

Sixth Georgia Law graduate in nine years selected to clerk for U.S. Supreme Court

This fall, Andrew A. Pinson (J.D.'11) will assume a role many law school graduates dream about but rarely obtain – clerking for a U.S. Supreme Court justice.

“Several people who helped me through the application process have compared being selected to clerk for a Supreme Court justice to catching lightning in a bottle, so I was absolutely surprised and humbled to even receive an interview,” Pinson said.

His invitation from Justice Clarence Thomas to clerk for the October 2013 Term makes him the sixth Georgia Law graduate in nine years to be chosen for one of these prestigious posts at the court.

“A Supreme Court clerkship is one of the most distinguished appointments a law school graduate can obtain,” Dean Rebecca Hanner White said. “I am extremely proud of Andrew, and I know he will make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Pinson graduated first in his class from Georgia Law, where he was the executive articles editor of the *Georgia Law Review* and was inducted into the Order of the Coif. He then served as a judicial clerk for Chief Judge David B. Sentelle of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

Currently, Pinson is an attorney with Jones Day in Washington, D.C., where he works in the firm’s Issues & Appeals Practice representing clients in various stages of civil litigation.

“My clerkship with Judge Sentelle proved to be a tremendous opportunity to develop as a lawyer and to gain a new perspective on how judges interpret the law,” Pinson said. “I applied for a Supreme Court clerkship for similar reasons.”

Pinson said that beyond the additional writing experience, working in Thomas’ chambers will help him hone his own views on jurisprudence generally and better understand some of the big legal issues America is facing today.

He also hopes the experience will provide him with insights into how the various justices approach all types of cases – particularly what they look for in a brief and what sort of arguments might resonate with them.

“All of these things are readily applicable to the appellate practice I plan to continue when I finish clerking,” Pinson added.

Pinson said he first began thinking about clerking for the nation’s highest court while earning his undergraduate degree, but considered it a “pie-in-the-sky dream” at the time.

“I read Justice Thomas’ memoir my senior year at UGA and was struck by what a neat experience it would be to clerk for him,” Pinson said. “It’s certainly a testament to the many wonderful people in my corner – Judge Sentelle, Dean White and professors Rutledge, Coenen and Turner, to name a few – that I will be clerking for him next year.”

Pinson said he believes this is why Georgia Law has been so successful in supplying clerks to the U.S. Supreme Court in the last decade.



“I am certain that I would not have clerked for Judge Sentelle, nor would I have this opportunity with Justice Thomas, if not for the amazing support from everyone at Georgia Law,” he said. “Knowing Georgia Law’s recent record with clerkships on the Supreme Court and elsewhere, that support clearly makes a difference.”

Pinson’s clerkship will bring the total number of Georgia Law graduates who have clerked for U.S. Supreme Court justices to 10.

The other nine alumni who have served the highest court in this capacity are: Brian C. Lea (J.D.’09), clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas for the October 2011 Term; Merritt E. McAlister (J.D.’07), clerked for Justice John Paul Stevens for the October 2009 Term; Jason T. Burnette (J.D.’06), clerked for Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. for the October 2007 Term; Adam M. Conrad (J.D.’05), clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas for the October 2006 Term; John H. Longwell (J.D.’99), clerked for Justice Stephen G. Breyer for the October 2005 Term; Anne Proffitt Dupre (J.D.’88), clerked for Justice Harry A. Blackmun for the October 1989 Term; Bruce P. Brown (J.D.’84), clerked for Chief Justice Warren E. Burger for the October 1986 Term; Glen M. Darbyshire (J.D.’84), clerked for Justice Thurgood Marshall for the October 1985 Term; and Benna R. Solomon (J.D.’78), clerked for Justice Byron R. White for the October 1980 Term.