Trial Team Ranks **FIRST** in the Nation

"Fear the Turtle"—it's a phrase associated with the University of Maryland, but mostly with the powerhouse basketball and football squads. But at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy's (NITA) **17th Annual Tournament of Champions** (TOC), it was the Trial Team from the School of Law methodically advancing through the brackets, upsetting higher-ranked powers, and ultimately claiming the national championship and the claim to the number one ranking in the country.

Limited to the sixteen schools that have compiled the nation's best competition records during the preceding three years, the Tournament of Champions is the most prestigious of all mock trial competitions for law students.

"Even to be among the sixteen teams that earn an invitation to the Tournament of Champions is a great accomplishment. Winning the national championship against such outstanding competition is truly remarkable," says Law School Professor Jerome (Jerry) Deise, the team's coach.

Competitors Jessica Butkera, Jason Downs, Sig Libowitz, Rachel Simmons, and alternate Nolan Welchek earned team honors. Simmons was named the Top Advocate of the championship, which was held last October at Stetson University (the 2004 winner) in St. Petersburg, Fla. As a result of their victory, the School of Law is automatically entered into the next two Tournaments of Champions. And competitors beware: UMLaw will have home "court" advantage when they host the TOC in fall 2008.

---

Students Make Winning Case in Myerowitz Competition

The excellent teaching you're receiving, combined with your obvious hard work in preparing, is propelling you all to be outstanding advocates," said The Hon. Clayton Greene, Jr., Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, and one of three distinguished jurists who sat on the bench for the final round of arguments for the 38th Annual Morris B. Myerowitz Moot Court Competition. "We expect great things from each one of you as you pursue your legal career."

The top finishers made their way through four rounds of oral competition, spanning the course of a semester. Alicia Welch ('08) (above) took the prize for top oral argument, with Thaia Sundaesaran ('08) earning runner-up honors. Jennifer Katz ('08) won the award for best brief. The arguments this year were based on the real-life free speech case, Morse v. Frederick, presented to the Supreme Court on March 19; it became known as the "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" case, echoing the banner central to the arguments.

"We all concur that the presentations were fabulous. We were thrilled to participate in this competition and were particularly struck that none of you seemed shaken by the fact that you were appearing before real judges," said Judge Greene, who was joined by The Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera and The Hon. James Eyer of the Maryland Court of Special Appeals on the competition's judging panel.

One of the most highly anticipated events of the year, the competition was created by the family of Morris B. Myerowitz to honor their son and nephew. Numerous members of the Myerowitz family attended the March 14 final round in the law school's Ceremonial Courtroom. The competition can be viewed at www.law.umaryland.edu/studentorg/mootcourt/myerowitz2007.asp
BLSA Banquet: Notes of Distinction

With the theme "Destined for Distinction," the Black Law Students Association's 32nd annual banquet reminded all in attendance that each person has the capacity for greatness, and urged its members to help remove the societal barriers that inhibit achievement.

The evening's keynote speaker was Baltimore native Charles Dutton, an ex-offender who subsequently achieved fame and success as an actor, on Broadway and in films. His speech, a dramatic embodiment of the banquet's theme, captivated an audience of almost 200 at the Feb. 17 event. "In a few years, I ended up going from jail to Yale," Dutton said. "Once you make a decision to change, all kinds of things happen."

The A.J. Cooper Award, named in honor of the BLSA's national founder and given each year to an outstanding graduating student, was shared by Alicia Wilson and Dara McClay Okeke. Wilson served as co-captain of the law school's national champion Trial Team and recently began a clerkship with Judge David Young of the Circuit Court of Baltimore City. Okeke was on the Maryland Law Review and held a judicial internship with Judge Marvin Garbis of the U.S. District Court.

William C. Murphy, Jr. ('69) presented the Murphy Scholarship, recognizing outstanding academic achievement, to Cori Shephard ('08). As a student, Murphy played a leading role in the creation of Maryland's BLSA chapter.

Russell McClain ('95), who returned to the School of Law last year as coordinator of the Academic Achievement Program and a visiting assistant professor, was named Alumnus of the Year. Professor of Law Douglas Colbert was named Teacher of the Year.

MPILP: Spurring On Community Action

It was a special evening, as 300 alumni, students, and faculty celebrated the good works and the twentieth anniversary of the Maryland Public Interest Law Project (MPILP). Honored at the dinner were founders Nevett Steele ('67) and Michael Millemann, the Jacob A. France Professor of Public Interest Law.

But more important, the annual benefit auction raised more than $40,000 to support the MPILP. Lucky bidders received lunch with Dean Karen Rothenberg, week-long vacations in far-flung locations, from Mexico to Martha's Vineyard, VIP tickets to a taping of Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report," and hundreds of other donated items.

The community at large will be the recipient of the largest; funds raised will support MPILP grants, providing students a $4,000 stipend for ten weeks of summer work at local public interest programs, such as the Legal Aid Bureau, the Homeless Persons Representation Project, and many others. This year, MPILP was able to fund grants for all of the twenty-seven applications it received. That's putting action into community action.

Three hundred alumni, students, and faculty filled Westminster Hall for MPILP's twentieth-anniversary auction. Program founders Nevett Steele ('67) (above far left) and Prof. Michael Millemann were honored before the auction, and Ben Peoples ('08) and Deepti Kulkarni ('08) received awards for their service to MPILP and the law school.
COMMENCEMENT

The School of Law's May 18 Hooding Ceremony was enough to stop traffic—literally. The faculty and 229 members of the Class of 2007 gathered before the ceremony in Westminster Hall, then processed together down a closed-off Fayette Street to the renovated Hippodrome Theatre, where an overflow crowd of friends and family had assembled.

Bryan Stevenson (left), executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama, delivered the keynote address. Stevenson has won national acclaim for his work challenging bias against the poor and people of color in the criminal justice system.

After the ceremony, graduates and their guests gathered for a luncheon at the law school, followed by UMB's Commencement Ceremony at the 1st Mariner Arena.
His parents are Chinese. He speaks five languages. He’s worked on Asian trade deals. But Marcus Wang had never left the country. That changed this summer, when the rising third-year student headed to China for a two-week internship in the Beijing office of DLA Piper, sent by the firm’s New York City office in its first foreign-exchange program.

A native son of Baltimore, Wang was scolded in Burmese as a child by his Chinese parents. They had emigrated to the United States from what is now called Myanmar in the 1970s. “It’s what I’ll probably use to scold my kids,” he laughs, “though they won’t understand me.” In a reversal of the stereotype, Wang translates from Chinese to English for his mother, who grew up speaking Burmese. He taught himself Mandarin and Cantonese while in high school and used to be “pretty fluent” in Spanish.

After graduating cum laude from Harvard, he put his language skills to work back in Baltimore. He translated conversations with the mayor of Nanjing for his boss at Maryland’s Department of Business and Economic Development, working on foreign direct investment in Maryland and local business deals in Asia.

Wang is carrying on a legacy of leadership and service as the first recipient of the Samuel and Anne Hopkins scholarship. He was vice president of the University Student Government Association last fall, and also worked on the school’s *Journal of Race, Religion, Gender, and Class*, writing case notes, pulling sources, and checking citations. But all these experiences are trumped by the opportunity to actually work in a foreign capital. “It was very exciting to get this kind of experience in my first time abroad,” he says. He’ll turn around and go right back this fall as one of four third-years heading to China’s elite Central University of Finance and Economics to study in the law school’s inaugural Chinese foreign-exchange program.

The hometown boy still thanks his lucky stars that he was able to discover his international future—and a law school he loves—right in his own backyard.

—Lise Lingo

Potential Leadership Scholar candidates were presented sage advice from seasoned alumni and more when they toured the School of Law last April 11 for a day-long series of events. The recruits met with faculty and deans, attended a mock law school class, and participated in the discussion “Perspectives from Practice.” The panel featured key graduates (from left) Judge Andre Davis (’78) of the U.S. District Court for Maryland; Miriam Fisher (’85), one of the nation’s leading tax attorneys; and Ava E. Lias-Booker (’86), head of the litigation practice group at McGuire Woods. Miles & Stockbridge Chairman John Frisch (’83) and Steve Groseclose (’94), director of global health and environmental protection at Advanced MicroDevices in Texas, offered additional insight.
Reunion 2007

Members of the class of 1997 (right) enjoy the weekend; Dean Rothenberg with alumni from the classes of 1956 and 1957 (below).

Graduates from all reunion classes shared a reception in the atrium before moving to individual class dinners throughout the law school.

Michael J. Pappas ('02) and his wife Laura show off the evening's youngest guests, daughters Caroline and Olivia.

Grads from 2001 enjoyed the reception before heading to Maggie Moore's restaurant for their class dinner.

Tours of the Nathan Patz Law Center were popular, with many alumni getting their first look at the law school's new home.
A Night to Honor Alums

More than 150 alumni gathered at the School of Law on April 19 for the Alumni Association’s sixteenth annual Honors Banquet. The Distinguished Graduate Award was presented to Francis B. Burch, Jr. ('74), Joint CEO of DLA Piper. The Hon. Lawrence Rodowsky ('56), of the Maryland Court of Appeals, received the Benjamin L. Cardin Public Service Award. (See profile on pg. 20.) The inaugural Rising Star Award, honoring a recent graduate of the law school, was presented to Marnell A. Cooper ('02), in recognition of his service, including coaching the law school’s Trial Team.

Dean Karen Rothenberg (above) with Alvin B. Krongard ('75), who introduced Distinguished Graduate Frank Burch ('74). Marnell Cooper ('02) (right) delivered rousing acceptance remarks after being presented the Rising Star Award.

Distinguished Graduate of the Year Francis B. Burch, Jr. ('74) with Jim Hanks ('67) and his daughter, Maria Dorothy.

Emerson Dorsey ('79) with Al Figinski ('62).

A CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP

Britt Kirwan, University System of Maryland Chancellor, welcomed a major group of UMLaw's most generous supporters to his Baltimore home, Hidden Waters, for a reception last September 26. Law school Dean Karen Rothenberg was joined by the Chancellor and UMB President David Ramsay in thanking the members of the Maryland Law School Club, the law school’s leadership giving group, for their continuing support. All were entertained with a piano performance by Roberto Vela ('09), the Samuel and Anne Hopkins Scholar, who came to the law school after completing dual degrees at Johns Hopkins and the Peabody Conservatory.

Henry Hopkins ('68) (at left) with Samuel and Anne Hopkins Scholar Roberto Vela. Howard Brown (at left, above), Paul Bekman ('71), chair of the law school’s Board of Visitors, with Chancellor Kirwan.