Dean’s Message

This academic year was filled with numerous thought-provoking events, lectures and conferences on timely topics. We welcomed several distinguished guests to campus, including, most recently, Chai Feldblum, commissioner of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, who delivered this year’s commencement address on achieving social justice as lawyers.

Additional recent law school highlights appear below, including photos from our lively class reunions – one of the largest reunion gatherings in the law school’s history. I am pleased to share these with you and hope you enjoy reading about them.

Warmly,
Rachel F. Moran
Dean and Michael J. Connell Distinguished Professor of Law

Reunions 2012

Reunions 2012 brought together the extended law school family to celebrate alumni from the classes of ’62, ’67, ’72, ’77, ’82, ’87, ’92, ’97, ’02 and ’07 and included a special reunion reception and intimate dinner for each class, as well as the Alumni of the Year Award Luncheon honoring Melanie Cook ’78, Partner, Ziffren Brittenham LLP, and Ron Brown ’79, Chief Public Defender, Los Angeles Public Defender's Office.

This year marked the third year of the Reunion Challenge, an opportunity for our alumni to commemorate their reunion by joining together in support of UCLA Law.

"Participation by alumni is one of the factors that boost our national rankings and help make an outstanding law school education possible for this generation and others to follow," said Jeffrey Silberman ’82, national chair of UCLA School of Law’s 2012 Reunion Challenge. Jeff worked with the classes to increase participation, strengthen financial support and help maintain the reunions’ great success. We would like to thank him and our entire reunion committee for their dedication to UCLA Law and for making Reunions 2012 so memorable!

You have until June 30, 2012, to participate in the Reunion Challenge.

Commencement 2012

On May 11, more than 450 UCLA School of Law students joined the alumni community when they were awarded J.D. and LL.M. degrees at this year’s commencement ceremony. Commencement speaker, Chai Feldblum, commissioner of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), shared lessons of leadership from her 30-year career.

A professor of law at the Georgetown University Law Center since 1991, Commissioner Feldblum was nominated to serve on the EEOC by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the Senate for a term ending July 1, 2013. As legislative counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union from 1988 to 1991, she played a leading role in drafting and negotiating the ground-breaking Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. She has worked to advance lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights and has been one of the drafters of the Employment Nondiscrimination Act.

In her address, Commissioner Feldblum spoke on the topic of achieving social justice as lawyers and included her thoughts on how social media can help. She began by explaining her belief that three variables must come together to accomplish a social justice goal: law, policies in practice and social norms. She shared examples to illustrate her point from her work, including the goals of valuing care-giving in our society and protecting religious beliefs and practices. She encouraged the class of 2012 to take on a leadership role in the effort to move toward justice and equality.
Alumni of the Year: Melanie Cook ’78 and Ron Brown ’79

The work and achievements of our alumni add immeasurable luster to the UCLA School of Law. This year, Melanie Cook ’78 and Ron Brown ’79 earned 2012 Alumni of the Year Awards in the categories of Professional Achievement and Public and Community Service, respectively.

Melanie Cook is a partner at the entertainment law firm of Ziffren Brittenham LLP. The first woman honored as Entertainment Lawyer of the Year by the Beverly Hills Bar Association in 1997, she is frequently listed on Hollywood "power lists" and recognized as an expert in her field. She serves on UCLA Law’s board of advisors and on the campaign cabinet. Her citywide community service efforts include Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Hollywood for Habitat for Humanity and The Painted Turtle.

Ron Brown was sworn in as chief of the Los Angeles Public Defender’s Office in January 2011 after 30 years of service. He is the only 10th person and the first African American to head the office since its establishment in 1914. He leads more than 700 attorneys and an extensive support staff, all dedicated to the representation of indigent clients. Determined to give back through public service for the help his family received while he was growing up, he has represented thousands of persons during his career.

Please join us in congratulating these esteemed colleagues.

Law Firm Challenge

The success of the Law Firm Challenge, now in its 10th year, continues to grow. The challenge broke new records in 2011 with 79 percent of alumni at 95 participating firms making a gift to the law school and 50 firms reaching the 100 percent mark. And, we are poised for another record-breaking year – we already have 97 firms in the 2012 challenge!

The Law Firm Challenge is an important contributor to the school’s growing excellence and national reputation. The commitment of our participating firms is vital to the future of UCLA Law. To enroll your organization – and no firm is too small – please contact Michelle deBaroncelli at (310) 206-1170 or debaroncelli@law.ucla.edu.

Professor Pavel Wonsowicz Receives Rutter Award

Professor Pavel Wonsowicz was honored with the 2012 Rutter Award for Excellence in Teaching, established by William Rutter and presented annually to a professor who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to teaching. Professor Wonsowicz teaches Evidence and Constitutional Law I and serves as the director of UCLA Law’s Academic Support Program.

"Anyone who has taken a course from Professor Wonsowicz or observed his teaching can attest that he is someone who deeply and passionately cares about teaching," said Dean Rachel F. Moran. "He presents difficult material with great clarity and humor."

Stephen Yeazell Endowed Fund

Please help us raise $2 million to establish the Stephen Yeazell Endowed Fund in honor of our former dean, who has taught, guided and inspired generations of UCLA Law students for more than 35 years. An expert on the history and theory of civil procedure and the dynamics of modern civil litigation, his impact in the classroom is memorable. He won not only the law school’s Rutter Award for Excellence in Teaching but also the university’s most prestigious prize for instruction, the Distinguished Teaching Award.

We encourage everyone to reach deeply and join this effort to recognize Professor Yeazell’s extraordinary contributions, not only to the School of Law but also to the entire UCLA campus. Gifts can be pledged and paid over a five-year period, and the money raised will be used to create an endowed chair or a scholarship fund. For more information, or to make a gift, please contact Donna Colin, director of major gifts and stewardship, at (310) 825-3025 or colin@law.ucla.edu.