

# ELON LAW

KERRI SIGLER '02 L'09  
IS LEADING EFFORTS  
TO HELP CONVICTED  
DRUG ABUSERS BREAK  
ADDICTIONS

*Alumni News*

SUMMER 2018

# Bulletin



# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



**H**OW'S THIS FOR GOOD NEWS? Elon Law, for the first time in its history, topped 1,000 applications for admission in a single class. That distinction for the Class of 2020 represents a 25 percent increase in the number of applications received over the previous admissions cycle, with improved metrics for LSAT, academic performance, and diversity in our newest class.

It's true that interest in law school has finally, after almost a decade of dramatic decline in applicants across the country, shown some life this year with a modest increase in applications nationally. Culture and politics may be inspiring young people to consider the value of a legal education to make a difference during a time of deep societal polarization. But that doesn't fully explain Elon Law's success.

Elon Law's prospective students cite our 2.5-year program as a distinctive feature among the schools they consider. They point to our highly experiential curriculum, and specifically, our residency-in-practice program. They know at Elon Law, they will learn not just to think like lawyers but to act like lawyers as they undertake real legal work, for real clients in real cases, long before they graduate.

Many people deserve credit for our admissions milestone. Senior Associate Dean Alan Woodlief and his team in the Office of Admissions have worked creatively and enthusiastically to share our story of innovation and experiential learning with prospective students. Once here for tours or open houses, prospective students meet faculty and staff who warmly welcome them to our school, demonstrating our commitment to nurturing their personal and professional growth. Current students also represent Elon Law as they recount experiences with friends who are researching law schools and potential legal careers.

And of course, you have helped to promote our ongoing success. Your accomplishments as Elon Law alumni are invaluable to your law school, to your communities, and to the profession. Your law school's success is your success.

We share your own examples of professional achievement with those who want to know the value of an Elon Law degree. And when you hire our alumni, supervise our students in their residencies, offer guidance as a preceptor, or volunteer as a moot court judge, you contribute to the ongoing legacy of our impact on legal education.

In the pages ahead, you'll learn of the new voices and programs that will shape our school as we enter a new academic year. As always, thank you for all you do to help Elon Law innovate, and for inspiring a new generation of students to embrace what we offer as the law school with a difference.

***Luke Bierman***

*Dean and Professor of Law*

# A Familiar Face Returns

**B**arbara Cini L'11 has been named Elon Law's assistant dean for development following a national search. In her new role at the law school, Cini – who had been serving Elon University as assistant director of planned giving – will develop and execute a comprehensive development program that includes major gifts, corporation and foundation relations, donor relations, and alumni engagement.

Cini will work with Elon University and Elon Law leaders in establishing fundraising priorities, assist in the management of the Elon Law Board of Advisors, manage the Elon Law Alumni Council, and oversee annual giving, directed through the Elon University Office of Annual Giving.

On main campus, Cini managed a portfolio of more than 150 prospects and personally worked with donors on major and planned gifts.

"I'm proud to be coming home," Cini said. "As a 2011 graduate, I care deeply about the success of Elon Law and look forward to sharing our unique story with alumni, friends, and supporters, and connecting donors to



the important work happening at Elon Law as we educate a new generation of lawyers while building a better community."

Prior to joining the Elon University staff, Cini established

the Greensboro office of Cordell & Cordell, one of the largest family law litigation firms in the nation. She also worked as an attorney for Dummit Fradin in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, handling cases that involved misdemeanor criminal charges, family law, and workers compensation claims.

## Quick Facts

**Hometown:** Columbus, Georgia

**Family:** Husband, Lee Morse; toddler son Parker Brooks; cocker spaniel, Reilly

**Hobbies:** Deep sea fishing; recently fished in the 21st annual Keli Wagner Lady Angler Tournament in Morehead City, N.C.

**Community Involvement:** Board of Directors of Forsyth Educator Partnership in Forsyth County



**ELON  
LAW**

BILLINGS, EXUM & FRYE  
**NATIONAL  
MOOT COURT  
COMPETITION**

## SAVE THE DATE

Oct. 19-20, 2018

The 9th Billings, Exum & Frye

National Moot Court Competition

Mark your calendar and look for emails inviting you to judge oral arguments when more than 20 law schools visit Elon Law for our annual event.

# NEWS

## LEADERSHIP LECTURE SERIES BRINGS BIG NAMES TO ELON LAW



Two of the nation's most recognizable legal legends visit Greensboro as part of Elon University School of Law's 2018-19 Distinguished Leadership Lecture Series presented by The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation.

**Alan Dershowitz**, an influential Harvard Law School professor emeritus, will deliver remarks on Thursday, Sept. 13, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the Elon Law Library. Tickets are \$15 or free with an active Elon ID beginning August 30. For information, call Elon University's Center for the Arts Box Office at (336) 278-5610.



**Loretta Lynch**, the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General of the United States, visits the law school on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. in the Elon Law Library. Tickets go on sale this winter.

## Student group honors women lawyers

Elon Law's Women's Law Association recognized **Manisha Patel L'11** and **Karen McKeithen Schaede** in April when it honored Patel, president-elect of the North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys, with the 2018 Young Alumna Award. Schaede, an attorney with Connors Morgan PLLC and a longtime Elon Law preceptor, was recognized by the association with its 2018 Outstanding Woman in the Profession Award.



## Alumni named to leadership program

Five Elon Law graduates were among 16 attorneys selected for the North Carolina Bar Association's 2018 Leadership Academy, a program designed to "help young lawyers become more effective leaders in their communities."

**Tiffany Atkins L'11**, **Melissa Duncan '06 L'09**, **Nicole Patino L'15**, **Courtney Roller L'13**, and **Grant Sigmon L'11** met five times over the spring and early summer at the North Carolina Bar Center in Cary for a day of leadership development, and the program culminated in June with recognition at an NCBA awards dinner at the organization's annual meeting.





# NOTES



**M**ark Jetton '06 L'09 has developed a reputation as one of Charlotte's top criminal defense and personal injury attorneys. Recognized as a "Legal Elite" by North Carolina Business Magazine, Jetton and Eric Meredith L'09 have made Jetton & Meredith, PLLC one of the most influential small firms in North Carolina's largest city.

This spring he added another distinction to his resume: the first Elon University double alumnus selected to the Elon Law Board of Advisors, a group of judges, lawyers and business leaders who advise the university on Elon Law's strategic growth. Jetton recently answered questions about his background and the unique attributes he brings to the board.

**As a managing partner in a small practice you co-founded, what are the particular opportunities and challenges you see for graduates just now starting their legal careers?**

One of the powerful things about a law degree is the flexibility it provides. Now closing in on a decade of practice, I can appreciate the endless opportunities for people with law degrees. Yet challenges exist for new graduates. Are you willing to put in the work necessary for career success? The best lawyers all have two

things in common: a burning work ethic and consistency. Anyone can do something for a week, or maybe a month. The best do it day after day, month after month, year after year. They never waver.

**In what ways do you encourage fellow Elon Law alumni to continue their support of the law school?**

Staying involved, donating money, and donating time are highly important. I also challenge Elon Law alumni to continue their support of the law school by being great lawyers. The law school will ultimately be judged by the lawyers it produces. Alumni need to be aware of their reputation among peers and judges and in their community. Go the extra mile, make a name for yourself, develop a reputation as someone who people respect.

**What most excites you about your new role on the Board of Advisors?**

Personally, I'm excited to serve on a board with such distinguished members and to offer new perspectives based on my own education and career. To be able to speak of the experience of going through Elon Law, and sharing stories of what worked well and what I thought could be improved, really motivates me.

# Kerri Sigler L'09

By Eric Townsend

**O**n any given day, about four people die from a drug overdose somewhere in North Carolina. That doesn't include the number of emergency room visits because of opioid abuse - more than 5,700 last year alone.

And while the Tar Heel State isn't immune from the opioid crisis now sweeping the United States, a new front has been opened by an Elon Law alumna determined to help those battling drug abuse.

Kerri Sigler '02 L'09 has led successful efforts over the past year to re-establish a program in Forsyth County where those who plead guilty to certain misdemeanors or non-violent felonies might receive help in breaking their addiction.

Defendants meeting particular criteria now can ask judges to sentence them to drug treatment court instead of prison. The sentence requires participants to report in person twice a month to a downtown Winston-Salem courtroom where a team of attorneys, judges, probation officers, substance abuse counselors, and social service workers monitor progress made toward recovery efforts, safe and affordable housing, transportation, and securing employment.

Ten people currently participate in the drug treatment court, a number expected to grow in the months ahead. Participants must live in Forsyth County. Their crimes rarely are for possession or distribution of controlled substances. Rather, the drug treatment court has been a sentence for offenses associated with addiction, such as larceny to support drug habits.

Who, exactly, are defendants sentenced to drug court? They're your neighbors and your coworkers and your fellow church worshipers - because as Sigler points out, the drug epidemic is touching all walks of life, from all types of communities. There's a PTA mom. A classical violinist. You also have a few mechanics.

"When you're talking about an addicted person, you're talking people

being totally controlled by a substance," says Sigler, who has built her career in Forsyth County as a criminal defense attorney.

When Sigler learned from District Court Judge Lawrence Fine about a previous iteration of the court, she set about raising money to fund a new one. Sigler recruited lawyers and social workers to serve on a board of directors for a nonprofit she launched to raise money toward the project. The City of Winston-Salem contributed funds, helping to formally reopen the court in December 2017.

It wasn't easy and it wasn't without resistance. Not everyone in the criminal justice system liked the idea of a new drug treatment court, Sigler said. People told her there wasn't enough support from the district attorney. There wasn't enough money. There wasn't enough space in the courthouse.

"She is an incredible, unbelievable example of someone who is able to overcome an enormous amount of obstacles to make something happen," Fine said. "You don't see that in a lot of folks. Most would have given up a long time ago. She threw all of us on her back, and she said 'we're going, we're going to make it happen.'"

The bigger surprise to those she meets is that Sigler has no connection to drug abuse or addiction, other than the plight of many clients. People also don't realize that despite not attending church, she is a person of faith, and that a colorful personality - "I drink! I curse like a sailor!" - hides a deep desire to be a resource for those who need help.

Or maybe it wasn't such surprise to those who taught her at Elon Law.

"She was never one to accept surface answers in class, or quick and simple

*"She is an incredible, unbelievable example of someone who is able to overcome an enormous amount of obstacles to make something happen. She threw all of us on her back, and she said 'we're going, we're going to make it happen.'"*

## What You May Not Know About Kerri Sigler

- » Originally from Allentown, Pa., and is an ardent New York Yankees fan
- » Studied political science and theatre arts as an Elon undergraduate
- » Dotes on an adopted son with special needs
- » Fosters dogs and cats and is an advocate for pet adoptions
- » Learn more about Kerri Sigler's nonprofit at <http://www.phoenixrisingwinstonsalem.org/>



responses. She always wanted to dig deep into an issue,” said Elon Law Dean Emeritus George Johnson. “There was a steeliness about her that came through. Almost anybody who came into contact with Kerri would tell you the same thing. You might be on different sides of an issue, but you’d never mistake her devotion to a cause.”

Now that the drug treatment court is fully operational, Sigler - who serves on the Drug Court Advisory Board, the committee that governs the program - is taking a closer look at the delivery of drug treatment resources in the community and, in a larger sense, the country itself.

There’s plenty of room for improvement, she said. From the way Medicaid and insurance companies cover treatment options to a dearth of adequate, safe housing for recovering addicts, the issues confronting addicts won’t be resolved soon. But resurrecting the drug treatment court has proven to Sigler that almost anything is possible with the right mindset.

“It’s been this constant process of being told ‘you can’t,’” Sigler said. “I don’t think people understand. I’m not asking permission. I’m asking them to participate. If they don’t, I go on without them.” ■



# Bar Results by

Elon Law's Office of Academic Success – formerly the Academic and Bar Support Program – continues to enhance and expand the resources available to students and alumni preparing for the bar exam. Results from the February 2018 exam illustrate strong performances by first-time takers outside of North Carolina, regardless of whether the jurisdiction administered the Uniform Bar Exam or its own state-specific test.

As North Carolina prepares to administer the UBE for the first time in 2019, current statistics indicate that Elon Law is poised for improvement in its overall bar passage rates.



**Elon Law  
welcomes  
new  
associate  
dean**



# the Numbers

| 1ST-TIME BAR PASSAGE - FEBRUARY 2018 |      |                  |           |
|--------------------------------------|------|------------------|-----------|
| Jurisdiction                         | UBE? | Number of Takers | Pass Rate |
| SC                                   | YES  | 6                | 100%      |
| FL                                   | NO   | 2                | 100%      |
| MD                                   | NO   | 2                | 100%      |
| TX                                   | NO   | 2                | 100%      |
| AZ                                   | YES  | 1                | 100%      |
| CT                                   | YES  | 1                | 100%      |
| MA                                   | NO   | 1                | 100%      |
| MN                                   | YES  | 1                | 100%      |
| DC                                   | YES  | 11               | 91%       |
| NY                                   | YES  | 5                | 80%       |
| VA                                   | NO   | 6                | 50%       |
| TN                                   | NO   | 2                | 50%       |
| NC                                   | NO   | 60               | 40%       |
| WV                                   | YES  | 3                | 33%       |
| GA                                   | NO   | 4                | 25%       |
| CA                                   | NO   | 1                | 0%        |

**P**ROFESSOR WENDY B. SCOTT, a distinguished legal educator with ties to North Carolina, joined the Elon Law administration this summer as associate dean for academic success.

In directing programs through the Office of Academic Success – formerly the Academic and Bar Support Program – Scott will lead a team of four staff members who coordinate and track academic performance and bar exam preparation. Scott also will teach bar prep courses required of all Elon Law students during their final trimester.

Prior to joining the Elon Law faculty, Scott led Mississippi College School of Law, serving from 2014-2016

as the first African-American to guide the school as dean.

Scott secured her stature in the history of legal education as the first tenured African-American woman at Tulane Law School and the first African-American to serve Tulane as vice dean for academic affairs. She went on to teach at NC Central University School of Law for eight years. Scott served at NC Central for three of those years as associate dean for academic affairs.

A scholar of constitutional theory and school desegregation, Scott has been widely cited by other scholars and the media for her work on the desegregation of public colleges and universities.

# CLASS



Lauren Hossfeld L'Dec. '17



Andrew Logan L'14

## 2009

**Molly Anthony L'09** was honored in May as the Mecklenburg County Bar Lawyer Referral Service Outstanding Panel Member of the Year. Her firm, Southpark Family Law, continues to grow in the Southpark neighborhood of Charlotte.

**Barron Thompson L'09** has been reappointed by North Carolina's State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement to another two-year term as a member of the Randolph County Board of Elections, which subsequently elected him secretary of the board.

## 2010

**Jonathan C. Dunsmoor L'10** and **Michael Vivenzio L'10** successfully defended a technology startup company in its recent dispute with North Carolina over the state's securities law. Their client is now working on the first state regulatory-approved crowdfunding mechanism to raise capital under North Carolina law possibly using both U.S. dollars and crypto-currencies.

**John Morris L'10** was appointed to serve as county attorney for North Carolina's Rockingham County. Originally from eastern North Carolina, Morris had managed a law practice in Rockingham County for the past six years.

**Sarah Neely Lanier L'10** has filed to run for District Court in North Carolina's Randolph County in November's election. She is the managing partner at Neely & Lanier, PLLC.

## 2011

**Chris Anglin L'11** has filed to run for associate justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court in November's election. He is the managing partner of Anglin Law Firm in Raleigh.

**Justin Kay L'11** has accepted a position as in-house counsel for Egger Group's U.S. operations. Egger, an Austrian company employing 10,000 people worldwide, is constructing a 1 million-square-foot manufacturing facility in North Carolina.



# NOTES



## 2012

**Ashley Hansen L'12** married Hunter Morris in High Point, N.C., on Feb. 10, 2018. **Megan Connable Siragusa L'12** served as a bridesmaid. Hansen currently works as a contract manager for Janssen Research and Development (Johnson & Johnson) via PRA Health Sciences.

**Mark York L'12** has been named a director at Carruthers & Roth in Greensboro where he is a member of the firm's commercial litigation team.

## 2013

**Susanna Guffey L'13** has been promoted to director of business & legal affairs at Universal Music Group in New York City where she is responsible for technology transactions and e-commerce and digital marketing agreements.

## 2014

**Andrew M. Logan L'14** has joined the Pennsylvania firm of Wisler Pearlstine, LLP as an associate. He focuses his practice in the areas of trust and estate planning and administration, taxation, business planning, and the representation of closely held businesses.

**Merrill Ward L'14** married Chris Akins on June 23, 2018. Ward is assistant general counsel for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

**Babak Zarin L'14** recently accepted a position as a library and graduate research assistant at Catholic University of America. Zarin has completed his LLM in intellectual property and will complete his MLIS this winter.

## 2015

**Robin Kester L'15** has joined the Elon University staff as assistant director for analytics and reporting in the Office of University Advancement.

## December 2017

**Mike Casterlow L'Dec'17** married Charles Harvey on May 5, 2018. Casterlow is a document review attorney for Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, LLP in Winston-Salem.

**Lauren Hossfeld L'Dec'17** recently accepted a full-time position with the Minority Corporate Counsel Association in Washington, D.C., serving as its membership and development manager, assistant counsel.

**Shane McGrath L'Dec'17** started a new position in April as judicial staff attorney for the Florida Fourth Judicial Circuit in Jacksonville. Specific assignments include handling motions for post-conviction relief.



**Support fellow alumni and current students by alerting the Office of Career & Student Development to career opportunities with your employer.** Staff can connect you with Elon Law graduates who are licensed and ready to practice. Posting a job is free and easy — **email [lawcareers@elon.edu](mailto:lawcareers@elon.edu) or call 336-279-9316.**

## Stay Connected!

We welcome your questions and ideas at [lawalumni@elon.edu](mailto:lawalumni@elon.edu).



**LinkedIn**

Go to LinkedIn, search for **"Elon Law Alumni"** and join the group! Also follow us on Elon Law's official LinkedIn page.



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# ELON LAW

## Alumni Association

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Greensboro, NC 27401

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