Res Ipsa

TAKING ACTION

S. Rafe Foreman aims to elevate advocacy program
SAVE THE DATE
The Pat Kelly Scholarship Poker Tournament
September 21, 2012
Get your chips ready for the next round of this fun and popular tournament. Sponsorship and scholarship opportunities are available to benefit our students.
FEATUREING:
Texas hold’em with re-buys and add-ons
Refreshments and door prizes
Beginner tables
Final table prizes
Blackjack tables

16th Annual Downs Scholarship Golf Tournament

Don’t miss out on this UMKC School of Law tradition!
Friday, May 11, 2012
Tiffany Greens Golf Club
Registration fee includes green fees, cart, lunch, T-shirt and complimentary beverages. Sponsorship opportunities are available.
11:30 a.m. Registration
12:30 p.m. Lunch
1 p.m. Tee off
For more information, contact Cary Powers at powerscl@umkc.edu or 816-235-5361.

SAVE THE DATE
The Big Event
February 2013
More than 100 alumni celebrated at the Big Event 2012: Jump, Jive an’ Wall presented by the Law Foundation and Law Alumni Association.
Don’t miss your chance to enjoy an evening of music, dinner and fun with your fellow alumni in February 2013!
For more information, contact Cary Powers at powerscl@umkc.edu or 816-235-5361.

About the Publication
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We need you
Have an idea for a story in next year’s Res Ipsa? We are looking for contributing writers as well as your news. Please contact Sarah McGinnity at mcginnitys@umkc.edu to get involved.

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Res Ipsa
University of Missouri-Kansas City |
School of Law
Alumni Magazine 2012

Inside this issue
2 Dean’s Letter
   Get to know the next generation of students.
20 The Student Experience
   A look back at the giving for 2010-11.
32 Alumni and Friends
   The School of Law community kicks back.
Back cover
Calendar of Events

2 Dean’s Letter
Briefs
Catch up on the highlights of the last year at the law school.
8 Library Renovations
Brand new technology leads UMKC into the next era.
14 Working for Freedom
The Midwest Innocence Project helps secure exoneration.
16 S. Rafe Foreman
New Douglas Stripp Professor leads advocacy efforts.
20 The Student Experience
Get to know the next generation of students.
22 Annual Report of Giving
A look back at the giving for 2010-11.
32 Alumni and Friends
The School of Law community kicks back.
Back cover
Calendar of Events

On the cover:
S. Rafe Foreman brings a new face to the School of Law and the Advocacy Program.
From the Dean

I write this letter with continued excitement about the future of our law school despite an environment that urges caution and concern. As anyone who reads the news is aware, public higher education in Missouri is facing significant financial challenges. In addition, serious questions have been raised whether, given increasing debt loads and fewer jobs, law school is a losing proposition. These attacks on legal education have had an effect—applications are down around the country by about 20 percent, and here at UMKC as well. Yet a significant number of potential students are still applying to law school. Why? I think it’s because these applicants believe that law is a true profession—one that matters to our society and to the people we represent, and that being a lawyer can still be a rewarding career if one has reasonable expectations.

It is with this backdrop that we recently adopted a strategic plan that will take us through most of this decade. That plan allows us to build on our strengths—advocacy (including family law), entrepreneurship, commitment to our urban mission, and being a supportive, student-oriented academic and professional community—to break out of existing law school hierarchies and become a leader in 21st century legal education. We are well-positioned to do so. We have an outstanding faculty with a strong scholarly core, yet significant practical experience, that is committed to integrating academic theory and practical skills. We have a new director of advocacy who is already working on building the substance and reputation of our advocacy program to achieve national prominence. We have significant strength in entrepreneurship. By using the strategic partnerships we have developed and will continue to develop with the Bloch School of Management, the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and important local and national entrepreneurship organizations, we have the capacity to play a leadership role in this area. We have a new director of IT who is a tech visionary and is committed to keeping us on the cutting edge with regard to both legal and legal education technology.

And we have supportive alumni and a legal community willing to help us in so many ways. With these resources and our new plan, I am optimistic about our future. I invite you to continue working with us to make that future a reality.

Ellen Y. Suni
A special topics lecture, “Autopsy of Our Failed Financial System,” presented by Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission (FCIC) Chairman Phil Angelides (above) addressed the reasons for the financial meltdown. A UMKC Law Review Symposium the following day included breakout sessions discussing the avoidable mistakes made during the meltdown and ways to avoid another crisis. Speakers included university professors from around the nation as well as FCIC executive director Wendy Edelberg. The program was coordinated by Professor Bill Black.

Mayor Sly James welcomes incoming class

The annual Matriculation Ceremony welcomed the entering class of 2011. One-hundred-fifty new students were called into the Student Lounge from the Truman Terrace to begin their journey into the school and the legal profession. SBA President Curtis Moore and Dean Ellen Suni addressed the students, urging them to pursue excellence in a collaborative and collegial manner. Kansas City Mayor Sly James addressed the crowd of students, faculty, staff and inn master mentors. James suggested that lawyers—like United States Marines—are the few and the proud, and urged students to take that role seriously. To conclude the ceremony, James administered an oath of admission to the new students.

Hon. Wesley Brown

U.S. District Judge Wesley Brown, a graduate of the Kansas City School of Law (later UMKC School of Law), died at the age of 104. Brown was appointed by President John F. Kennedy and was the longest-ever serving federal judge. Brown spent the majority of his career practicing in Hutchinson, Kan., for the Williams, Martindell and Carey law firm. He reviewed cases up until his death.

Bill Anderson

Friends, neighbors, students and colleagues honored Professor Emeritus Bill Anderson at a memorial event in February. Speakers included Dean Ellen Suni, Associate Dean Jeffrey Berman, 1986 law school alumnus Toni Blackwood, and Anderson’s children—Breck Anderson and Nancy Alemifar. Family, friends and colleagues remembered Professor Anderson's success as a trial attorney, teaching, and other contributions to the law school—including his skills with the bagpipes and his ever-present sense of humor.

Marcia Pinkman

Longtime receptionist and friend Marcia Pinkman was remembered for her invaluable contribution to the School of Law community. Staff, faculty, alumni and friends gathered in the Thompson Courtroom to share short stories, listen to Marcia’s favorite music and enjoy some of her favorite snacks. A balloon release on the terrace followed the remembrance ceremony. Donations were accepted for the Marcia Pinkman staff scholarship fund.

Governor addresses law school class of 2011

Interim President Steve Owens, Governor Jay Nixon and Dean Ellen Suni take time for a picture before the Spring 2011 commencement ceremonies.

The law school honored 141 graduates at the 2011 spring commencement ceremony on May 7. Governor Jay Nixon addressed graduates and encouraged them to be the kind of lawyers the community takes pride in. Interim University of Missouri System President Steve Owens also delivered remarks. The Law Alumni Association welcomed back three members of the Class of 1961 on the 50th anniversary of their graduation. R. Lawrence Ward, Charles Hyer and the Honorable Tom Sims were presented with an honor cord and certificate from Law Alumni Association President Tom Hankins. Hon. Patricia Breckenridge of the Missouri Supreme Court will address graduates at Commencement 2012 on Saturday, May 5.
Faculty Spotlight

Kisthardt recognized for civic leadership

Professor Mary Kay Kisthardt received the President’s Award for Faculty Community Engagement in recognition of her record of highly engaged, sustained leadership with public and community organizations addressing critical concerns, especially those involving children. Kisthardt is the co-director of the Child and Family Services Clinic and was one of the first to encourage mediation as a tool to resolve family conflicts. She has served as editor of the international family law journal and worked extensively with the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

Kisthardt was one of only two faculty members recognized on a system level in 2011. Kisthardt said she aims to help students recognize their ability to make a difference in the lives of others. “One of the most rewarding aspects of my teaching is realizing the potential we have to impact the community through the students we educate.”

Lynch brings international experience

Tim Lynch joined the law school faculty this fall with a focus on international law. Lynch graduated from Harvard Law School and completed his MBA at Indiana University, concentrating on the regulation of global capital markets and international trade. Lynch taught the Law of International Trade and Finance during his first semester at UMKC.

He said his education and practical experience in both law and business helps him understand and critique the law of international business and financial institutions. “I have a strong appreciation of the dynamic process of international business and can more easily identify how and why private international law works—and doesn’t work,” Lynch said.

Lynch hopes to focus his UMKC career on engaging students in international law as well as using the school as a platform to conduct innovative research in international law as it relates to finance, trade and the environment.

When he’s not in the office, Lynch is spending time with his three sons—a 6-year-old and 5-year-old identical twins. He also enjoys exercising and playing musical instruments—the accordion, bagpipes, didgeridoo and classical guitar.

Cohen Lecture brings gene patent debate to School of Law

Do gene patents kill? That was the question at the 2011 Joseph Cohen Lecture, which featured patent attorney Dan Ravicher and biotech industry representative Hans Sauer engaged in a passionate debate. Students, faculty and alumni as well as members of the UMKC and Kansas City community attended the Oct. 13 lecture.

The discussion centered around a 2007 Congressional bill banning the patenting of DNA. Although Congress has not acted, the American Civil Liberties Union and Public Patent Foundation filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Patent Office and genetic testing company Myriad Diagnostics. The groups claim gene patents are illegal and a violation of the U.S. Constitution. Meanwhile, many universities and biotechnology companies argue that gene patents save lives by providing incentives for medical innovation.

The Joseph Cohen Lecture Series honors the memory of Joseph Cohen, a 1925 graduate. The lecture celebrates the courage and commitment of a lawyer to the causes of civil rights, individual liberty and religious freedom. The fund was established by his late son Barton P. Cohen, to honor his father’s memory. We appreciate the generosity of Mr. Cohen and his wife Dr. Mary Davidson Cohen in sustaining this lecture series.

“Do Gene Patents Kill?” debate brought two of the leading voices in the debate over gene patents to UMKC, and provided our students and the community a first-hand opportunity to learn and comment upon this important and timely topic.”

Chris Holman
Associate Professor of Law

Hans Sauer, Dean Ellen Sust, Mary Cohen, Associate Professor Chris Holman and Daniel Ravicher at the 2011 Joseph Cohen Lecture Fund presentation on the controversy surrounding DNA patenting.

Mary Kay Kisthardt
Professor of Law
J.D. Penn State ’78
LL.M. Yale ’85

Tim Lynch
Professor of Law
J.D. Harvard ’98
MBA Indiana University ’09
The renovated space, the first phase in a three-part series of library improvements, is conveniently located on the ground floor across from the school’s large classrooms. It contains the new Courtney Turner Trust Collaborative Technology Classroom which, according to Library Director Paul Callister, allows for continued innovation in pedagogy by encouraging students to utilize technology in group settings and improve their legal research skills. The classroom includes both hardware and software that allow groups of three to six students to drag applications from their laptops on to large flat screen monitors that the group can view and edit together. Multiple students can drag documents or applications on the same screen simultaneously, allowing for greater collaboration and critique. Shared screens can then be captured for instructors or other students to access and review.

Outside the classroom, core legal research materials are accessible so that students can learn to integrate print and electronic resources. Student learning will be further enhanced by easy access to the library’s research librarians, who have moved to the new facility to make their expertise more accessible to students.
The Instruction and Technology Library houses the school’s laptop clinic, which allows students to focus on their studies while Jeff Henderson, the clinic tech, deals with laptop problems that could stymie effective learning if not corrected quickly. The new facility also, for the first time, provides a home for the academic strategies program, which allows teaching assistants to hold office hours and provide workshops on law school learning strategies in a space frequented by 1L students. The Professor William Anderson Academic Strategies Library and Classroom, the result of a generous anonymous gift, organizes helpful materials for first-year students in one location.

Not only does the renovated space serve the law school community, but it will satisfy the concerns expressed by the American Bar Association during an accreditation site visit in 2006, which called the library uninviting, uncomfortable and lacking in study spaces. The redesigned space more than meets the ABA’s concerns, Callister said.

More than $1 million has been contributed to the $1.3 million project. According to Callister, alumni and friends in the community were excited to support the project’s vision.

In addition to improving learning now, the library face lift is leaving a favorable impression as the school recruits new faculty members, staff and prospective students. With features that mirror those in the renovated E.E. (Tom) Thompson Courtroom, the new facility serves as an anchor for the north side of the building.

Extending outside the UMKC community, the efforts to blend the best of traditional book learning and technology while encouraging collaboration and teamwork, will be a model for other law schools, Callister said.
Thank you all who contributed.

Library renovations made possible through the generous support of the following supporters with gifts of $5,000 or greater.

Thank you…

A special thank you…

Major gifts

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Tom & Vina Hyde
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Anonymous in honor of Professor William B. Anderson
Hoffman Family Foundation
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Jim & Billie Ray Tippin
Gene & Linda Voigts
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$5,000-9,999.99
Ellen, Erl, Karin and Eric Suni

In loving memory of Alan Brooks

Debbie Brooks earned her law degree from UMKC in 2001. She and her family made their contribution to the law library in loving memory of her husband, friend and mentor Alan E. Brooks, a combat and industrial engineer. Debbie is currently the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Multicultural Affairs, and serves on the UMKC Law Foundation Board of Trustees.

Jim and Billie Ray Tippin honor daughter and son-in-law

Jim Tippin earned his law degree from UMKC in 1973. His wife, Billie Ray, earned her degree in education from UMKC in 1978. Jim and Billie Ray made their contribution to the law library in honor of their daughter, Dana, and her husband, Keith, who both graduated from the UMKC School of Law in 1989. They work with Jim in the Kansas City law firm of James W. Tippin and Associates. Jim is currently treasurer of the UMKC Law Foundation Board of Trustees.

Shook, Hardy & Bacon honors John C. Dods III

John C. Dods III earned his law degree from UMKC in 1957. He then practiced law at Shook, Hardy & Bacon for over 45 years. He passed away on June 2, 2008 at the age of 74. John served as president of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association (1991), the Law Foundation of UMKC (1992-1994), Legal Aid of Western Missouri (1992) and the International Visitors Council of Kansas City (1995). He was also awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the UMKC Law Foundation.

In honor of Harold Holiday Sr., the law school’s first African-American graduate

Gifts provided by the following judges:

Janice Barnes-Williams (J.D. ’95)
Justine Del Muro (J.D. ’84)
Elena M. Franco
Fernando J. Gaitan Jr. (J.D. ’74)
Kenneth R. Garrett III (J.D. ’02)
Gregory B. Gillis
Jon R. Gray (J.D. ’76)
Lisa White Hardwick
Thomas H. Newton
Martina L. Peterson (J.D. ’94)
James M. Reed II (J.D. ’70)
Marco A. Roldan (J.D. ’83)
Ronnie L. White (J.D. ’83)

What experiences have prepared you for this position?

My most recent experience at the University of Illinois College of Law provided me an excellent grounding. Teaching both general legal research as well as an advanced legal research course focusing on business information allowed opportunities for applying educational technology in the classroom as well as developing an appreciation and approach to pedagogy. But I would say, most important are the 15 years I spent practicing law.

How will the library be able to better serve UMKC students with the new renovations?

The new space does two things immediately for the students. First, it provides 11 students dedicated space to allow them to become familiar with the essential tools for legal research that will serve them throughout their career. Second, it provides dedicated space for two librarians to be continuously available to the students throughout the day. As we continue to move into more and more of a digital collection, space to instruct and demonstrate these tools and resources will become increasingly important.

What goals do you have in enhancing UMKC’s offerings in legal research and technology?

One of the primary changes in the legal publishing industry has been the acquisition and consolidation under three main content publishers. Content providers are blending diverse content and shaping new products. Legal research has traditionally been taught within the context of litigation. However—especially with our focus on entrepreneurship, teaching about business information resources is an important addition to our legal research portfolio.

What relevance do traditional libraries have in our interactive, digital world?

The short answer is that the law library remains as vibrant and as important to the law school as ever. The difference, however, between “Langdell’s laboratory” and today’s law library is that the librarian is now the key point for accessing information. Our role as teacher and navigator has never been greater.

How can alumni continue to contribute to the library’s future success?

The alumni are one of the school’s greatest strengths. We know there is an active group of alumni using the library. We have a keen interest to make sure we are at the cutting edge of information technology, so continuously seeking input and ideas is one key to making sure we create one of the nation’s best law libraries.

When not at the library, where would we find you?

My wife and I tend to the six dogs and two cats we’ve acquired in the last few years. Not surprisingly, one of my favorite hobbies outside of work is books.

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It is because of experiences like these that many students attend UMKC School of Law. “I have talked to many students who come to UMKC specifically because of the Innocence Project,” Sean O’Brien said. “Where else can they get this kind of experience? It is eye-opening to see how innocent people get convicted of crime. Almost always, a wrongful conviction occurs because a defense lawyer failed to do his or her job, a prosecutor or law enforcement officer failed to turn over exculpatory evidence, or judges let incompetent evidence go to the jury.”

“Seeing is believing, and students who meet people like Dale Helmig, and become involved in their cases, come away with a better perspective on how much the justice system depends on people acting with integrity—whether they go on to be defense lawyers, judges or prosecutors, the lessons are valuable.”

For Dale Helmig, the Midwest Innocence Project (MIP) was his only hope. Helmig, 54, was convicted of the 1993 murder of his mother, Norma Helmig—a crime he didn’t commit. In November 2010, DeKalb County Senior Circuit Judge Warren E. McElwain named Dale Helmig “the victim of a fundamental miscarriage of justice,” and he was granted his freedom. Prosecutors say they have no plans to try the case again.

Innocence Project in Illinois, interviewed witnesses and jurors from the previous trial and obtained helpful evidence. Then MIPSO president Mark Thomas uncovered that extraneous evidence, not introduced at trial, was secretly slipped into the jury room during deliberations and was used to convince hold-out jurors to vote guilty.

MIP investigator Quinn O’Brien built a character defense for the case, which is rare in murder cases for fear it opens the door for damaging evidence, Sean O’Brien said. “But a thorough investigation proved that we had nothing to fear by opening the door to Dale’s character for nonviolence,” O’Brien said. “He had never hurt anyone in his entire life, before and after he went to prison, and we were able to convince Judge Warren McElwain that the notion Dale would kill his mother over a phone bill, as the state had argued, was absurd.”

After developing a convincing case for innocence, Helmig’s story was featured on America’s Most Wanted (AMW). It was the first time the show portrayed a convicted person as innocent of the crime. Sean O’Brien said it was also the first time the show devoted a full hour to a single case and the first time law enforcement refused to cooperate on an AMW project.

When Helmig was released, several MIPSO students accompanied the defense team to walk Dale out of prison, and to buy him his first steak dinner as a free man,” Sean O’Brien said.

A RECORD OF SUCCESS

MIP recently obtained its second exoneration working with the Husch Blackwell firm, and currently has several cases in litigation and additional prisoners who have been identified as likely innocent of the crimes for which they are serving sentences. Without support and donations from alumni and friends, MIP would be unable to help correct the justice system’s wrongs, O’Brien said.

“If we go away, there is no entity in the Midwest whose mission is to comb through prisoner mail and identify those who deserve a chance to prove their innocence,” he said. “I am convinced that in every prison in America is a handful of innocent people who don’t deserve to be there.”

MIP has a new legal director, Laura O’Sullivan (see sidebar) who brings years of criminal trial experience. In addition, the organization has qualified for two federal grants that allowed the hiring of a staff attorney, paralegal and investigator. The project recently hosted the Innocence Network Conference, where more than 400 attendees from across the nation participated in breakout sessions and networking events. More than 100 exonerees and their guests were honored.

MIP, a non-profit organization, works in collaboration with the UMKC School of Law, University of Missouri School of Law and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. To learn more, visit miptrog.org.

Recent exoneration shows importance of student, faculty and community collaboration

Midwest Innocence Project works with law school to free the wrongly convicted

Laura O’Sullivan joined the faculty this fall as clinical professor and legal director of MIP and is excited to lead a program that allows students to work closely with alumni and friends in the legal community to obtain justice for the wrongly convicted.

“UMKC’s law school does a spectacular job of facilitating a connection with the wider community,” O’Sullivan said. “This equips the students with a more realistic and informed view of being a lawyer, and a network of people to call upon when they need help. I think something very special is happening with the direction of the law school, and I am excited to be part of it.”

O’Sullivan most recently worked in the Missouri State Public Defenders office as the training director and previously as the district defender. She was also a partner in the firm of Hughes and O’Sullivan. She graduated from Saint Louis University School of Law and attended University of Kansas for her undergraduate degree.

“With 20 years of criminal defense practice, O’Sullivan said she has seen the justice system work and seen it fail. “The failures are heartbreaking. No one is a winner when an innocent person is wrongfully convicted. It does a real disservice to the victims, the jurors, the judge, the prosecutor, the defense attorney, and most critically, the defendant,” she said.

“Watching the agony and the helplessness of injustice is something that never leaves you. “We have so many people who need our help. I hope that we will be able to obtain the resources necessary to investigate their cases, hire the experts to prove their innocence and increase our litigation team,” O’Sullivan said. “We are on the cusp of some really amazing results, and I hope people will be inspired to participate with money or time, or simply by spreading the word.”
After practicing as a trial lawyer in a solo and small firm setting for 23 years, Rafe Foreman decided to take the next step in his career. The new Douglas Stripp Dean’s Distinguished Professor of Law and Director of Advocacy sat down to share his thoughts on advocacy, law in the media and what it means to be a warrior for justice.
Q&A

What brought you to the UMKC School of Law?
UMKC is the kind of law school that I want to be associated with. They don’t just teach the theory of the law, they teach practical application. Many law schools focus on theory without application. At UMKC, programs are offered to teach current practical application so students can experience the justice system while they’re students. That’s very attractive to me. It merges the two things that are separated at most law schools—theory vs. practice. At UMKC, they strive very hard to mix those two things.

How did you see UMKC School of Law’s reputation while you were in private practice?
I’ve been around long enough to see the tremendous support you were in private practice?—try to get the two things. At UMKC, they strive very hard to mix those two things.

How does the classroom experience at UMKC vary from other schools?
For me, the best part is how compassionate and caring the professors are toward the students. They’re not going to give the same lecture they’ve given for years; they’re there to encourage, work with and share their experience with the students; to provide hands-on training and experience.

What effect does that approach have on students once they start their law careers?
The students who graduate from this school of law are able to go out and make it on their own. UMKC is preparing our students to find those jobs that are elusive. There is a whole job market out there that is available to our students.

How did you get involved with the Midwest Innocence Project?
I’ve always been interested in the project. FBI data suggests that one out of every five people who is currently incarcerated did not commit the crime they’re in there for. The jury system is not the problem. Sometimes it’s failures with a judge who doesn’t allow evidence or a defense attorney who’s asleep at the switch.

You’ve spent the past 10 years re-teaching 50 or 100 practicing attorneys per year at Trial Lawyers College. How are you making the transition to 1L, 2L and 3L students?
Trying to eliminate the bad habits of attorneys has a lot of reward to it, but the opportunity to teach lawyers from the beginning of their careers and in larger numbers has a great appeal to me. It was a natural transition for me.

Foreman’s life experiences shape approach to law
Cowboy, athlete, auctioneer, lawyer. Rafe Foreman’s identity isn’t easily defined. Then again, his email address says it all: warriorforjustice at his firm’s website. It’s not just a catchy name—it’s a life philosophy.

“The difference between an advocate for justice and a warrior for justice is that I don’t turn it off at 5 o’clock,” Foreman said. “I don’t just put it on the shelf when I’m in court or need to advocate a position. It’s a way of life for me.”

He credits his history as a farmer, rancher and member of the Future Farmers of America for his dedication to the profession. He spent more than 20 years approaching his solo practice career as a crusade for righting wrongs, and it’s a philosophy he plans to carry into his teaching career.

“Going to law school was genetically encoded in me. I was brought up being the underdog, rooting for the underdog, believing that people of power would abuse it and take advantage of people,” Foreman said. “That’s drawn me to law is that our justice system is the great equalizer. The main thing that keeps us free as a nation is unencumbered right to a jury trial. That is being attacked and compromised every day by people with their own agendas and personal business interests. ‘They’re taking away our constitutional rights at warp speed. I’m doing whatever I can do to protect that most sacred right.’”

He founded his law firm—Foreman, Lewis and Hutchinson—with two former classmates. The trio decided to hire only attorneys who had attended the Trial Lawyers College. “We wanted to represent the damned, the unpopular and members of society who aren’t getting fair access to justice. Those are the people we felt we were meant to serve,” Foreman said.

UMKC School of Law Dean Ellen Suni said Foreman’s background and commitment make him a perfect fit for the school. “He has been a very successful trial lawyer and has a strong record and reputation as a teacher,” Suni said. “He is well-known in segments of the trial advocacy community into which we need to make inroads. And he is creative, forward-thinking and insightful. He also appears to be one of those people who gets things done, and that’s what we need.”
The student experience

Every fall, a new class is welcomed into the history and family of the School of Law. When those students get involved with the school’s activities, the entire school comes out ahead.

Nicholas Vrana
Council Bluffs, Iowa

Nicholas Vrana, a decorated Army veteran, hopes to use a law degree to restore respect and integrity to the U.S. military. Vrana is entering the law school through the Yellow Ribbon Program, a partnership between the Veterans Administration and UMKC offering tuition assistance.

He graduated from Buena Vista University in Iowa while on military active duty. In 2004, he was deployed to Kuwait for 11 months and received the Commendation Medal for Service as a liaison to the Kuwait Army. He worked as a paralegal for the 108th Training Division for two years and received the Meritorious Medal for Service.

He hopes to practice in the Midwest and after touring UMKC, he could tell it was where he was supposed to be based on the close-knit environment. Once his law degree is in hand, he would like to continue pursuing military justice as a prosecutor. “I would eventually like to prosecute violent crimes and those who abuse positions of trust for personal gain.”

Brandi Derstler
Osborn, Mo.

Brandi Derstler was her family’s first college graduate, but not its last. She graduated summa cum laude from Missouri Western State University. In May 2009, her uncle—who struggled with homelessness, alcoholism and depression most of his life—followed in her footsteps and graduated with honors from Eastern Illinois University. It is stories of triumph like her uncle’s that led Brandi to work with the Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph. For the past four years, she has worked to help low-income families develop healthy interactions with their communities.

At the end of her law school career, Brandi hopes to use legal skills to become an advocate for legislation that opens doors for homeless youth. “I’m truly thankful for the path I walk in life, and I hope to inspire my children to do the same,” Brandi said. “In my uncle’s words, “my journey is just beginning.”

Competitive edge

With new commitment to advocacy, UMKC teams see success.

As part of the law school’s commitment to rebuilding its advocacy programs, it has made an increased commitment to competition participation this year. With support from the Law Foundation, which increased the competition budget by over 30%, the school sent students to more competitions than in the past. “Because of the national reputation of Rafe Foreman, our new Stripp Professor and Director of Advocacy, the school has been invited to trial advocacy competitions around the country that we previously had not had the opportunity to attend,” Dean Ellen Suni said. The School’s competition success has also been aided by alumni who serve in varying roles to help the students prepare.

ABA Negotiation Competition
UMKC’s Negotiating Team, which has the best record of success in the country over the past 25 years, again qualified for nationals after placing in the regional competition this fall. At nationals, the team of Laura Fellows and Lauren Rogler placed ninth in the country out of an original field of 228 teams. They were coached by professors Bob Downs and Tony Lupino.

ABA Client Counseling Competition
Students Abby McClellan and Katie Wiehl tied for first after three rounds of competition at the ABA Client Counseling regional competition. They advanced to the semi-final round, where they counseled a mother whose daughter had been the victim of bullying. They lost in an extremely close round and missed qualifying to nationals by a very slim margin. The team was coached by Dean Barbara Glesner Fines.

Transactional Lawyering Meet
The Transactional Lawyering Meet is the premier moot court experience for students interested in transactional practice. It requires the submission of questions to the hypothetical client, preparation of a term sheet for a complex business transaction, responsive mark-ups of term sheets drafted by opposing teams and three rounds of negotiations. The team of Erik Thompson and Kyle Conroy placed first at the Midwest Regionals and will compete at national finals in Philadelphia. They were coached by professors Bob Downs and Malika Simmons.

Trial Advocacy Competitions
Trial advocacy students participated in several competitions this year, performing well at the regional level. Ray Salva and Jesi Demeire made it to the finals at the National Trial Competition Regionals in Kansas City but fell one win short of qualifying to nationals. The team of Tiffany Sears, Ray Salva Jennifer Brooks and Kevin Boyd tied for the final four in the American Institute for Justice Regional Competition in Seattle but missed the opportunity to compete for a national berth by losing the sixth level of a tie breaker.

Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition
Jessup is the world’s largest moot court competition with more than 2,500 competitors from 500 law schools around the world. UMKC’s team, comprised of Maria Beg, Aaron Luukkan, Ryan Ponder, Scott Sturgeon, and Samara Winburn, competed at the Super-Regional in Denver and was one of four teams out of 24 to make it to semi-finals. Unfortunately, the team fell one victory short of qualifying for the World Cup Finals. They won First Place Best Memorials (the international equivalent of briefs). The team was coached by professors Tim Lynch and Rana Lehr-Lehnardt.
The UMKC Law Foundation and Law School Alumni Association worked hard to excel in both fundraising and friend raising in a fast-paced 2010-11 fiscal year. The Law Foundation worked closely with Dean Suni and her staff to finish a library renovation campaign that led to the opening of a terrific new facility in August. At the same time, the Law Alumni Association held a number of well-received and well-attended events. All the while, the Law Foundation kept its central mission moving forward by effectively managing and increasing the endowment in a time of financial uncertainty. Students, faculty and alumni benefited from their hard work throughout the school year.

The Law Alumni Association continued its tradition of hosting quality alumni events. Students, faculty, staff and alumni attending the UMKC Roos vs. Western Illinois University event enjoyed an exciting basketball game after a tailgate party held in the student lounge. The Student Awards Ceremony in May provided more than 70 awards to outstanding and deserving students with their families and friends in attendance. Commencement featured Gov. Jay Nixon addressing the graduates and members of the Class of 1961 celebrating their 50-year anniversary. Mother Nature treated us a little better this year. More than 100 players participated in the Bob Downs Golf Tournament at Tiffany Springs Golf Club, raising more than $20,000 for scholarships. Generous alumni also played a significant role in fostering the school’s excellent reputation as a champion of solo and small firms by sponsoring 21 students at the Missouri Bar Solo and Small Firm Conference.

The 2010-11 campaign stimulates giving

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The 2012 year started out exciting as we celebrated our accomplishments with The Big Event, jazz style, at the President Hotel. Those in attendance enjoyed the pre-event VIP Party, a beautiful ice sculpture and photo booth. In addition to the enjoyment of a wonderful evening with fellow alumni, money raised by The Big Event went to benefit travel for the law school’s competition teams. In March, the alumni trip to Washington, D.C., allowed alumni to be sworn in to the United States Supreme Court. See page 30 for photos, including a swearing-in ceremony, CLE session and tours of our nation’s capital. Another trip is being planned for 2014.

The upcoming year will not disappoint as we continue with our annual events, an exciting speakers programs and the fall reunion. Fundraising will continue to be a priority, and the sequel to The Big Event will undoubtedly be another success.

It has been and will continue to be an active and fun year for the law alumni. We appreciate those who have participated and contributed, and encourage all to do so.
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The UMKC School of Law and the Foundation gratefully acknowledge the following generosity of all supporters. We thank the following donors of gifts of $250 or more between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011.

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the list, we apologize for any omissions or errors that have occurred.

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Giving - Class Participation
Standing before eight Supreme Court justices, UMKC alumni, Dean Ellen Suni and Visiting Professor Marcia Narine raised their right hands and repeated the oath of admission to become the newest members of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court.

The March alumni trip to Washington, D.C., included the swearing-in ceremony, a CLE session and sightseeing tours. Dean Suni characterized the weekend as an "awesome experience."

"I didn't really think it would be that big a deal until I was actually in the courtroom, with Justice Sonia Sotomayor directly in front of me and Nina Totenberg to my left," Suni said. "At that point, the pride in being a lawyer and the majesty of the court were almost overwhelming."

Those being sworn in were treated to a breakfast in the attorney’s room, where they were visited by the Clerk of the Court, who provided ceremony instructions. Anticipation increased as they were escorted into the courtroom to sit in front of the attorney’s bar. At 10 a.m., eight of the nine justices entered the courtroom and took their seats. Justice Elena Kagan announced the opinion of the Supreme Court in a death penalty case.

Then, former Missouri Congressman and Armed Services Committee Chair Ike Skelton moved to the podium and presented the lawyers from UMKC. Each stood, held up his or her hand, and repeated the oath of admission, which was followed by a welcome from the Supreme Court. The day ended with a lecture on the history and architecture of the Supreme Court.

Prior to the swearing-in, alumni were treated to a private tour of the U.S. Capitol, arranged by UMKC Continuing Legal Education Director Daniel McCarroll, with the help of Senator Claire McCaskill’s office. Those arriving on Saturday had an opportunity to experience the best Washington, D.C., had to offer, visiting monuments, museums and restaurants. On Sunday, the group went to the Newseum, an interactive museum tracing the history of journalism. Especially of interest to the lawyers in the group was the First Amendment gallery honoring the all-important “45 words of freedom.”

The museum trip was followed by a CLE held at the Husch Blackwell Sanders law firm. Arranged by alumnus Luther Washington ('00), the CLE featured Skelton and others from the firm, addressing topics relating to law and politics. The presentation was followed by a reception hosted by the firm, where those in attendance had an opportunity for more in-depth discussion. UMKC is planning another trip in May 2014.

Danne Webb ('91) said being sworn in was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. "It is one that my brother and I will look back on with fond memories," Webb said. "Everything went so seamlessly, and the Supreme Court admission process was amazing."
And the winners are ...

Each year, the UMKC Law Foundation and Alumni Association recognize exceptional alumni and friends of the School of Law with joint awards acknowledging philanthropy, leadership, service to the school and the legal community, and lifetime achievement. Alumni were recognized during a Nov. 11 reception at the All-Class Reunion at the InterContinental Hotel on the Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Mo. The classes of 1981, 2001 and 2006 held special receptions to reconnect with classmates and friends.

Stay tuned for information on next year’s reunion activities. To nominate alumni for next year’s awards, download a nomination form at law.umkc.edu/alumni-friends/awards.asp.

1. Law Alumni Association President Tom Hankins presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Kent Emison. The award is presented to an alumnus who has achieved outstanding professional success in the legal field throughout a long career.

2. Tom Hankins presents the Philanthropy Award to the Downs Tournament Committee. Steve Bough and Clint Newton accepted on behalf of the committee. The award is given to an individual or family who has provided exemplary service to the Foundation.

3. Tom Hankins presents the Pat Kelly Service Award to Jim Tippin, treasurer of the Law Foundation. The award is given to an alumnus who has provided exemplary service to the Foundation.

4. Law Foundation President Steve Cosentino presents the Decade Award to Danny Thomas. The Decade Award honors an alumnus who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession within their first 10 years of practice.

5. Law Foundation President Steve Cosentino presents the Presidents’ Award to Paul Campo. Campo, a previous president of the Law Alumni Association and adjunct faculty member, was selected for special recognition.

6. Law Foundation President Steve Cosentino presents the Pro Bono Award to Mira Mdivani, which is awarded to an alumnus who has made an outstanding contribution to the public welfare through the legal profession.
EVENTS

1. The Law Alumni Association hosted the 3rd Annual Wine and Good Friends Event at Café Trio. The annual event allows alumni to reconnect and meet fellow alumni. In attendance were Stanley and Laquana Counts ('86) and Visiting Professor Marcia Narine.

2. In conjunction with the Class Reunion Events, the 50+ Alumni Group meets for lunch. Norm Besheer ('55) is still practicing law and is the chairman of Gunter Pest Management.

3. Wine and Good Friends Reception had more than 50 alumni in attendance, including Bob Burnett, Comm. Margene Burnett ('87) and Jenny Redix Jordan ('06). The event will take place again in Fall 2012.


5. Alumni Aaron Kirkland ('08), Brett Burmeister ('07) and Jason Scott ('08) chat at the Wine and Good Friends Reception.

6. Class of 2010 alumnus Wale Akinmoladum and his wife, Andrea, are all jazzed up and ready for the Big Event. Watch for details for next year’s event in February.

7. Catching up are Hon. Gene Martin ('53), Tim Dollar ('84), Christine Albano ('88) and Michael Albano ('96) at the Missouri Bar Annual Meeting UMKC Alumni Luncheon on September 23, 2011. Alumni attend from across the state to hear Dean Suni speak and give updates on the law school.

8. Alumni, faculty, staff and students attend the annual The Big Event. Proceeds benefit a chosen law school project or student support activity. Law firm sponsors donate seats for students, which included Jason Kotlyarov and Lauren Rogler.

For more information about upcoming events, visit law.umkc.edu/alumni-friends.
Every contribution to the UMKC Law Foundation helps us provide scholarships and other vital support to the UMKC School of Law. Your gift gives students a better experience, attracts and retains top faculty, and also helps raise the prestige of your school.

To make a donation contact Chuck Cordt, cordtc@UMKCfoundation.org or 816-235-6328.

The UMKC Law Foundation and Alumni Association are in need of alumni and friends who are willing to serve on the boards and committees. Volunteering provides our alumni and friends with the opportunity to network with leaders in their field while supporting the work of the organization and the mission of the School of Law.

For more information, contact Cary Powers at powerscl@umkc.edu or 816-235-5361.
Calendar of Events

April
UMKC Alumni Awards Luncheon
Thursday, April 26 | Westin Crown Center

May
Commencement
Saturday, May 5 | Swinney Recreation Center

16th Annual Downs Scholarship Golf Tournament
Friday, May 11 | Tiffany Greens Golf Club

September
Pat Kelly Scholarship Poker Tournament
Friday, Sept. 21 | Pierson Auditorium

Luppino CLE and Softball Tournament
Friday, Sept. 28 – Saturday, Sept. 29

October
Wine and Good Friends Fall Reception

November
All Class Reunion Event
Friday, Nov. 2

December
Commencement
Saturday, Dec. 5 | Swinney Recreation Center

For more information about upcoming events, visit law.umkc.edu/alumni-friends.