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Tennessee Law Between the Lines

The Semi-Annual Online Companion to the Tennessee Law Magazine

Moot Court Team Places 2nd in National Competition

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Scholarship Successes

Recent gifts from Carl Colloms, Joel Katz, and a Tennessee court support UT Law students. [Read More](#)



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Blackshear Gala

UT Knoxville will commemorate and celebrate 50 years of African-American Achievement this year in honor of the first African-American students who attended undergraduate school at the university. [Read More](#)



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Outside the Law

Laughing with a Law Student

Jacob Wilson finally mustered the nerve last November to grab a microphone and

INFLUENTIAL ALUMNI

It's no secret that the alumni of the University of Tennessee College of Law have been making a difference in the world for decades. In the spring edition of Tennessee Law, we will profile our most senior alumni—those now aged 80 and over—and talk with them about their lives, their careers, their memories of law school and how the world has changed since they left UT Law. Read about their journeys, and how all those who have come after them are feeling their influence.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Did you love a story that appeared in Tennessee Law or Between the Lines lately? Did you disagree with one? Would you like to suggest alumni, professors, or staff we should profile? Now you can share your thoughts on our content, as well as give suggestions for future content, through our new Letters to the Editor section. Simply send an e-mail to managing editor, Tanya Brown, at tgbrown@utk.edu, or remit to: Tanya G. Brown, College of Law, 1505 W. Cumberland Ave., Suite 394, Knoxville, TN 37996-1810

Any letters received may be edited for length and clarity and could appear in print. Go ahead—make your voice heard!

COMING EVENTS

start telling jokes before a live audience. As a result, the third-year UT law student generated enough laughs to walk off with first place in Knoxville's Rocky Top Comedy Contest.

[Read More](#)



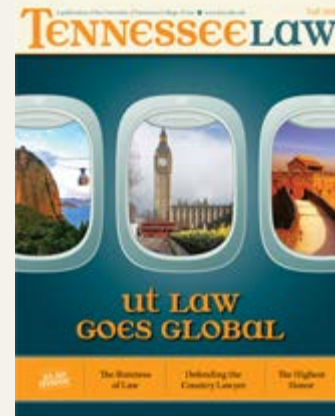
Law Dean Leads Race Against Racism

UT Law Dean Doug Blaze led a parade of runners and walkers in the annual YWCA Race Against Racism through east Knoxville on Jan. 15. [Read More](#)



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[View our calendar](#) on the alumni website to see our upcoming fall events.



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News & Events

Moot Court Team Places 2nd in National Competition



Amy Mohan, John Watkins, Chief Judge Sandra L. Lynch of the U.S. Court for the First Circuit and Will Perry.

By Ivy Wood and Kristi Hintz

A trio of UT Knoxville College of Law students placed second in the nation in final rounds of the 61st annual Moot Court Competition at the New York City Bar Association on Feb. 3.

The student team, consisting of Amy Rao Mohan, G. William Perry and J. David Watkins, was coached by Professors Joseph Cook and John Sobieski.


Mohan also was runner-up as Best Oralist in the four-day competition that included 28 teams from 14 regions across the country.

Tennessee qualified for the national finals by placing first in the Region VII National Moot Court Competition held last November at University of Memphis. The Texas Tech School of Law was the national winner.

This year the competition presented two issues not yet decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The first issue relates to deciding a motion for a preliminary injunction. The second issue relates to whether a specific municipal health care ordinance is preempted under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

"The experience is simultaneously challenging and inspiring," Perry said. "It's challenging because the judges literally ask whatever questions occur to them, and because they have so much more knowledge and experience than do law students. The experience is also inspiring, however, because it prepares us to articulate, apply and defend legal arguments at the highest levels of the profession. Ideally, an appellate argument is simply a dialog between attorney and judge. The opportunity to engage in this sort of exchange, particularly with federal appellate judges, is a rare privilege."

To prepare for the competition, the team worked together to research and write a brief on the problem assigned to them by the competition sponsors, and then worked on their oral argument. UT Law professors aided the students with practice



questioning and advice on presentation and style.

“The help they provided by giving us difficult and thought provoking questions during each practice was instrumental in our success,” Mohan said. “We never got a question during the competition that we were not prepared for.”

Perry said the team’s unique skills and experiences served them well in the competition. “We were able to draw on each other’s strengths and bolster each other’s weaknesses in a way that, in my experience, is rare for such a unique collection of people.”

The final argument of the competition is the culmination of more than six months of preparation and arguments by more than 179 teams from more than 124 law schools competing at the regional and national levels in every geographical area of the country.

The competition is sponsored by the American College of Trial Lawyers, a national organization of approximately 5,700 of the leading advocates in the United States, and the New York City Young Lawyers Committee.

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News & Events

Scholarship successes: Recent gifts support UT Law students

By Tanya Brown

\$1 million gift will help those in need

Carl Colloms, a 1966 graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law, credits his Christian faith for his decision to expand his contribution to the law scholarship that bears his name.

The Charleston, Tenn., native pledged an additional \$1 million to the Judge Carl E. Colloms scholarship endowment in December 2010.

The gift will be paid in annual installments until his death, when his estate will deliver the balance of the gift to the law school.

Colloms currently manages several real estate ventures and serves as the child support magistrate for the 10th Judicial District of Tennessee, which includes Bradley, Polk, Monroe and McMinn counties. He has held the position of county judge, city judge and county attorney in Charleston and Bradley County, in addition to working in private practice during his long legal career.

"Lately, our pastor has been talking from the pulpit about the three types of people," Colloms said, as he explained the background behind his decision to make another gift to UT Law.

"It's been the substance of several of his sermons. One type says, 'What's yours is yours, but if I want it, I'll take it.' Another says, 'What's mine is mine, and I'm going to keep it.' The last one says, 'What's mine is mine but if you need it, I'm going to share it with you.' I just got to studying on it. We've had some good investments and business dealings. I felt like I could do more."

He's hopeful that increasing his investment at UT Law will allow more students access to a career in law. The first in his family to go to college, Colloms said he made financial need the deciding factor in his scholarship criteria because the generosity of others made a law degree possible for him.

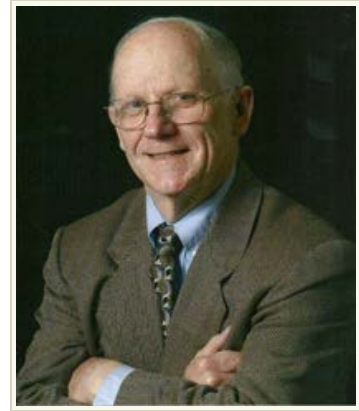
"Just looking back on my own situation, I had parents of modest means with a big family, but they were always willing to share," Colloms said. "I don't think any kid should be denied a good education because they can't afford one. I know from my personal experience how valuable scholarships are."

Entertainment lawyer reaches out, gives back

Entertainment lawyer Joel Katz recently contributed an additional \$250,000 to the scholarship that bears his name at the University of Tennessee College of Law.

An entertainment lawyer based out of Atlanta, Ga., Katz has represented clients ranging from Willie Nelson and George Strait to Josh Groban and Renée Fleming. A founding shareholder of Greenberg Traurig, he also was a founding partner of Katz, Smith and Cohen, which merged with Greenberg in 1998.

Katz created the Katz Family Scholarship Endowment at UT Law to assist students struggling to perform in school due to financial obligations. As a law student in the late 1960s, Katz attended classes while working nights at a local motel. He helped support his parents and siblings with the money he earned, but had difficulty balancing his employment with the rigors of law school.



The Katz scholarship gives preferences to students “from the bottom quarter of the class with financial need, who because of lack of money and family obligations, is struggling to fulfill his academic potential.”

Bench and bar scholarship benefits Middle Tennessee students

When Judge Todd Campbell came up with the idea of a scholarship that would help diversify the bench and bar in Tennessee’s middle district, he looked to his own court to help find the funding.

Money for the Federal Court Bench and Bar scholarship at the University of Tennessee College of Law comes from the fees paid by lawyers to be admitted to the court.

“None of the money is tax payer appropriated,” Judge Campbell said. “Because it’s fee-based, the current lawyers are helping to fund the next generation of lawyers.”

The scholarship, which is awarded to students in financial need who hail from the middle district, recently doubled in size from a \$5,000 to a \$10,000 award. While academic success is a factor in the award, it’s not the deciding one.

“We want the bench and bar here to be as diverse as our population,” Campbell said. “If you’re a very good student, there are already academic opportunities to help you. We settled on financial need and we hope that it brings other types of diversity with it – everything from race, gender and national origin to economic diversity.”

The court also sponsors similar scholarships at other state law schools, including Vanderbilt University, the University of Memphis and the Nashville School of Law. A committee of his peers supported the idea and voted to allow the earmarking of the funds for such a purpose.

“I’ve received some wonderful letters from students who were so uplifted by receiving the scholarship,” Judge Campbell said. “I think we’re off to a great start.”

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News & Events

Blackshear Gala, A New Celebration of Diversity

By Kristi Hintz

UT Knoxville will commemorate and celebrate 50 years of African-American Achievement this year in honor of the first African-American students who attended undergraduate school at the university.

In its own event celebrating similar milestones, the UT College of Law will host its 11th annual Julian Blackshear Jr. Scholarship Gala this spring honoring one of its first African-American graduates.

The college has hosted the event annually since 2001. This year's celebration will be at 5:30 p.m., Saturday, March 5 at The Foundry in World's Fair Park.

Fred Humphries, Vice President of U.S. Government Affairs for Microsoft Corporation, in Washington D.C., will provide the keynote address. Humphries manages both the federal and state government affairs teams at Microsoft.

Ticket prices are \$50 per ticket; \$25 for current students. Tables are \$500 dollars for 10 people. Tickets must be purchased by Feb. 25. All proceeds from ticket sales and money raised at the event directly support the Blackshear Scholarship. This scholarship program has helped recruit and retain outstanding African-American students to UT's College of Law.

In the past, the banquet primarily has been organized and hosted by the Black Law Students' Association (BLSA). BLSA's primary goal through this event is to provide a scholarship fund for African-American students to supplement their education at the UT College of Law. The Blackshear Gala also is a special time to celebrate the achievements of BLSA's graduating members.

This year, the event has a new name -- the Blackshear Gala, formerly the Blackshear Banquet -- and has grown beyond BLSA's expectations.

"This year the Blackshear Gala will be the culmination of all diversity efforts of the College of Law," said Lauren Herbstritt, director of annual giving and alumni affairs for the college. "It will be the college's premier diversity event to honor our students and alumni who are making strides to increase diversity in the law school. It will be an event that all of our alumni, students, faculty and the legal community can get behind."

The college's BLSA chapter is still leading the charge on the event and is excited to see it become a celebration of all diversity in the college.

"We are all very excited about the gala this year," said law student and committee co-chair Shelby Ward. "Through Blackshear, the law school community reflects on how far it has come in its road to equality in legal education. The gala also is an opportunity for students, faculty and practitioners to celebrate the future as one. The law school's continued support of Blackshear illustrates its commitment to diversity."

Various sponsorships levels are available for the Blackshear Gala. Special thanks to Merchant and Gould, an intellectual property law firm in Knoxville, who was the first supporting sponsor of this year's event.

To order tickets or for more information about sponsorship opportunities, visit <http://www.law.utk.edu/news/11Blackshear.shtml> or contact the College of Law's Office of Development and Alumni Affairs at (865) 974-6691 or by email at LKH@utk.edu.

March 4-5 also will be UT Law's black alumni reunion weekend. A free reception will be held at the Four Points Sheraton on Friday, March 4, from 6-8 p.m. An event is being planned for Saturday, March 5, but details are not yet available. Please continue to check the college's homepage for updates.



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Laughing with a law student

By R.G. Smithson

Jacob Wilson finally mustered the nerve last November to grab a microphone and start telling jokes before a live audience.

As a result, the third-year UT law student generated enough laughs to walk off with first place in Knoxville's Rocky Top Comedy Contest.

"Comedy was something I had been thinking about for a while," the 24-year-old Savannah, Tenn., native said. "I had seen some notices about local open mic competitions, but I had always found an excuse to chicken out before actually entering. This time I had some material I had been thinking about using, so I entered."

Wilson said friends had encouraged him to try stand-up comedy as he is usually the funniest in the group. "I have been writing jokes for years, but never performed any of them."

The Rocky Top competition field was actually filled when Wilson inquired, but he received a spot when a would-be participant dropped out. A field of 48 was narrowed to 12 for the final round in which the audience, the other comedians and a panel of judges all had votes.

Wilson joked in the preliminary rounds about Halloween and hayrides and in the finals about the Taylor Swift song, "Fifteen," and the difficulties of dating. As a law student in the advocacy track he was used to responding under pressure on his feet. As a 2L, Wilson was on a UT moot court team that finished second in the region.

"It's all about being confident and being able to perform in front of people. You can find humor in just about everything and anything."

Wilson plans to enter additional competitions between now and graduation, while also searching for a job as a litigator, but he also has a bigger dream. "By 2012, I would love to have my own sitcom on a major network," he said.

Will he have comedy to fall back upon if a legal job doesn't happen, or law to fall back upon if the comedy route doesn't work out?

"Surely, at least one – and maybe both – will work out," he laughed. "Hopefully, I can get paid one way or the other."





Law Dean Leads Race Against Racism

UT Law Dean Doug Blaze led a parade of runners and walkers in the annual YWCA Race Against Racism through east Knoxville on Jan. 15.

"It was a fun event, and an honor to be chosen as torchbearer," Blaze said. "There were about 200 runners and another 100 or so walkers. The race is always held to coincide with Martin Luther King, Jr., Day and to raise awareness about racism across the country."

Event chair Danielle Benson called Blaze an excellent role model for the purpose of the race.

"Dean Blaze was chosen as Torchbearer because of his work – and the College of Law's ongoing work – against racism," Bensons said.

Several UT law students and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Katrice Jones Morgan, participated in the 5K run and one-mile walk. A number of local attorneys, including several UT law alumni, also took part in the race.

"I got to start the race and lead for about the first 10 yards," Blaze said, "and then everyone passed me – including my youngest son Peter. But it was great because I had to do a little more running than I have been doing lately so I could keep up with everyone. It was just a great day."

Proceeds from the event supported local YWCA programs.