Leaders of the Pack

Building on their success—professional, personal, and academic—the law school’s first group of “Leadership Scholars” are making an impact on advocacy in the arts, sciences, and all manner of community service.

Thirty of the students in the 2004 entering class of the School of Law were recognized as “leadership scholars” before they even opened up a law book. These individuals became the inaugural class of Leadership Scholars because of their outstanding accomplishments as leaders in academics, and in their professional life, community work, and overall public service.

This group has set a high standard for the law school, and the leadership scholars to follow. Dean Karen Rothenberg notes, “The reasons that led these students to pursue a career in the law are not only inspirational and meaningful, but as diverse as their backgrounds. We are proud to be given the opportunity to shape the future careers of these extraordinary students. They are poised to become exceptional lawyers and they exemplify our law school’s commitment to educating our country’s future leaders.”

The legal specialties this diverse group have chosen are as varied as the students’ many different backgrounds. Dorcas Gilmore, recipient of the Gilbert & Jaylee Mead Scholarship, grew up in a middle class family living in a low income Florida community. Later, she worked in the poorest regions of the Dominican Republic.

“My life experiences have shown me the power of our legal system to both enable and disenfranchise,” Gilmore says. She hopes that these experiences will energize her to use her law school education to empower low-income communities of color and provide them with the legal representation necessary to make meaningful changes in their quality of life.

Sigmund Libowitz, a Maryland native, is a former vice president for acquisitions and co-productions for Paramount Pictures. (He worked in front of the camera as well, in acting roles for such leading TV shows as “Law and Order” and “The Sopranos.”) His successful career in the creative arts, on both sides of the desk, prepared him well, he says. “I believe that my experience negotiating contracts, managing budgets, working creatively to bring divergent parties and interests together, performing live on stage and on camera, and my background as a writer and as a studio executive working with other writers provides me with practical skills that can serve me well in law school and beyond.” Libowitz wants to link his work in the entertainment field with politics and law.

Alicia Wilson, the Andrew Levy Scholar, says, “Through appellate legal advocacy, I hope to challenge policies and practices that prevent individuals from obtaining justice based on their race, class, ethnic background, disability, or gender.” Wilson learned early, as a young volunteer at the Public Justice Center, that her ability to create change was not dependent on social status, age, or economic situation, but instead it was the strength of her desire to create lasting solutions to social injustices on a daily basis.

John Lovejoy says that he wants to “combine [a] hunger to be heard with the study of law.” He hopes someday to be a litigator and to improve the quality of life in his native city of Baltimore.

Joanne S. Hawana is a scientist with an intimate knowledge of current debates surrounding embryonic stem cell research, therapeutic cloning, regenentesis, and gene therapy. “I am acutely aware of the need for public policy in these and other areas,” she says. “I have come to believe that we should not leave public policy decisions until after a technology or therapy already has come into widespread use or practice.” Hawana believes that part of the problem in this realm is the communication disconnect existing between scientists and lawyers. She wants to enter the field of intellectual property law.

As the fall semester opens, the law school welcomes a new class, the 2005-2006 “Leadership Scholars,” making this honor another fine continuing tradition of UM Law.—Nancy Zibron

The 2004-2005 Leadership Scholars

Dorcas R. Gilmore, BA, magna cum laude, Rollins College, Gilbert & Jaylee Mead Scholar
Maribel Roig, PhD, MA, Harvard University, BA, summa cum laude, Princeton University, Christine Edwards Scholar
Reena K. Shah, MPA, Princeton University, BA, magna cum laude, George Washington University, Benjamin R. Civiletti Scholar
Alicia L. Wilson, BA, with high honors, University of MD, Baltimore County, Andrew Levy Scholar
Sophie I. Asike, BA, Howard University
Christopher S. Davidson, BA, summa cum laude, University of MD, Baltimore County
Jennifer A. Deines, BA, magna cum laude, Xavier University
William E. Gamgort, BS, summa cum laude, University of Delaware
Ivy Gentry, BA, cum laude, Biola University
Carolyn Gleason-Sánchez, BA, UCLA
Christopher J. Hautala, BA, magna cum laude, Salisbury University
Joanne S. Hawana, MS, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, BS, College of William and Mary
Daniel W. Ingersoll, BA, Swarthmore College
Sean M. Kates, BA, cum laude, University of Maryland
Brian T. Kehoe, BS, University of Rochester
Sarah A. Kotula, BA, cum laude, Franklin and Marshall College
Emily L. Levenson, BA, magna cum laude, University of Maryland
Victor Emmanuel Leviste, BS, cum laude, Georgetown University
Sigmund G. Libowitz, BFA, with high honors, New York University, Tisch School of the Arts
John J. Lovejoy, BA, with honors, University of Chicago
Darah P. McCray, BA, Emory University
Marissa L. Merrick, BA, cum laude, University of Delaware
Jill L. Morotchie, BA, American University
Kaelia S. Plunkett, BBA, cum laude, Temple University
Rebecca B. Ripley, BFA, magna cum laude, Denison University
Taren K. Savage, MA, Boston University, BA, with honors, Eckerd College
Marcia J. Simon, MA, Cornell University, BS, MIT
Elisabeth S. Walden, BA, Johns Hopkins University
Jillian A. Williams, BA, University of Maryland
Aileen B. Xenakis, BA, Mount St. Mary’s College

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