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High-powered board will advise Advocacy Institute

The Advocacy Institute – UB School of Law’s newest signature initiative to train students to become the best advocates in the profession – has taken a major step forward with the naming of a high-profile National Advisory Board. At its recent inaugural meeting, the board began its work of advising and supporting the Advocacy Institute, ensuring that its teaching and programs are of exceptional quality and reflect the best ideas in the field. It includes nationally acclaimed trial attorneys, jurists and legal scholars.

“We are very excited about the National Advisory Board we have recruited,” says SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Dr. Charles Patrick Ewing, who directs the institute. Ewing, himself a gifted teacher and nationally sought-after expert on the criminal mind, notes: “These board members are renowned in their fields, with outstanding reputations and accomplishments, and we are honored that they have joined us to help guide the institute in becoming one of the nation’s top advocacy programs.”

“The level of enthusiasm for the Advocacy Institute has been outstanding, with so many distinguished practitioners and jurists eagerly agreeing to serve on the board,” says board Chair Terrence M. Connors ’71, founding partner of Connors LLP who has been ranked for the past eight years as the top Super Lawyer in upstate New York.” In addition to some of our most prominent alumni, several non-alumni with no prior connection to the Law School, who are famous for their success in high-profile cases – such as Barry Scheck in the O.J. Simpson trial, Bob Clifford in the 9/11 case, and Stewart Jones, a top New York trial lawyer – are so enthusiastic about the current quality and vast potential of the Institute that they have agreed to serve on its Board.”

In addition to Connors, the members of the National Advisory Board include:

Michael A. Battle ’81, a former U.S. attorney and judge, and now a partner with the Washington, D.C., law firm Barnes and Thornburg, focusing on commercial/civil litigation and white-collar criminal matters and appeals.

Jennifer Beckage ’07, former owner of a technology-based company that was publicly acquired, whose practice now focuses on complex business disputes and commercial litigation as a partner with the Buffalo firm Phillips Lytle.

Donald Chiari ’83, founding partner of Brown Chiari in Buffalo, whose practice is devoted to clients who have sustained catastrophic, life-changing injuries, and who has obtained one of the largest nursing home verdicts in New York State.

Robert A. Clifford, a senior partner with Clifford Law Offices in Chicago and designated as the No. 1 Super Lawyer in Illinois for eight years, who was the lead negotiator in the $1.2 billion settlement of 9/11 property damage claims involving the Twin Towers in New York City.

Steven R. Fisher ’16, a third-year law student who serves as executive editor of the Buffalo Law Review, who later this year will join the New York City firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson.

Neil A. Goldberg ’73, a renowned trial attorney, founding partner of Goldberg Segalla in Buffalo and former president of the Defense Research Institute, who has defended products liability, pharmaceutical, medical device, trucking, toxic tort and other catastrophic cases nationwide for a number of New York Stock Exchange companies.

E. Stewart Jones Jr., an acclaimed trial lawyer and partner with E. Stewart Jones Hacker Murphy in Albany, N.Y. He is the only New York State lawyer outside of New York City to be named to all four of

WILLEM C. VIS INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION MOOT COURT

More than 300 law schools from around the world competed in the Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot Court held annually in Vienna, Austria.

For the first time, from March 19 to 24, the Advocacy Institute sent a team to compete. Spurred by the competition, more than 20 pre-moots were created in such cities as Budapest, where our team competed, before the actual rounds began in Vienna.

The goal of the Vis Arbitral Moot is to foster study in the areas of international commercial and arbitration laws, and to encourage the resolution of business disputes through arbitration.
the most exclusive organizations honoring outstanding trial lawyers, including the International Academy of Trial Lawyers and American College of Trial Lawyers.

Marianne Mariano ’94, a former courtroom lawyer who serves as Federal Public Defender for the Western District of New York, and the first woman to head a federal public defender’s office in the Second Circuit.

Teresa A. Miller, a Harvard Law School graduate and longtime UB Law professor, now UB’s vice provost for equity and inclusion, who is an expert on prisons, immigration and prisoners’ rights.

Hon. Erin Peradotto ’84, an accomplished trial and appellate lawyer, former head of the New York attorney general’s office in Buffalo, and now justice of the New York State Supreme Court Appellate Division, Fourth Department.

Hon. Eugene F. Pigott Jr. ’73, now senior associate judge of the Court of Appeals, New York State’s highest court, following a distinguished career as a trial attorney, Erie County Attorney in Western New York, New York State Supreme Court Justice, and Presiding Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Fourth Department.

Barry Scheck, a partner with Neufeld, Scheck and Brustein in New York City, co-founder of the Innocence Project at Cardozo Law School, which has exonerated approximately 300 people, and a key member of the “Dream Team” that defended O.J. Simpson. Scheck is renowned for his eight-day cross-examination and his part in the summation in that trial.

Christopher Viapiano, a partner with the Washington, D.C., law firm Sullivan & Cromwell, whose practice includes complex antitrust, commodities, securities and shareholder derivative litigation.

Judge Richard Wesley, a former trial attorney in private practice who served in the New York State Legislature and on the New York State bench (Supreme Court, Appellate Division and Court of Appeals) before becoming a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit.

For more information about the Advocacy Institute and the National Advisory Board, please visit www.law.buffalo.edu or contact Professor Ewing at ewings@buffalo.edu or (716) 645-2770.

Commencement 2016

Words of challenge as graduates cross a threshold

No one gets through law school without a cheering section, and as 200 students received their degrees at SUNY Buffalo School of Law’s 127th Commencement ceremonies, their families and friends did plenty of cheering.

At the May 21 ceremonies, held in the auditorium of UB’s Center for the Arts, 188 J.D. candidates and 12 master of laws candidates crossed the stage as degrees were conferred—and crossed the threshold of their new life as lawyers.

Interim Dean James A. Gardner welcomed the crowd and had some parting words for the Class of 2016. (See Message from the Interim Dean on page 1.)

The afternoon’s keynote speaker, Robert Odawi Porter, is the former president, attorney general and chief legal counsel of the Seneca Nation of Indians. Porter shared some hard-won lessons about life in the law, encouraging the graduates to think beyond the narrow interests of their careers.

He asked each of them to consider their profession a “personal journey.” From this day forward,” he said, “it will become increasingly meaningless how well you did here in the Law School as a student. What will matter is whether you’re any good as a lawyer and whether you’re any good as a person.”

Porter also counseled a careful balance between the pursuit of a high salary and the higher calling of the law. “I don’t think there’s any shame in wanting to improve your economic situation,” he said. “But as lawyers we exist to serve our clients. Money is a consequence of some success in the legal profession, but it is not the objective.”

Finally, he encouraged the graduates to be engaged in their community. “Serve on the school board. Raise money for a charity. Teach a kid how to read. Run for Congress. Whatever you do, it will not only help your legal career, it will make you a better person.”

The student address was given by Ibrahim Tariq, who recounted a moment in Associate Professor Matthew Steilen’s classroom when Steilen—explaining a concept in constitutional law—paused and said, “We’re lawyers. We run this.”

“And he was right,” Tariq said. “We run our society. We know what the law says, but it’s our duty to argue about what the law should mean.” He encouraged his classmates: “Let’s not change the way we fight. Let’s not change the way we work. Let’s run this. Let’s run it well.”

An emotional Professor Charles Patrick Ewing presented the Ken Joyce Excellence in Teaching Award posthumously to John R. Nuchenero, who passed away during the first year of the Innocence and Justice Project. He was instrumental in creating, Catherine E. Nagel ’98 accepted the award on behalf of her husband and law partner.

For more photos and video visit: www.law.buffalo.edu/forum/extra