Looking Toward the Future: Students of Color Celebrate Their Accomplishments

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Looking toward the future

Students of Color celebrate their accomplishments

Anthony J.M. Jones '84

A billion-dollar lawyer. An attorney to the stars. A state Supreme Court justice. There were plenty of accomplishments to impress and emulate from among the prominent alumni lauded at the 2013 Students of Color Dinner, held April 11 at the Buffalo Marriott.

About 150 people attended the affair, primarily to wish well the members of the Black, Latin American and Asian Pacific American law student associations who would be graduating the next month and perhaps looking for some inspiration for their legal careers ahead.

This is where Paul Korniczky ’86, Anthony J.M. Jones ’84 and Hon. Janice A. Taylor ’78 come in. The three were honored that evening as Distinguished Alumni, and with good reason.

Korniczky ’86 is a shareholder and registered patent attorney with Chicago’s Leydig, Voit & Mayer, one of the oldest and largest patent law firms in the country. He has served as trial counsel in patent infringement and intellectual property litigation in U.S. federal courts and in international patent disputes in Europe and the Far East. In a notable career highlight, Korniczky won a $1.2 billion lawsuit on appeal. It has been a 27-year career that was put in motion when Korniczky was studying mechanical engineering and saw his academic adviser prepare to become an expert witness in a patent lawsuit.

“That’s when I got the idea to go to law school,” Korniczky said. “I chose Buffalo because they have more programs for students of color.”

Joe Korniczky, joining Paul for the evening, said that his brother’s accomplishments are even more impressive when one considers that he graduated from college at 19, got a master’s degree at 21 and finished law school by 24.

Jones ’04, in the relatively short time since he graduated, has established himself nationally as an expert in the transactional aspects of entertainment, sports and media law.

His vision of international justice was behind his involvement as adviser to the United Nations for the 2008 International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Further, he recently launched the Global Social Ventures Initiative to help empower the world’s poor through education, microfinance and entrepreneurial programs. Another avocation is encouraging youth through music and sports.

Taylor ’78 is a SUNY Buffalo Law standout, not just because she sits on the state Supreme Court in Queens County, but also because she was the first female African-American to do so when she was elected in 1997. She won a second 14-year term to the court in 2011.

Her path to the bench began in transportation, as an attorney for the New York City Transit Authority and as secretary of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Operating Authority, specializing in labor, employment and contracts law. She held those positions from the year she graduated until 1986. She next moved into private practice, where she specialized in labor, civil rights, family, estates and entertainment law.

Adding inspiration to the evening was keynote speaker David Edmunds Jr., deputy commissioner of the state Liquor Authority. He offered a 10-point list of practical advice drawn from his own law career that included private practice and public appointments and election as the first and only African-American president of the Bar Association of Erie County.

Additionally, students honored two professors for their contributions to the law and teaching. Both said they were humbled by the recognition.

Remla Parthasarathy ’94 was selected for the Trailblazer Award for her work in intimate partner violence prevention. Today, as a clinical instructor for the Women, Children, and Social Justice Clinic, she teaches students how to maximize interaction with victims, while avoiding burnout that can come with the demands of the field.

The Jacob D. Hyman Professor Award was given to Associate Professor Anthony O’Rourke, a specialist in criminal law and procedure, legislation and constitutional law, who is new to the Law School. He tries different approaches to the material he teaches and puts special effort into getting to know his students – a gesture that students appreciate, yet is a small investment of time, he said.

“I’m deeply moved and humbled because I’ve only been teaching for a year,” O’Rourke said. “It’s less of a recognition of what I’ve done and more of a vote of confidence.”

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