

A photograph of three people—two women and one man—standing outdoors in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The woman on the left is Black with long black hair, wearing a black blazer over a patterned top. The woman in the center has reddish-brown hair, is wearing a black blazer over a white dress, and has her hands clasped. The man on the right is white with a beard, wearing a grey suit jacket over a patterned shirt and tie. They are all smiling at the camera. The background shows green trees and a modern building with blue-tinted glass windows.

# ELON LAW

## CLOSING THE JUSTICE GAP

Alumni who founded and operate Triad Legal Group are using a nonprofit business model to expand access to the legal system for underserved North Carolinians.

*Alumni News*

SUMMER 2020

# Bulletin



## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



# Our Three Principles in the Era of COVID-19

Elon Law's faculty and staff have been working for months to prepare for this fall's in-person instruction, guided by three principles critical to our mission: keep the community healthy and well, keep students on track to graduate in 2.5 years, and keep focused on the continued recruitment of highly motivated students who understand the value of learning by doing

This is no simple task. The COVID-19 global pandemic requires us to be creative, nimble, conscientious and sincere in our approach to a new way of teaching and learning. Some of the highlights:

- Cloth face coverings must be worn by all students, faculty and staff across the law school campus, including classrooms (with the exception of a faculty or staff member's private office)
- Additional cleaning procedures, hand sanitizing stations and disinfecting applications will foster a healthy learning environment and minimize the risk of viral transmission on surfaces
- Classrooms and other spaces have been configured to promote physical distancing with signage and floor markers to remind the community of appropriate distancing
- Facilities personnel are ensuring that building HVAC systems are operating at their maximum possible design ventilation
- Fall Trimester classes end the Friday before Thanksgiving and all exams will be administered remotely so that students do not return to campus after Thanksgiving
- Some keynote programs have been postponed until the 2021-22 academic year, while others like our Billings, Exum & Frye National Moot Court Competition and the Elon Law Review Symposium will be held virtually.

Our return for the August Term and Fall Trimester will also bring greater focus on efforts to promote and educate the community on effective anti-racism strategies. This summer's resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of violence against our families, friends, classmates, colleagues and neighbors of color is a testament to the ongoing responsibilities we have as lawyers and future lawyers to seek justice, in all its forms, for all people. It is vital work that should never stop.

We are very pleased to have received authorization from the university to hire a Director of Inclusive Excellence for graduate students who will be based at the law school. I also have convened and charged faculty committees to undertake a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities intended to imbue anti-racism understanding across our law school and into the culture of Elon Law. Our intention is to turn good intentions into impactful action.

As we enter the final weeks of Summer 2020, destined to be studied for generations of historians to come, know that I remain thankful for all that our alumni do to support our mission as the law school with a difference. And please continue to support each other in your own professional pursuits. I am forever proud of what Elon Law alumni do to enhance their communities and our profession as lawyer leaders committed to the common good.

**Luke Bierman**

*Dean and Professor of Law*

# It is Extraordinary What We Can Accomplish Together



instruction for the Spring Trimester in a near-seamless process.

None of this would have been possible without your support. In the midst of a global

What started as a normal year quickly turned into a year that we could never have anticipated. True to the spirit of Elon Law, we innovated our approach to legal education and continued to train the next generation of lawyer leaders, moving to online

pandemic, you continued to mentor students, serve as residency and internship hosts, and volunteer as moot court judges and classroom speakers both virtually and in-person. From locations around the country, you have given of your time and talent to our Elon Law community. Your philanthropy on Elon Day and throughout the year helped to create new opportunities for our students and future Elon Law alumni.

Thank you.

Though much is uncertain about the coming year, one thing we know for sure is that we're better when we're supporting one another.

**Barbara Cini L'11**

*Assistant Dean for Development*

# ELON LAW

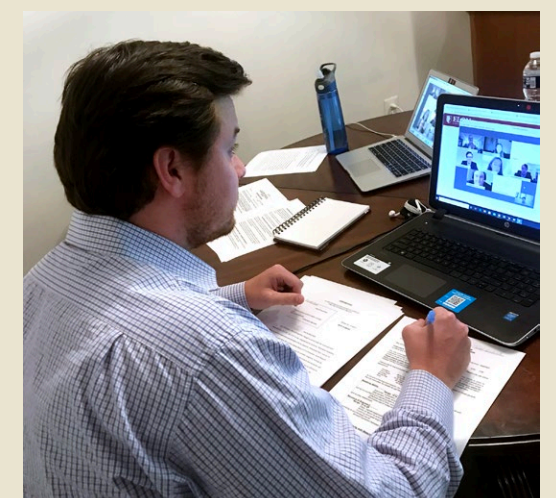
## BILLINGS, EXUM & FRYE NATIONAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION

## SAVE THE DATE

The 11th Billings, Exum & Frye National Moot Court Competition will be held virtually October 22-24, 2020. Look for more information this fall from Senior Associate Dean Alan Woodlief, director of the Moot Court Program, on volunteering to judge from afar.

Elon Law's 2020 Intramural Moot Court Competition took place in May with judging by nearly three dozen Elon Law alumni. Your contributions to the success of our Moot Court Program can't be overstated.

Learn more at [law.elon.edu/mootcourt](http://law.elon.edu/mootcourt)



Todd Kendrick L'May'17, an attorney with Jackson & Campbell, P.C., in Washington, D.C., was among the Elon Law alumni who volunteered as judges for the law school's 2020 Intramural Moot Court Competition.



# Faculty Statement in Response to Violence Against Members of the Black Community

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED JUNE 5, 2020

**T**HE FACULTY AT ELON LAW STAND TOGETHER IN RECOGNIZING the ongoing, systemic and structural racial and societal injustices in this country. These injustices have been part of the American political, economic and criminal justice systems for over 400 years. The faculty recognizes the value of all human life and is appalled by the killings of Black Americans under color of law. Further, the faculty recognizes and feels the sadness, anger, frustration and pain caused by racial violence, in all its forms, and understands the purpose and benefit of peaceful protest in advancing societal change.



As the training grounds for future lawyers and judges, law schools hold a special responsibility to acknowledge and confront the historical and continuing injustices within our country. In that context, we commit to having uncomfortable talks and real, honest conversations about these injustices and we commit to fight ignorance and intolerance, model inclusivity, and embrace our differences and the

power that diversity represents. The Law School faculty further recommit to the principles and objectives adopted in our Strategic Plan regarding diversity, equity and inclusion. The Law School faculty is committed to training students to become culturally competent lawyers and leaders in their communities. We will do this by providing classroom experiences that are inclusive by design and in application; by collaborating with University and external resources to increase Law School programming on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and by expanding our curricular

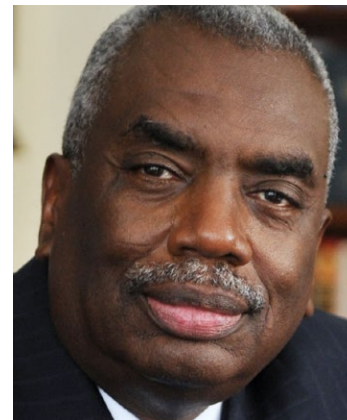
offerings, adding opportunities to study issues of structural bias in the legal system. And, importantly, the Law School faculty is deeply committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing exceptional faculty and staff, adding the perspectives of underrepresented identities to our Law School community.

Recognizing our diverse Elon Law community, we acknowledge the continuous need to educate ourselves about challenges confronting students and colleagues from historically underrepresented groups. We will not permit a culture of bias to exist in our classrooms, our student advising, our faculty dialogues, or our academic community. We commit to support our students, our staff, our fellow faculty, and other members in our community in addressing racism in all its forms.

As stated by lawyer and author Bryan Stevenson, "There is no path to justice that is only comfortable and convenient. We will not create justice until we're willing to sometimes position ourselves in uncomfortable places and be a witness." As faculty members at Elon Law, we recognize our obligation to accept discomfort to create justice within and beyond our law school community.

## NEWS & NOTES

### DEAN EMERITUS NAMED A 'LEGEND'



Dean Emeritus and Professor George R. Johnson Jr. has been named as one of five 2020 Legal Legends of Color, a recognition bestowed by the North Carolina Bar Association's Minorities in the Profession Committee.

Honorees must be a lawyer of color practicing (or one who has practiced most recently) in North Carolina for at least 15 years, have had a legal career with a significant impact in North Carolina, have demonstrated a high level of service to his/her local community and/or on a statewide basis, and be a member in good standing of the North Carolina State Bar.



### Elon Law professor selected for inaugural post at LWI

Assistant Professor Tiffany D. Atkins L'11 has been named the first Leadership Experience and Advancement Pipeline (LEAP) Board Member for the Legal Writing Institute's Board of Directors, a position designed to bring new voices onto its board and to provide the LEAP board member a springboard into other leadership positions.

Atkins said she anticipates using her new role to raise awareness in the legal writing community of the many ways Elon Law's Legal Method & Communication Program supports and trains students to be persuasive writers and advocates in the profession.



### New faculty join Elon Law's legal writing program

Two professors have joined the Elon Law faculty as the law school's legal writing program continues to build its national reputation for teaching and scholarship.

Caroleen M. Dineen and Amanda Elyse enhance a program recently ranked by U.S. News & World Report in the top quartile of legal writing programs. In welcoming Dineen to the faculty, Elon Law will have on its faculty three professors with professional experience directing legal writing programs over the course of their teaching careers.



# Closing the Gap



From left: Michelle Scott L'19, Ryan Hargrave, Sharon Dunmore L'17 and Daniel Karlsson L'16 comprise Triad Legal Group, which is located in the Self-Help Building in downtown Greensboro. Not pictured: Je'Vonne Knox L'19. (Photo courtesy of VanderVeen)

A group of Elon Law alumni have big plans for a small nonprofit that serves clients who can't afford fees charged by traditional law firms but aren't eligible for Legal Aid or help from the Office of the Public Defender.

By Eric Townsend

It's known as the "justice gap."

Millions of Americans earn enough income each year to avoid indigency but not enough to hire quality legal help for everyday civil and criminal matters.

Given the confluence of current events, from a global pandemic to spikes in unemployment to a reinvigorated push for racial justice in the wake of police violence against the Black community, the gap only shows signs of widening.

Yet a small group of Elon Law alumni are looking to bridge that chasm in the form of Triad Legal Group Inc., a nonprofit general practice law firm formerly known as Gate City Legal Services that resides on the ninth floor of Greensboro's Self-Help Building.

Founded by Daniel Karlsson L'16 and Lauren Jeffries L'10, the firm is today led by Karlsson as executive managing director and Sharon Dunmore L'17 as director and chief executive officer. Recent hires include attorney Je'Vonne Knox L'19 and Michelle Scott L'19, the firm's practice manager. Ryan Hargrave, a former Guilford County assistant district attorney, completes the team.

Their business model is rare in the legal profession. Rather than charge set hourly rates, Triad Legal Group assesses a client's income before determining fees on a sliding scale. The team only provides services to clients earning up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

"We have to be conscious of our role in society," Dunmore said. "There's a privilege that comes with our status as attorneys. The people we're helping need to know we're not so different from them. Aside from our suits, we have a lot of similarities with them, and we want to make sure they can navigate the system with the right tools."

The justice gap that inspires the firm's work is the growing population in North Carolina of those who live and work in

a community but can't afford more conventional law firms for civil matters like child custody. Divorce. Immigration. Even traffic tickets or criminal charges, which the firm also manages.

According to a 2017 report from the Legal Services Corporation, 86 percent of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help.

"I fell in love with the idea of providing a needed service," Karlsson said of his motivation three years ago to help launch what is now Triad Legal Group. "Even cases with things like divorce and child custody - I'm not talking complex litigation! - many people just don't have a place to go."

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced much of the nation to shut down in March, Triad Legal Group was no exception. Upon reopening, the attorneys started offering free consultations for all clients, no questions asked. They were able to do so through a grant from the Greensboro Virus Relief Fund due to the firm's nonprofit status.

The attorneys also stayed true to core values over the summer by offering free legal representation to nearly two dozen clients arrested during Black Lives Matter protests. Bringing about systemic change drives much of how attorneys approach their roles as advocates for marginalized communities and the working class.

"It's a crisis situation. You have police brutality, questionable deaths at the hands of police, people who are upset and feel betrayed by the system," Karlsson said. "This goes lockstep with our mission. It's the least we can do."

The firm has established a de facto pipeline from Elon Law. Four of its five staff members are alumni. Triad Legal Group hosted this summer four interns from the law school. Knox was hired after completing her residency-in-practice with the firm and Scott had interned with the nonprofit during her studies.

"I appreciate having Elon Law students in the office," Dunmore added. "I want them to get the opportunities that Dan and I sometimes wish we had been able

to get. We like to see ourselves as an extension of the practical learning the law school already provides."

For all involved, working for a nonprofit law firm with a strategic plan to expand on the coast, in the mountains, and in Charlotte where a federal immigration court is located, brings countless personal rewards.

"A lot of people who come to us already contacted several other firms and couldn't afford them, or the firms didn't have the manpower and resources to take on the case for the price clients were able to pay," Scott said. "I get satisfaction knowing that we can help who we can, especially once they went elsewhere and were told no, and we're able to say, 'yes, we can help.'"

**Anyone inspired to support the work of Triad Legal Group is encouraged to make a tax-deductible gift through the firm's website: [www.triadlegalgroup.org](http://www.triadlegalgroup.org).**



## Alumni Provide Counsel on N.C.'s Pandemic Relief

As attorneys for the North Carolina General Assembly, Luke Gillenwater L'11 and Jeremy Ray L'11 assisted state lawmakers this spring with bipartisan legislation aimed at countering the economic and public health damage caused by COVID-19

By Eric Townsend

IT WAS A RELATIVELY RARE SIGHT in Raleigh. On a morning in early May, the most powerful lawmakers in North Carolina – three Democrats, including Governor Roy Cooper, and the two Republicans who lead their majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly – stood together at a news conference to share details of bipartisan legislation prompted by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The relief package, passed unanimously by both chambers of the General Assembly, contained \$1.6 billion

in measures for expenditures related to public health and safety, education, small business assistance, and state government operations.

Like all significant pieces of legislation, there were many people whose work in the preceding weeks made it possible, including Elon Law alumni Luke Gillenwater L'11 and Jeremy Ray L'11.

Their roles are largely invisible. Confidentiality is key. Gillenwater, an attorney in the bill drafting division, assists lawmakers who request his expertise in writing legislation. They'll

bring to him their ideas before he researches and drafts legislation on their behalf.

"I love being behind the curtain," said Gillenwater, who typically assists with drafting bills that affect the criminal justice system. "We try to make sure their ideas, their decisions, are reflected in the legislation they introduce. And we try to make sure everything runs smoothly, that it's drafted correctly, and that we provide sound legal advice."

If Gillenwater is one of the legislative ghostwriters for members of the General Assembly, that makes Ray one of their editors.

A legislative analyst for both chambers, Ray is among those who help lawmakers rewrite legislation debated in committee. He is primarily assigned to committees that handle legislation affecting insurance, administrative law, and unemployment in North Carolina.

Ray's work on COVID-19 included another facet that remains largely hidden from the public. As a legislative analyst, lawmakers turn to him with questions they've fielded from their own constituents. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits? How do I access particular services? What are my rights under federal and state laws?

"People are dealing with an unprecedented time in their lives that is very scary," Ray said. "The greatest satisfaction I get is providing meaningful feedback to individual constituent requests where a business owner is seriously concerned about whether his or her business will be able to continue to operate, or if someone may be eligible for a particular form of unemployment insurance benefit that will help weather the storm."

Ray worked for a few years at the Division of Employment Security before moving in 2016 to the General Assembly. The native of Buncombe County in western North Carolina was the first in his family to attend graduate school, and he and his wife, a pediatric critical care physician, are the parents of young twins. One of his biggest passions is riding a 2015 Harley-Davidson on backroads around the Triangle.

Gillenwater, who grew up in Winston-Salem, briefly practiced at an insurance defense firm in Charlotte before moving to the General Assembly in 2012. Married to Laura Lee Howell Gillenwater L'11, an attorney for the global health care company Grifols



Luke Gillenwater L'11

with offices in Research Triangle Park, the father of two spends what free time he can find enjoying UNC basketball and the U.S. and French national soccer teams.

Gillenwater and Ray say that the relative anonymity of their roles in the North Carolina General Assembly is part of the appeal to their work. So is the nonpartisan nature of their positions. And it never fails to surprise people to learn of the vast support staff that helps a lawmaking body function with elected leaders who rely on their expertise.

"Most people don't understand we exist. I was guilty of that myself!" Gillenwater said. "They have the same assumptions I did! That members will draft bills themselves... or they have their office staff that draft it. Most don't understand there's a nonpartisan division that handles this work."

So how do both men view their roles in helping draft historic COVID-19 relief legislation and providing lawmakers with answers to constituent requests? Modestly. Or, as Gillenwater describes it, as "just another day at the office." ■



Jeremy Ray L'11



# CLASS NOTES



Ashley Shelton Murphy L'10



Nicole Patterson L'10



James F. Knox L'11



Andrew Penny L'13 & Janison Dillon L'13



Lauren Zickert L'19

## 2009

**Damon Duncan L'09** and **Melissa Duncan L'09** welcomed a daughter, Reese, in July. Reese joins big brothers Brooks and Hayes. Damon is an attorney for Duncan Law, LLP in Greensboro. Melissa is assistant dean for career & student development at Elon Law.

**Leslie Lasher L'09** has been named the global labor compliance manager for Cisco where she is responsible for the corporation's global compliance program for contingent labor.

**Barron Thompson L'09** won a contested Republican primary in March in Randolph County, North Carolina, and will be on the November general election ballot to serve as a judge for the North Carolina District Court.



Barron Thompson L'09

## 2010

**Jenny Sweet Caley L'10** accepted a position this spring as in-house employment counsel for HCL America, Inc., in Raleigh, N.C. HCL is an Indian technology company with over 150,000 employees in 46 countries. Caley wed her husband, Gregory, in June.

**Ashley Shelton Murphy L'10** and her husband, Gerald, welcomed a daughter, Bexley, in February. Bexley joins big brother Daxton. Murphy is of counsel at Robert Half International Inc.

**Nicole Patterson L'10** and her husband, Byron, welcomed a son, Byron L. Patterson II, in February. Patterson serves as acting director of the Labor and Employee Relations Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**Jennifer Ruby L'10** has been named partner with Law Firm Carolinas in Greensboro, focusing her practice area on general civil litigation and appeals.

## 2011

**James F. Knox L'11** has joined South Carolina-based law firm Turner Padgett to form its government relations and public policy service. As part this team, Knox will provide legal aid such as strategy development, public policy advice, legislation and amendment drafting to local government entities, associations, nonprofits and more.

**Manisha Patel L'11** has been named to the 2019 Pro Bono Honor Society for contributing more than 50 hours of pro bono service as set forth in the ABA's Rule 6.1: Voluntary Pro Bono Publico Service. Patel had logged more than 650 hours of pro bono service.

## 2012

**Melissa Cox (née Apperson) L'12** has been named director, corporate counsel for Thermo Fisher Scientific, a global biotechnology company with offices in North Carolina.

## 2013

**Janison Dillon L'13** and **Andrew Penny L'13** were married on June 6, 2020. Dillon is in-house counsel for BeiGene USA, Inc. Penny is an attorney for Crossley McIntosh & Collier in Wilmington, N.C.

## 2014

**Katherine Renaut L'14** welcomed a son, Gibson, in June. Renaut is the assistant athletic director for compliance for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

## 2016

**Angelique H. Saltikalp (née Ryan) L'16** welcomed a son, Roj Ryan Saltikalp, in January.

## 2019

**Anastasia Tramontozzi L'19** recently accepted a position as a criminal defense litigation attorney at DummitFradin for the firm's Winston-Salem office in North Carolina.

**Lauren Zickert L'19** has joined The Elderlaw Firm in downtown Greensboro where she had interned for nearly six months before graduation. Zickert will practice estate planning law and is engaged to be married later this year.

# ELON LAW

## Alumni Association

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### Fall 2020 Calendar

**September 25:** Elon Law Review Symposium: "Access to the Ballot on the Eve of the 2020 Election: What Barriers Still Exist?" More information at [law.elon.edu/lawreview](http://law.elon.edu/lawreview).

**October 22-24:** Billings, Exum & Frye National Moot Court Competition

**December 12:** Commencement for the Class of 2020

Members of Elon Law's Mock Trial Program in the Class of 2020 who took part in the 2020 Texas Young Lawyers Association Regional Competition in South Carolina were (from left) Danielle Smith, Melenni Balbach, Melissa Buck, Megan Wilson-Bost, Chris Smith and McCathern Painter.

**Stay Connected!** We welcome your questions and ideas at [lawalumni@elon.edu](mailto:lawalumni@elon.edu). Also connect with us, and each other, at [LifeLongElon.com](http://LifeLongElon.com)



#### 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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