

A portrait of Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr., a Black man with a mustache, wearing a dark blue pinstripe suit, white shirt, and light blue tie. He is standing outdoors in front of a modern building with large windows and greenery. His hands are clasped in front of him.

**ELON**  
**LAW**

## REMEMBERING A LEADER

Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr., shared stories and wisdom with Professor Catherine Ross Dunham last fall shortly before a longtime illness took his life.

*News*

WINTER 2021

# Bulletin

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



### Aspire to Help Others Heal

I JOINED WITH MY COUNTERPARTS at 156 other law schools this winter to publish a joint statement that calls on legal educators to redouble efforts “to restore faith in the rule of law and the ideals of the legal profession.” Our message was in direct response to the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol only days earlier and the rising tension surrounding what always had been, until this year, a peaceful transition of power.

Here is part of what we said: “The violent attack on the Capitol was an assault on our democracy and the rule of law. The effort to disrupt the certification of a free and fair election was a betrayal of the core values that undergird our Constitution. Lives were lost, the seat of our democracy was desecrated, and our country was shamed.”

And as I wrote to Elon Law students, faculty, and staff on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, there has been no shortage of strife and anxiety and fear over the past year as our country navigates a disheartening era of distrust, whether that be distrust of expertise or distrust of institutions or distrust of difference. I would add here that it is a mistake to believe it is a recent phenomenon. Historians have long recognized that tectonic shifts in any society, whether they be economic or cultural or technological, can inevitably lead to friction and even violence. Indeed, American history is rife with examples, from the Salem Witch Trials to the Awakening and Revival movements. So maybe what we saw at the U.S. Capitol should not be a surprise after all.

And yet.

What our students are doing in their studies, and what you are doing in your professional activities, contribute to the work that remains ahead of us in reestablishing a common ground that allows us to begin to repair frayed relationships with each other, and for many, a frayed relationship with facts and truth. This is no easy task. It is not a quick task. It is the kind of work to which one might dedicate an entire career. But it is critical. We lost a legend at Elon Law late last year with the passing of Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr., and as you will read in these pages, he, too, saw lawyers and those studying to be lawyers as beacons of hope for just such purposes.

I find myself frequently advising today’s students to be aspirational in the causes for which they choose to advocate. I offer you the same advice. Find inspiration in the professors and mentors and friends from Elon Law to dedicate yourself to being a change agent for those harmed by unjust laws or the disregard of just laws that, when enforced, ensure we all have the same rights and responsibilities and privileges guaranteed by our Constitution. That is our obligation as members of this important profession of which we all are a part.

**Luke Bierman**

*Dean and Professor of Law*

### Your Generosity and Kindness

FOR MANY OF US HERE AT ELON LAW, Commencement is one of our favorite days of the year. It certainly is one of mine. We found new ways in December to celebrate the 122 graduates now part of our growing Elon Law alumni family. Every class is unique, but two common traits have emerged over the years in each class that should make us all proud: generosity and kindness.

The Class of 2020 led efforts this fall for a class gift that, in part, supported the Elon Law Student Emergency Fund. In doing so, graduates built upon a tradition established by the classes of 2018 and 2019. Contributing to a fund that assists future Elon Law students in crisis exemplifies a deep commitment to supporting each other when it counts the most.

I encourage you to continue your own support of one another. Whether by advocating for Elon Law alumni in your offices, working to improve your communities, or returning to

Elon Law as mentors, residency hosts, or other volunteers, we’re strongest when we join together to accomplish great things.

In that spirit, I also invite you to support future Elon Law students by participating in Elon Day on Tuesday, March 2. Your philanthropy creates and nurtures opportunities for future generations of Elon Law alumni through student scholarships and experiential education programs for which Elon Law is recognized.

Thank you for all you do for Elon Law.

**Barbara Cini L’11**

*Assistant Dean for Development*

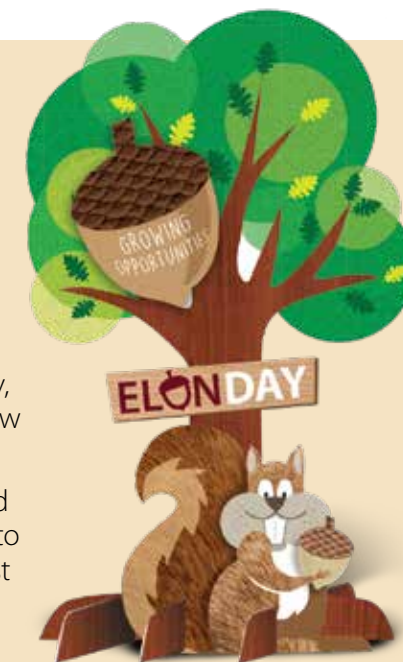


## Be a part of **GROWING OPPORTUNITIES**

At Elon, we’re at our best when we work together. On Elon Day, we’ll show the strength in our numbers as we give back to grow opportunities for Elon Law students.

Join us on **March 2** as we make gifts in support of students and their ongoing success. Visit [elon.edu/elonday](https://elon.edu/elonday) and make a gift to any Elon Law fund or Venmo @ElonGiving and make sure to list that your gift is for Elon Law. Programs to support include:

- Elon Law Review
- Moot Court / BEF National Moot Court Competition Clinical Programs
- Eugenia H. Leggett-Frank Endowed Scholarship
- Elon Law Annual Scholarship Fund
- Michael L. Rich Memorial Award for Excellence in Criminal Law Studies
- And more...



**ELON DAY**  
**03|02|21**



# LAW NEWS & NOTES

## RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



### JURIST HONORED WITH ELON LAW LEADERSHIP AWARD

**Judge Albert Diaz** of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit accepted Elon Law's 2020 Leadership in the Law Award during a prerecorded segment for a November program streamed by North Carolina Lawyers Weekly. Elon Law traditionally bestows its annual leadership award in an evening gala hosted by North Carolina Lawyers Weekly. The newspaper moved its program to a virtual format this fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Diaz's legal career spans nearly four decades, beginning with active-duty assignments as a prosecutor, defense counsel, and appellate government counsel in the United States Marine Corps, followed by service on the North Carolina Superior Court and culminating with his confirmation to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.



### MOOT COURT MOVES ONLINE

Forty-eight teams representing 31 law schools went head-to-head in October in a virtual format for Elon Law's 11th Billings, Exum & Frye National Moot Court Competition. The largest ever Elon Law contest was also the first time the Moot Court Board hosted an online national competition, with George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School prevailing in the championship round over the University of Oklahoma School of Law.

Dozens of Elon Law alumni, faculty, and staff helped judge. **Casey Robinson L'20** and **Hunter Cornelius L'20** co-chaired the Moot Court Board's overall competition committee.



### A Symposium on Voting Rights

The Elon Law Review hosted its first online symposium in September featuring **Dale Ho**, director of the ACLU's Voting Rights Project, who delivered the Jennings Family Lecture in Memorium to Associate Professor Mike Rich. More than 150 people registered for "Access to the Ballot on the Eve of the 2020 Election: What Barriers Still Exist?" with attorneys and some of the nation's top legal scholars on election law discussing the ways in which voting rights have been expanded – and limited – throughout history.

The Elon Law Review program was organized by **Victoria "Tori" Ford '17 L'20** and **Samantha Dudley L'20**. Read more at [law.elon.edu/lawreview](http://law.elon.edu/lawreview).

## HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS



### TOP PRIZE FOR A JAG INTERN

**Christopher Schroeder L'20** took first place over the summer in the inaugural Mock Opening Intern Competition for more than two dozen law students at U.S. Air Force bases across the United States. Competitors first represented the government in a fictitious case involving an airman accused of stealing his suitemate's credit card to purchase an Xbox gaming system.

The six interns who advanced beyond the opening round then competed virtually against each other with opening statements in defense of the accused airman. Schroeder graduated in December and has been selected for the U.S. Air Force JAG Corps.



### Students excel in national contest

**McCathern Painter L'20** and **Megan Wilson-Bost L'20** reached the quarterfinals and earned second place among all legal briefs submitted last fall for Regent Law's 20th Annual Leroy R. Hassell, Sr. National Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition.

Teams were confronted with a problem drawn from today's headlines: Could a faith-based child placement agency that has contracted with the state, yet holds religious convictions that prevent it from recommending placement with a same-sex married couple, be exempt from state anti-discrimination laws in its recruitment and placement decisions?

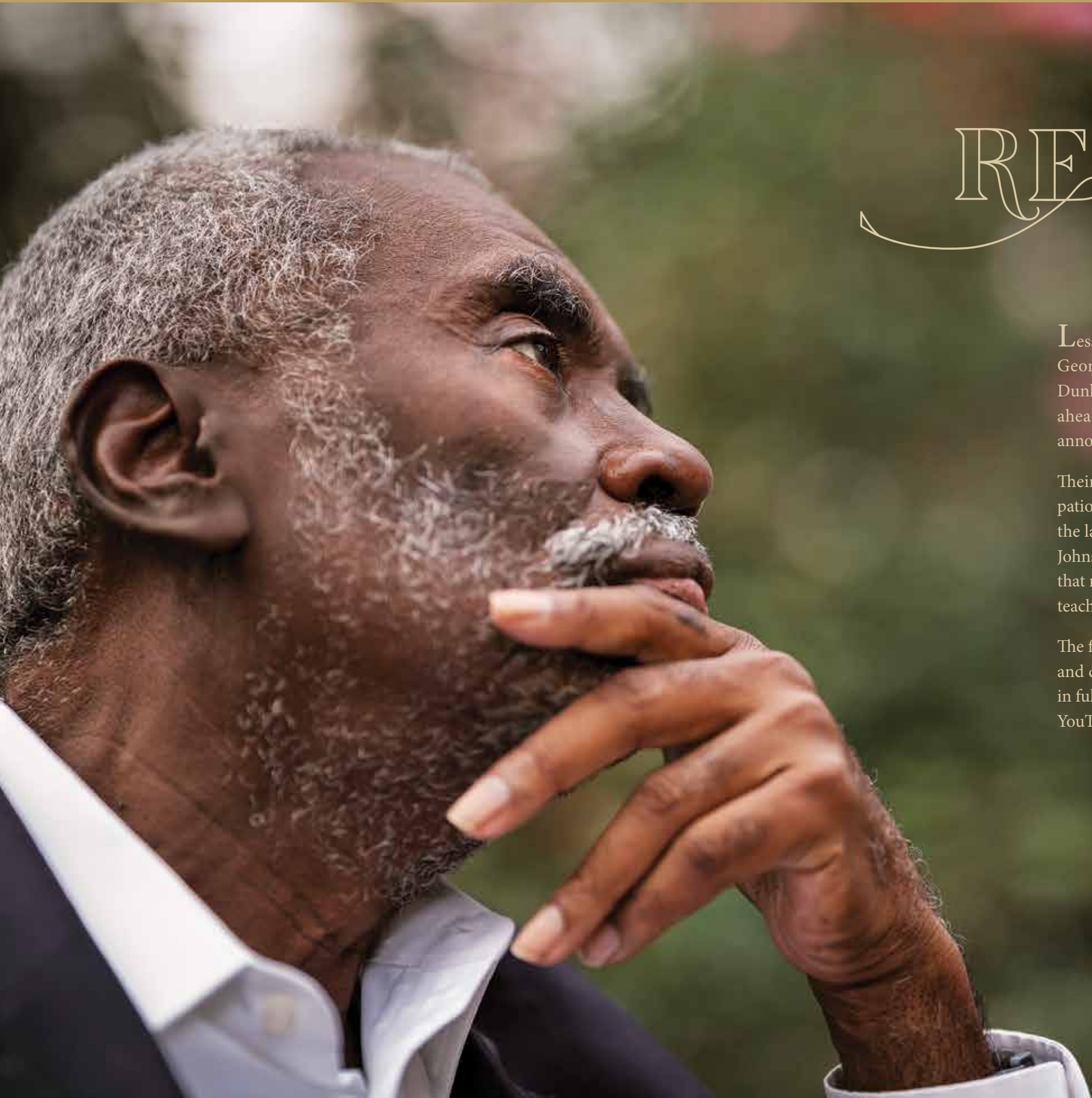
### Accolades from The Princeton Review

Elon Law has been recognized in The Princeton Review's 2021 guidebook of "The Best 164 Law Schools," an annual list based on institutional and student surveys of academic rigor, student bodies, and campus life, with additional questions about student career plans.

Elon Law also made The Princeton Review's top-10 list of "Most Competitive Students," a category that reflects the level of student commitment to studying outside the classroom, and the degree of ambition and competitiveness students report among their peers. The law school was ranked #7 in the most recent edition.







# RESTING HIS CASE

Less than a month before his death, Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr. met with Professor Catherine Dunham to reflect on his legacy at Elon Law and look ahead to his June retirement, which he had recently announced to colleagues.

Their conversation on October 20, 2020, on the back patio of Johnson's Greensboro home, was unknowingly the last time the two would see each other in person. Johnson died November 15, 2020, following an illness that never kept him in recent years from continuing to teach and mentor hundreds of students.

The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity. Their 35-minute talk is available to watch in full on the Elon Law website and the Elon University YouTube channel.

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to what the lawyer does,  
not just for the individual,  
but for society. And I think it's  
that notion that keeps me  
optimistic about the profession."*

.....





**Catherine Ross Dunham:**

It's beyond a pleasure to sit here with you today.

**George R. Johnson, Jr.:**

Well, it's all my pleasure. Believe me. It is.



**CRD: Retirement is a big decision.**

**GJ:** Yeah. It is a big decision, but at some point, you recognize when it's time... and it is time. I will still try to do little things, but the day-to-day responsibility of a class? Done. I will find some episodic projects to work on, and some consulting to do, and then there's always a civic board or somebody clamoring for your time, attention and money. I don't doubt that there will be things to do.

**CRD: When you think back to your time at Elon – your years in the classroom, your years as the dean – can you think of a couple of moments that really stick with you as being key experiences?**

**GJ:** Well, there've been a lot of key experiences. I think the really important thing here is just the startup. That was the real attraction for me. Here was a venture that really wanted to look at legal education differently. That was intriguing. You know, I think back to my law school days, when you could spend an hour in the class, hour and a half, and you'd hear two voices – the faculty member grilling a student. It seems so artificial to me. Now, I will confess, it did help to hone one's analytical skills when one wasn't deathly afraid.

**CRD: Right!**

**GJ:** But this was an opportunity for students to be much more engaged with faculty. I told our students here that we dared not speak to our (Columbia Law) faculty members outside of class. Elon provided an opportunity to really engage with students in some ways, even as colleagues, because it was an enterprise that we had ventured into together... to see people working together, to try to create something different and special, that was really exciting for me.

**CRD: And that charter class was special.**

**GJ:** It is. I still remember them. I guess in some ways it's like your first born, that attachment you have to them. Not that you love the others any less, but there's an intensity, because you went through those trials together. And we were the only ones in the building for the whole year. They knew us, we knew them – sometimes too much about them – but that was good.

**CRD: So why did you go to law school? You grew up in Georgia and ended up in New England for college and then law school.**

**GJ:** One of my nicknames growing up was "The Judge." People thought I would either be a preacher or a lawyer. And Linda (Johnson's wife, Dr. Linda Morris) said she wasn't going to marry a preacher. But I was always interested in politics and government and how things worked in the

world. Law school was a natural choice. And then I had a teacher at Amherst who said to me, "Mr. Johnson, you're going to go to law school." I said, "I am? How do you know that?" His response: "Because you haven't taken enough courses to go to medical school."

**CRJ: Did you think you would teach?**

**GJ:** I did. I always thought that I would teach because some of the people I most admired growing up were teachers.

**CRD: Do you think you take a little Georgia with you wherever you go? I think Southern roots are meaningful.**

**GJ:** There's meaning in whatever your roots are, but I think there is something particular about Southern roots. This notion of place and people is really important. Who are my people? Who are the people with whom you have relationships, with whom you have common interests, and even uncommon interests? Southerners are very good sometimes about building those kinds of relationships.

**CRD: In your career as a teacher, scholar, dean, college president at LeMoyné-Owen College in Memphis, I would think relationships were part of every one of those jobs.**

**GJ:** They are inescapable. You can't do it with any modicum of success without building relationships and fostering the kind of attention to other people's feelings and needs to try to grow and develop an institution, sensing how it is you can bring people together for some common enterprise. It's much better when a decision or decisions are fashioned out of contests of ideas and trading of notions. It's messy but you come out with a greater appreciation for the decision and you come out with more people supporting the decision, even if one of their principles or one of their pet issues was somehow left on the floor or somehow discarded.

**CRD: When you think about being dean of Elon Law, what was particularly challenging?**

**GJ:** The challenge was getting people to understand that legal education was very different from undergraduate education. You hear everybody complain about "faculty are difficult." Law faculty are particularly difficult. And, well, lawyers are difficult. In the old days, law schools were very inexpensive to run. You had one faculty member who would teach 150 students. It was not like a business school or medical school where you had to have tons of equipment. They generated lots of money and therefore had great influence on how the university was run. Now the tide has turned because of some of the efficiencies of legal work. But there is something central to what the lawyer does, not just for the individual, but for society. And I think it's that notion that keeps me optimistic about the profession.

**CRD: Students make me optimistic.**

**GJ:** Yeah. They do. You couldn't do it without seeing the glimmer in their eyes and the enthusiasm. We have students just clamoring to do well, not necessarily for any self-aggrandizement. I think they're genuinely interested in making the world better.

**CRD: I remember you used to say, and I always thought this was funny, that "I love teaching. I just don't like grading exams." What are you going to miss most about being in the classroom?**

**GJ:** I'm going to miss the students. I'm going to miss my colleagues, too, but I really do particularly enjoy first-year students. You have the opportunity to influence them. And I say influence. I don't say indoctrinate. I try to set an example for them, to open up ways of thinking about things, and that is tremendously exciting. Of course, you like to see them progress and develop, but there is something about watching them come in and begin to gravitate to the study of law, the struggle in their study, and then the achievements. Nothing beats it.

**CRD: There's a lot of talk now about young people changing. In your time teaching, have the students really changed that much?**

**GJ:** I don't think they have. There was a time when I thought there was considerably less activism amongst current students. I grew up with the Vietnam War, the civil rights protests, the women's movement. All of these things were happening, and students were in the midst of the throes. That seemed to have subsided. We are seeing now another onset of incredible activism and I don't think it's going to be easy to put that back in the bottle. People are beginning to ask questions. Why are we organized in the ways that we are? Why is it that some people have many more opportunities than they will ever need? And some not nearly as many as they deserve? Those questions are beginning to be asked with much more poignancy.

**CRD: Could you give me one highlight from these 14-and-a-half years?**

**GJ:** One highlight. That is tough. Of course, the achievement of our ABA accreditation was huge. If we didn't do it, the whole enterprise would have suffered. And the way people came together to make that happen was a kind of team effort that I had not been a part of with that kind of intensity, from the university administration on down to this community. And this community! I have never been anywhere where people welcomed a bunch of lawyers to town. The foundations here went to bat to raise money to develop this law school. You could not have had a more supportive environment. We opened our law school in a permanent facility!

**CRD: Yeah.**

**GJ:** With no debt. Unheard of! And I've inspected a number of law schools. Every other new law school has been in some temporary facility and had to go out and raise the money to buy or build a building. We didn't have to do any of that. Community and university support was just phenomenal. And a number of law schools are disappearing. I have no doubt this place will survive and thrive because it sees how to make adjustments. The idea of a law school that was designed to foster leadership and civic engagement has gone even farther.

**CRD: If you could give some advice to somebody who's thinking about being a lawyer, or maybe a law teacher or law administrator, what would that be?**

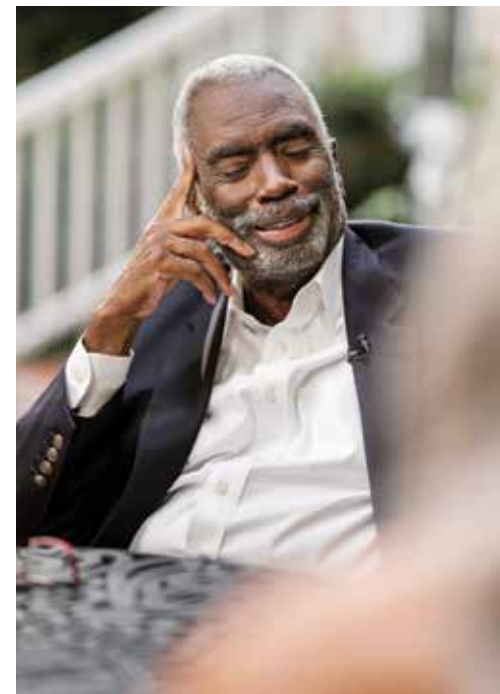
**GJ:** If that's what you want to do, go for it. I am of the mind that one does one's best work where one is really engaged and committed. If it's personally rewarding, and it helps to make the place where you spend your time, where you live and work, your community, better, that's what you do. Lawyers are indispensable. Society will not make it, and clearly not do nearly as well as it could, without that mediating influence and leadership from lawyers.

**CRD: Thanks, George.**

**GJ:** Well, thank you, Catherine. It's always my pleasure. And you know, this is the end of an era. But there are more chapters to write. I think I have more chapters to write.



*George Johnson with his wife, Dr. Linda Morris*





## ADDITIONS TO THE ELON LAW FACULTY

**E** LON LAW WELCOMES new faculty members this year with the addition of a former associate justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court and a Greensboro native with scholarly interests in the areas of administrative law, food and drug law, and health law.



**The Hon. Mark Davis** was appointed a Visiting Distinguished Jurist in Residence and will lead courses on the judicial process while assisting with criminal law courses and the supervision of students on residency in judicial chambers. Davis is the author of the 2019 book “A Warren Court of Our Own: The Exum Court and the Expansion of Individual Rights in North Carolina,” which explores the jurisprudence that evolved when former North Carolina Chief Justice James Exum, Jr. presided over the court from 1986 to 1994. Exum is a founding member of the Elon Law Advisory Board and a retired member of the Elon Law faculty.



**Assistant Professor Tammi Shimere Etheridge** returns to her hometown this summer from the faculty at Howard Law. She brings practice experience in complex commercial litigation and product liability law, and a publication list that includes articles in law journals at Georgetown and Michigan. Etheridge will lead courses in torts, food and drug laws, and health law starting this summer after previously teaching and mentoring law students at Howard University and Villanova University.

## FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS



**Professor Steve Friedland** received the 2020 Daniels-Danieley Award for Excellence in Teaching, Elon University’s top faculty honor for teaching. In the words of one nominator: “His devotion to his craft as a teacher, mentor, scholar and colleague is recognized across the country and around the world.”



**Assistant Professor Tiffany Atkins L’11** has been elected to the Society of American Law Teachers’ Board of Governors to help advance the mission of making the legal profession more inclusive and reflective of the nation’s diversity while enhancing social justice training and quality legal education.



**Professor Catherine Ross Dunham’s** essay “Reputation Evidence in the Age of Instagram,” which suggests that federal courts should reconsider the rules by which witnesses are allowed to testify to someone’s character, was named the 2020 Edward D. Ohlbaum Paper in Advocacy from Temple University.

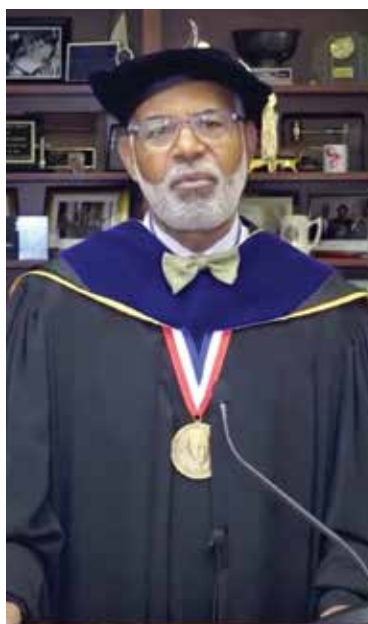


**Assistant Professor Caroleen Dineen** has been selected for Elon University’s Sustainability Faculty Scholars Program, which supports faculty interested in incorporating or enhancing a focus on sustainable principles in their courses. Dineen is developing an Environmental Justice course to potentially offer during the 2021-22 academic year.

## COMMENCEMENT GOES ONLINE

### Elon Law conferred degrees on 122 graduates

who celebrated the end of their legal education with a December 12 virtual ceremony streamed from Alumni Gym and featuring an address by Chief Judge Roger L. Gregory of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Gregory is the father of a 2016 Elon University undergraduate alumna.



Adopting an online format due to the COVID-19 global pandemic inspired new approaches to the celebration. Graduates submitted in advance of the ceremony photos and videos that featured parents, spouses, children, siblings, and friends hooding them in their homes or other unique locales. Their submissions were featured in the live stream as well as a video display board in the arena.

*“Work hard. Be creative. Be resilient. ... Every person is important. Be a voice for those who will never get to the table, those who never had the opportunity to go to law school, or graduate from college, or have the world believe they can do anything. Advocate for justice. Make sure the world knows that equal justice under law is not just for a few people, but for everyone.”*

— Roger L. Gregory P’16, Chief Judge,  
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit



Julianna Kober L’20

### David Gergen Award for Leadership & Professionalism

#### Julianna Kober

Selected by a faculty and staff committee that evaluates nominees based on law school activities representing the twin principles of leadership and professionalism, Kober oversaw the pro bono “People Not Property” Project at Elon Law where she managed the transcription and digitization of hundreds of slave deeds from Guilford County, thereby helping the public to learn more about the lives of people who were enslaved in antebellum Greensboro.

Kober had been elected to serve as a defender on Elon Law’s Honor Council and she provided pro bono support to Elon Law’s Humanitarian Immigration Law Clinic. Other leadership roles: serving as a Moot Court Board Member and as co-president of the Jewish Law Students Association. Kober also organized a visit to Elon Law by a nationally renowned civil rights attorney to discuss issues of police abuse.

## HONORS in the CLASS OF 2020

Elon Law’s Distinguished Service Award  
*Anissa Cottrell*

North Carolina  
Advocates for Justice Award  
*Melenni Balbach*

International Academy  
of Trial Lawyers Award  
*Michael T. Logsdon II*

North Carolina Chapter AAML Award  
*Molly Lyle Brazil*

ALI-CLE Award  
*Samantha D. Dudley*

Elon Law’s Michael L. Rich  
Memorial Award for Excellence  
in Criminal Law Studies  
*Victoria Charlene Corey*

National Association of Women Lawyers  
Outstanding Law Student Award  
*Megan D. Wilson-Bost*

North Carolina State Bar  
Student Pro Bono Award  
*Julianna Kober*

CLEA Outstanding Student Award  
*Evan Austin Tarver*

### FOR THE RECORD

“To all the friends and families that are joining us this morning, we extend our deepest thank yous, because your patience and understanding during our time at Elon really made this moment possible for all of us. On behalf of the Class of 2020, I want to apologize for all the skipped dinners, missed phone calls and birthdays. And I ask that you continue to bear with us over the next two months as we prepare to take the February bar exam.”

— Kia Barrett L’20,  
SBA President’s Welcome



“We are all ‘sitting’ here today as graduates of law school, something that less than 1% of the population of the United States can say. Now, I don’t know about any of you, but that is enough for me. ... I truly respect and hold in high esteem every single one of my classmates. Not only did we graduate from law school but at the end of the day we did it together!”

— Hannah Quinn Lundquist L’20  
in the Student Address

“You are now among the most well-educated people in the world. You will face inevitable challenges in your personal and professional lives. I charge you to be resilient and steadfast, like the mighty oaks for which Elon is named. Display your Elon diploma proudly in your homes or offices and stay connected to your new alma mater as Elon alumni—you are lifelong members of the Elon family.”

— Elon University President  
Connie Ledoux Book



# 'We all owe something to those who came before us'

By Eric Townsend

On the weekend before his investiture as a newly elected judge to the North Carolina District Court in Randolph County, Barron L. Thompson L'09 visited a cemetery in the eastern part of the state to simply say "thank you."

Neither maternal grandparent buried in Johnston County had graduated high school. His grandfather dropped out after the eighth grade and eventually married a 15-year-old bride who bore seven children. And while both of Thompson's parents would finish high school, college was never in the cards.

To be the first in his lineage to not only attend college but graduate law school? And then serve as a judge?

"I didn't get here by myself," Thompson said from the bench of an Asheboro courtroom the morning of January 4, 2021, where moments earlier he swore an oath of office. "Being a judge is nice, but if it weren't for a blacksmith and a carpenter and a pastor and farmers, I wouldn't be here, because they wanted better for the next generation."

Sacrificing for each succeeding generation is a theme that guides Thompson's approach to life. Humility and mercy are other qualities Thompson cited for being an effective judge when he delivered remarks to a courtroom of socially distanced friends and family, including his wife, Dr. Emily Houston Thompson, and their two children.

Thompson's ceremonial swearing-in (he officially started his duties on New Year's Day) also represented a milestone for Elon Law. The Hon. Sarah Neely Lanier L'10 led Thompson in his oath, which he took

while placing his hand on a Bible held by his son, Will, and daughter Ava.

"This is the first time an Elon Law alumna serving as a judge gets to swear in another Elon Law alum to the office of judge," Lanier said. "I'm proud to be a part of this historical moment."

As the courtroom emptied, Thompson was able to reflect on his journey from Morehead City to UNC Greensboro and, for a short time, a Guilford County high school social studies classroom where he taught for five years before attending Elon Law.

"I try to retain the humility that I'm just a lawyer who got lucky and gets to have the final say and sit in the big chair at the front of the courtroom," he said. "Especially in criminal court, people make bad decisions sometimes, but there's still the opportunity and there's still hope that you can make a decision to do better for yourself and make better choices."

"That can last for generations. ... And we all owe something to those who came before us." ■



## ELON LAW'S GROWING PRESENCE ON THE BENCH

While Barron L. Thompson L'09 is only the third Elon Law alum to win election to the North Carolina District Court, he is the fourth to hold the title of judge.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper appointed Phillip Cornett L'09 in November to serve as a District Court judge in Montgomery and Stanly counties, located between Charlotte and Southern Pines, following the retirement of Judge William Tucker.

Cornett had previously served as an assistant district attorney and brings to the bench several years of experience in private practice. He previously worked as a judicial clerk on the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

"It is a privilege and an honor to be appointed to this position," Cornett told the Stanly News & Press newspaper following Cooper's announcement. "I appreciate the governor's confidence in my ability. I will work hard every day for the citizens of Stanly and Montgomery counties to fulfill the duties and responsibilities placed upon me."

Elon Law Alumni who now serve as North Carolina District Court judges: Cornett, Thompson, Carrie Vickery L'09 and Sarah Neely Lanier L'10.



# PREPARING for the NEXT PANDEMIC

**After thousands of New York nursing home residents died last year of COVID-19, the New York State Bar Association created a task force – members who include John Dow L'16 – to determine why elderly residents were disproportionately harmed by the disease.**

Hundreds of thousands of Americans are dead from COVID-19. A majority of those who perished were over the age of 65. Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities were hardest hit.

When the New York State Bar Association established a task force late last summer to determine how older residents of the Empire State might be spared in future pandemics, it didn't take long for John Dow L'16 to be among 19 attorneys seeking answers.

Dow brings a unique perspective

to the task force. St. Peter's Health Partners in Albany, where he works as a senior staff attorney, operates a range of facilities. Hospitals. Nursing homes. Long-term care and rehabilitation facilities. Dow and his colleagues had a close-up view of systemwide supply shortages, employment questions, and end-of-life legal considerations, all while doctors learned to treat a new disease and government orders changed daily.

What doctors discovered in the hospital needed to be shared across

the system. Dow and the general counsel's office were involved in creating policies and amending existing regulations, drafting contracts, and identifying new vendors in the early months of disrupted supply chains and hospitals with limited equipment to protect workers and treat patients.

His experience gives the task force an insider's view of how a health system can nimbly adapt to quickly changing circumstances - or not - based on existing regulations.

"There is certainly room to create a system that is ready for the next time (we confront a pandemic), which hopefully will never happen," Dow said. "How do we foster the creation of a spectrum of care for patients?

This is an opportunity for us to think about how we take away regulatory barriers that keep patients in a system that is not going to necessarily be the most comfortable or most accessible."

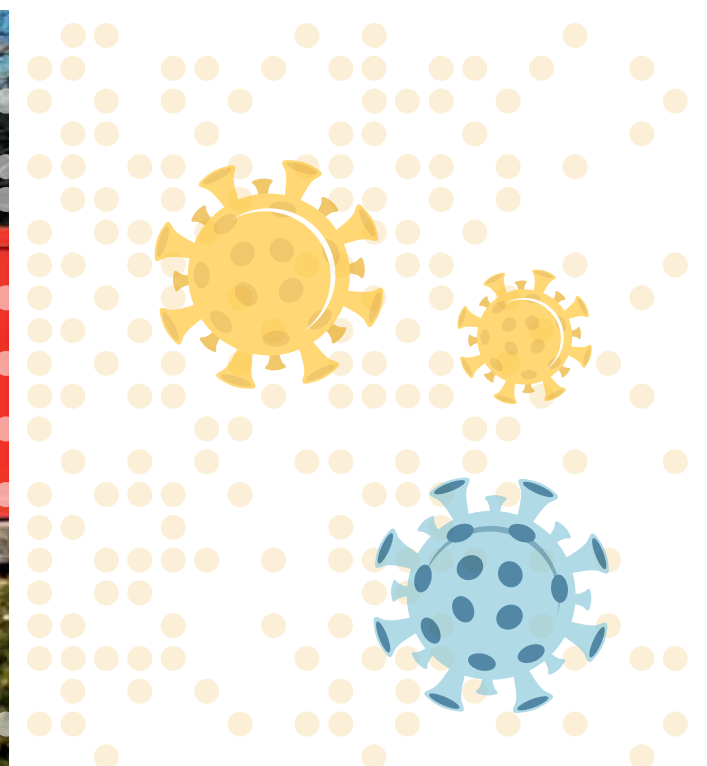
Robert Swidler, vice president of legal services for St. Peter's Health Partners, recommended Dow to the New York State Bar Association when the nonprofit health care provider was invited by the task force co-chairs to take part in their work. What makes Dow an added value to the project?

"He's bringing to the task force the same qualities he's brought to us - an exceptional amount of knowledge for a relatively new lawyer," Swidler said, "and he gets fulfillment in knowing he's doing something

more than simply helping a client achieve a business goal. There's something special about working in health care."

The task force is planning to release its report later this spring. For Dow, the work means more than dissecting what did or didn't happen during the pandemic. It's also about creating health care systems that prioritize quality of life for patients and their loved ones alike.

"We're focused on what happened in the facilities, but we also want to look at how this affected families," Dow said. "What can we build to make this a more responsive system and not just look back and say, 'this is what went wrong?'" ■





# CLASS NOTES



Brittany V. Carter L'11



Aaron R. Davis L'16



Diane K. Pappayliou L'16



Nathaniel Cook L'May '17

## 2009

**Sam Hyde L'09** and **Mark Wilson L'13** have established Hyde, Brown, Wilson P.A. in Waynesville, N.C. The firm serves western North Carolina in the areas of criminal defense, family law, estates, business law, and civil litigation.

**Seema P. Shah L'09** has accepted a new position with Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation as the vice president of BSA/AML and OFAC Compliance Program Management.

**The Hon. Carrie Vickery L'09** and her husband, Phillip Skipper, welcomed a daughter, Patricia Joan Skipper, in August 2020.

## 2010

**Craig Turner L'10** was elected by members of the Alamance County (N.C.) GOP executive committee to serve on the Board of Commissioners. Turner is an associate for Fox Rothschild LLP in Greensboro.

## 2011

**Brittany V. Carter L'11** was recently recognized as a top Louisiana lawyer in the areas of family law and trusts & estates when featured in the October 2020 edition of *Sophisticated Woman* magazine

and the November 2020 edition of *New Orleans* magazine. Carter has owned her own Covington firm, Brittany V. Carter, Attorney at Law, L.L.C., since 2012.

**Samantha Gilman L'11** recently joined Boston-based Alexion as director of public policy, a position that involves monitoring and engaging in federal and state policy changes impacting patients with rare diseases; ensuring access to medicines through value and access discussions; and partnering with patient advocacy groups to advance patient care for rare diseases.

**Manisha P. Patel L'11** was inducted in October into the North Carolina Pro Bono Honor Society for pro bono work completed in the 2019 calendar year. Patel provided over 620 hours of pro bono services in 2019.

## 2013

**Jake Pryor L'13** has transitioned off active duty in the Marine Corps into the Marine Corps Reserves, recently moving from San Diego to Greensboro to begin work as an assistant U.S. attorney.

## 2014

**Andrew Realon L'14** and his wife, Lauren, welcomed their son Luke in November 2020. Realon works

in academic support at The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C.

## 2016

**Aaron R. Davis L'16** has been named a partner in the High Point firm of Wyatt Early Harris Wheeler where he practices in residential real estate law.

**Diane K. Pappayliou L'16** was recognized in the 2021 edition of *North Carolina Super Lawyers* as a rising star for her work in class actions/mass torts. Pappayliou practices in Butler Snow's Wilmington, N.C., office with the Tort, Transportation and Specialized Litigation group.

## 2017

**Nathaniel Cook L'May '17** recently joined the firm of Block, Crouch, Keeter, Behm & Sayed, LLP as an associate attorney in Wilmington, N.C., focusing on commercial and residential real estate (acquisition and development), business law, estate planning and estate administration.

## 2018

**Adam Etzel L'18** has been promoted to assistant vice president and estate settlement advisor for PNC Financial Services in Pennsylvania. Etzel handles the settlement of estates for which PNC has been appointed executor.

**Sarah Price L'18** and Abraham Pernicka were married on August 22, 2020. Price is an attorney for Dauntless Discovery in North Carolina.



Morgan D. Ricci L'18

**Morgan D. Ricci L'18** and Gavin Auten were married on October 10, 2020. Ricci is a workers' compensation defense attorney in the Charlotte office of Willson Jones Carter & Baxley, P.A.

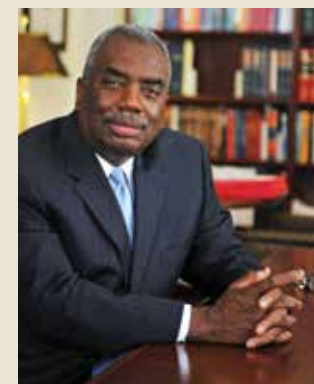
## MEMORIALIZING a beloved mentor

**Elon Law's Class of 2020**, with the generosity of faculty, staff, alumni, students, and families, raised more than \$7,300 in support of the law school's student emergency fund and to remember Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr.

Funds will enhance the Elon Law Student Emergency Fund, established by the Class of 2018 and supported by the Class of 2019 as a resource for students facing a one-time, extraordinary financial crisis. A portion of the class gift will also fund the creation of a visible memorial to honor Johnson, who died in November following a long illness.

The class gift was presented to Elon Law Dean Luke Bierman as part of a December awards program on the eve of Commencement.

Fundraising efforts were enhanced by an anonymous donor who pledged a dollar-for-dollar match of up to \$3,000. The Class of 2020 Gift Committee was led by Ryan Allshouse, Hayleigh Carroll, Anissa Cottrell, Sarah Ensley and Robin Wintringham.







#### IN-PERSON LEARNING

Professor Scott Gaylord leads his Constitutional Law II students in a January 14 discussion on the U.S. Supreme Court and the question of ripeness.

**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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