

Continuing the tradition of excellence



Peter B. "Bo" Rutledge
Dean and Herman E.
Talmadge Chair of Law

"I hope that you will use the key that you are about to receive to unlock justice." This was the inspiring closing line of U.S. Deputy Attorney General and Georgia Law alumna Sally Quillian Yates' address to this year's graduating class. Her memorable remarks included reflections from her time as a student here in Athens, her years as a young attorney and her very recent review of a clemency petition filed by two members of the Class of 2016 that she forwarded to President Obama for his consideration and ultimate approval.

Sally's challenge was particularly appropriate because, even before they graduate, the students at your law school are unlocking justice. Eighty percent of this year's graduating class took part in externships, clinics or other experiential learning programs during their time at Georgia Law. Each and every student made an impact by providing legal services to a wide range of organizations and people, including Steven Boyd who was granted clemency after serving 18 years of a life sentence for nonviolent crimes. (Learn more on page 6.)

This is just one example of the work done by our clinics, which assisted in a range of matters from representing child sexual abuse survivors to guiding young entrepreneurs. Our record attests to the exceptional leadership of Erica Hashimoto, former associate dean for clinical programs and experiential learning, who recently returned to her alma mater. Erica's good work will continue with the expert guidance of Prof. Alex Scherr, who succeeds her as associate dean, and Prof. Thomas Burch, a long-time supporter of the Appellate Litigation Clinic who now serves as its director.

Clinics represent only one example of how Georgia Law students are preparing for careers through hands-on experience. Led by Prof. Kellie Casey, our award-winning advocacy programs had an exceptional year, sweeping all of the awards in the Intrastate Moot Court Competition, winning the J. Braxton Craven, Jr. Memorial Competition, finishing fifth in world in the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot and capturing the Best Brief Award at the ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition. (Learn more on page 16.)

Faculty who produce world-class scholarship are essential to enhancing the student experience. We are fortunate to have among our ranks nationally recognized thought leaders such as Gregg Polsky, our newest colleague and one of the nation's leading tax scholars who joins us from the University of North Carolina. (Learn more on page 25.)

Of course, none of this is possible without the support of the Georgia Law community, including the incredible number of alumni and alumnae who invest both time and resources throughout the year. I want to particularly thank the anonymous group of benefactors who established the Challenge Fund as well as those who generously responded. Your investment in the mission of your law school resulted in a record-setting year for the Law School Fund. In fact, the fund exceeded its best year ever by more than 100 percent.

We are carefully stewarding your record-setting investment. You are funding scholarships that often make the difference between a student's decision to attend Georgia Law or go elsewhere – or to pursue the dream of earning a law degree at all.

Moreover, your gifts provide essential support for the clinics, advocacy programs and faculty research that ensures graduates are not just receiving a law degree but are being prepared to make an impact on their communities. Simply put, your generosity is building the next generation of lawyers and leaders.

The proof is in the results. Our 2015 graduating class had a higher bar passage rate than any other law school in the state. We are among the top 20 in the nation (and top in state) with regard to placing graduates in federal judicial clerkships over a three-year period. Our "employed at 10-month rate" for 2015 graduates in high-value jobs as defined by *U.S. News & World Report*, a key indicator of placement success, was the highest in the state and exceeded comparable rates for many national peer and aspirational institutions.

This letter only begins to touch upon all that is happening at Georgia Law. I encourage you to take the time to read this issue of the *Advocate*; be on the lookout for our e-newsletter; visit our website; follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; and make plans to visit campus either for Homecoming Weekend in October or Alumni/ Alumnae Weekend in March or any time of the year your schedule allows you to be in Athens.

In closing, I hope you will join me in thanking my predecessor, Rebecca Hanner White, who retired at the end of this academic year, for her legacy of leadership and the foundation upon which we build today.

With your continued support our students will indeed stand ready to unlock justice and continue the tradition of excellence of which we can all be proud.