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Tennessee Law Between the Lines

The Semi-Annual Online Companion to the Tennessee Law Magazine

Debt and Financial Education Classes at UT Law

The College of Law recently invited Jeff Hanson, a debt management and education finance expert, to campus. Students had several opportunities to meet with and learn from Hanson about making good financial decisions. [Read More](#)



National Moot Court Team Scores in New York

The UT College of Law National Moot Court team followed up last year's second place national win with a shutout victory at this year's regionals and a trip to the Sweet Sixteen. [Read More](#)



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Duo Wins 2011 Advocates' Prize

Winning the annual Advocates' Prize competition takes hours of preparation, and in the case of winners Mitchell Panter and Jessica Johnson, more than one pot of coffee. The students, judges, and organizers of the fall event look back on the road to the prize. [Read More](#)



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Join us for a Metamorphosis!

The Clayton Center for Entrepreneurial Law invites you to attend a conference on technology and the future

LAWYERS WITH A CAUSE

The spring 2012 issue of Tennessee Law will take a closer look at the College of Law's Pro Bono programs. Hear from students, faculty, and community members about how UT Law students are making a difference in Tennessee and around the region.

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? Send an email to 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

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

of entertainment law. Put both the conference and the Julian Blackshear, Jr. Scholarship Gala on your calendar for March 31, 2012! [Read More](#)



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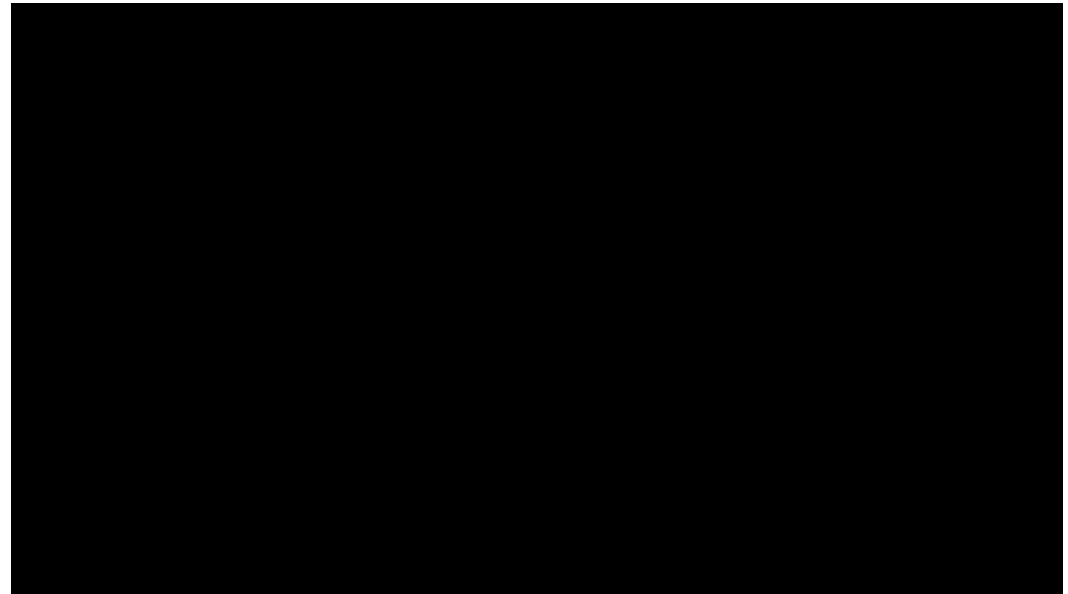
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News & Events

Students receive debt management counseling



By Tanya G. Brown

Jeff Hanson, a national authority on financial education and debt management, visited the University of Tennessee College of Law in January to help students get a handle on managing their financial commitments during and after law school.

Hanson addressed students at several college-wide presentations on debt management, as well as in one-on-one debt counseling sessions.

3L Crystal Lucas said Hanson's talk helped her create a plan for how to manage debt that went back to her time in graduate school.

"Student debt is something people tend to shy away from," Lucas said. Having Hanson on campus was a way of "opening up the conversation, and really was helpful to me and my classmates," she said. "I'm very concerned about repayment options. I want to jump into it with a plan."


Hanson detailed a four-step plan of attack for students looking to understand the ramifications of debt repayment.

First, students need to understand what their loan portfolio looks like.

"The Department of Education does not service its own loans, so you need to find out who does," Hanson said. "Those are the people you will have to deal with. Find out your rate, who is servicing it, and what you owe. This will help you try to borrow less in subsequent years."

Second, students should understand what type of loans they have taken out and determine when repayment begins.

"The repayment period is going to occur whether you do anything or not, so the



third step is very important,” Hanson said. “You must understand your repayment options and pick your plan. If you don’t choose a repayment plan, it will result in one being selected for you—and the default option is almost always the one where you will be paying the most per month. Don’t let that happen.”

Lastly, Hanson encouraged students to prepare for contingencies by knowing the options available to them for payment relief and refinancing.

He offered detailed information about how to follow through with each step of the plan and met with students for several hours on an individual basis.

Karen Britton, director of admissions and financial aid and director of the Bettye B. Lewis Career Center at UT Law, said the school will continue to address the issue of debt with students.

“Law school debt is an issue for law schools nationwide, and while UT remains a good value, we are concerned to see the average amount borrowed increasing while the frequency of higher paying post-graduate jobs is declining,” Britton said. “Our students were intensely interested in his action plans for loan repayment, and we will invite him back to help our entering students understand the long-term financial implications of debt so they can make good decisions as they go along.”

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News & Events

National Moot Court team triumphs at competition



By R.G. Smithson

The UT College of Law National Moot Court team lost a close decision to the University of California-Berkeley in the final sixteen at the national finals on February 2.

Team members Amy Mohan, Valeria Gomez, and Carlos Yunsan turned in an excellent performance. The round at the New York City competition actually ended in a tie, but Berkeley advanced by having a better oral score in the round. Berkeley eventually finished second nationally, losing to Texas Tech in the finals. UT had bested Seton Hall and Case Western in the first two rounds.

Tennessee, which had qualified for the nationals by winning the Region VII competition last November, was recognized for having the fourth best brief at the nationals.


"I am proud of our team's performance this year," said 3L Amy Mohan, who was a member of last year's team that finished as the national runner up.

The 2011-12 team had three solid arguments and seemed to improve in each round. The judges praised the UT team for its use of language, rebuttal, and extensive knowledge of the record in its round against UC Berkeley.

"We lost by just a hair, which was disappointing after our strong performance, but I feel like we went out on top of our game," Mohan said.

Tennessee swept through the regional competition undefeated against teams from Loyola of New Orleans, Memphis, Faulkner, Mississippi College, and Loyola a second time in the finals to win the regional crown for the second year in a row.

"It was definitely a team effort this year," said Mohan. "Each one of us had a hand in writing every sentence of the brief and preparing both sides of the argument.



Professors (Joseph) Cook and (John) Sobieski said we would be the best prepared team at the regional, and I think we were.”

The National Moot Court competition, the nation’s oldest interscholastic competition, is co-sponsored by the American College of Trial Lawyers and the New York City Bar Association. Teams from more than 180 accredited law schools compete each year with the top two teams in fifteen regions advancing to the finals.

Region VII includes teams from Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

“It’s the most prestigious competition in the country,” said Cook, who has been coaching UT’s team since the late 1960s. Throughout the years, Tennessee has won first place at the nationals twice and finished as runners up twice. This is the sixty-second year of the competition.

“We also had the Best Brief in the region this year, which is a significant accomplishment,” Cook added. UT lost one oral argument round at this year’s regional by one point, but the team’s brief score was high enough to offset that.

The competition problem is typically a current issue that is likely to come before the U.S. Supreme Court. This year’s problem dealt with a public high school’s authority to discipline one of its students because of comments made on a personal blog outside of the school. The problem remained the same for the national finals, as did each team’s brief. No changes could be made to the brief.

Winning is nice, Cook said, but of even more value is the educational experience for the students. “That is always the top priority,” he said, “and the key is that we get broad-based faculty support. The faculty started working with the team very early, and the students got the perspective from a variety of viewpoints. By the time we get to the regional there weren’t get any questions they hadn’t already heard. We were as well prepared as anyone there.”

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News & Events

Duo wins 2011 Advocates' Prize

By R.G. Smithson

Mitchell Panter was listening last fall as Professor Penny White made a pitch in her Evidence class for students to enter the 2011 Advocates' Prize competition.

"When she mentioned the competition would be judged by six U.S. Sixth Circuit judges in the final round, I knew I had to compete," the 2L said. "After all, this competition was probably my one and only chance of ever arguing before a panel of judges of this caliber."

Panter's second decision was to find a partner. Once again, he made an excellent choice with fellow 2L Jessica Johnson.

"I wanted more experience in writing briefs and oral argument, so I agreed," Johnson said.

The two split the issues with each writing a section of the brief. "We were writing right up to the deadline," Johnson said.

"We spent so much time researching the problem that we shortchanged ourselves on time to write the brief," Panter said. "Finally, though, after three sleepless days and twenty gallons of coffee, we finished. Neither one of us was very confident, but we hoped it would be enough to push us through."

The experience turned out to be extremely beneficial for both parties as Panter and Johnson advanced through the preliminary rounds and found themselves facing Austin Kupke and Samuel Moore in the finals.

"Once the final argument began, it became clear the judges were going to be tough, pelting us with questions throughout the entire hour," Panter said.

"We had spent all day hiding from everyone and preparing for the finals, and I was nervous," Johnson said.

Panter and Johnson not only won the 2011 competition, the duo also was recognized for having the "Best Brief" and Johnson was named "Best Oralist."

"The opportunity to research and write an appellate brief and to argue in front of sitting federal judges is one of many ways that students at the College of Law undertake to be better prepared for the rigors of the profession," said White, director of UT's Center for Advocacy and Dispute Resolution.

Thanks to student leadership, White added, the Advocates' Prize competition has experienced strong growth in recent years. "The number of students participating has increased and the caliber of their performances has been unmatched," she said.



One of the judges, Jane Branstetter Stranch of Nashville, enjoyed the give and take of an academic setting.

"I have heard teaching described as leading someone to discovery," she said. "I enjoyed the Advocates' Prize because it felt like a fulfillment of that description. It was a pleasure to create an opportunity for the law students to discover how oral argument before a panel of judges works and to watch them revel in a wise answer, mourn a misstep, and comprehend something of the give and take of oral argument."

White said other Advocates' Prize judges have been impressed, as well. "Ten judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals and one U.S. Supreme Court justice have compared our students favorably to seasoned lawyers who argue regularly in the federal courts," White said.

This year's competition attracted twenty-two teams of second- and third-year law students. The hypothetical case, *United States of America v. Stacie Gillingham*, posed issues related to the parent-child privilege and the Sixth Amendment right to compulsory process. Each team participated in a brief writing workshop, an appellate argument boot camp, and filed an appellate brief on behalf of one of the parties.

The Advocates' Prize competition allows students to present an oral argument before a panel of judges. Students are judged on the quality of the oral argument for the competition. Judges prepare for the competition by reviewing a bench brief.

They are familiar with the facts and case law and will ask probing questions pertaining to issues raised.

This year's final round marked the first time in the history of the competition that competitors had the opportunity to argue before six federal appeals court judges.

This year's judges, in addition to Stranch, were Presiding Judge Gilbert S. Merritt, Judge Danny J. Boggs, Judge Julia S. Gibbons, Judge Ronald Lee Gilman, and Judge Eugene E. Siler, Jr.

Elena Kagan of the U.S. Supreme Court will be the presiding judge for the 2012 finals.

Judges score each competitor based on a variety of factors, including content and persuasiveness of argument; knowledge and use of legal authority; and poise and effectiveness in responding to questions from the bench.

Two teams shared the 2011 "Second Best Brief" award—Monica Goldblatt and Crystal Enekwa and Eugene Choi and Daniel Hall.

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The Clayton Center for Entrepreneurial Law with

The College of Law at the

University of Tennessee

cordially invites you to attend

the entertainment law conference

**"Metamorphosis: How Technology
is Reshaping Entertainment"**

Saturday, March 31, 2012

9:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

1505 W. Cumberland Avenue

Knoxville, Tennessee 37996

with continental breakfast served at 8:30 a.m.

A separate reception and dinner

at the 12th Annual Julian Blackshear, Jr. Scholarship Gala

will follow at 6:00 p.m. in Knoxville.

For more information on Metamorphosis,

please contact Micki Fox at

mfox2@utk.edu or 865-974-4464.

The 12th Annual Julian Blackshear, Jr.

Scholarship Gala will follow the conference.

The Gala benefits the Julian Blackshear, Jr.

Scholarship Fund which provides support
for African American students with financial need.

For more information about the Blackshear Gala,

please contact Rynn Dupes at

cdupes@utk.edu or 865-974-6691.



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