Named Scholars: Six Faculty Members Receive New Academic Designations for Scholarship, Teaching and Service

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Named scholars
Six faculty members receive new academic designations for scholarship, teaching and service

Six longtime faculty members of SUNY Buffalo Law School have been elevated to new academic ranks – reflecting, says Dean Makau W. Mutua, “outstanding scholarship and notable records of teaching and service.” The new designations are made possible by generous gifts from distinguished alumni. Several are the result of leadership gifts to the school’s seven-year fundraising campaign. A major goal of the $30 million campaign, which is especially targeted at the school’s 10,500-plus alumni, is endowed support for faculty research.

“In the last five years alone, we have raised money for four completely new endowed ranks,”Mutua says. “We expect many more of these gifts – to support our faculty – before the campaign is over.”

The faculty members receiving new academic designations are:

James A. Gardner, Bridget and Thomas Black Professor. A well-regarded constitutional law scholar and former vice dean of the Law School, Gardner joined the Buffalo faculty in 2001. He also has been named a SUNY Distinguished Professor. A prolific scholar, his most recent book is Election Law in the American Political System (Aspen, 2013). Thomas E. Black ’79 and his wife, Bridget, are Western New York natives who now live in Texas, where Black is managing partner of the highly successful mortgage servicing firm Black, Mann & Graham. He serves as chair of the Law School’s Dean’s Advisory Council, as a trustee of the University at Buffalo Foundation, and as co-chair of the Law School’s campaign steering committee.

Errol E. Meidinger, Margaret W. Wong Professor. Meidinger, who teaches and conducts research in environmental law, directs the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy, a research institute that advances the University’s role in cutting-edge research on law and legal institutions. His most recent article, co-authored with four other scholars, is “Transnational Business Governance Interactions: Conceptualizing a Terrain,” published in Regulation and Governance (2012). Margaret W. Wong ’76 serves as co-chair of the Law School’s campaign steering committee and as a long-time member of the Dean’s Advisory Council. The successful immigration law practice she founded in Cleveland now has offices in six U.S. cities. She is also a published author and one of the Law School’s most generous alumni.

Athena D. Mutua, Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar. Professor Mutua studies and writes in the areas of critical race and feminist legal theory. Her work includes the edited collection Progressive Black Masculinities (Routledge, 2006). The late Floyd H. Hurst ’31 was a founding partner of the law firm Hurst & Brothman (later Hurst, Brothman & Yusick) in Angola, NY. He and his wife, Hilda L. Hurst, spent their later years in Altoona, Fla.

John Henry Schlegel, Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar. Schlegel, a SUNY Buffalo Law faculty member since 1973, has primarily studied legal history and the history of legal education. A recent article is “Together Again,” in the Comparative Law Review (online 2012). He is part of the faculty group that offers the financial transactions concentration, teaching both acquisition transactions and in the concentration’s program in finance in New York City.
Cook LLP, serves on the Dean’s Advisory Council and on the campaign steering committee of the Law School, and also is a trustee of the charitable Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation.

Patrick Long ’00 honored for teaching skills

Patrick J. Long ’00, who coordinates and teaches in the Law School’s Legal Analysis, Writing and Research (LAWR) program, has been tapped for special recognition as a legal writing professor.

Students chose Long to receive the Faculty Award at this year’s Commencement ceremonies. The Law School now has submitted his name for recognition at the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Association of American Law Schools. At the meeting, Jan. 2 to 5 in New York City, Long will be recognized as one of AALS’ “Teachers of the Year.” He will also be acknowledged in the association’s February newsletter.

“Pat Long is simply one of the best research and writing professors in the country,” says Dean Makau W. Mutua. “His masterful command of legal argument, and his superior ability to teach legal skills to lawyers in embryo, is one of the reasons our LAWR program is without doubt a key cornerstone of SUNY Buffalo Law’s curriculum.”

Recognizing an audiovisual master at work

Law School librarian who helps to make learning a multimedia experience has been honored for her work by UB’s Professional Staff Senate.

Anne Marie Swartz, an instructional support technician in the Charles B. Sears Law Library’s Koren Audiovisual Center, received the Outstanding Service Award at a June 6 luncheon. The award recognizes “professional excellence and outstanding service of noteworthy scope and depth which is beyond that encompassed by the job description.”

The Professional Staff Senate is an organization that represents 2,500 professional employees of the University.

Swartz, who joined the Law Library in 2000, has primary responsibility for the audiovisual equipment – the laptops, DVD players, document cameras and projectors – used by professors and other presenters in the Law School, equipment that often must be set up, wired properly and tested in a 10-minute window between classes. She manages a rotating staff of about a dozen students and juggling staff, equipment and clients in a fast-paced environment. Swartz has a master’s degree in library science.

Terrence McCormack, associate director of the Law Library and manager of Law School technology, nominated Swartz for the award.