50th Anniversary Convocation Speaker
Justice Antonin Scalia
Supreme Court of the United States
Beyond the Classroom

A legal education at St. Thomas Law is a full time and transforming experience. In this issue, we highlight some of the many ways we extend the educational experience beyond the outstanding classroom teaching provided by our faculty. We do this through:

- Distinguished speakers, expert in their fields, who expand students’ horizons. This year, we hosted Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia (pp. 10-12), privacy expert Professor Anita Allen of Penn Law, and Pulitzer Prize winning author Sonia Nazario, among others;
- Clinics, externships, and a Pro Bono Leadership Program that help students build skills, learn the difference a lawyer can make in people’s lives, and develop lifelong habits of service. This year, our students provided over 16,000 hours of volunteer community service. (pp. 2, 4)
- A learning environment that includes academic support programs regarded as national role models. The November 2012 issue of the National Jurist, the law student magazine, singles out our atmosphere, our first year academic support program, our diversity, and our admissions policies for particular praise;
- Highly successful advocacy programs. Each year, our student mock trial and moot court teams win national awards and recognition. (pp 3, 9);
- A full slate of professional development programming including alumni panels on a wide range of careers as well as training in interviewing, networking, and business etiquette and a new Professionalism Day devoted to the values of our profession.

We are excited about the opportunities to serve our students, the community, and the cause of justice. I hope you will join us in this important mission through a gift to our Annual Fund and by volunteering to mentor a student.

With sincerest best wishes for the New Year,

Douglas E. Ray
Dean and Professor of Law
10  Supremely Speaking

United States Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia shares his experience, wisdom and advice with St. Thomas Law students, alumni, faculty and friends.

13  Servants of Justice

Before law school, these St. Thomas Law students served those in need around the world. Now, they are earning their law degrees with the goal to serve those in need in their own backyards.
Celebrating Service
St. Thomas Law’s Inaugural Public Service Awards

On Thursday, April 12, the St Thomas University School of Law held its first annual Public Service Awards program. Dean Douglas Ray introduced the program stating, “Today we celebrate the difference a lawyer can make in a community, and the particular difference our St. Thomas Law students make in this community.” In the 2011-2012 academic year, St. Thomas Law students provided over 16,000 hours of pro bono service.

Dean Ray highlighted the pro bono work of the 39 students in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program who helped more than 500 low- and middle-income taxpayers and military personnel file returns and receive over a million dollars in refunds and credits.

Pro Bono Commendation Certificates were presented to the 42 students who each provided more than 100 hours of volunteer service to the community as part of the law school’s Pro Bono Leadership Program. Some of these students provided more than 500 hours of service. Dave Sooklal and Vladimir Larios from the Immigration Law Clinic and Joseph Hunt from the Tax Law Clinic received Outstanding Clinic Student Awards, and Victoria Mendez of the Office of the City Attorney in Miami received the Outstanding Supervisor Award.

Dade County Bar Association President Andrea Hartley delivered the keynote address, congratulating the students for their efforts. She stressed the importance of volunteer work by the Bar and the difference a public-spirited lawyer can make in the lives of people and communities.

Training Against Trafficking

St. Thomas University School of Law’s Human Trafficking Academy aims to raise awareness of human trafficking, while promoting public-private collaboration and improving services for survivors of this heinous crime.

“Our Human Trafficking Academy is a unique initiative encompassing year-around specialized training, research and community outreach in a hands-on approach to combating trafficking in human beings,” said Director of the Human Trafficking Academy and Professor of Law, Dr. Roza Pati. “The summer two-week intensive training for law enforcement and other first responders, legal professionals, teachers, researchers and religious institutions was the landmark of the Academy, training over 200 participants.”

Through a series of conferences and workshops, the Academy has reached about 2,500 professionals locally, nationally and internationally in the past year, and has offered 128 free continuing legal education credits to members of the Florida Bar and other professionals.

Participants are now better equipped to recognize not only the importance of prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership in combating the crime, but also issues of rescue, redress, recovery and reintegration of human trafficking survivors back to normal life. For more information please contact us at humantrafficking@stu.edu.
Trial, Not Error

St. Thomas Law is one of eight law schools advancing to the national finals of the American Bar Association’s annual Labor and Employment Law Mock Trial Competition in Dallas in January 2013. Over 100 law schools originally entered this ABA competition.

In October, St. Thomas Law entered two teams in the competition’s regional rounds in Miami. Battling twelve teams from Florida, Georgia and Texas, St. Thomas’s teams performed very well, setting up a final round in which St. Thomas Law faced off against St. Thomas Law!

Alex Vanicek ’13, Jessica Klein ’13, Florence Rubio ’13 and Nicholas Ferreiro ’13 represented the plaintiff and Jeffrey Hagans ’14, Lindsay Scott ’14, Andres Fernandez ’14 and Rachel Walker ’13 represented the defendant. In the end, the plaintiffs proved victorious, and the students will now represent St. Thomas Law and its mock trial program in the national finals in Dallas.

The first and second-place teams were coached by adjunct professor Michael Mayer, Esq., ’07, the mock trial team’s faculty advisor, as well as Katya Pisman, Esq. ’07, Lincoln Atten, Esq. ’11, and Jeff James, Esq. Dean Douglas E. Ray and Professor Stephen Plass also assisted with the teams’ preparations, and offered valuable insights.

Law Day Festivities

On Law Day, April 3, 2012, St. Thomas Law invited Scott Hawkins, Esq., President of The Florida Bar, to deliver the keynote speech.

Mr. Hawkins chose to speak of professionalism, urging students to live by Aristotle’s view that “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is a habit, not an act.” He encouraged these future lawyers to “practice our noble profession in a noble way.”

Pictured left: Scott Hawkins with Herman Russomanno at Law Day.
Community Impact

St. Thomas Law Students Make A Difference

This fall, St. Thomas Law partnered with HandsOn Broward to kick off the school year with a Back-to-School Preschool Makeover. St. Thomas Law students, alumni, and staff worked together to give the LES Preschool, in Hollywood, Florida, a fresh new look.

The following month, the law school partnered with Farrell & Patel, Attorneys at Law, (Wes Farrell, Esq. and Ricky Patel, Esq. are both 2009 graduates), to volunteer at the 2nd Annual Miami Children’s Hospital 5K Run/Walk. Students and attorneys worked side-by-side overseeing the Kids Fun Zone. The event raised more than $450,000 for the children and families at Miami Children’s Hospital, more than double the amount raised through the inaugural event last year.

“These events further St. Thomas Law’s mission to be involved continuously in the community,” said Jennifer Portwood Gordon, Esq. ’09, Director of Pro Bono and Public Interest Career Counselor at St. Thomas Law. “Each month the law school will partner with a different local organization in the community to give back and make a difference.”

If you are interested in volunteering or know of pro bono opportunities, please contact Ms. Portwood Gordon at jportwood@stu.edu.
Opening Doors

On November 27, 2012, The Most Rev. Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, presided at the blessing and dedication of the law school’s newest building, The Center for Professional Development. This Center will house the new, expanded offices for Career Development, Alumni Relations and Outreach, and the Pro Bono Leadership Program and Resource Center. The 5,000 square foot building also houses a new 75-person classroom with interactive technology. The classroom will be used by both students and alumni for professional development programs on professionalism, ethics, interviewing and networking, and CLE programs.

[Editor’s note: The dedication ceremony took place after publication. Please go to the Alumni Relations page of the St. Thomas Law website for more photos of the blessing and dedication.]

Media Frenzy


The event featured Harvard Law Professor Charles Nesson as keynote speaker, prominent South Florida attorney Benedict Kuehne as moderator, and a conversation with retired Judge George Greer, who presided over the Terri Schiavo case.

Pictured above left: Dean Ray, Fern Nesson, Prof. Charles Nesson, Kyle Teal, Esq. ’12; Andrew Abel, Esq. ’12
Pictured above right: Manny Garcia, Willard Shepard, Howard Saltz, David Lyons
At the St. Thomas Law Commencement ceremony on May 12, 2012, we saluted our newest alumni – 172 J.D. and 30 LL.M. graduates – and welcomed back eight graduates from the classes of 1987 and 1988. These eight alumni, celebrating the 25th anniversary of their graduation, served as the ceremony’s grand marshals. Juan M. Saiz, Esq. ’87 enjoyed the experience noting, “It was my absolute pleasure to take part in the ceremony and see my classmates.” The law school looks forward to building upon this tradition going forward.

Dean Ray told the graduating students that they would be the “peacemakers and the communicators of our society, the people who make things happen and who help others realize their dreams.” He thanked the graduates for the difference they had made in the life of the school and in the community through their volunteer and clinic work and thanked their families and the faculty and staff for making this graduation possible. Joseph Hunt, Shannon Healy, and Jennifer Heath were presented Dean’s Awards for Outstanding Leadership and Service and Kyle Teal received the ALI/ABA Scholarship and Leadership Award.

Valedictorian Kerry Nierenberg thanked family and friends, and acknowledged the sacrifices they made in support of the graduates.

In her keynote address, the Honorable Rosemary Barkett of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit challenged the graduates to take on difficult issues: “We still have inequality. I hope that the skills St. Thomas Law has provided you with will enable you to take on challenges like poverty and inequality, and do something about it.”
The Office for Alumni Relations began a new tradition on September 28, 2012, when the law school welcomed back 27 alumni from the Class of 2012 and hosted its inaugural induction ceremony for new lawyers.

Just a few months after they graduated and took the Florida Bar exam, these new lawyers represented the many St. Thomas Law graduates who had received good news from the Board of Bar Examiners in mid-September. Held in the Moot Courtroom, the ceremony offered graduates the opportunity to be sworn in with their fellow classmates in the same venue where it all began for them a few years ago as nervous first-year students.

Over 130 proud family members and friends were in attendance as well, along with many members of the St. Thomas community. The Honorable Peter R. Lopez of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, an adjunct professor at St. Thomas Law who taught several of these alumni, was the presiding judge and offered warm words of encouragement for the new lawyers.

Also taking part in the program were Frances Guasch De La Guardia, Esq. ’88, President of the St. Thomas Law Alumni Association; Suzette L. Russomanno, Esq. ’04, President of the Dade County Bar Association – Young Lawyers Section; and Msgr. Franklyn M. Casale, President of St. Thomas University.
Pope Recognizes Professor Pati
Prof. Roza Pati Named to Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

St. Thomas University’s Professor Roza Pati has been recognized at a global level for leadership in the intercultural human rights arena. Pope Benedict XVI named Professor Pati a member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The Council, a Vatican body dedicated to the promotion of social justice, advocates for peace and justice around the world consistent with the Gospel and the Church’s social teaching.

“This is a significant appointment and a recognition of the global impact Professor Pati has had through her writings and her speeches around the world on human rights issues such as human trafficking. It is a recognition of her status as a leader in global human rights,” said Dean Douglas Ray.

Professor Pati, who was born in Albania, was a member of parliament there and served in the cabinet as Secretary of State for youth and women. Professor Pati teaches at St. Thomas Law, serves as the Executive Director of the Graduate Program in Intercultural Human Rights (since 2003), and is also the Director of the Human Trafficking Academy.

“I am extremely proud of Professor Pati,” said St. Thomas University President Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale. “She is a leader in so many areas of social justice.”

Eco-Advocates
LL.M. In Environmental Sustainability Educates Environmental Leaders

Some of the nation’s most outstanding thinkers in the fields of sustainability, ecology and environmental law guest lecture as part of St. Thomas Law’s LL.M. Program in Environmental Sustainability, now in its second year.

They share insights with the students in a variety of course formats, many of which are offered to the wider public for CLE credit. To make the program more accessible to remote or working students, certain courses are offered as intensive Friday-Saturday workshops.

Among the highlights of the LL.M. in Environmental Sustainability are immersion courses that take students into the field to interact with professionals in a variety of disciplines linked to sustainability. In May 2012, students traveled to the Netherlands for a week-long course that gave students an inside view of high-tech water management as experienced in a nation below sea-level.

As the program enters its second year, the program’s director, Professor Alfred Light, notes “I can’t help but feel that we are starting this program at the right place and at the right time.”
Honorable Mentions
St. Thomas Law Students Win Advocacy Awards Across the Country

In the prestigious Wechsler First Amendment Moot Court Competition held October 2012 in Washington, D.C., the St. Thomas Law Moot Court team, comprised of law students Stephanie Jimenez, Stephanie Michel and Joshua Simon, was recognized with the Second Best Brief Award, being outscored only by Harvard Law School in that category.

In the prestigious San Diego Defense Lawyers National Mock Trial Competition held October 18-20, 2012, in San Diego, California, the St Thomas Law Mock Trial team of Daniel Garza, Guy Noa, Ian Ward, and Marbely Hernandez, placed fifth of 24 teams from across the country.

At the 2012 Nova Closing Argument Mock Trial Competition, St. Thomas Law dominated. Sean Ford won the competition and was named Best Closer, Ian Ward won a Finalist award, and St. Thomas Law won the Best Team Award.

At the 2012 Frederick Douglass Southern Regional Moot Court Competition in Alabama, St. Thomas Law finished in the top three and advanced to the National Finals.

At the 2012 Chester Bedell Memorial Mock Trial Competition, the St. Thomas Law team of Jorge Garcia, William Hannon, Bill McHugh, Sean Ford and Stacy Wohar advanced to the semifinals.

At the 2012 Regional National Trial Competition held in Denver, St. Thomas Law students Daniel Garza and Jenine Abdeljaber made it to the semifinals.

In March 2012, St. Thomas Law students participated in the IISL Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition for the first time. St. Thomas Law advanced to the semifinal round, where Lanessa Owens and Clayton Ling were called upon to present both sides of the argument.

At the 2011 Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition, Michelle Narganes won Best Individual Oral Advocate.

At the 2011 National Criminal Procedure Competition in San Diego, Shannon Healy and Christina Camacho advanced to the quarterfinal round and brought home the award for Best Brief of Respondent.

Patently Perfect
St. Thomas Law Team Wins Science Competition

Congratulations to second-year students Michael Stopek, Felipe Rubio and Kevin Cudlipp who, at the Dade County Legal Aid fundraiser, the Patently Impossible Project at the Miami Science Museum, demonstrated both their talent and their commitment to the community as the winners of the Patently Impossible Project.

Competing against teams of patent attorneys, engineers and attorneys, they were the first team to successfully complete a project which involved dozens of tiny parts and a set of complicated instructions for assembling a battery-powered paper airplane launcher. St. Thomas Law was also represented by several other members of our student and alumni communities, all of whom came together to help Legal Aid raise money for the important work it does.
U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of St. Thomas University
In celebration of its 50th Anniversary, St. Thomas University held a special academic convocation on November 15, 2011. The Honorable Antonin Scalia, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, delivered the keynote address before a capacity-sized crowd of students and alumni, faculty and staff, members of the judiciary and various South Florida community leaders at the University’s Fernandez Center for Leadership & Wellness.

Prior to Justice Scalia’s address, Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale, President of St. Thomas University, conferred upon Justice Scalia an honorary doctor of laws, *honoris causa*, recognizing the Justice’s years of service to the nation and commitment to justice.

“We were honored to have Justice Scalia visit us to help St. Thomas celebrate its 50th anniversary,” said Msgr. Casale. “We are very proud of how we’ve grown here as a university over the last half-century, and equally proud of the accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and thousands of successful alumni. We were pleased that Justice Scalia, the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice to visit this campus, was able to see in person that we practice what we preach: we develop leaders for life.”

Marking a personal milestone himself – Justice Scalia was celebrating his 25th year on the Supreme Court and is the longest-serving member of the nation’s highest court – the Justice praised St. Thomas for its role as a Catholic university, and spoke generally about the importance of a Catholic law school in today’s higher education and judicial systems.

Justice Scalia outlined areas in which a Catholic law school can make a difference, perhaps most importantly, by contributing to the moral foundation of its students. “This has nothing to do with making them better lawyers,” he said, “but everything to do with making them better men and women.”
Following the academic convocation, Justice Scalia attended a luncheon on campus where Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson, a St. Thomas University alumna, presented a key to the city to Justice Scalia, “the first Supreme Court Justice to visit Miami Gardens.”

In the afternoon, Dean Ray conducted an informal “Conversation with Justice Scalia,” during which a dozen students engaged Justice Scalia with questions on a variety of topics. Among the subjects he touched on, Justice Scalia explained that, as a judge on a panel of nine judges, one has a feeling not of great power, but rather of great responsibility. He spoke of the importance of including dissenting opinions so that the best of both sides’ arguments are represented in the final decision. He pointed out that a good judge often reaches a result he does not like “when applying law as it exists and not as he wishes it were.”

Addressing the law school’s future lawyers, Justice Scalia underscored the importance of cultivating a reputation as a trusted lawyer. “To earn trust,” he said, “one must be precise and accurate in everything one does.”

The students relished the opportunity to have such personal contact with Justice Scalia. Rachel Lyons ’13, remarked, “This was an amazing day at St. Thomas Law. I especially enjoyed Justice Scalia’s Q&A with the students. It was not only a rare opportunity to hear a Supreme Court Justice field questions on a variety of legal issues, but also a rare glimpse into the personality of someone about whom we only read in books and Court decisions.”

We were pleased that Justice Scalia, the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice to visit this campus, was able to see in person that we practice what we preach: we develop leaders for life.

Concluding the day’s activities, Dean Ray thanked Justice Scalia and presented him with an original Haitian painting, a memento from the collaborative art projects that St. Thomas University supports in Port-de-Paix, St. Thomas University’s sister diocese in Haiti. “This was a proud moment for the law school and the entire university. I credit Dean Ray and Assistant Dean Kelly for their efforts in securing such a prominent jurist, and for an entire day’s worth of events – extremely well-organized and well-received by all,” said Antonio Martinez, Esq. ’03, Secretary of the St. Thomas Law Alumni Association.
Servants of Justice

by Peter T. Kelly

Public service is a core component of our mission at St. Thomas Law.

Our students are shining examples of this mission. Throughout their time at the law school, our students serve through the Pro Bono program, clinical programs, and more. Upon graduation, many of our alumni continue to serve through a variety of organizations including Legal Aid, the Public Defender and State Attorney’s offices, and the JAG Corps, to name a few.

But what about our students’ lives before entering law school? On the following pages we look at how three current students chose to serve before joining the St. Thomas Law community.
Rachel Walker, who was born in Australia and raised in upstate New York and Brookline, Massachusetts, graduated from the University of Texas-Austin with a B.A. in Government, and worked within the Texas House of Representatives for a year after her time in Austin.

She then headed off to the Kingdom of Swaziland in Sub-Saharan Africa, where she served as a member of the Peace Corps for over two years. Because Swaziland’s HIV infection rate is the highest in the world (26.1% of adults and over 50% of all adults in their 20s), Rachel focused her work on HIV/AIDS education, teaching a broad range of age groups—from five-year old orphans to high school students.

In order to succeed, she had to adapt to the customs and culture in Swaziland, where women are second-class citizens. “Out of deference to the men, I had to give presentations while kneeling on the ground,” Rachel recalled. “In Swaziland, I realized first-hand what it is like to live in a country where women have no voice. I decided to go to law school to speak on behalf of those with no voice.”

Despite all the sessions she led on the dangers of HIV and AIDS, Rachel still managed to find some time to prepare for life after the Peace Corps. “I practiced LSAT tests at night, in a small hut by candlelight. I timed each section while chickens walked about my feet.” Rachel, who has worked as an intern at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Miami office, and at the United Nations through the law school’s Pax Romana program, says about her future as an attorney, “I hope to use my experiences within the Peace Corps and at St. Thomas Law so that I may be able to bring aid to others, to defend the rights of individuals, and to act as an agent of change.”
On November 8, 2012, Dean Ray hosted St. Thomas Law’s third annual Veterans Day reception at the law school to thank all students, staff and alumni who have served on behalf of our country. Pictured (L-R): Andres Vasquez ’13 (U.S. Marine Corps); Jason Petcovic ’12 (U.S. Army); Robert “Mitch” Altman ’13 (U.S. Marine Corps); Msgr. Franklyn M. Casale; Dean Ray (U.S. Army); John Roberts ’15 (U.S. Army); Remington Frow ’15 (U.S. Merchant Marine); Professor Alfred Light (U.S. Army). There were several other students who are veterans who were unable to attend the reception.

If you are an alumnus/alumna and are on active duty, have a child on active duty, serve in the Reserves or the National Guard, are a veteran of the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard, are a former member of Americorps, the Public Health Service, the Merchant Marine, or the Peace Corps, are a former Teach for America corps member or have done similar national service, please send an e-mail to Ms. Stephanie Rodriguez, Alumni Relations Coordinator, at srodriguez3@stu.edu, so that we can update our records. We hope to see you at a future Veterans Day reception.

Lieutenant Colonel Tim W. Cox enlisted in the United States Army’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps in 1987 as a student at Georgia Southern University, and has spent the past 25 years in the Army (he is now in the Army Reserves).

Tim was commissioned in 1990 as an infantry officer, and has also served as a company commander of a basic training unit. He served three tours in Iraq: 2004-2005, during which Tim was hit by a roadside bomb for which he earned a Purple Heart, and survived another roadside bomb from which he suffered a combination of traumatic brain injury and acoustic trauma; 2007-2008, during which he served as a civil affairs officer; and 2009-2010, when he served as a civil affairs commander.

In total, Lieutenant Cox served 1,386 days in Iraq since 2004. Tim notes, rather matter-of-factly, that “soldiers always want to be in war.”

In his other professions, as both a police officer in Georgia and as the Chief Operating Officer for the Seminole Tribe, Tim has “regularly dealt with attorneys, so law school has always been on the horizon.”

Tim also testified before Congressional subcommittees on behalf of the Seminole Tribe, and points to this experience as well in helping him prepare for law school and beyond.

Tim, who worked this past summer in Bosnia on a military diplomatic mission to prevent another uprising, ultimately hopes to work as a public defender after earning his law degree. “All my life I’ve been in public service. For over 30 years, I have been defending the Constitution in one form or another, and defending people who cannot defend themselves.”

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Honoring Our Veterans

Tim Cox ’14
U.S. Army, Iraq

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If you are an alumnus/alumna and are on active duty, have a child on active duty, serve in the Reserves or the National Guard, are a veteran of the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard, are a former member of Americorps, the Public Health Service, the Merchant Marine, or the Peace Corps, are a former Teach for America corps member or have done similar national service, please send an e-mail to Ms. Stephanie Rodriguez, Alumni Relations Coordinator, at srodriguez3@stu.edu, so that we can update our records. We hope to see you at a future Veterans Day reception.
Kevin Rajabalee is a 2007 graduate of Florida State University where he double-majored in criminology and political science. Before beginning law school, Kevin applied for and was accepted as a corps member of Teach for America (TFA), a national teachers’ corps of recent college graduates who commit to teaching for two years in under-resourced public schools.

Kevin spent his two years at an elementary school in Houston, teaching all subjects and dealing with all the energy, promise and challenges that elementary-aged children bring on a daily basis. “Teaching others taught me how to deal with failure – I’d never experienced anything that was so physically and emotionally draining. It was so hard to do anything right, especially in the beginning,” he remembers.

Kevin says that his TFA experience prepared him well for the academic rigor of law school. “Through teaching,” Kevin states, “I developed a real-world work ethic because I had 25 kids counting on me for everything. My attention to detail had to be second-to-none.”

Toward the end of his second year in Houston, Kevin started thinking about law school for several reasons, but particularly because he aimed for a financially stable career path that would provide for his family. After his two years of service in Houston, Kevin returned to South Florida, where he taught second-grade students at a brand-new charter school in Florida City. He also applied to St. Thomas Law, and attended in large part because of the scholarship he received.

Since entering St. Thomas Law, Kevin has interned for the Honorable John D. Fry (Broward County Court) and hopes to intern with Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).
I want to take the time to thank all the alumni, students, faculty and administration for helping our alumni association achieve great success this past year.

The association has significantly increased its membership and overall engagement, and each one of you is part of that success. Thank you for your support!

This past year, we have also created an alumni council, which is comprised of a group of graduates who will help us continue to build upon our recent successes. The alumni council has three committees which will focus on three areas: (1) alumni mentoring for our students; (2) providing outreach/networking opportunities for alumni; and (3) fundraising efforts to strengthen support of St. Thomas Law and our alumni association.

I urge each of you to become part of the association and join us at this time of growth and opportunity. I promise that if you put in some time, yours will be a rewarding experience, and you will be part of something special.

I wish you all a safe, healthy, and prosperous new year. God bless.

Frances Guasch De La Guardia, Esq. ‘88
President
St. Thomas Law Alumni Association
alumni receptions

Fort Lauderdale

Tampa

Washington, D.C.

Jacksonville
1993

ABBY JILL GOLDMAN was made partner at Roberts, Reynolds, Bedard & Tuzzio, PLLC. Abby practices out of the firm’s Broward office and focuses her practice on insurance defense litigation.

1999

ANDREW C. DEMOS managing partner at Andrew C. Demos, P.A., recently relocated his practice to 4835 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, Florida. His practice areas of focus are condominium and homeowners’ association law, foreclosure law, corporate law and personal injury.

DAVID H. DRAKE was recently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Judge Advocate General’s Corps. Lt. Colonel Drake currently works as an Operational Law Attorney at US European Command in Stuttgart, Germany. His previous assignments include criminal law prosecution and defense trial positions at Fort Stewart, GA and Fort Carson, CO, and OIF combat deployments and operational law positions with US Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) at Fort Carson, CO, and Fort Bragg, NC. He has also earned LLMs in Military Law (Criminal Law Specialty) and Prosecutorial Science.

2001

HONORABLE MICHAELLE GONZALEZ-PAULSON was elected as a county court judge in August 2010 and is currently assigned to the County Civil Division at the South Dade Justice Center. In March 2012, Judge Gonzalez-Paulson was awarded the Spellman-Hoeveler Chapter of the American Inns of Court Passing of the Gavel, in recognition of her “dedicated service and extraordinary achievement in the South Florida Legal Community.”
CHRISTOPHER E. BENJAMIN received rising star awards this year: Super Lawyers Rising Stars 2012; Cystic Fibrosis Foundation 40 under 40 Outstanding Young Attorneys (2012); National Trial Lawyers Top 40 under 40 (2012); South Florida Business Journal 40 under 40 (2012); and Legacy Magazine 40 under 40 Leaders of Today and Tomorrow (2012).

2002

MIRIAM QUINN started a new position in the United States Patent and Trademark Office as an Administrative Patent Judge in December 2012. She had previously been a litigator at Fulbright & Jaworski in Houston, where she focused on technology and intellectual property matters. She lives in Flower Mound, TX.

2003

DIANA E. GONZALEZ of Ferrer Shane, PL in Miami, was recently elected Miami-Dade County Court Judge. She is the first-elected judge of Colombian descent in the United States. Judge Gonzalez begins her work on the bench in January 2013.

MICHELLE A. VARGAS recently accepted a position as associate general counsel of Armor Correctional Health Services, Inc.

2004

WHITNEY V. CRUZ was named partner in the Miami office of Arnstein & Lehr LLP. Ms. Cruz practices in product liability and automotive breach of warranty.

PICTURED (L-R): Assistant Dean Peter Kelly; Gary Farmer, Esq.; John Bajger, Esq. ’06; Suzette Russomanno, Esq. ’04; Dean Douglas E. Ray; Rev. Msgr. Franklyn Casale, President; Jude Faccidomo, Esq. ’03; Beatriz “Betty” Llorente, Esq. ’02; Frances Guasch De La Guardia, Esq. ’88

On September 20, 2012, the law school held its first annual “Professionalism Day” for all first-year students. The program included a presentation from Dean Ray regarding the responsibilities, obligations and opportunities within the legal profession, as well as a panel discussion that featured several alumni. The graduates shared with the students their own experiences at St. Thomas Law, and also spoke about the benefits of joining legal organizations, the satisfaction of being a lawyer and helping people, and the importance of ethics and professionalism.

JUDE M. FACCIDOMO was sworn in as President of the Miami chapter of the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (FACDL) in May 2012. An attorney at Jeffrey S. Weiner, P.A., in Miami, Jude is the youngest president in the 50-year history of the FACDL’s Miami chapter.

SUZETTE L. RUSSOMANNO (formerly Suzette L. Benitez) and HERMAN J. RUSSOMANNO III welcomed their second child, Nicholas Joseph Russomanno, on May 12, 2012. They also have a two-year-old daughter, Mia Antonia Russomanno. Ms. Russomanno was also installed as President of the Dade County Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section in June 2012.

MARBET MIER LEWIS was elected to partner at Gray Robinson, P.A., in Miami. Marbet concentrates on the alcohol industry trade and other regulated products.
2005

JAVIER A. LEY-SOTO
was married to Jennifer Sabin, Esq.
on April 20, 2012. Javier is based
in Miami and serves as the Chief
Regional Counsel in the Miami office
of the Florida Department of Children
and Families Southern Region,
Circuits 11 and 16.

2006

JOSEPH GURIAN
has started his own firm specializing
in immigration. Gurian Group,
Attorneys at Law, is located at 66 W.
Flagler Street, Suite 1002, in Miami.

YAHIMA SUAREZ
opened her own practice on 4445 West
16th Avenue in Hialeah. Her practice
focuses on family, immigration and
wills, trusts and probate cases.

2007

JUDD ROY BEAN II
was medically retired with a 100%
disability rating in November 2011
after suffering combat-related injuries
in 2009 while on active duty as a
Captain in the United States Air Force
Judge Advocate General’s Corps.
Although taking medications to
address various medical issues, Judd
maintains a healthy outlook on life,
and currently works as an associate at
Griffin & Associates, a boutique family
law firm in Brandon, Florida. He
credits his success to his “supportive
classmates, fantastic professors at

P.A. and a member of the Florida
Bar since 2008, recently became a
member of the California Bar. Her
practice areas include first party
property insurance, product liability,
personal injury, negligent security,
construction defects, wrongful death,
and automobile negligence cases.

2008

H. DAVIS LEWIS JR.
was named a Florida Super Lawyers
2012 Rising Star by Super Lawyers
magazine. Davis is the managing
attorney at Hightower, Stratton
Wilhelm in Orlando.

TODD M. NORBRATEN
married Keri Smith in April 2012 in
Stuart, Florida. The couple resides in
Coral Gables. Todd is an associate at
Wicker, Smith, O’Hara, McCoy and
Ford, handling medical malpractice,
premises liability and general civil
litigation matters.

FREDERICK RATLIFF
is based in Houston and is now senior
counsel in Shell’s anti-bribery and
corruption department. Fred had
previously been corporate counsel at
Halliburton.

2009

JEFFREY A. LACLAIR
has joined Nason, Yeager, Gerson,
White & Lioce in its West Palm Beach
office as an associate. Jeff focuses on
federal tax planning, estate and trust
administration, and estate planning.
YARA LORENZO recently joined the Miami office of Hogan Lovells as an associate in the litigation, arbitration, and employment group. She focuses her practice on international commercial litigation and arbitration. Prior to joining Hogan Lovells, Yara had served as a law clerk to the Honorable Peter T. Fay of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and the Honorable James Lawrence King of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

ERIC S. MEDOFF works at the United States Department of State, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, where he is an expert on sanctions policy, import/export licensing, and delisting requests on U.S. sanctions programs and prospective sanctions regimes in Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Residing in Arlington, VA, Eric is also a professorial lecturer in law at George Washington University Law School, where he teaches legal writing.

JENNIFER PORTWOOD and ANDREW M. GORDON were married in June 2012 in Orlando. Jennifer is currently St. Thomas Law’s Director of Pro Bono & Public Interest Career Counselor, and Andrew is an associate at Fowler, White, Boggs in Fort Lauderdale.

YOLYVEE Y. RIVERA was recently named an associate at Arnstein & Lehr in their Tampa office. A member of the firm’s litigation practice group, Yolyvee concentrates her practice in foreclosure litigation and commercial litigation with an emphasis on business torts, contractual disputes, and employment matters.

Yara Lorenzo ‘09

WASHINGTON D.C.

SILVERMAN, KATZEN & LEVINE, P.L. in Miami, has published the cover article for CABA Briefs, the magazine of the Cuban American Bar Association. Jorge has also been a terrific coach for St. Thomas Law’s Moot Court Team during the last few years. The article is available at: http://share.snacktools.com/SDE5E6BDC9/fun5ri3k

AILEEN PENATE and ARMANDO G. HERNANDEZ were married on November 2, 2012 in Miami Beach.

PEDRO A. PEREZ-ROURA is currently attending the graduate program in taxation at the University of Miami School of Law.

SARAH J. ROBINSON CAMPBELL recently accepted an associate position at Andrew C. Demos, P.A., in Hollywood, Florida. She will work with fellow St. Thomas Law graduate Andrew Demos ’99 and specialize in condominium and homeowners’ association law, foreclosure law, corporate law and personal injury.

2010

JORGE DELGADO an associate at Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine, P.L. in Miami.

2011

JORGE L. FORS, JR. accepted a nomination to serve on the Board of Directors for the Coral Gables Bar Association for 2012-2013.

BRYAN PASchal an associate at Rivero Mestre LLP in Miami, was elected Group 1 Director of the Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. Bar Association for the 2012-2013 year.
LAUREN M. SHOEMAKE joined Greenspoon Marder in February 2012 as a member of the firm’s litigation department. Based in the firm’s Fort Lauderdale office, Lauren focuses her practice on real estate litigation.

JASON SILVER, an associate at Morris Hardwick Schneider in Miami, was elected a director-at-large of the Dade County Bar Association’s young lawyers section.

MICHAEL D. DUNLAVY was recently featured on NBC 6 South Florida’s “Forever Family” segment after receiving his J.D. at the May St. Thomas Law commencement ceremony. Mike grew up in foster care homes throughout Florida and has been an advocate for foster care children. Mike is continuing his advocacy work as a consultant this fall at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in Washington, D.C., alongside George Sheldon, former associate dean at St. Thomas Law and currently an Assistant Secretary of HHS under Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

JANELLY GARCIA is an associate at The Law Offices of Albert J. Perez, P.A., in Coral Gables, Florida. Janelly’s practice areas focus on immigration and family law.

In September, St. Thomas Law welcomed back 27 alumni from the Class of 2012 at its inaugural induction ceremony. More than 130 friends and family members watched as the Honorable Peter Lopez officially swore in the graduates as new attorneys. Pictured above left: Erma Green ’12 Esq. and family with Judge Lopez. Pictured above right: Daniel Benhayoun ’12 Esq. and wife with Judge Lopez.

In Memoriam

The St. Thomas Law family extends its prayers and condolences to the families and friends of the following students, alumni and friends:

Marisa B. Bernstein 7/11/12
Anwar Janania 3/18/12
Professor Emeritus Richard H.W. “Dick” Maloy 4/28/12
Allison Hall Nelson, Esq. ’08 3/7/12
Jason J. Pieczonka, Esq. ’07 6/19/12
William T. Walsh, Esq. ’06
Dear Alumni and Friends:
I’d like to thank the executive officers of the St. Thomas Law Alumni Association – Frances Guasch De La Guardia, Esq. (President), Erajh M. Panditaratne, Esq. (Vice President), Antonio L. Martinez, Esq. (Treasurer), and Niurka “Nicky” Lopez, Esq. (Secretary) – for all their work this past year. I look forward to continuing to work with them and our alumni council in 2013, specifically on these two important initiatives:

St. Thomas Law Mentoring Program
At our alumni receptions this year, we have asked graduates and friends to consider signing up to become a mentor to one of our current students. We hope you will, too. In the spring of 2013, I will work with our alumni council’s mentoring committee in scheduling a “speed mentoring” reception to allow students and graduates to make connections in a fun, friendly environment. If you’re interested in finding out more about this event, or would like to serve as a mentor, please feel free to contact me directly.

Our Annual Fund
It’s my hope that you will join your fellow alumni and friends in support of St. Thomas Law, and consider making a donation toward our annual fund. As successful leaders in our legal community, you are the foundation for our success, and you have the opportunity to help the next generation, our students, by providing vital funds for scholarships. Thank you for your support. To donate online, please go to the www.stu.edu/GivingtoSTULaw tab on our website, or send a check payable to St. Thomas University School of Law to:

Office of the Dean
St. Thomas University School of Law
16401 NW 37th Avenue
Miami Gardens, FL 33054

Finally, Ms. Stephanie Rodriguez, a 2010 St. Thomas University graduate who previously had been working in our registrar’s office, began as the new alumni relations coordinator in July 2012. Please know that Stephanie is here to help all of us reach out to you and further improve our alumni engagement. I thank Stephanie for her contributions thus far, and hope you will get to know her better.

I wish each of you and your families a safe, happy and healthy New Year.

All the Best,

Peter T. Kelly
Assistant Dean for Alumni Relations
pkelly@stu.edu
Phone 305-623-2374
Make a Difference!

Support the St. Thomas Law Annual Fund

Unrestricted gifts to the Annual Fund have a direct and immediate impact on the education we provide our students.

Annual Fund gifts support:

• Scholarships to students in need;
• Clinical and public interest programs;
• Moot court, trial advocacy, and law journal activities;
• Conferences, distinguished speakers, and symposia that help us expand our students’ horizons; and
• Career and Professional Development programs that help our students build their futures

Please make an online gift [www.stu.edu/GivingtoSTULaw],
or send a check made payable to St. Thomas University School of Law to:

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Thank You!