

# RUTGERS LAW ALUMNI NEWS



## A Look Back at 2017, Rutgers Law School: Engaged and Dynamic

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### Rutgers Law Alumni News

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From representing immigrants, helping juvenile offenders, competing in Moot Court competitions, and welcoming new faculty, Rutgers Law School had an exciting and dynamic school year. There is lots to celebrate in 2018. Here is a look at some of our highlights in 2017:

1. Rutgers Law continued to be recognized nationally for its value and affordability as a law school. Rutgers Law was ranked as [a top 25 nationwide Best Value Law School by National Jurist](#), the only law school in the northeast to make the top 25. In addition, [U.S. News & World Report ranked Rutgers 62nd nationally](#) in its Best Graduate School category, a 30-spot jump from the previous year and the largest increase in ranking of any law school.
2. [The incoming class in Fall 2017](#) came from 16 states and 22 foreign countries, bringing the total number of students at Rutgers Law School to around 1,100, making it one of the largest law schools in the Northeast.
3. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito was one of the guest judges for the first-ever [Judge Leonard I. Garth Competition](#), a moot court-style contest between Rutgers Law students in both locations. In a close contest, Camden's team won this year.

Continued on next page.

4. As the newly-elected Gov. Phil Murphy takes office in January, Rutgers Law School was well represented on his [transition team](#) and in his committee appointments, including [Co-dean Ronald K. Chen](#). A phalanx of Rutgers Law alumni also are on the transition team, including [Lloyd Freeman '07](#), former chancellor of the alumni association in Camden.

5. National scholars and experts joined the faculty at Rutgers Law School. Three new social justice scholars started in the fall: [Sahar Aziz](#), an expert in the Middle East, national security, race and civil rights; [Rachel Godsil](#), whose scholarship focuses on race, implicit bias, and property, and [Adnan Zulfiqar](#), an expert in criminal law, Islamic Law, and the laws of war. Former Chief Judge of the Newark Municipal Court, [Victoria Pratt](#), joined the Newark faculty and also launched a [TED Talk](#); and [Rose Cuison Villazor](#), who will be teaching immigration, property law and a citizenship seminar, will join the law school in the fall.

6. Recent graduates returned to Rutgers Law School to take part in [swearing-in ceremonies](#) conducted by the New Jersey State Bar Association. New Jersey State Bar Association President Robert Hille administered the oath in Newark, while NJSBA Trustee and Camden County Bar Association President Eric G. Fikry '96 performed the ceremonies in Camden. Both ceremonies were connected in a live video feed.

7. A total of 365 students [graduated from Rutgers Law School](#) in May 2017. U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Patty Shwartz spoke in Newark and James Sandman, President of Legal Services Corporation, spoke in Camden.

8. This school year, Rutgers Law launched the [Rutgers Immigrant Community Assistance Project](#), which along with the Immigrant Justice Clinic and Immigrant Rights Clinic, helped communities in need. [Attorney Jason Hernandez](#) served clients, including Rutgers students, throughout the entire state.

9. Faculty members were recognized for scholarly excellence and exemplary teaching skills. [Katie Eyer](#) was named one of this year's recipients of the [Society of American Law Teachers' Junior Faculty Teaching Award](#). The [Association of American Law Schools](#) (AALS) honored [Stacy Hawkins](#) with the 2017 Derrick A. Bell Award. Former Co-dean John Oberdiek and Vice Dean Reid Weisbord, were recognized by their peers with the [Gregory Lastowka Award](#).

10. Rutgers Alumni continued to give back in a big way, sponsoring summer internships, externships, scholarship money and serving as mentors to current law students. [Jeffrey Hsi '97](#) kicked off a challenge campaign for the 50th anniversary of the Minority Student Program.

11. Rutgers Law students continued to excel in Moot Court competitions, both locally and regionally. Students in both the [spring](#) and [fall](#) semesters represented Rutgers Law School competitively.

12. Looking to the new year, Rutgers Law will welcome a new Co-Dean for its Newark location. A national search is underway to replace [Co-Dean Ronald K. Chen](#), who will return to his role as a full-time law professor. ■



## Katherine Pothier '92 Hits it Out of the Park for the Texas Rangers



Katherine Pothier '92

In a typical day, attorney Katherine Pothier '92 may work on legal issues involving taxes, leases, real estate financing, litigation, intellectual property, insurance or contracts.

That's the life of an Executive Vice President and General Counsel who just happens to work for Major League Baseball's Texas Rangers.

Pothier, a graduate of Rutgers Law School in Camden, is in her second stint with professional baseball. She joined the Rangers staff a little over a year ago and previously worked for the San Diego Padres for eight years.

"This is a small business with a high profile," she said. "We do everything . . . It's contracts, general torts, real estate, information technology, it crosses everything."

Pothier is from Kendall Park, New Jersey and attended Rutgers for both undergraduate and law school. During law school, she clerked for a federal magistrate judge and had a summer clerkship with the federal government, where she was assigned to work with the United States Border Patrol in California.

She met her future husband that summer, and after graduation, went back to California where she landed a job at Coughlan, Semmer, Lipman in San Diego. That firm eventually did work for the Padres handling litigation to build a new ballpark.

When a position

opened with the Padres, Pothier was encouraged to apply for it.

"I was in the right place at the right time," she said.

Pothier said once in the job, she shifted from litigation work to transactional work, including contracts, general torts, and real estate. "In order to be effective, you really have to know the business and the business of baseball," she said. "Every day is a little bit something different."

After spending eight years with the Padres, Pothier became a partner at Wilson Turner Kosmo, the largest woman-owned law firm in San Diego, before joining the Texas Rangers in 2016. She said the Arlington-based team was finalizing its plans to build a new ballpark when she was hired. The ballpark is now under construction and is expected to open in 2020.

"I came in on the eve of that and a great run for the team, I'm coming at such a great time," she said.

For law students who may be interested in working professional sports, she advised, "Get a variety of experience if you can." Pothier said understanding contracts is key, as is learning to be a good advocate and a good listener. Young lawyers should network with attorneys practicing in the field and seek positions at firms that handle sports franchises.

One of the Rutgers Law experiences that helped her most with her job: participating in Moot Court.

Pothier, who is married and has two children, says when she's not at work, her family enjoys the outdoors. ■



Randy Bresnik, an astronaut, gives a shout out to Rutgers Law while in orbit. Bresnik's wife, Rebecca, graduated from Rutgers Law in Camden in 1999 and is the Assistant Chief Counsel for International Matters at NASA. The couple currently lives in Houston with their children.



## New Faculty Working Group Focuses on Human Rights

Rutgers Law Professor Jorge Contesse and Rutgers University-Newark Political Science Professor Janice Gallagher didn't meet for the first six months they were on campus. Despite their shared research interests in human rights in Latin America, and specifically in the litigation of Mexican cases in the Inter-American Human Rights System, their paths didn't cross.

Once they did meet, they began several joint research projects. They applied for and received funds from the Initiative for Multi-disciplinary Research Teams (IMRT), and through differing approaches, began to pursue research into how average citizens and legal institutions are responding an increasing rights-hostile environment both in Latin American and in the US.

Professors Contesse and Gallagher have launched a human rights working group in the hope that it will provide more auspicious opportunities for scholars, professors, and researchers who are working at the intersection of human rights and civil rights to meet each other – and perhaps realized shared interests as well.

The working group met in Newark twice during the fall semester to meet each other, define their agenda and begin to share work.

In the new year, they will hold additional meetings and plan to host a conference in the fall of 2018 that will address issues involving international human rights, law, and politics.

Gallagher observed that the working group allows professors and graduate students to connect with others in their field, whether they're from within the Rutgers community or at universities in the greater New York City area. "We're making professional collaborations and connections," she said.

Already, professors and scholars from Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Law, Global Affairs and Global Urban Studies have gotten interested in the working group. "It's a way to get us together," Gallagher said. "It's a new place for faculty."

Topics discussed range from the role of legal advocates and activists in Mexico to rural land struggles in Brazil and India, and rights of determination among indigenous communities.

Contesse said the working group is aligned with RU-Newark Chancellor's goals of supporting interdisciplinary study on issues of social justice, and also has the added benefit of bridging connections between different academic departments.

The group's next event will be on January 30, when Contesse and Gallagher will host Samuel Moyn, a professor of law and history from Yale University. ■



Janice Gallagher



Jorge Contesse

### Do You Have A Great Rutgers Law Love Story?

*Last year, Rutgers Law School featured a Valentine's Day story about Rutgers Law School couples Kelly O'Connor & Jon Sandler and Jerry Santer & Courtney Johnson. It was one of the most-read stories on the law school website. This year, we'd like to mention the names of other married couples who met at Rutgers Law School. We'd like to know how you met your spouse, what years you attended law school and what you're up to now. Your story may be featured in next month's alumni newsletter and on the law school website. If you've got a love story to share, please email Communications Director Elizabeth Moore at: [e.moore@law.rutgers.edu](mailto:e.moore@law.rutgers.edu)*

## Rutgers Law Students in the World

Three Rutgers Law and graduate students, along with Professors Sahar Aziz, a Chancellor's Social Justice Scholar, and Jeena Shah, who, until recently, worked with the International Human Rights Clinic and the Constitutional Rights Clinic, visited Jordan in mid-December to study the social, economic and political consequences of the Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East. Here are some of the photos they took on their trip. You can read more about their experiences in the Race and the Law Prof blog. <http://go.rutgers.edu/ga5kv0st> ■



Rutgers Law students, and students from Rutgers Allied Health DPT program and the School of Public Affairs and Administration went to the Dominican Republic over winter break with Professor Andrew Rothman and his wife Beth, who is a physical therapist. They built a home and constructed a water filter in an impoverished neighborhood and helped residents with physical therapy and pain management, while working with two non-profits: Cambiando Vidas and Physical Therapy Beyond Boundaries. ■



## SBA in Camden Shines Light on Substance Abuse Issues

The Student Bar Association (SBA) at Rutgers Law School's Camden location hopes to raise awareness of a harmful and often ignored issue: substance abuse and addiction among law students and lawyers. "A lot of people think going to the bar every other night and drinking is the only way to have fun," says Sam Kovach-Orr, president of the SBA. "It's ingrained into the national culture of law school and the legal profession." As part of the SBA's "Sober January" campaign, all law students at the Rutgers-Camden campus are invited to participate in the initiative and pledge to refrain from drinking alcohol and using non-prescribed substances during the month.

The student government group is offering social activities on Friday evenings in January as alternatives to going out and drinking alcohol on the weekend. On Jan. 12, the SBA is holding a potluck dinner with board games at the law school. On Jan. 19, Co-Dean Michael Cahill will host an Oxford-style debate involving faculty and student teams on the proposition "Is there a Central Jersey?" The events will be held in the Camden location's Faculty Lounge.

Members of the SBA became interested in the issue of alcohol and substance abuse in the legal profession after reading an article in the New York Times about a California attorney's secret addictions and how his family learned about them after he died.

A 2016 report by the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation and the American Bar Association found that about 21 percent of lawyers qualify as problem drinkers. The report showed that 75 percent of the lawyers surveyed didn't even respond to questions about drug use. Of the lawyers who admitted using drugs, the most common drugs were cocaine, crack, stimulants, opioids, marijuana, and hash.

"That spurred a lot of conversation in the law school," says Kovach-Orr. "As part of the student government, we felt compelled to organize something to help fight back against that reality." The SBA hopes to continue offering other events throughout the semester. ■

### Former Minority Student Program Deans Return To Prepare for the MSP 50 Celebration

*As part of preparations for the 50th anniversary of the Minority Student Program, former MSP Deans met to talk about the history and future of MSP. From left to right, Oliver Quinn '75, Janice Robinson, Yvette Bravo-Weber, Marcia Brown '94, and Co-Dean Ronald Chen '83. Oliver Quinn served as the dean from 1977 - 1981, Janice Robinson served from 1986 - 1996, Marcia Brown served from 1997 - 1999, Ronald K. Chen served in Fall 1994 and from 2000 - 2001, and Yvette Bravo-Weber served from 2008 - present.*



*Rutgers Law School celebrates the 50th anniversary of its pioneering Minority Student Program on Saturday, April 14, 2018. The day's events include a daytime colloquium followed by a gala at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark. Created in 1968, the MSP is a nationally recognized model for educating and preparing students of color and disadvantaged students of all races for a legal career and for diversifying the legal profession.*

*Further details will be available in future issues of this newsletter, and at [law.rutgers.edu/MSP50](http://law.rutgers.edu/MSP50)*

**MSP  
50  
Celebration**

COMING TOGETHER AND LOOKING AHEAD

## Two Rutgers Professors Advise Nigerian Lawyers On Country's Developing Court System

As court systems in Africa are rapidly forming, U.S. scholars and legal professionals – including John (J.C.) Lore and Kimberlee Moran of Rutgers University–Camden – are assisting with the development of the courts by sharing their expertise with Nigerian lawyers and government leaders.

At a week-long training by the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) in November, Lore, a Rutgers Law School professor, instructed Nigerian lawyers on how to prepare, present, and cross-examine expert witnesses. Moran, director of forensic science and associate teaching professor at Rutgers–Camden, presented on the science of forensics.

“It was an amazing experience for us all as we watched the legal system in Nigeria

continue to move forward, so that fair and just outcomes are reached in their legal matters,” says Lore, clinical professor and director of trial advocacy at Rutgers Law School’s Camden location.

Lore, a longtime faculty member of NITA, the U.S.-based nonprofit provider of legal advocacy skills training, recommended that Moran participate in the sessions held in Nigeria’s Lagos State.

Recently, Nigeria opened its first forensic lab, so government officials were interested in learning more about tools and methods of gathering and processing evidence.

Moran presented lectures to introduce participants to the specialty of forensic science, covering topics such as handwriting analysis, ballistics, fingerprints, and pathology.

“This is an exciting time for forensic evidence in the Nigerian court system,” says Moran.

The training helps to shape Nigeria’s legal system and will influence how law is practiced throughout the nation.

“Teaching in Nigeria, I got a strong sense of how important a fair and just legal system is to the stability of the country,” says Lore. “The people we trained all recognize the need to keep learning and improving. It is an amazing group of lawyers who are dealing with challenging circumstances when it comes to resources. There are 63 lawyers supporting a population of 23 million people, and they represent the indigent in both civil and criminal matters. In contrast, the Defender Association of Philadelphia has about 240 lawyers supporting a population of 1.5 million, with a much lower poverty rate, and only handling criminal matters.”

The training session, led by Judge Ann Claire Williams of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, also included other NITA faculty members: Judge Margo Brodie of the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York; Tom Innes, an attorney with the Defender Association of Philadelphia; Judge Debra Seaton of the Illinois Supreme Court; Geraldine Sumter of the Ferguson Chambers & Sumter law firm in Charlotte, N.C.; and Judge Michael Washington of the San Diego Superior Court.

Lore has been a faculty member for NITA since 2004 and has taught as both a team leader and program director.

Moran hopes to participate in future training sessions in Nigeria. “There was a lot of interest in extending the training to the police, prosecutors, and judges, and interest in follow-up training as the new forensic lab begins to take on cases,” says Moran. ■



Professors Kimberlee Moran and JC Lore at National Institute for Trial Advocacy training in Lagos State, Nigeria

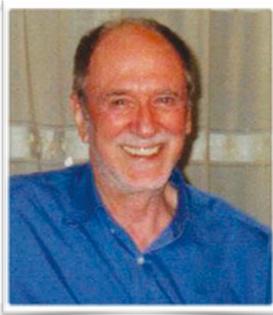


A future Rutgers Law student and her pro bono snowman: Ailey Freeman topped her frosty friend with a Rutgers Law Pro Bono Program hat during a recent snowstorm. Thank you to Ailey's dad, Lloyd Freeman '07, for sharing the photo. An enthusiastic participant in the Pro Bono Program during his time at Rutgers Law School, today Lloyd is the immediate past chancellor of the Rutgers



School of Law-Camden Alumni Association and a partner at Archer & Greiner PC in Haddonfield.

## Rutgers Mourns Loss of Former Professor



The Rutgers Law community mourns the passing of our beloved former professor Fred Clark Chandler Jr., who taught tax law for 32 years at Rutgers Law School in Camden and also received the University Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching. Donations can be made to the Fred C. Chandler, Jr. Endowed Scholarship, c/o Rutgers Law School, 217 N. 5th St., Camden, N.J. 08102. [The full obituary is available here.](#) ■

## Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) Applications Now Open

The law school in Newark is currently accepting applications for its Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP.) LRAP provides financial assistance to alumni who are working in full-time, law-related public interest/public service employment and are repaying law school loans. Graduates from the Classes of 1997- 2017 are eligible to apply. The deadline is March 1, 2018.

Eligibility requirements and the 2017 - 2018 application are available on the law school's website at [law.rutgers.edu/newark-loan-repayment-program](http://law.rutgers.edu/newark-loan-repayment-program). Any questions can be directed to Tai Gedeon at 973-353-1702 or at [tai.gedeon@law.rutgers.edu](mailto:tai.gedeon@law.rutgers.edu).

## Alumni Associations

### Camden

Janice L. Heinold '97  
*Chancellor*

Kevin Miller '14  
*First Vice Chancellor*

Samantha R. Gross '14  
*Second Vice Chancellor*

Ragner Jaeger '14  
*Treasurer*

Angella Middleton '14  
*Recording Secretary*

Laura Ann Pontelandolfo '09  
*Corresponding Secretary*

### Newark

Brian Biglin '11  
*President*

Osato Chitou '10  
*Immediate Past President*

Maritza Rodriguez '11  
*President Elect*

Helen Nau '93  
*Vice President*

Mark Makhail '13  
*Treasurer*

Joe Linares '14  
*Secretary*

## Contact the Alumni Associations

Janice Heinold  
Chancellor

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Brian Biglin  
President

Newark Alumni Association  
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## Alumni Updates

To submit an update, please email [alumni@law.rutgers.edu](mailto:alumni@law.rutgers.edu)

**Maritza Dominguez Braswell '08** has been named one of the Top 25 Most Powerful Women in 2018 by the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce.

**Charles J. Vaccaro '15** has joined Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP as an associate in the Litigation Department.

**Jocelyn Soriano '93** has been named a partner at Archer Norris, in Walnut Creek, CA.

**Brad Kushner '09** has been named a shareholder of Stevens & Lee, in Philadelphia, PA.

**Victoria Guilfoyle '08** has been named at partner at Blank Rome LLP, in Wilmington, DE.

**Anthony Rollo '82** has been recognized in Louisiana Super Lawyers 2018

**Julie M. Murphy '07** has been named a partner at Hyland Levin LLP, in Marlton, NJ.

**Camelia M. Valdes '96** has been appointed to The College of Saint Elizabeth' Board of Trustees.

**Kate McDonnell '06** has been named Deputy Chief Counsel for New Jersey Governor-elect Phil Murphy.

**Chanette Armstrong '97** has been appointed as the Director of the Office of Technology Transitions at the US Department of Energy.

**Lisa Kent '92** has been elected president of the Franklin County Bar Association, in MA.

**Josh Reinitz '03** has been elected to the Fair Lawn Borough Council.

**David Gold '10** has become a member of Cole Schotz, in Hackensack, NJ.

**Daris B. Jackson '13** has been featured as a Legal Freedom Fighter by Rocket Matter.

**Steven K. Mignogna '89** has received a 2017 Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education.

**Marc D. Goldstone '94** was appointed to the Southern Region Board of Governors for the T.J. Martell Foundation, in Nashville, TN.



### Newark Alumni Reunions

Mark your calendars! The law school will be holding a reunion on May 11, 2018 for the Newark classes of 1958, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1988, 1998, & 2008. The schedule for the day will include: two CLE courses (including Ethics, and will be made fun so that non-lawyer guests can enjoy them as well), lunch, a panel discussion with current students, a tour of the new law school, and a cocktail reception in the Great Hall at the "old law school" at 15 Washington. After the cocktail reception, everyone will split into their individual classes for dinner. Details will be provided in future issues of this newsletter.



### Professor George Thomas Honored by AALS

*Congratulations to Professor George Thomas, recently honored as a Teacher of the Year by the national Association of American Law Schools. Thomas, an expert on criminal law, was chosen as last year's faculty commencement speaker by the students at Rutgers Law School.*



## Keep in Touch with Rutgers Law School

To keep you informed, Rutgers Law School needs your current home and business contacts.

[UPDATE INFORMATION](#)