



School of Law
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

2018 DEAN'S REPORT



FROM PETER B. "BO" RUTLEDGE, DEAN & HERMAN E. TALMADGE CHAIR OF LAW

This fall, the University of Georgia School of Law was named the best value in legal education by the *National Jurist*, a resource relied upon by many as they are deciding where to attend law school.

Of all the accolades our school could receive, for me personally, this is one of the most important. It is validation that we are fulfilling our promise to deliver a high return on investment to our students. These rankings are based largely on outcome-driven factors such as average indebtedness, bar passage and employment – all of which result in greater opportunity.

With your support, we have been able to implement a three-pronged strategy that has resulted in the ability to achieve something truly noteworthy in today's world of higher education – a first-rate education at a cost that allows our students to choose their careers based on their passions, not their wallets. We have essentially held tuition flat since 2015, kept a close eye on spending and significantly increased student financial aid.

Delivering a high return on investment means delivering excellence. While we have reduced student borrowing by approximately \$1 million annually, we also have seen roughly 95 percent of 2016 graduates who sat for a bar exam pass within 12 months of graduation and 90 percent of the Class of 2017 secure full-time, long-term jobs (that require bar passage or where a J.D. provides a significant advantage) within 10 months of graduation.

During our most recent fiscal year, more than 1,800 donors committed an unprecedented \$11 million in financial support that will allow the law school to continue building on these results. Below are just a few highlights of how your active engagement and investment make an impact on the student experience:

- Almost 90 percent of Class of 2018 graduates participated in at least one semester-long clinical or externship course. We continue to expand these opportunities with initiatives like the new Veterans Legal Clinic, which received its lead funding from James E. "Jim" Butler Jr. (J.D.'77) and is already serving a full caseload of military veterans needing assistance to obtain the benefits they have earned. The Wilbanks Child Endangerment and Sexual Exploitation (CEASE) Clinic, created with the assistance of Marlan B. Wilbanks (J.D.'86) in 2016, made history with the first case tried to verdict under Georgia's Hidden Predator Act (and was decided in favor of the clinic's client). Of course, these experiences – as well as those in the classroom – are guided by an incredible, world-class faculty who in addition to teaching are publishing, contributing to public dialogue and earning national recognition for their achievements.
- Our law school ranks 14th in the nation with regard to sending clerks to the U.S. Supreme Court, and 18 percent of the Class of 2017 secured federal or state judicial clerkships. Our students are inspired by alumni including newly sworn-in Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice

Top photo: At his portrait unveiling, U.S. District Court Judge Steve Jones (J.D.'87) shares a moment with his former law clerks.

Prepare. Connect. Lead.

Harold D. Melton (J.D.'91) and Justice Charles J. "Charlie" Bethel (J.D.'01) – and soon-to-be Justice John J. Ellington (J.D.'85) – in addition to recently confirmed U.S. District Court Judges R. Stanley "Stan" Baker (J.D.'04), Michael L. "Mike" Brown (J.D.'94), William M. "Billy" Ray II (J.D.'90) and Tilman E. "Tripp" Self III (J.D.'97). Along these lines, U.S. District Court Judge Steve C. Jones (J.D.'87) was honored with the 2018 UGA Alumni Merit Award, and his portrait now hangs in Hirsch Hall alongside other distinguished graduates-turned-jurists including U.S. Court of Appeals Judges Julie E. Carnes (J.D.'75) and Beverly B. Martin (J.D.'81).

- By ensuring that our students graduate with lower levels of debt, we allow them to consider following leaders like 1986 alumna Sally Quillian Yates and Sibley Chair of Corporate and Business Law Larry D. Thompson (both of whom have served as U.S. deputy attorney general) as well as many others who have chosen to spend all or part of their careers in public service. As the number of students pursuing public interest work during their time in law school continues to grow, we have, in recent years, been able to double the number of fellowships offered to help defray their expenses.
- Through our Distinguished Law Fellows program, which started in 2016 thanks to a transformational gift from The John N. Goddard Foundation, we are attracting exceptionally talented students – both those who are awarded the fellowships and those who chose to apply in part because of the opportunity the program affords. Approximately 10 such fellowships will be awarded during the 2019–20 academic year.
- First-generation college students, veterans and aspiring attorneys from traditionally underserved communities are also among those we are able to more effectively support.
 - Approximately 62 percent of first-generation college graduates in the Class of 2021 are receiving financial aid. These students boast impressive personal and professional backgrounds that make them highly sought-after individuals for any law school.
 - Currently all of the military veterans enrolled in our law school – some of who are still on active duty – are receiving financial support.
 - Our new Benham Scholars Program, named for alumnus and Georgia Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham (J.D.'70), serves students who hail from or show a demonstrated intent to practice in a legally underserved community.

These examples only begin to illustrate the success of our students, our alumni and alumnae, and our law school. With your ongoing financial support, we can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of our students as well as our profession.

We hope you will join us on campus for the Fifth Annual Alumni/Alumnae Weekend on March 29 and 30, during which the Distinguished Service Scroll Award will be presented to The Aflac Foundation President and School of Law Board of Visitors Chair Kathleen V. Amos (J.D.'82), Chief Justice Melton and former Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games President and Chief Executive Officer William P. "Billy" Payne (J.D.'73). This weekend is a great opportunity to connect with students, faculty and fellow law school graduates and to learn even more about how and why your active engagement makes a difference and allows the School of Law to fulfill its mission every day.

Thank you for all you do,



At a recent Board of Visitors reception, Sanders Griffith (J.D.'77) (third from left) and Eleanor Banister (J.D.'79) (second from right) pose with current law school scholarship students – (l. to r.) Addison Smith, Andy Bastone, Jackson Mansour, Sam Kennon and Michael Sloman.



Smith Hulsey & Busey partner Steve Busey (center) presented the annual Florida/Georgia-Hulsey/Gambrell Moot Court Competition trophy to third-year students Jennifer Cotton and Miles Skedsvold. The School of Law's record in this tournament is now 23–11–2. Photo courtesy of the Daily Record & Observer, LLC, 11/1/18.