

Delivering on our promise

Each fall, we make a promise to all entering students that the University of Georgia School of Law will:

- provide the education and experience to prepare them for quality jobs,
- help them build valuable connections with our faculty, alumni and alumnae as well as employers,
- ensure they graduate with the skills necessary to become leaders in their profession and their communities,
- and continue to be the best return on investment in legal education.

Here at your law school, we deliver on that promise every day.

Roughly 95 percent of our students who sit for the bar pass within 12 months of graduation – the highest rate in our state and among the best in the country. Ninety percent of the Class of 2017 secured fulltime, long-term employment that either required bar passage or preferred a Juris Doctor – placing your law school among the best in the nation. We have also been recognized as one of the top 20 law schools for securing a federal clerkship. One day, our students may even find themselves clerking for alumni like U.S. District Court Judges Michael Brown (J.D.'94) and Tripp Self (J.D.'97), both who have recently been seated on the federal bench.

The first-rate preparation our students receive takes place in the classroom and through experiential learning opportunities such as our Veterans Legal Clinic, which was made possible by a leading gift from Jim Butler (J.D.'77) in memory of his father who was a fighter pilot in the U.S. Navy. This clinic will provide critical services to those who have so bravely served our nation and be led by seasoned public service lawyer and professor – Alex Scherr. You can read more about this important new opportunity for our students and veterans on page 5. Another way our students receive incredible experience is through our award-winning advocacy program that added three national titles, one regional crown and the coveted state championship trophy at the Intrastate Moot Court Competition this year (page 4).

On any given day, our students have the opportunity to learn from talented and widely published faculty members, many of whom are nationally recognized as experts in their chosen fields. Their accomplishments are many and are highlighted on pages 21–25 and throughout this magazine. We are also fortunate that prominent alumni/alumnae and friends of the law school are willing to assist in the education of our students. Examples include: U.S. District Court

Judge Timothy Batten (J.D.'84), who will teach at our Atlanta facility this fall (page 9), and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Bernice B. Donald, who served as our Edenfield Jurist in Residence this spring (page 20).

We continue to build on the law school's tradition of public service – which includes alumni and alumnae like this year's graduation speaker, Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham (J.D.'70) (page 17). Justice Benham matriculated just over 50 years ago and was honored earlier this year with a new program focused on diversifying the legal profession and recruiting students from underserved parts of the state (page 6). The legacy also includes Harold Melton (J.D.'91), who will become the chief justice of our state's highest court in September (page 37), and lawyers like those honored with this year's Distinguished Service Scroll Awards – Sibley Chair and former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson, University System of Georgia Board of Regents Vice Chair Don Waters (J.D.'78) and former Acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates (J.D.'86) (pages 35–36). Each of these honorees took time the day before the DSS Award ceremony to meet with and inspire our students to make their own impact on society.

With your help, your law school is training the next generation of leaders to follow in these footsteps. We do so not only by ensuring our graduates are well prepared, but also without the overly burdensome debt that would prevent them from pursuing jobs that make sense for them, their families and their communities. **In fact, thanks to your support, we have held the line on tuition, built a solid scholarship program and reduced the aggregate indebtedness of our student body by nearly \$1 million annually.**

None of this would be possible without your continued engagement and support. I hope you will take some time to read about all that is happening at your law school – and that it will inspire you to hire a student, contribute to the Law School Fund or commit to our capital campaign, which will allow us to fulfill our promise to our students and the legal profession long into the future.



Peter B. "Bo" Rutledge
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