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Loyola Law School - Los Angeles

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Weekend Events

1. "Moot Court and Trial Advocacy Teams Win Top Honors"

There is a good reason why Dean Victor Gold refers to Director of Trial Advocacy Susan Poehls ’89 as “the Wizard of Olympic Boulevard.” In the past 21 years, Poehls has led Loyola’s Byrne Trial Advocacy Team to 18 regional wins at the prestigious National Trial Competition. This year was no different as the Byrne Trial Advocacy Team once again came out strong to take home the regional championship, beating out the largest number of teams ever to participate in the competition.

A total of 26 teams from 13 schools competed, including UCLA, Pepperdine, University of San Diego, Thomas Jefferson and Southwestern. Loyola’s team went undefeated, winning 14 out of 15 judge ballots, and was ranked first in the quarterfinals, semifinals and final round. Team members noted that the secret to their success was their dedicated coaches, many of whom are Loyola alumni.

Poehls feels strongly that alumni involvement with the teams really makes a difference and she said, “It feels very fortunate to see so many alumni of the program who are willing to come back and offer their time and talents to help prepare our students for their competitions. The alumni who return have experience in a wide variety of practice areas, as well as varying levels of experience, which gives our students the advantage of being exposed to a breadth and depth of knowledge that is not available to most young lawyers.” Poehls believes that the coaching and interaction students receive from alumni provide a real advantage to Loyola students as they prepare for their careers.

The winning tradition continued this year with Loyola’s Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) Moot Court Team, coached by Carlos Cruz ’96. Competing against 31 schools, the Loyola team swept this year’s HNBA 15th Annual Uvaldo Herrera National Moot Court Competition held in March in San Diego, CA to become this year’s National Champions. Team members Ana Gomez-Garcia, Claudia Perez and Gabriela Ramirez won first place and Best Respondent Brief. Perez won the coveted Best Oral Advocate Award, while Ramirez took home the Runner-Up Best Oral Advocate Award.

Loyola’s ABA National Appellate Advocacy Team, the Scott Moot Court Team, beat the odds in Las Vegas by defeating 26 competitors from 32 teams representing 20 different law schools at the ABA Regional Appellate Advocacy Competition. The team composed of Ashley Farrell, Peter Klaunzer and Blake Osborne went undefeated in every round of the competition, and finished first place overall. The team

2. "Academic and Student Events Bring Top Legal Minds to Campus"

While Loyola was ranked fifth in 2010 by The Princeton Review for “Best Classroom Experience,” the school has also been providing alumni and students with numerous learning opportunities outside of class. Loyola’s leading-edge symposia attract expert lecturers, offering students an opportunity to explore their legal interests, as well as providing alumni and other legal professionals an opportunity to share in these experiences and earn MCLE credits. The Law School’s thought-provoking panels, led by prominent faculty and legal heavyweights, continue to bring students and alumni together for a true meeting of the minds.

The legal community flocked to this year’s Fidler Institute on Criminal Justice, which took place at Loyola on April 9, 2010, to get current on criminal law topics ranging from stitching to cutting-edge issues in forensic science. Professor Laurie Levenson described the program’s strengths by saying, “Once again, the Fidler Institute on Criminal Justice is tackling the toughest issues facing our criminal justice system today: prison reform, prosecutorial misconduct, snitches and how to responsibly handle forensic evidence. The Fidler Institute is the one place where prosecutors, defense lawyers, judges, professors, government officials and students can come together to find solutions. It is amazing to have so many people with such a variety of expertise under one roof. We are proud that Loyola is the go-to place for criminal law.”

Loyola hosted the educational and inspirational symposium, “A Journey to Justice,” in February 2010, which highlighted topics focused on civil rights law. The symposium included panels on race and litigation and innocence. Exonerree and symposium panelist Herman Atkins described his 12 years in prison before being released from a 45-year sentence after DNA testing confirmed his innocence. The panels were followed by the presentation of the Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr. Public Service Award to the Honorable Terry J. Hatter, Jr., Senior Judge and Chief Judge Emeritus of the United States District Court, Central District of California.

Loyola’s law reviews have also been at the helm of creating opportunities to learn outside of the classroom. In March 2010, the Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review brought together international disability rights policy makers for a three-panel program examining the significance of the United Nations (U.N.) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Speakers including Stephanie Ortoleva, former advisor on disability policy, U.S. Department of State, and Dr. Michael Stein, executive director of the Harvard Law School Project on Disability, discussed their strategies for widespread ratification and implementation of the convention.

Associate Dean Michael Waterstone said, “The symposium on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was a fantastic success. We were able to hear from many of the people who were directly involved in negotiating the treaty, as well as those who are responsible for implementing it amongst various countries. In addition to these leaders engaging each other, they also engaged our audience, who became an active part of the day’s sessions.”

Yet another outstanding program presented by Loyola’s Civil Justice Program was the March 2010 symposium, “Injuries without Remedies.” The program brought together dozens of academics and practitioners alike through four panels examining the many facets of remedies. Professor John Nockleby described the intricacies of the symposium topic noting, “Many people assume that what the law defines as an ‘injury’ is constant over time. However, neither ‘injury’ nor ‘remedies’ are static, but changing in meaning and content over time. The
Academic and Student Events
Bring Top Legal Minds to Campus
(Continued from cover)

symposium featured leading scholars thinking hard about what counts as ‘injury,’ as well as the symbiotic relationship between injury and remedy.”

Less formal lunch-and-learns have also given students the chance to learn outside the classroom and connect with accomplished alum who obtained most of his success outside of the traditional practice of law.”

Plascencia also serves as a judge pro tem for the Superior Court of Los Angeles, paddle surfs and is the bassist for two bands. Student Owili Eison added, “Having Joe Escalante come in and speak at our ESLS event was both an inspiring and informative experience. As a student, it is always great to have these opportunities to converse with an accomplished alum who obtained most of his success outside of the traditional practice of law.”

Joe Escalante ’92 joined the Entertainment & Sports Law Society (ESLS) over Chinese food to discuss his multi-faceted career as the host of “Barely Legal Radio” on Indie 103.1 FM, a program in which he dispenses free legal advice for professionals working in the entertainment industry. Escalante also serves as a judge pro tem for the Superior Court of Los Angeles, paddle surfs and is the bassist for two bands. Student Owili Eison added, “Having Joe Escalante come in and speak at our ESLS event was both an inspiring and informative experience. As a student, it is always great to have these opportunities to converse with an accomplished alum who obtained most of his success outside of the traditional practice of law.”

The SBA and the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association brought alumnus Luan Phan ’96 on campus to give insight on his experiences as a renowned civil trial attorney in Los Angeles. As managing partner of the Phan Law Group, Phan was listed by Southern California Super Lawyers magazine for seven consecutive years. Samuel Liu, speaker chair for the SBA, loves the idea of bringing alumni like Phan back to campus. “Loyola has produced some of the best trial attorneys in the nation; they are leaders in every aspect of the law, and as students, we can really benefit from their experience and wisdom,” noted Liu.
John Horn, the current president of Loyola Law School’s Alumni Association Board of Governors, has been deeply involved with the school for many years. He began his involvement as a student, serving first as SBA president. Horn noted, “I was an ex-officio member so I had attended several board meetings as a student.”

Horn’s continued involvement with Loyola, serving on the SBA for four years, including two as president, has given him a unique perspective on the school. He felt there was a great need for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to be taught from a practitioner’s perspective rather than a philosophical model. Horn approached Loyola with his ideas and a course plan, and for the past decade he has shared his expertise with Loyola students.

As president of the Board of Governors, Horn has projects in motion to bolster the alumni network through technology. His primary goal for the year is to establish Loyola Connect as a viable and useful way for the Loyola alumni community to grow stronger and more valuable. Since content and connections are the most important keys to our success, now that the site has officially launched, my objective for this year is to drive as much traffic through the site as possible.”

With these wins under their belts, the teams went on to participate in the ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition in Chicago in April 2010. At the national final, the team of Peter Klausner, Ashley Farrell and Blake Osborn placed 12th in the country out of 201 teams with Peter Klausner being named the number three oralist in the country. The team of Jonathan Burke, Danielle Claxton and Brian Hong placed 18th in the country out of 201 teams. The winning teams were coached by Joel Richlin ’06 and Courtney Ryan ’09 with the direction of faculty advisor Rebecca Dellino.

The Jessup Moot Court Team was also on a winning streak, placing third in the U.S. Pacific Super Regionals. The team consisting of Diana Rivero, Jessica Rankin, Sonya Servin, and Tatyana Gomerman beat out teams including Stanford, Hastings, UC Davis, Cal Western, USC and UCLA. Servin and Gomerman received Outstanding Oralist Awards out of 114 participants. Judith Weston ’99 coached the Jessup team.

The training and preparation of these competitions has given Loyola students an edge that helps them hit the ground running when they begin their legal careers. Gabriela Ramirez described the advantage gained by her participation on the HNBA Moot Court Team: “This experience has taught me so much about the art of appellate advocacy. Not only have I improved my writing and oral advocacy skills, but I have also had the experience of arguing before prominent judges and attorneys. All of this makes me feel ready and eager to begin my legal career.”

Visit www.alumni.lls.edu for a list of upcoming events and opportunities to get involved.

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