHERLIN MELP'17

Dr. John Sutherlin MELP'17 co-authored "[Playing with Fire](#)." This book examines the tale of Marine Shale Processors, the world's largest hazardous waste company, and the women who fought to protect their children.

2018

Liz Bower
lizbower88@gmail.com

Published by the Environmental Law Institute, **Marcelo Dias LLM'18** has released a book titled, "[Principal Trends on Brazilian Environmental Law](#)." Described as a critical resource for anyone who wants to learn more about Brazil's environmental governance system, the book features contributions from several of the country's esteemed environmental lawyers.



MARCELO DIAS LLM'18

CLASS NOTES

Michael Westfall MELP'18 was appointed compliance officer at Wailuku Water Company. Wailuku Water is what remains of the 200-year-old Wailuku Sugar/C Brewer. The company operates a reservoir and ditch system to transport water from the West Maui watershed.

2019 5TH REUNION JUNE 2024

Margaret Shugart
marg.shug@gmail.com

Jennifer Byrne MELP'19 reported that between 2018 and 2022 she had been working on the **REJOICE Project** (Rural Environmental Justice Opportunities Informed by Community Expertise), a coalition of academics, legal experts, and community members who sought to answer the question: What does environmental justice (EJ) look like in Vermont? Their work informed Vermont's first ever environmental justice law, signed by the governor on May 31, 2022. As a fellow, Jennifer spearheaded the policy core of the REJOICE Project and co-led several teams of students in VLS's Environmental Justice Clinic to help draft the findings and language included in the law. Jennifer is the **district manager** of the White River Natural Resources Conservation District, serving Orange and Windsor counties in Vermont.



ALYSSA HARTMAN MFALP'19

Ashley Mayrienne Champagne MELP'19 is a communications manager at National Geographic Society.

Named to the **2023 Grist 50**—a list of climate leaders and innovators—**Alyssa Hartman MFALP'19** is driving change in our food system. She is the executive director of the Artisan Grain Collaborative, a regional coordination network of over 185 farmers, millers, bakers, brewers, and others working to build a diverse grain shed.

2020

Evan Antal
eantal@rivercitylawyers.com

Marisa Heiling
marisalheiling@gmail.com

Evan Antal JD'20 is working at Marsicovetere & Levine Law Group, P.C., in White River Junction, Vermont, where he completed his externship during his final semester at VLS in the fall of 2020. Evan is engaged in both criminal and civil litigation, including civil rights violations, landlord/tenant disputes, and employment disputes. He is in court nearly every day and is taking over as the defense attorney for the Southeast Regional DUI Treatment Docket.

Last spring, **Karen Blakelock MELP'20**, **Megan O'Toole JD/MELP'09**, and **Allison Rogers JD'20/LLM'21** connected at a climate focused event



KAREN BLAKELOCK MELP'20 (RIGHT), MEGAN O'TOOLE JD/MELP'09 (MIDDLE), AND ALLISON ROGERS JD'20/LLM'21 (LEFT)

in Washington, D.C. Karen is now the climate and energy policy advisor for The Nature Conservancy Maine. Megan is the climate change mitigation coordinator with the Vermont Climate Action Office within the Agency of Natural Resources. Allison is a climate solutions and environmental justice advocate and attorney, and a former director for environmental justice public engagement for the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

2021

Erin Miller
erinmiller83@gmail.com

Paige Beyer JD'21 is an associate at Barclay Damon, where she is a member of the project development, environmental, and land use and zoning practice areas. She is based in the firm's Albany, New York, office and is also admitted to practice law in Colorado.

As an associate at Barclay Damon, **Dan Krzykowski JD'21** assists the Regulatory and environmental practice area and energy team attorneys and clients on a wide range of matters, including infrastructure-siting matters and environmental permitting. Dan works out of the Albany, New York, office.



CALEB SABATKA MARJ'21 AND CLASSMATE KARLA BARRON MARJ'21 MEETING IN PERSON FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE FALL OF 2021

Mike Rice MFALP'21 was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives in 2022 and serves on the leadership team of the Climate Solutions Caucus. He represents Vermont's Bennington-Rutland House District, including the towns of Danby, Dorset, Landgrove, Mount Tabor, and Peru.

Caleb Sabatka MARJ'21 began working in educational justice at Urban College of Boston as a bilingual student success advisor shortly after finishing the MARJ in the spring of 2021. Urban College offers college courses in several different languages, and primarily serves immigrant women working to earn their college degrees in early childhood education and human services while also learning the English language. Caleb is lucky enough to teach restorative justice to Urban College students as an adjunct professor, while continuing to serve as senior academic advisor. Caleb looks forward to making higher education accessible for system-impacted people for many years to come!

Kelsey Schweitzer JD'21 has joined Downs Rachlin Martin's litigation team. Previously, she worked as a law clerk for the environmental and civil divisions of the Vermont judiciary.



JASDEEP SINGH KHAIRA JD'21/MERL'20

Jasdeep Singh Khaira JD'21/MERL'20 is an associate at Gentry Locke's Richmond, Virginia, office. His practice focuses on energy and environmental law. Before joining the firm, Jasdeep was a full-time legal extern for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Colorado.

CLASS NOTES

2022

alumni@vermontlaw.edu
Please email the Alumni Office if you are interested in serving as class secretary.

Isabella Smith JD'22 received a 2023 John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Sea Grant College Program.

2023

Amanda Di Dio
asddio4@gmail.com

Kirsten Williams
kirstenmariawilliams@gmail.com

Kirsten Williams JD/MEM'23, **Carolyn Clark JD/MELP'22**, and **Casey Hess JD'22** enjoyed a Noah Kahan concert at the 2023 Alaska State Fair.



KIRSTEN WILLIAMS JD/MEM'23, CAROLYN CLARK JD/MELP'22, AND CASEY HESS JD'22



PLAN YOUR LEGACY

DOUGLAS MEREDITH SOCIETY

The Douglas Meredith Society consists of forward-thinking supporters who impact the future of Vermont Law and Graduate School via planned giving. Through estate plans or other deferred gifts, you can establish a lasting legacy while enhancing the VLGS experience for the next generation of changemakers.

For more information on planned giving, please contact us at giving@vermontlaw.edu or 802-831-1312.



The Honorable RUTH BADER GINSBURG

The package arrived on the second floor of Debevoise Hall in April 2022 and its unusual size and heft caused a lot of curiosity amongst administrators, faculty, and staff.

Dean Beth McCormack gingerly opened the package as a number of people anxiously watched. What she found inside was a testament to the personal connection between Vermont Law and Graduate School and one of the most impactful legal legacies of the last century: the honorary degree the school awarded Ruth Bader Ginsburg at its 1984 Commencement.

Even before her 1993 ascent to the United States Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg had made an impression on the

school and legal communities. As the former director of the ACLU and at that time a D.C. Court of Appeals Judge, she embodied the school's motto to great effect—using the power of the law to make a dramatic difference in the community and in the world.

Made possible by the Bader Ginsburg family's extremely thoughtful and generous gift, the elegantly framed degree now occupies a prominent position on the walls of the Cornell Library, its presence encouraging the law and policy students of today and tomorrow to reflect upon how much one remarkable woman accomplished, and how much work remains. ■

1970s

Terry Beckwith JD'76 1944 – 2023

Terry was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. He earned degrees from East Carolina University, SUNY Albany, and Vermont Law School (VLS). Terry spent his career working as a librarian in a variety of locations, including at his alma mater, VLS. He leaves behind many loved ones including his son, daughter-in-law, granddaughter, and brother.

Morris Joseph Fonte, Jr., JD'76 1950 – 2021

Upon earning his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, Morris joined the U.S. Navy as a reservist. He was then accepted to, and attended, law school in Vermont. Morris spent more than 20 years working for the Hillsborough County (Florida) Assistant State Attorney's Office. His legacy will live on through his beloved family and friends, especially his granddaughter.

Milton George James JD'76 1946 – 2021

After graduating from Vermont Law School in 1976, Milton began his career in Chicago as a public defender. He later became an arbitrator judge for the State of Illinois. Upon retirement, Milton moved to Arizona—where he spent the last 20 years of his life—to be closer to many family members. He is survived by his wife, three sons, two daughters, and nine grandchildren.

Bruce Morrisey JD'76 1949 – 2021

Bruce served as an attorney in Bergen County, New Jersey, since 1976. He was a member of the New Jersey Bar Association, U.S.

Tax Court, and U.S. District Court. Bruce enjoyed coaching youth sports—particularly soccer and baseball—and spending time on the water. Survived by many family members and friends, Bruce will forever be remembered for his wit, humor, warmth, compassion, and loyalty.

Stephen Cosgrove JD'77 1950 – 2021

A Rutland, Vermont, native, Stephen started his career as an attorney for the local firm of Corsones and Corsones. He ultimately opened a private practice, which he ran for over 30 years. Stephen also served as the zoning administrator for the Town of Mendon, Vermont. Described by loved ones as a passionate and principled man, Stephen was always willing to help others in times of need.

Michael Joseph Devanie III JD'77 1947 – 2023

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Michael was the oldest of eight children. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned home and attended Illinois State University where he met his future wife, Sandra. Shortly following their marriage in 1974, the couple moved to Vermont because Michael was accepted to Vermont Law School. Upon graduating and returning to the Midwest, Michael became a district attorney in Rusk, Barron, and La Crosse Counties. He then went into private practice as a criminal defense/civil rights attorney and partnered with Keith Belzer until his retirement in 2015. While he earned many professional accomplishments, Michael considered his greatest achievement to be the birth of his two children, Maura and Brendan.

Owen Jenkins JD'77 1948 – 2023

Owen graduated from the University of Vermont and went on to play hockey in Europe. Upon his return to Vermont, Owen taught at Essex High School and managed its hockey rink. After earning his JD in 1977, Owen spent his career practicing law in Essex Junction. He was especially passionate about helping those who faced injustice, and he took on cases of those who couldn't pay to assure their voices were heard. Above all else, Owen was a dad and husband who cherished his family.

Frederick "Rick" Partyka, II, JD'77 1946 – 2021

As a self-employed attorney, Rick owned and operated the Law Office of Frederick A. Partyka until his passing. He also served his country honorably as a member of the U.S. Army. Rick was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. He is predeceased by his wife, **Karen Sarnowski Partyka JD'78**, and survived by his daughters, **Cassandra Jordan JD/MELP'12** and Olivia Bartoli, grandchildren, sisters, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Robert "Bob" Sheil JD'78 1948 – 2022

Bob earned his bachelor's degree from Union College in Schenectady, New York. After graduating, he visited a friend in Vermont's Mad River Valley and decided to make it his home. Bob went on to earn a juris doctor from Vermont Law School. He started his legal career as a deputy state's attorney for Washington County, Vermont, before moving into private practice where he specialized in juvenile and criminal law. For the 28 years following, Bob served as the

supervising attorney in the Office of the Juvenile Defender, which is part of Vermont's public defender system.

1980s

Michael Patrick Sweeney JD'80 1948 – 2022

Michael passed away on June 9, 2022, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Manchester, Connecticut, he lived in Simsbury for 30 years. Michael was a dedicated husband, father, and friend. Prior to law school, he graduated from Stonehill College and then the University of Hartford Business School. He worked as a senior manager at Deloitte & Touche and Reynolds and Jacobs before establishing his own CPA practice. Michael enjoyed tennis, travel, and riding his recumbent bike with friends. He co-founded the Warrior Riders, supporting injured veterans. He is survived by his wife, children, brothers, and beloved nieces and nephews.

Virginia Farley MSEL'81 1955 – 2022

Virginia, of Berlin, Vermont, passed away on February 24, 2022. Born September 8, 1955, in New York, New York, she dedicated her life to land conservation and climate change efforts. Virginia's impactful career spanned roles at the Vermont Land Trust and the National Park Service. Additionally, she taught courses at the University of Vermont and Vermont Law School as an adjunct faculty member, and she consulted with nonprofit conservation organizations in her free time. An avid outdoorswoman and dancer, she connected kindred spirits through her love for the land. Virginia's legacy of protected natural wonders in Vermont will

endure. She is survived by her daughter and sisters.

Karen Reynolds JD'81 1951 – 2022

Karen graduated from the University of Bridgeport and Vermont Law School. She served the Greater Bridgeport Bar Association diligently since 1982 and went on to become a member of the board of directors, Community Outreach Committee, and chair of the Family Law Committee. Karen, survived by her sons Daniel and Jason, leaves behind a loving family including five siblings, cherished grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Lawrence "Larry" Meier JD'82 1956 – 2021

Larry passed away on December 11, 2021. Born and raised in Toledo, Ohio, Larry graduated from Miami University, where he majored in music and engineering. A vibrant soul known for his kindness, Larry excelled as an intellectual property attorney and avid outdoorsman. He cherished his children, Ian and Hannah, and found joy in music, running, and sailing on Lake Champlain. Larry was an accomplished cellist and took great pleasure in playing with the Champlain Philharmonic Orchestra. Larry's legacy lives on through his family, including sister Marcia Strobel, and his extensive network of friends.

Ronald Paul Peles JD'82 1957 – 2023

Ronald passed away on January 4, 2023, surrounded by his wife, Gloria, and dear friend, Debbie Iorio. Born August 29, 1957, in Spangler, Pennsylvania, he is survived by his mother, sister, brother, and nephew. A Rutgers

College graduate, he went on to earn his JD from Vermont Law School and practice law in New Jersey. Ronald was known for his dedication to his community, passion for music, and love of antique automobiles. He was active in St. Mary R.C. Church and was a member of the Holy Name Society and Knights of Columbus, having served as Grand Knight and Faithful Navigator. A cherished husband and friend, Ronald will be deeply missed.

Susan Marie Coffey JD'83 1953 – 2021

Survived by her brothers, Susan passed away April 20, 2021, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She was an attorney for many years and after her retirement she "went to the dogs!" Susan trained and showed Gordon Setters under the prefix "Huntmoor." She titled her dogs in a diversity of AKC disciplines, and they were the love of her life. She was a proud member of the New Mexico Stewards Association. She also leaves behind many friends from her personal life and the dog world.

Peter Heintzelman JD'83 1959 – 2021

Peter—who was born in Lake George, New York, and raised in Vermont—was a respected lawyer and boxing enthusiast. Graduating from Vermont Law School, he practiced law in Worcester, Massachusetts, while passionately covering boxing for Fightnews.com® for 12 years. His charm and wit, honed in the courtroom, shone through in his writing, capturing the essence of the sport. Peter's love for boxing was rekindled in 2002, after attending the Gatti-Ward rematch, sparking his career at Fightnews.com®. His legacy as



IN MEMORIAM

a gentleman, father, lawyer, and boxing aficionado will endure.

**Gerald “Jerry” Wright
Howe MSL’83
1945 – 2023**

Jerry passed away on February 24, 2023, surrounded by loved ones. A U.S. Navy veteran, he earned degrees from the University of Massachusetts and Vermont Law School. Jerry’s legacy as an agricultural agent, professor emeritus at the University of New Hampshire, and community leader reflect his dedication to service. He enriched lives through mentorship and advocacy. A lover of storytelling, Jerry embraced diverse experiences, from fishing to acting. His greatest joy was family, and he is survived by his wife, daughter, grandson, and extended family. Jerry’s impact and vibrant spirit will be cherished forever.

**Mark Di Stefano JD’84
1956 – 2022**

Mark passed away on March 22, 2022, after a brief battle with cancer. Born in Washington, D.C., he devoted his life to family, law, and music. Mark’s legal career in the Vermont Attorney General’s Office focused on environmental protection. A talented musician, he played old-time fiddle and cherished community jam sessions. He loved Vermont’s natural beauty and skied and hiked across the state. Mark leaves behind his wife, Bridget; children **Emma MELP’10**, Rachel, and Benjamin; stepmother, Amalia; siblings, nieces and nephews. Mark’s warmth and generosity touched all who knew him, leaving a legacy of kindness and compassion.

**Sheilla Files JD’84
1947 – 2021**

After bravely battling cancer, Sheilla passed away on September 26, 2021. She led a life of determination and achievement. Sheilla excelled academically and professionally, becoming a respected lawyer and businesswoman. In addition to her legal career, she was active in the Business and Professional Women (BPW) group, becoming president of the Windsor chapter. Her warmth and generosity extended beyond her career; she cherished her family above all else. Known for her welcoming nature and culinary skills, Sheilla left a lasting impact on all who knew her. She is survived by her daughters, grandchildren, siblings, and a legacy of love.

**Erick Edmund Titrud JD’84
1958 – 2021**

A devoted father, lawyer, and friend, Erick’s legacy of compassion and dedication touched many. Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, he found his home in Vermont, where he practiced law and served his community tirelessly. Erick’s love for nature and music, his kindness, and his gentle spirit endeared all who knew him. He faced his cancer diagnosis with grace, surrounded by love. Erick’s memory lives on in his daughters, family, and friends, who will forever cherish his impact on their lives.

**Dawn DeSantis JD’85
1959 – 2023**

After a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, Dawn passed away peacefully in September 2023. For 26 years, she served as assistant corporation counsel for the City of Waterbury. A former

colleague and friend once said he never met a lawyer who advocated for her clients harder than Dawn did. Due to her love of dogs, Dawn also started Spotty Dog Rescue organization. Through this work, she saved more than 800 dogs from locations as far away as the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands. Dawn was an amazing wife, sister, and aunt. She will be deeply missed by a loving group of family, friends, and her cherished dogs.

**Martha Applegate
Schonberger MSL’85
1961 – 2022**

Martha earned a bachelor’s degree from Western Michigan University and a master’s degree from Vermont Law School. After marrying and becoming the mother of three sons, she discovered her true calling was teaching. Martha went on to become a special education teacher in Loudon County, Virginia, where she spent 25 years positively impacting the lives of others. In 2007, Shenandoah University honored her as Loudon County’s Teacher of the Year. Additionally, Martha founded Legacy Farms, a nonprofit dedicated to providing neurodiverse individuals with education, training, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. Martha’s greatest love was her family and she especially enjoyed Thanksgiving, which provided the opportunity to bring everyone together.

**Pamela Stafford JD’85
1951 – 2023**

Born to a family of meager means in Balston Spa, N.Y., Pamela followed her indomitable desire for knowledge and growth through several educational institutions

(including college education in her beloved father Fred Stafford’s home state of Colorado), before attending Vermont Law School and falling in love with this brave little state. Upon moving to Randolph in 1993, she selflessly committed herself to the practice of law in a way that aimed to help her beloved neighbors succeed, and to serving the community she loved so dearly through civil service and charitable endeavors alike. Her desire to help others and her steadfast commitment to standing up for what she believed in were the defining factors of her life.

**Robert “Bob” Fasanella JD’86/
MSL’83
1958 – 2024**

Bob passed away peacefully, at home, in January 2024. Following completion of his juris doctor, Bob started his own law firm composed of VLS grads and interns. He then worked as a partner at Rubin and Rudman in Boston, specializing in environmental and land use law. Throughout his life, including during his time at VLS, Bob was an all-seasons outdoorsman. He enjoyed skiing, windsurfing, biking, hiking, tennis, and, at VLS, was a member of the ultimate frisbee team. He was a proud member of the VLS community and spoke fondly of his studies and time in Vermont, and he enjoyed attending the many Boston alumni events.

**Christine Ann Hoyt JD’86
1962 – 2023**

The Honorable Christine Ann Hoyt passed away peacefully on December 17, 2023, at home surrounded by family in Tunbridge, Vermont. Christine was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and friend,

who will be deeply missed by many. She graduated from Vermont Law School in 1986 and embarked on a successful legal career. On August 10, 1988, she was appointed a magistrate by Governor Howard Dean. Christine dedicated herself to upholding the law and ensuring fairness for all. She had an adventurous spirit, and she leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness, and a zest for life that will continue to inspire those who follow in her footsteps.

**Elaine Luckey MSL’86
1926 – 2021**

Elaine was a trail blazer. From her historic election as the First Selectman of Washington, Connecticut—the first woman in the town’s 240-year history—to her treks through Nepal’s mountains, she was often called off the beaten path. She championed environmental causes, served as an educator, and embraced political engagement, serving on the Charter Commission in Middleburg Heights, Ohio. Elaine’s zest for life had her traveling all over the world. She found joy in sailing, skiing, and laughter. Survived by her siblings, sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, Elaine leaves a legacy of adventure, activism, and deep love for humanity and the earth.

**Paul Lee McKean JD’87
1953 – 2022**

Paul, adventurer extraordinaire, passed away with his beloved wife of 38 years by his side. From West Hartford, Connecticut, to Sarasota, Florida, his life was filled with exploration. After graduating from Vermont Law School, Paul moved down to Florida to start his career in law. He pursued his master’s in social work while he continued his

legal practice. Upon graduation, Paul realized his greatest joy was in the practice of psychotherapy. He was a man who left nothing on the table and he passed away without regrets. Paul is survived by his wife, sister, nieces, and nephews, through whom his spirit of adventure will live on.

**Gail Linell Sanderson JD’87
1930 – 2023**

Gail was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on July 20, 1930. She attended Mount Holyoke College and married Paul Graves Sanderson, Jr., (Sandy) in 1953. They raised a family together for 34 happy years until his death in 1986. She is survived by two sons, two daughters, and nine grandchildren. Among her many accomplishments, Gail was very involved in the town of Suffield, Connecticut. She was on the Suffield Arts Council and, together, she and Sandy co-founded the Suffield Reader-Writer Conference and ASSIST, an international exchange program which is still active today. Following Sandy’s passing, Gail attended Vermont Law School and started practicing family law. Gail ultimately got her real estate license, which she put to use in New Hampshire, Vermont, and later in Florida, once she moved to Sarasota.

**Patricia “Pat” Meyer JD’89
1952 – 2022**

After an epic, unrelenting 7½ year battle with metastatic cancer, Patricia died peacefully, with her family at her side, in October 2022. She spent the initial 27 years of her life in Wisconsin, before moving to Randolph, Vermont, in 1979 with her husband to be, Gus. Pat earned a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of



IN MEMORIAM

Wisconsin-Milwaukee and worked in a variety of pediatric settings over the course of 10 years. She then attended Vermont Law School, graduating with a juris doctor. Pat went on to practice law in Randolph for 25 years, focusing on real estate and probate law. She was known for her listening skills, practical counsel, and high ethical standards. By far her greatest love, however, was doing things with her husband and daughters, of whom she was enormously proud.

1990s

David Cormier JD'91 1960 – 2023

David grew up in Connecticut and was a graduate of Newington High School, Providence College, and Vermont Law School. He dedicated his career to Collette Tours, guiding people around the globe for over 30 years. His love of travel inspired a fruitful career, a wonderfully diverse circle of friends, and adventure across nearly every continent. In addition to his beloved mother, David is survived by his older sister and her husband, as well as his elder brother and his wife. He is also survived by several nieces and nephews, as well as grandnieces and grandnephews who held a very special place in “Uncle Dave’s” heart. Equally importantly, he left a wonderfully supportive and adventurous group of friends who span the globe.

Jennifer Kitchel Reining JD'95 1965 – 2022

A 1987 graduate of Dartmouth College, where she rowed varsity crew, Jennifer majored in art history and minored geology. She earned a master’s degree in 1990 from the Yale School of Forestry

and Environmental Studies. There, she met Conrad Reining, whom she married in 1994. They have two children, Charlotte and Anabel. Jennifer received a JD from Vermont Law School in 1995, graduating magna cum laude and third in her class. Early in her career, she clerked for the Vermont Supreme Court and served as a staff attorney in the EPA’s Office of General Counsel. In 2005, Jennifer took a position as assistant director with the Hitchcock Foundation, an entity within the Dartmouth Health system—based in New Hampshire and Vermont—dedicated to aiding and advancing the study and investigation of human ailments and injuries. She became the foundation’s executive director and stayed with the organization for the rest of her career.

Virginia Lee Tomicich JD'95 1953 – 2022

Virginia earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Washington and a juris doctor from Vermont Law School. She spent her career working in contract negotiations for Boeing. In her free time, Virginia enjoyed reading and spending time with her beloved American Eskimo dogs. She is survived by her sister and two brothers.

Carrie Legus JD'96 1961 – 2023

Carrie—an outdoor enthusiast—enjoyed traveling and spoke many languages. She was fluent in Spanish and translated numerous academic documents, particularly focusing on poetry and philosophy, into English. After growing up in Minnesota, Carrie moved to Walden, Vermont, in the late 1980s. She received her juris doctor from Vermont Law School in 1996

and went on to practice at the Montpelier-based firm Legus & Bisson. She started studying law while writing the dissertation for her PhD, which she completed in 2000.

Adam Kerr Daly JD'98 1970 – 2022

A Hawaii native, Adam spent the majority of his childhood on the island, before his family moved to England and later Canada. In 1995, he decided to attend law school in Vermont, which is where he met his soon-to-be wife, **Andrea Marston Daly JD'97**. The couple moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, after earning their law degrees and raised two children, Nick and Morgan. Adam loved many outdoor activities, but he was extremely passionate about surfing. After a challenging battle with stage four colon cancer, Adam passed away in September 2022. He is remembered for prioritizing family and friends, and always putting others first.

2000s

Rose Ann Watson JD/MSEL'00 1970 – 2021

Prior to earning her juris doctor at Vermont Law School, Rose—a Missouri native—attended the University of Missouri-Columbia for her undergraduate studies. She went on to become an accomplished attorney. Rose started her career at McLane Middleton Professional Assoc., before moving into a corporate career where she used her estate planning skills as an advanced market attorney with Sun Life. She then moved on to serve as the director of advanced planning with Commonwealth Financial Network.

Before her passing, Rose was the vice president/wealth planning strategist with Raymond James in Clearwater, Florida.

Tonya Porter JD'01 1975 – 2023

Following law school, Tonya spent more than 21 years working at the Department of Housing and Urban Development Boston Regional Office. While in Boston, she met Gabe Porter, who would later become her husband. They bonded over a shared love of the outdoors and ultimately moved to New Hampshire, where their daughter, Grace, was born. Since 2010, the family resided in the town of Epping. There, Tonya was involved in a variety of school, community, and charity organizations. As a family, the Porters spent time traveling, skiing, camping, and hiking. But above all else, Tonya was devoted to Grace and nurturing her into the incredible young lady that she is (and the amazing woman that she will become).

Diana M. Dascalu-Joffe JD/MSEL'03 1978 – 2023

Born in Bucharest, Romania, Diana was a beloved mother, wife, daughter, friend, and passionate environmental attorney and advocate. She emigrated to the U.S. (Queens, New York) at the age of two, and she went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Slippery Rock University, and a juris doctor and master’s degree from Vermont Law School. Diana dedicated her life to the betterment of others through her incredible advocacy and amazing work achievements to improve the environment and tackle climate change. She is survived by her husband, **Brian Joffe JD/MSEL'03**; children, Noah

and Emily; parents, Nicholas and Michele; father and mother-in law, Les and Linda; and many other relatives, friends, and colleagues.

Edward Nichols Wadsworth MSEL'03 1937 – 2023

Edward died peacefully at his Cohasset, Massachusetts, home. He was the beloved husband of Suzanne (Maloney); devoted father of Nathaniel B. Wadsworth (Kate Droste) and the late Peter N. Wadsworth; adored grandfather of Calliope and Clio. His brother, David Wadsworth, predeceased him. Edward was retired at the time of his passing, but he previously served as general counsel of Nvest.

Kristen Huysman JD'04 1972 – 2022

Following a long battle with an illness, Kristen passed away peacefully in her sleep. As a Vermont native, she possessed a deep love for the environment and its stewardship. Kristen enjoyed hiking, traveling, exploring new places, and listening to music. She was also an advocate for women’s rights and equitable treatment. Kristen was a dedicated mother who served as a role model to her daughters. She graduated from Essex Junction High School, the University of Vermont, and Vermont Law School. Kristen is survived by her husband, daughters, parents, and siblings, as well as several aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Hassan Parrish JD'04 1975 – 2022

Hassan Parrish, age 47, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, formerly of Shelby, passed away on October 5, 2022, in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

John-Austin “Aussie” Diamond JD'09 1983 – 2022

After a courageous battle with cancer, Aussie passed away at home surrounded by his immediate family on August 23, 2022. He is survived by his wife, Anna, and his son, Liam. Aussie also leaves behind his parents, three siblings, nine nieces and nephews, and many loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. Aussie was extremely accomplished in his professional career, earning numerous awards and accolades. Committed to making the world a better place, Aussie founded his own firm, Diamond Law Practice, and co-founded The Private Patriots Foundation, a non-profit which helps injured military and defense contractors worldwide. In one of his proudest moments, Aussie was sworn in at the Supreme Court of the United States by Chief Justice John Roberts. Above all else, however, Aussie was most proud of the beautiful life he built with Anna and Liam. ■

IN MEMORIAM



DONALD C. BAUR

Known for his quiet, steadfast nature, **Donald C. Baur** tirelessly advocated on behalf of animals, national parks, and the environment. During his many years of service, he received the Marine Wildlife Conservation Award from the Center for Marine Conservation, the 1872 Award for Service to the National Parks from the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, and the Wings Award for Animal Welfare Advocacy from the Pegasus Foundation.

Don received his BA degree, with highest honors, from Trinity College and his JD degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He worked in the Solicitor's Office of the Department of the Interior before serving as the general counsel of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, and he sat on the boards of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the Shenandoah National Park Trust, and the Environmental Leadership Council of the Environmental Law Institute. His publications include the American Bar Association books "Endangered Species Act: Law, Policy and Perspectives" and "Ocean and Coastal Law and Policy".

In addition, Don was a partner in the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources (EER) practice at the Washington, D.C., office of Perkins Coie LLP, which recognized him in memoriam for his leadership in "bringing the firm's EER practice to national prominence and playing a lead role in recruiting and training a generation of environmental lawyers."

Numerous Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS) students gained invaluable experience through internships with Don's help, and he was a mentor to many more. He was also a champion of VLGS's new Animal Law and Policy Institute.

Don's Oceans and Coastal Law class was one of VLGS's most popular courses. This is no wonder when you look at his incredible pro bono work to help whales, sea otters, and the oceans. One notable case was when he represented Keiko the orca, who was featured in the Disney movie "Free Willy". With Don's continued efforts, Keiko was finally freed from the Oregon Coast Aquarium in 1998.

Up until just days before he died, Don also worked tirelessly on behalf of Lolita, the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale who was held captive at the Miami Seaquarium in the smallest orca tank in the world for more than half a century.

These are only two of the many contributions Don has made to animal rights, ocean conservation, parks, and the environment. Through his demonstration of perseverance and quiet determination, Don Baur has inspired and influenced many generations of environmental and animal lawyers. ▣

IN MEMORIAM



**THOMAS "TOMI"
FENNEL JD'23**

The Vermont Law School community was deeply saddened by the unexpected passing of **Thomas "Tomi" Fennell JD'23** in a tragic car accident on Nov. 16, 2021.

Tomi was a valued member of the school community, and its campus and academic programs were greatly enriched by his presence and many contributions, including his leadership in the Environmental Law Society and Energy Law Institute. Remembered across campus by many for his kindness and compassion, he was a friend to many and a defender of those who needed defending.

His growing passion for energy law was clear, with noticeable interest in international energy law and policy, and a particular curiosity for Latin American energy policy, enhanced by his past summer internship in Córdoba, Argentina. Tomi displayed an ability to see connections between different topics and to unpack the complexities of energy law. His enthusiasm brought him to energy law and his intellect allowed him to succeed. Tomi also built strong relationships with his Institute for Energy and the Environment classmates and his passion for energy law and policy was infectious, even inspiring others to explore this field.

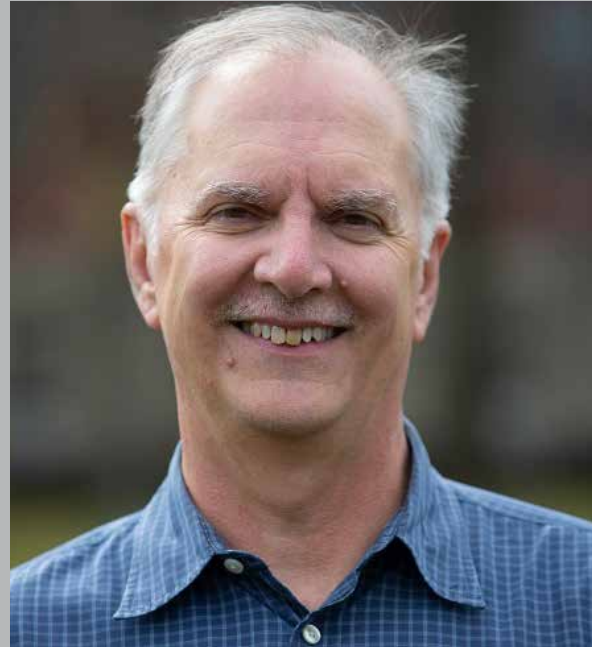
A native of the Pittsburgh area, Tomi was a 2016 graduate of Fox Chapel Area High School and earned an undergraduate degree in international relations from UCLA in 2020. He was a second-year JD/MERL student who planned to become a law professor and dedicate his career to climate justice.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Tomi loved reading and writing short stories, and playing basketball and tennis.

Tomi is survived by his parents Richard Fennell and Graciana Rodriguez Vitalie, brothers Lucas, Nicholas, and Tobias Fennell, and many loving grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

While the school community continues to grieve at this sudden and tragic loss, we are also committed to the many positive memories of Tomi, which will inspire our faculty's teaching and our students' passion to work harder for a clean energy future. ▣

IN MEMORIAM



KEVIN B. JONES

Kevin B. Jones, PhD, grew up in a very close family in Proctor, Vt. Kevin enjoyed spending time with his family in Proctor, where there were many family gatherings throughout the year, whether an official holiday or grilling in the yard, as well as many Sunday dinners. He was always surrounded by nature, curiosity, and a loving family.

Kevin and his partner, Rachel Levin, lived in a house they purchased together decades ago in Chittenden, Vt., and made their own. There he enjoyed filling the bird feeder, sitting with his coffee and something sweet, with dogs at his feet, and noticing a red cardinal or blue bunting, and all those chickadees. He would not miss a Saturday to take the dogs, go to the farmers market, and enjoy his Saturday favorite routine, which frequently concluded with stopping by to visit his family in Proctor. He enjoyed downhill and cross-country skiing and many other sports; deer-hunting season; music; reading; first hybrid and then electric transportation; energy efficiency at home, to every extent possible; his work; traveling throughout the world with Rachel and, at times, with their two beloved Old English sheepdogs; finding and exploring new places, restaurants, vineyards, coffee producers and people; and experiencing other cultures. Peace, justice, equity and community participation were important to him. He constantly thought about the next generation of learners and teachers and how anything could be improved. He loved teaching and learning and had passion for creating successes, not just for himself, and in ways that were unique. From a young age, he lived to the fullest every day.

Kevin was the director of the Vermont Law and Graduate School (VLGS) Institute for Energy and the Environment and professor of energy technology and policy for the Institute for Energy and the Environment. He was also a lecturer for the Sustainable Energy Technology and Policy Sustainable Innovation MBA program at the University of Vermont. He was proud of founding the Energy Clinic

and the Cuba Trip course—the global sustainability field-study course—where Kevin provided students with hands-on learning and experiences, beyond campus, in Vermont and in New Hampshire communities, as well as in Cuba.

He considered his students, fellows, coworkers, other faculty and alum as part of his family. He mentored, guided, enlightened, respected and learned from so many and then assisted with job hunting, making personal phone calls to current and former colleagues to gain entrance to what was for many their first experience working in the energy sector. He always made himself available and accessible for any reason, had an open-door policy at his office, and was deeply caring and available, whether in his office or elsewhere. VLGS has a special Tributes Page, with information about events and remembrances.

Kevin enjoyed research that had practical uses, as well as learning as the goal for a final product or project. He enjoyed including students, fellows, alum, faculty and colleagues from VLGS, as well as from his previous workplaces. He published two books utilizing that process, “The Electric Battery: Charging Forward to a Low-Carbon Future” and “A Smarter, Greener Grid: Forging Environmental Progress Through Smart Energy Policies and Technologies.” Kevin also published numerous articles and chapters in many publications and participated as a panel member or facilitator at energy-related conferences in the U.S. and throughout the world. He had memberships in national and international associations, which he used to keep in contact with current and former colleagues and to keep current.

Kevin received a PhD from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute’s Lally School of Management and Technology, a master’s from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, and a BS from the University of Vermont.

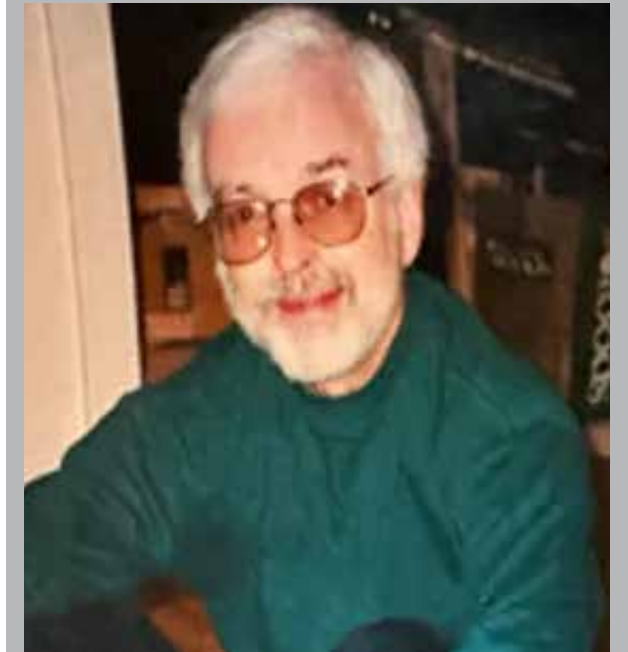
Some of his previous professional experience includes as the director of power market policy at Long Island Power Authority; associate director of energy practice at Navigant Consulting Inc./ Resource Management International; director of energy policy for the City of New York; various positions in rates and planning at Central Vermont Public Service Corporation; and alderman of the City of Rutland, Vt. He also assisted and supported many local and Vermont organizations that strengthen the community. One of his proudest associations was serving on the board, then becoming board chair of what was then the Rutland Land Trust, now the Housing Trust of Rutland County.

Kevin Brian Jones died on January 29, 2024, while teaching one of two winter courses at VLGS. He collapsed shortly after the class commenced and immediately died.

Kevin was predeceased by his father and mother, Sidney Hiram Jones and Patricia Jane (Johnson) Jones. He is survived by Rachel Levin, his nearly three-decade partner, and his two Old English sheepdogs — their fourth and fifth — whom he loved and spoiled and who were the light of his life. He has three siblings, Deborah Jones, Mark Jones (and Kathy), and Andrea Jones; a nephew, Jeremy (and Bobbi Jo) Jones, with whom he had a very special relationship; two nieces, Megan Jones and Hailey Wood, whom he adored; a great-niece and -nephew; Ruth Jones, a very special aunt, whose 100th birthday he recently celebrated with family from near and far; and many other loved and loving relatives.

In celebration of Kevin’s life and in memory—or whatever it may be for each of us—please take time for yourself, spend time with your family and loved ones, and enjoy your dogs. A private gathering will be held when he is buried in Proctor in the spring. 🕊

IN MEMORIAM



KENNETH KREILING

Kenneth Kreiling passed away peacefully on February 2, 2024. Born in Chippewa Falls, WI on June 24, 1941, Ken was the son of the late Norman and Lillian Kreiling. He received a bachelor’s degree from Marquette University, master’s and law degrees from the University of Wisconsin and an advanced law degree from Harvard University. He began his career as a research associate at the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Law and Poverty. He then worked with the New Haven Legal Assistance Association. In 1976, he joined the faculty at Vermont Law School where he was an accomplished scholar in scientific and expert evidence. Ken loved the law, teaching, researching, and learning. He also enjoyed traveling, cooking, and spending time with his family and friends. Incredibly smart, kind and loving, Ken will be missed by all who were privileged to know him.

Ken is survived by his beloved wife, Blanche Podhajski Kreiling, and daughter, Elizabeth Hunt, her husband Scott Lollis, and their children, William, Matthew, and Julia. He also leaves his sister Katherine Bollom and her husband Melvin, their daughter Lori and son Timothy, his wife Brea and their children Cooper and Kennedy. Those who wish may make donations for scholarships in Ken’s name to the Waterbury Rotary Club, the Stern Center for Language and Learning, or Vermont Law and Graduate School. 🕊

IN MEMORIAM



**KAREN
OELSCHLAEGER JD'16**

Karen Oelschlaeger JD'16 passed away at her home in Montpelier, Vt., on April 19, 2021, nearly three years after she was diagnosed with stomach cancer.

Oelschlaeger earned her juris doctor from Vermont Law School in 2016. During her time as a student, she interned at the South Royalton Legal Clinic, and along with fellow alumna **Nessabeth Rooks JD'16**, drafted and advocated for an expungement bill that was ultimately signed into law by former Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin in 2015. Both former students in Professor Robert Sand's Criminal Law class, Oelschlaeger and Rooks envisioned an earned expungement program to encourage ex-offenders to engage in prosocial activities and reconnect with their communities.

Upon graduating from VLS' Accelerated JD program, cum laude, in 2016, she worked as a deputy state's attorney for the Windsor County State's Attorney Office in White River Junction, Vt. In that role, she served as the dedicated prosecutor for the Windsor County Special Investigative Unit, which is a multi-disciplinary team that focuses on sex crimes and other serious crimes against children. She also volunteered her time as part of the VLS alumni mentoring program.

Prior to attending VLS, Oelschlaeger received her bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University and her Master of Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Even as she was nearing the end of her life, Oelschlaeger was working to help others. She became a proponent of Vermont's Death With Dignity Law, which she would ultimately utilize to end her own life, on her own terms. Just a week prior to her death she appeared on Vermont Public Radio to advocate for changes to the law that would make it more humane, and easier, for terminally ill patients to comply with its regulations. In her obituary, which she wrote herself, she thanked the legislators and lobbyists who worked to pass the law.

She also left family and friends with poignant words of wisdom and earnest wishes, writing that she'd like "for you to live your best life now—just in case. She'd like you to be kind. She'd like you to take extra care of her parents, Linda and Terry; her most beloved nieces; and her dear ones Meghan, Eric, and Jess." ■

IN MEMORIAM



R. ALLAN PAUL

Former president of the VLGS Board of Trustees and Trustee Emeritus **R. Allan Paul** passed away at home on Jan. 3, 2022.

A key supporter of the school's founding, Paul served on the Board of Trustees from 1994 to 2004, and as its president from 1995 to 2001. He received an honorary degree from Vermont Law School in 2006.

Paul began his legal career with renowned Burlington lawyer Pearly Feen, and in 1968, he, along with Joseph Frank and Peter Collins, formed Paul Frank and Collins. Allan served as its founding president for the first 26 years of its now 53-year history.

His extensive resume of civic and professional contributions includes service as a member of the boards of Banknorth Group, Inc., the Vermont Business Roundtable, and the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation. He served as a member of the board of trustees of the University of Vermont from 1976 to 1982 and again from 1984 to 1990, and was chair of the board from 1981 to 1982. He was a member of the Vermont Racing Commission, including as chair from 1977 to

1989, and served as president of the National Association of State Racing Commissioners. He served as a member of the City of Burlington Board of Aldermen and City Council from 1965 to 1969. In 2006, Paul was named the Vermont Chamber of Commerce's citizen of the year.

Paul received his AB degree from the University of Vermont in 1953, and his JD from the Columbia University School of Law in 1956.

Those who knew him well say that Paul loved his family above all else. He enjoyed his daughters' countless dance recitals, gymnastic and swim meets, and musical performances, and felt truly blessed to have many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Elsie, daughters Karen Paul (Mark Saba), Diana (Bret) Kernoff, and Laurie (Eric) Mittenthal, and eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. ■

JOIN US FOR REUNION 2024

June 28–30

South Royalton, Vermont

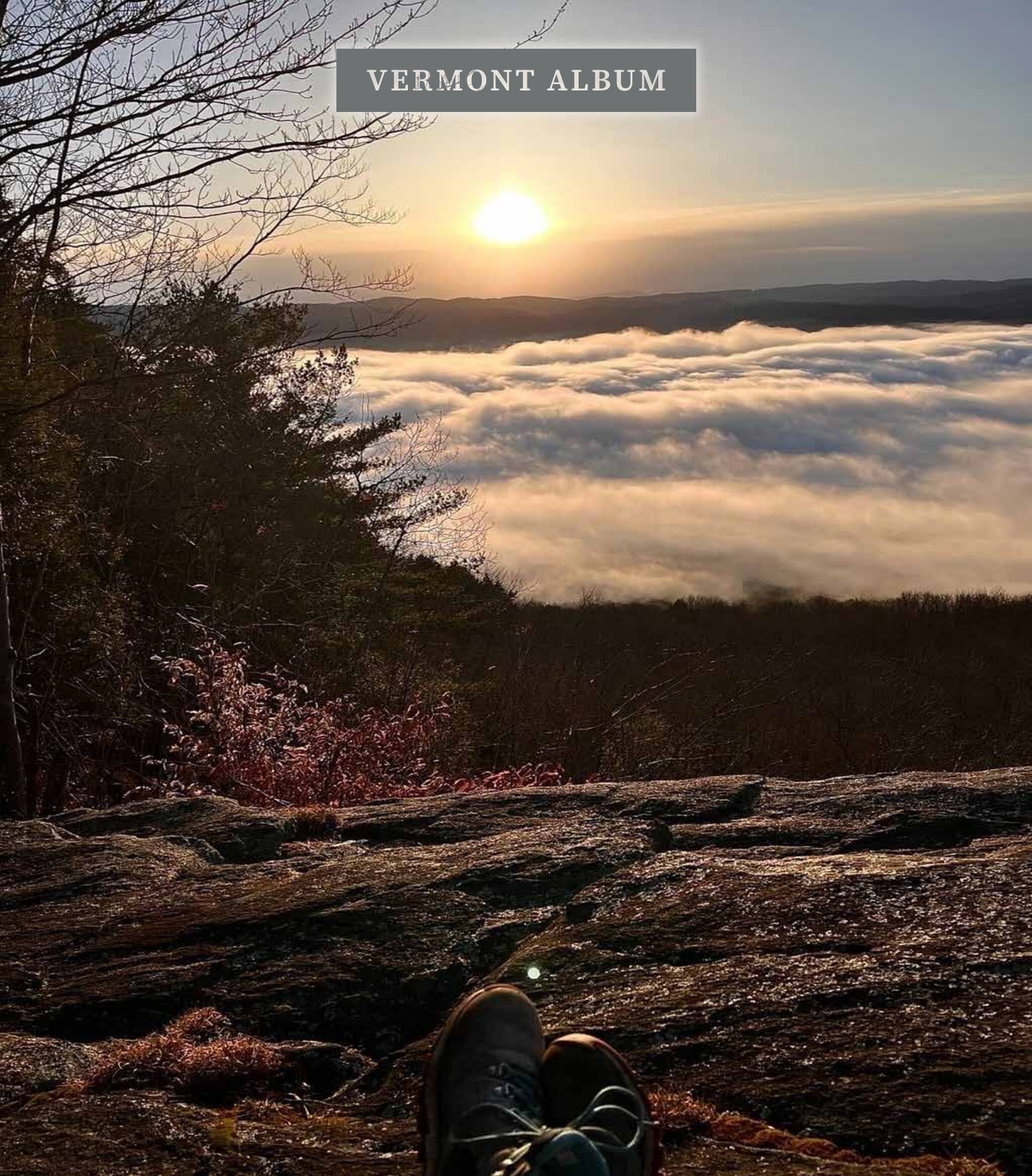
Mark your calendars and plan to attend Reunion 2024! This year's weekend of festivities will offer opportunities to reconnect with old friends, participate in celebratory activities, get the latest updates from across campus, and engage with beloved members of VLGS's faculty and staff. All alumni are encouraged to attend. Members of class years ending in four and nine will be celebrating special milestones with a group dinner and more.

Find all the latest details at bit.ly/vlgs-reunion-2024.



WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU IN SORO, SWANS!

VERMONT ALBUM



STUNNING VIEW FROM KENT'S LEDGE IN SOUTH ROYALTON, VERMONT.
PHOTOGRAPH BY ALYSSA SHEA JD/MELP'24.