PRE-LAW

The Magazine for UNF Pre-Law Students

Pre-Law Speakers Series Issue

Fall 2011

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A Message from the Director, Martin Edwards

Due to the generosity....

Due to the generosity of some law firms and numerous lawyers, we were able to secure endowments for a number of Pre-Law Program courses in the early years of the Program. Over time, the funds from those endowments grew, as faculty were able to secure guest speakers for the courses on a cost-free basis. The endowments continued to grow, the UNF Administration decided to create a Pre-Law Speakers Series, so that the funds could be utilized to bring law-related featured speakers to the UNF campus. On these pages one can learn about the success of the Pre-Law Speakers Committee in bringing some outstanding lecturers to campus. On March 9 Dr. Michael Gagarin, one of the country’s foremost scholars in the area of ancient Greek law, oratory, and political theory came to campus. He addressed a Pre-Law Board of Advisors luncheon group, spoke to a class, and at night addressed a full auditorium of students and guests. UNF’s Department of History did an outstanding job of bringing Dr. Gagarin to campus and working with the Speakers Committee to make our first speaker event a highly successful one.

On these pages you will read about the second speaker, Linda Greenhouse, a Pulitzer prize winning reporter for the New York Times, who covered the Supreme Court for over twenty-five years, and now teaches law at Yale Law School. Ms. Greenhouse was the Pre-Law Day speaker on October 13, addressed a Supreme Court class in Political Science and Public Administration, and delivered a well-attended nighttime address in the Lazzara Performance Hall.

Still to come on February 23 is Jeffrey Toobin, CNN’s law analyst, and author of the highly popular book The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court. Toobin will deliver a nighttime address open to the public and will speak to a UNF class during the daytime.

It has been our pleasure and honor to bring these distinguished speakers to campus, and we look forward to continuing this series next academic year as well.
Coming Up…

An Evening with Jeffrey Toobin
The Pre-Law Speaker Series will present author and legal political commentator Jeffrey Toobin. Mr. Toobin will present a public lecture at UNF on Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 7:00 pm in the University Center. This lecture is titled “Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court.” Mr. Toobin is the author of The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court, about the Justices of the US Supreme Court.

Pre-Law Board of Advisors Luncheon
This fall the Pre-Law Board of Advisors Luncheon will be November 16th at 12:00 noon. The luncheon will be held in the Student Union, Building 58 West, Room 3703-A. New students who have joined the Program since last fall’s luncheon are invited to attend. Reservations are required by calling the Pre-Law Program office at 620-1069.

This Semester…

Pre-Law Day
The Pre-Law Program and Career Services hosted the Annual Pre-Law Day event on Thursday, October 13, 2011. This year our guest speaker was Linda Greenhouse, the Knight Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence and Joseph M. Goldstein Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School, and former Pulitzer Prize winning reporter, previously with the New York Times. She is a regular guest on the PBS program Washington Week. Representatives from all the Florida law schools and numerous law school from out of state were on hand to speak with students about their school.

An Evening with Linda Greenhouse
The Pre-Law Speaker Series presented Linda Greenhouse. This nationally known journalist presented a public lecture at UNF on Thursday, October 13, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Lazzara Performance Hall. Ms. Greenhouse reported on the US Supreme Court and its Justices for over 29 years. It was an honor having Ms. Greenhouse at UNF.

Pre-Law Breakfast
Pre-Law students were invited to join us for breakfast on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 in the Student Union, for the Pre-Law Program’s first breakfast. A number of students attended and local attorneys spoke about the practice of law.
Interested in becoming a lawyer? Come out and learn more about law school, how to apply, what you need to do to prepare and LSAT testing.

12 p.m.—2 p.m.
**Law School Showcase**

Meet representatives from a variety of law schools and gain valuable information about their law programs, admissions process and more.

2 p.m.—3 p.m.
**Guest Speaker:**
**Linda Greenhouse**

Knight Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence and Joseph Goldstein Lecturer, Yale Law School. Teaches Supreme Court related courses. Successful 40 year career at the New York Times, 30 years covering the United States Supreme Court.

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On Left, Deborah Luyster, FSCL, who assists students with their personal statements, Center-Lisa Bates-Lester, JD and UNF Instructor in Criminal Justice, and Right-Peggy Baldt, Pre-Law Program Assistant and practicing attorney, visit during the law school showcase.

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Pre-Law Day October 13, 2011

Started with the Law School Showcase and Guest Speaker Linda Greenhouse capped the day with her presentation on the Supreme Court.
Pre-Law Forums

Law forums focus on particular law schools and give students an opportunity to speak directly with the admission director of the school. During the spring semester we had three law forum sessions.

On January 25th, Laura Zuppo, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at Stetson University College of Law came and spoke with our students. UNF Grad Erika Wilson a 2L at Stetson came with Ms. Zuppo and spoke about opportunities at Stetson, including Mock Trial. Erika is on Stetson’s Mock Trial Team, which has done very well this year.

On March 22nd, John Marshall School of Law and Florida Coastal School of Law came to UNF. They discussed the benefits of going to their school and explained how scholarships are awarded.

On March 29th, Deborah Hood, Director of Admissions at Florida State University College of Law, met with our students and explained the admissions process and the importance of students scoring high on the LSAT and securing a high GPA to that process.

Pre-Law Speakers Series

On March 9th the Pre-Law Program Speaker Series hosted its first lecturer: Dr. Michael Gagarin. Dr. Philip Kaplan of the History Department, and Dr. Paul Carelli of the Philosophy Department were instrumental in bringing Dr. Gagarin to campus. Dr. Gagarin is the foremost scholar in the area of ancient Greek law, oratory and political theory. He was the James R. Doughtery, Jr. Centennial Professor of Classics at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a published author and his works include: Drakon and Early Athenian Homicide Law, Early Green Law, and most recently Writing Greek Law. His presentation “Law and Oratory in Classical Athens & Today” was well attended.

Dr. David Courtwright with Dr. Michael Gagarin
Linda Greenhouse Speaks at UNF:
A Pre-Law Program Coup

By Ashley Taylor

Over forty years of extraordinary experience matched with a remarkable enthusiasm makes the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Linda Greenhouse the ideal keynote speaker. The Pre-Law Program and its Director Martin Edwards were honored to welcome Ms. Greenhouse to the UNF campus on October 13, 2011 for Pre-Law Day. This annual event is full of amazing opportunities for students interested in continuing their education in law school. At noon, students were invited to visit The Law School Showcase which featured twenty different law schools, and gave students the freedom to meet with an admissions representative from each school. Following the showcase, Linda Greenhouse took the stage.

Her first speech was entitled “Judicial Nomination and the Confirmation Process”. It was the perfect topic, coming from Ms. Greenhouse, since she had remarkably covered the Supreme Court for *The New York Times* between 1978 and 2008. Currently, her work can still be found in *The Times* through her biweekly columns on law. In 1998, she was awarded The Pulitzer Prize “for her consistently illuminating coverage of the United States Supreme Court”. Ms. Greenhouse also lectures at Yale Law School, where she holds the titles of Knight Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence and Joseph Goldstein Senior Fellow in Law.

During the speech to the Pre-Law Day attendees about the nomination and confirmation process, she offered many students the opportunity to learn even more about the subjects covered in their curriculum, from the unique vantage point of someone who was present for a number of events, as they unfolded. She began by illustrating the power that the United States Senate possesses during the confirmation process, especially with their ability to block a nominee. Although the White House faces new struggles today in seeing their judicial nominees confirmed, the struggle itself has existed since the inception of the Court. Since 1789, 112 Supreme Court Justices have been confirmed, while 36 have failed. Ms. Greenhouse spoke about the varying confirmation battles that specific nominees have faced, including that of the highly criticized Robert Bork. She finally explored the theories that some have developed about reform, and what these reforms could mean to the nomination and confirmation process.

Later that evening, Linda Greenhouse took the stage for a second time. This speech was a public address, titled “The Supreme Court and the Public – An Imperfect Dialogue”. In the address,

*(Continued on page 9)*
she spoke on several issues, including whether or not the Supreme Court is influenced by public opinion and that it is important to remember that the information the justices have may be just as important as the information they do not have. The justices do not have researchers, but only the briefs they receive and the arguments they hear. To illustrate the Court’s connection to public opinion, Ms. Greenhouse focused on the landmark case of Roe v Wade, pointing out the steady shift in public opinion about the issues in the case.

Both of Linda Greenhouse’s speeches were simply extraordinary. She obviously has a mastery over the subject area that allowed her to present the topics with ease, in a style that felt mostly conversational. The Pre-Law Program is very proud to have hosted such a successful event, and reminds everyone that we are just getting started in the tradition of having such prestigious keynote speakers. Coming to UNF as the next Pre-Law Program speaker in February of 2012, is CNN’s Jeffrey Toobin, author of The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court. You do not want to miss out on what promises to be another extremely successful event!

**The Pre-Law Program would like to thank Ashley Taylor and Lee Ann Fraser for “manning” our table during the Pre-Law Day Law School Showcase. **

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**Thursday, February 23, 2012**

**7:00 PM University Center**

**Jeffrey Toobin**

Mr. Toobin is one of the country’s most esteemed experts on politics, media and the law. He is a senior analyst for CNN and staff writer for The New Yorker. With unparalleled journalistic skill, Toobin has provided analysis on some of the most provocative and important events of our time, including the O.J. Simpson trial, the Kenneth Starr investigation and impeachment of President Bill Clinton, and the disputed Florida recount of the 2000 presidential election. Toobin’s book The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court, delves into the historical, political, and personal inner workings of the Supreme Court, and its justices to reveal the inside story of one of America’s most powerful institutions.
When asked what my major is, my response of Anthropology frequently warrants puzzled looks, quizzical expressions, and even a few raised eyebrows. Usually I hear out whatever definition of the discipline my questioner comes up with (mostly for my own entertainment), before explaining to he or she that Anthropology has nothing to do with dinosaurs.

Literally, Anthropology is the study of humans (Anthropos = humans; -ology = the study of). However, the discipline covers more than just the humans down the street, it includes the study of humans from every geographic region and time period – in other words, anthropology is the holistic study of man. The discipline itself can be broken down into four sub-fields: cultural anthropology (studying human culture and the facets therein), linguistic anthropology (studying human language and its effects), biological anthropology (the study of humans in a physical sense, including evolution), and archaeology (the study of artifacts left behind by humans). The culmination of all four sub-fields provides an in-depth view into humanity from practically every obtainable angle.

Considering that Anthropology is the study of anything human, it is understandable how the discipline pertains to law. From a culturally anthropological viewpoint, understanding a Client’s culture, and therefore worldview, will aid a legal professional in understanding the motive for an act that was committed by a Client or a Client’s response to a situation. Linguistic Anthropology is relative to law in that the discipline allows for greater understanding of legal terms and the linguistic origins of the same. Under the umbrella of biological anthropology exists a science made popular by a network television show that lends aid to the evidentiary side of criminal law – forensic anthropology; or the study and analysis of human remains or biological materials using anthropological methods, criteria, and techniques. Not only do forensic anthropologists produce evidence for a court of law to examine, but they can also testify as expert witnesses. Of all the four sub-fields, archaeology might seem to make the least amount of contributions to the legal profession, but the discovery and excavation of a knife covered in dried blood could turn out to be the proverbial smoking gun in a high profile murder case – you never know!

All in all, anthropology has the ability to contribute to the field of law in a myriad of ways. The discipline as a whole provides the “big picture” regarding humanity – and that is something that will remain pertinent to law long after the dinosaurs roamed this earth.
My Experience in Mock Trial

By Sean Lofton

When I was asked to write an article about my experience with the Mock Trial class I had to sit down and really reflect on what I had learned and how I felt as the class progressed throughout the semester. To anyone who is thinking about taking the class I can guarantee that you are going to experience a full array emotion as you work your way through the different concepts that shape trial litigation. I know I personally felt frustration as I grappled with some of my short comings in opening statements and felt pride when I was finally able to apply criticisms from my class mates to deliver one successfully.

With that being said, I feel that I would be doing anyone who reads this article a disservice if I failed to mention what I think it takes to be successful in this class. One of the most important things to remember going in is that you will get as much out of Mock Trial as you put into it. Simply put, it is not an easy class. It requires a high level of dedication from the student because there is a steep learning curve. You have to remember that you are trying to learn how to conduct yourself at a trial; something that some lawyers never really master. If you want to learn you have to do your readings and most importantly you have to practice. The reason for this is because there is no substitute for the facts.

I only mention this to be truthful. In no way do I wish to scare anyone off because they do not think that they are capable for one reason or another. The truth is that just about anyone can be incredibly successful in this class. There is a line from the introduction of the Trial Notebook by James McElhaney. He basically says that the best lawyers are not those who go to the best law schools, get on law review, or have a golden tongue. In fact the best lawyers are the ones who choose to be the best and are willing to work for it. The same is true for anyone who takes this class. If you want to be the best you’re going to have to work for it.

Other than a willingness to work hard you are also going to need an ability to accept criticism. Mock Trial runs on trial and error. The only way you are going to know if you are getting something right or wrong is to listen to your classmates as they critique your performance. So, do not get offended when someone says that you could have done better in one area or another; be receptive and soak up as much as you can. I found that it is very helpful to be outgoing. If you are not comfortable with getting up and speaking in front of twenty five, or more, of your peers than this class may not be right for you. You are going to have to present in this class if you want to get everything it has to offer.

This class was also a great Litmus test for me. Going in I was not sure if litigation or law was what I really wanted to do for the rest of my life. But after going through all the readings and the different presentations I found myself wanting to do more so I volunteered to be part of the full trial at the end of the semester. After a week of tireless preparation with my group and going through as real of a trial as possible; I knew this was for me. So if you are like me; an upper level graduate who at the time was thinking of taking the LSAT and going to law school, but you just was not sure if that is what they want to do. Take the class, by the end of the course you will have a much better idea of what it is you want to do.

I honestly hope that this article is helpful to those who read it. The parting words that I would like to leave you with is that this class is no walk in the park but that it is well worth the work that goes into it. So just remember that as long as you decide to be the best you will.
If you want to go to law school, then next semester you need to enroll in the Legal Research and Analysis class taught by Professor Tess Arington. Along with the wealth of knowledge you are sure to obtain – you get the opportunity to see what law school is all about. The information Professor Arington gives during this class is unique and invaluable. You will only benefit from taking this class if you wish to pursue a career as a lawyer or in the legal field.

Professor Arington sets high expectations for her students. Students should govern themselves in class with some similarities to the way lawyers (and persons working in the legal field) are expected. This means (1) class starts at 6:00 P.M. not 6:01 P.M.! (2) All work assigned is due when she says – late assignments are not accepted. This, as Professor Arington explains, is because in the legal profession judges do not accept work a minute past the deadline, nor will a clerk accept documents past 5:01 P.M. Any form of business with the court system is to be completed by the close of business; if it isn’t there it will not be accepted – period. The point to these simple rules is, be prompt (and efficient) because as a lawyer you will lose your case if you miss a deadline.

During law school you will be assigned a lot of reading! Not only will you be assigned a lot of reading, you better do it. Professor Arington practices the Socratic method with students. This is a method where students are assigned homework and during the next class the professor will call on you and you will be asked to answer explicit questions surrounding the assignment(s). Professor Arington uses this method because this, as she explains, is the method used most frequently in law school. This method ensures that you are not only reading the material but understanding it as well. She is invested in her students and wants to ensure that we are ready for the challenges that will sure to face us in during our years of law school.

Work in this class is mandatory and it is not always easy. If you cannot keep up with it, you might want to reevaluate your decision to go to law school. The workload given in this class is minor in comparison to the workload given in law school. Along with occupying a large amount of your time, you will also have to learn a new way of thinking. However, the time that you invest in this class will not be for nothing – you will learn how to think and analyze like a lawyer. You will also learn how to interpret laws and their meanings. There are methods that are taught in this class that you will carry with you throughout your tenure of law school or any upcoming law classes. As well as challenging you to think outside of your normal thinking pattern, you will learn how to look at things from a different perspective. This class will be the ultimate test for future law school students. So, if you are ready to see what law school is all about, sign up for this class! As Professor Kingsfield said in (the infamous movie) The Paper Chase, “You come in here with a skull full of mush and you leave thinking like a lawyer.”
Greetings, all of you Pre-Law enthusiasts! My name is Curt Bender; I am the President of the UNF Pre Law Student Society (PLSS). This is a great year for the PLSS. We have undergone many changes in order to make this upcoming academic year the most successful one to date. I would like to inform you all about important changes made to the PLSS, our agenda for the upcoming semester, as well as, extend to you all an invitation to immediately get involved with the PLSS!

Before I divulge the details, allow me to introduce the officers that will be leading the PLSS for the upcoming academic year. I, myself, am a Political Science major with a minor in Business Management and American Sign Language. After graduating with my bachelor’s degree, I plan on earning my M.B.A. then pursuing my J.D.. After my J.D., I hope to practice law as a defense attorney before eventually managing a law firm that specializes with deaf and hard of hearing clients. As an aspiring attorney, I understand the necessity for proper communication between attorney and client, and that is why I study American Sign Language. Armed with language skills, I hope to bridge the communication gap that deaf clients have with hearing attorneys that rely on an interpreter.

Next is the Vice President, Maria Bastos. She was born in Costa Rica, one of the most beautiful countries. She is currently a junior, majoring in Political Science with a minor in Religious Studies. Passion for the law is something Maria possessed from a young age. Throughout her life she has engaged in a variety of activities to gain a broad range of knowledge about the different legal fields. From volunteering at the Miami Beach Police station to being a lead attorney on the UNF Mock Trial team, Maria is confident being a lawyer is what she is meant to be. She plans on practicing law in Miami as a criminal defense attorney.

Vanessa Mahai is our Secretary and Val Avanesov is our Treasurer.

Now that the introductions are out of the way, allow me to tell you all about a few key changes we have made to the PLSS. The most significant change we have made this year is the way our meetings are structured and conducted. We will host our general meetings every other Wednesday at 7:30pm starting October 19th. When you attend our general meetings, the first thing you will notice, besides the free food and refreshments we provide at every meeting, is our officers’ dedication to facilitating the needs and requests of our members. As officers, we have revamped the PLSS structure to include guest speakers at every general meeting, attorney panels, law school tours, and even FREE LSAT PREP courses. You will also notice that there is always something to do as a member of the PLSS! This semester alone we will be touring the Florida Costal School of Law on October 28th, attending live trials in the Jacksonville area, hosting sporting events between rival academic clubs, and that is all on top of our spectacular line up of invigorating guest speakers! Wow, I know that is a lot, but do not wait until the last event to get involved! Also, if you are a professional in the legal field and would like to share your experiences at one of our general meetings, please do!

I am confident that this will be the most productive year the PLSS has had to date, and that leads me to know that you will not want to miss out! To get involved with the PLSS, please contact us at unfprelaw@gmail.com.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you all,

Curt Bender
President Pre Law Student Society
c.bender@unf.edu
Plan it Out

Fall of Senior Year

- Attend UNF Pre-Law Day in the Fall
- Attend UNF Pre-Law Forum in the Spring
- Begin studying for the LSAT (study for at least 3-5 months in advance of test)
- Register for June LSAT, if ready
- Order official transcripts
- Make sure LORs are submitted
- Finalize personal statement

Spring of Senior Year

- Take LSAT in June, if ready
- Check the status of your LORs
- Begin writing Personal Statement; speak to Pre-Law Program Director, M. Edwards, about help with Personal Statement
- Contact law schools to see if applications are complete
- Complete and submit financial aid information
- Evaluate admissions offers
- Thank your letter writers and inform them of your plans

Personal Statement

- **Personal Statements vary according to law school:** The University of Florida, for instance, requests students submit an “Academic Statement” in addition to a short “Diversity Statement.” Other schools like students to tell unique personal stories. Check with each law school for specific guidelines.

- **Ask for help writing and editing your statement:** Ask the Pre-Law Program Director about Dr. Luyster, a Pre-Law Board member with a PhD in English and a JD, who helps students brainstorm and edit their statements.

Letters of Recommendation

- **Ask early:** Students often ask too late into the semester for letters of recommendation, long after professors have already agreed to write letters for other students.

- **Ensure good letters:** Ask professors who have instructed you in multiple classes and ones who know you academically. A professor from a class in which you performed poorly would not necessarily be the best writer of your letter regardless of their prestige.

LSAT

- **Pick a goal:** Find out from law schools their LSAT ranges to help you decide what you goal should be

- **Study Effectively:** Create a weekly/daily study plan and stick to it.

- **Stay Calm:** Don’t let nerves hurt your performance

Resume

- **Get involved:** Volunteer, work or join a club and stick to it; law schools know when you’re really interested and when you’re just filling a resume

- **Talk to the school:** some law schools look favorably on certain extracurricular activities; figure this out early in your academic career
The Pre-Law Program maintains a Resource Center for Program members.

With a wide array of resource materials including a variety of study aids and advice materials on everything from LSAT prep, letters of recommendation to information on the first year of law school, the Pre-Law Program Resource Center is a great way for students to learn about law school and to prepare for all aspects of law school.

Take the time to practice and prepare!

Do I need to take a LSAT Prep Course to do well on the LSAT?

“Should a student take one of the commercial LSAT preparation courses? “Arizona State University PreLaw answered this question: “Approximately 40% of law school applicants have taken a commercial prep course. Students who have taken them report that such courses do familiarize you with the format of the test and reduce your test anxiety. These students also report significant improvement in test scores. If you choose to take one of these courses, take it as near to the time of the actual test as possible. Commercial prep courses are not going to harm you. On the other hand, if you have real discipline, they do not do anything for you that you cannot do for yourself.”

Boston College discusses EIGHT COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LSAT, the second misconception is “The LSAT is biased against test takers who cannot afford expensive coaching courses.” In rebuttal, it is stated that “the difference in mean LSAT scores between those who did and those who did not take a commercial course is about 1 point on the 120-180 LSAT score scale.”

Some of the commercial LSAT prep courses available *

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blackstone LSAT Prep</td>
<td>1-800-881-LSATI <a href="mailto:blackstonelsat@aol.com">blackstonelsat@aol.com</a> (UNF Division of Continuing Education 904.620.4200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan LSAT Programs</td>
<td>1-800-KAP-TEST; <a href="http://www.kaptest.com">www.kaptest.com</a></td>
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<td>TestMasters</td>
<td>1-800-696-5728; <a href="http://www.testmasters.net">www.testmasters.net</a></td>
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<td>Knewton LSAT Prep</td>
<td>1-888-563-9866; <a href="http://www.knewton.com">www.knewton.com</a></td>
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<td>Princeton Review</td>
<td>1-800-2review; <a href="http://www.preincetonreview.com">www.preincetonreview.com</a></td>
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<td>1-801-318-3051; <a href="http://www.ace180.com/l">www.ace180.com/l</a> sat.php</td>
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