



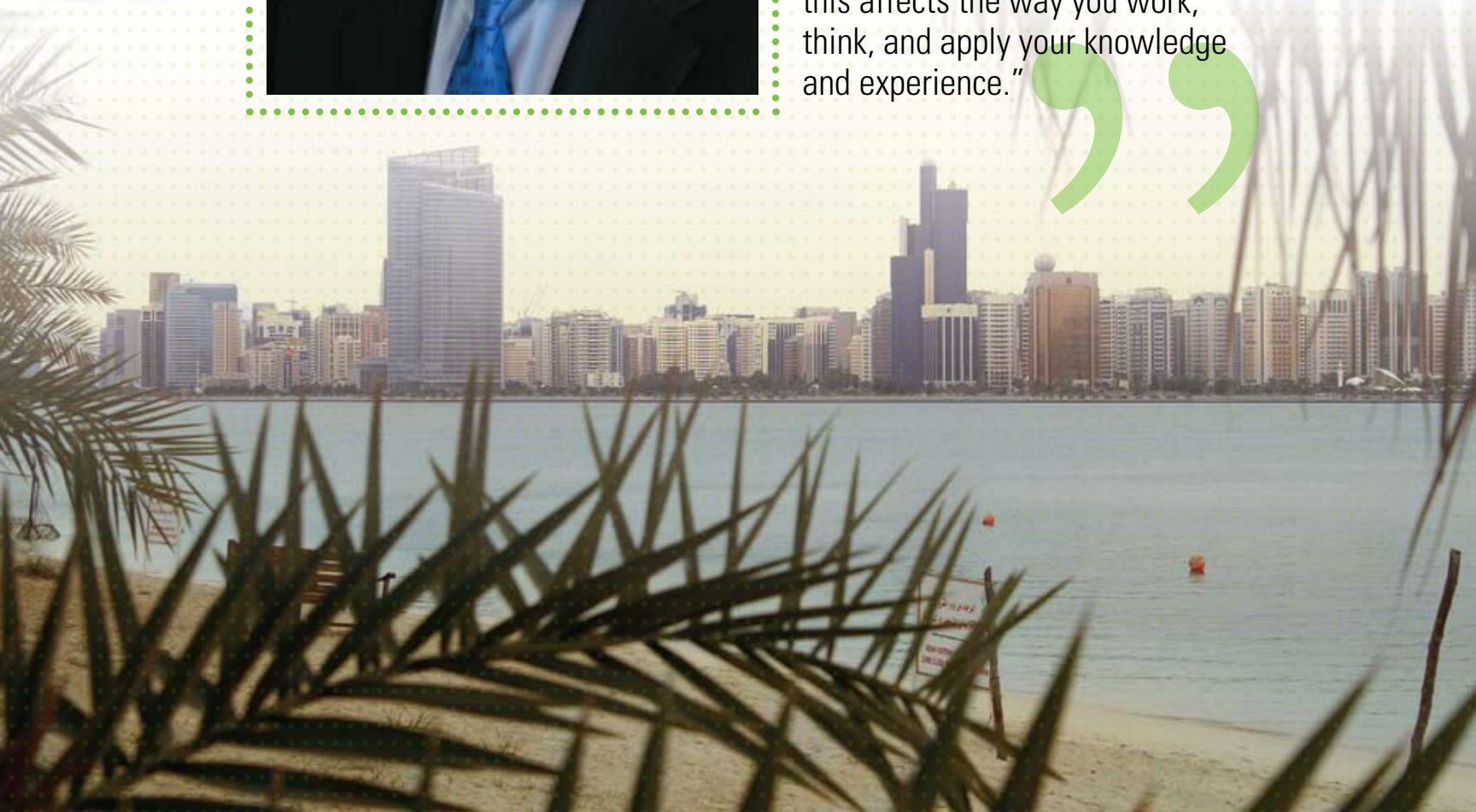
**Alumni  
Profiles**

# ▶ Oliver Agha '94

Founding and Managing Partner, Agha & Shamsi, L.L.C.  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates



“Working overseas is not just about the work but also about the cultural and social benefits you can acquire to make you a more rounded individual, and this affects the way you work, think, and apply your knowledge and experience.”



### What do you do?

I am the Founding and Managing Partner of Agha & Shamsi, L.L.C. in Abu Dhabi, the first boutique law firm compliant with Shari'ah, the law of Islam. I advise clients on devising innovative Islamic finance structures and major project finance deals, covering a range of industries from petrochemicals to banks.

### How/why did you get your job?

Previously, I was a partner with DLA Piper's Dubai office, where I was Global Head of Islamic Finance and Head of the Saudi Arabian practice. In 2009, I decided to establish Agha & Shamsi pursuant to a vision to develop a law firm that practices according to an ethical mandate and certain restraints in terms of practice areas and client representations.<sup>1</sup>

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

I'm enjoying developing an innovative firm that has no modern precedent and addressing novel challenges.

### What's the best part about living and working in the United Arab Emirates?

The United Arab Emirates is the commercial hub of the Middle East, the gateway for Islamic finance, and an enjoyable place to live. It combines the traditionalism of the East with the comfort of the West.

### Why did you choose New York Law School?

The School's location was a big draw, as well as the quality of the professors.

### What NYLS course have you found to be most valuable in your career?

That is an easy one. Professor Robert Blecker's Constitutional History: Supremacy & Nullification. It helped me develop an understanding of the interplay of law between governmental departments, agencies, and constitutionalism. It was the high point of my legal education and has been very helpful in my practice.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

Professor Blecker was a mentor and is now a friend. His commitment to excellence in academia, intellectual rigor, and passion for his subjects was (and still is) exceptional. I still think, however, my paper deserved an A not an A-!

### What would you tell students who are considering working abroad?

Understanding other cultures and having a sense of scope of a different world will open additional opportunities for law students who are considering work overseas. If working abroad does not tempt you, living abroad might.

### Tell us a fun/unique fact about yourself.

My earliest memory of childhood is earlier than that of anyone else I've ever met: less than 3 months old.

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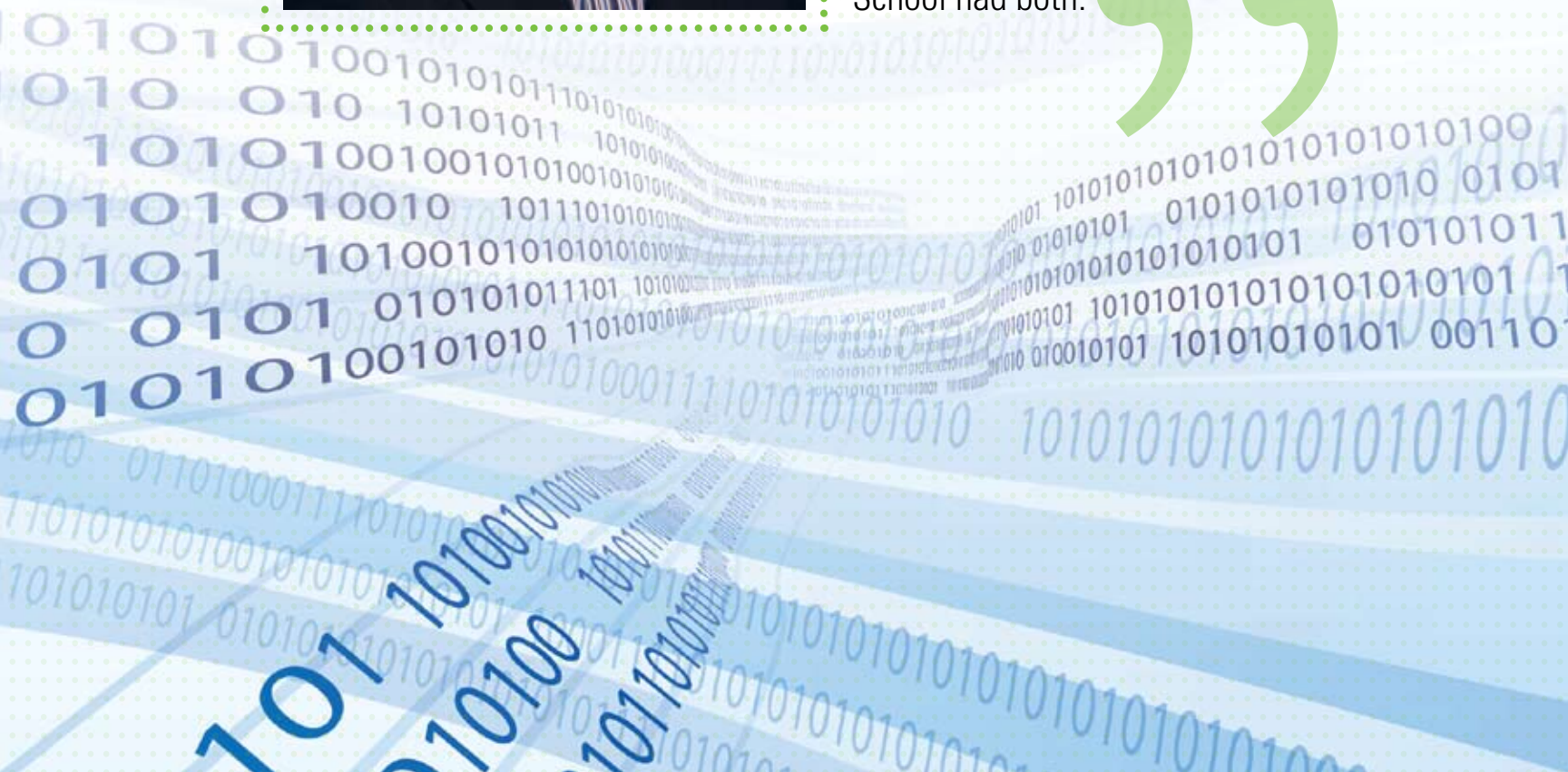
<sup>1</sup> Islamic finance, among other tenets, does not allow usury (charging interest) or investment in businesses that are contrary to Islamic beliefs.

# Arnold G. Blair III '02

Senior Staff Attorney, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP  
New York, New York



“I’ve never taken the traditional route for anything, and New York Law School was a perfect fit for me. I wanted to be in an environment that had a diverse faculty and staff. New York Law School had both.”



### What do you do?

I am a Senior Staff Attorney at WilmerHale whose primary job is handling all aspects regarding electronic discovery in regulatory investigations.<sup>1</sup> I work with other attorneys, litigation technology project managers, and paralegals on teams that manage electronic documents in large cases and investigations.

### What does your typical day look like?

There is no typical day in my work. Regulatory work, especially e-discovery, is a fast-paced and hectic environment. I like it that way. One day I could be preparing documents to produce to regulators, and the next, trying to figure out a client's IT system. The only constants in my days are the never-ending requests for help in solving all sorts of issues that arise with electronic documents.

### What did you do before law school?

When I graduated from college I went to a professional cooking school, convinced I wanted to be a chef. But after working in the industry for a while, I realized it was not for me and chose to take the legal career path instead.

### What was your most memorable law school experience?

One memory that stands out was 9/11. Just like all the other students and faculty at the Law School for the 2001–02 year, I had to finish out the year in a building so close to Ground Zero. I am still so amazed and proud of how the School came together and made it through, despite everything that was going on around us.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

Professors Ann F. Thomas and Michael B.W. Sinclair. Both always found the time to talk to me, never stopped encouraging me to do the best I could, and continuously challenged me to think like a lawyer instead of a student who thinks he knows the law. There is a big difference between just knowing the law, and applying knowledge to solve the types of problems lawyers are faced with every day.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

Learn everything you can about computers and databases, and how the legal practice is changing due to the technological revolution that is still occurring. Computers are here to stay and there is a big demand for lawyers who understand how law and technology interact.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

My biggest passions are reading, music, working out, and food. Oh yeah, and the Yankees. When I am not at work you can find me pursuing one of the above.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic discovery (or “e-discovery”) refers to the process of identifying, preserving, collecting, processing, reviewing, and producing electronically stored data in order to use it as evidence in a civil or criminal legal case.

# ▶ Jo Ann J. Brighton '89

Of Counsel, K&L Gates LLP  
Charlotte, North Carolina



“I take the mentoring model very seriously. In this community, we need to help each other. Not just women helping other women, but older teaching younger, opening doors, sharing experiences, and imparting wisdom.”



### What do you do?

I am Of Counsel to K&L Gates LLP in the financial restructuring group. I represent institutions and lenders in all areas of commercial and bankruptcy law.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

Financial restructuring is like a puzzle—you are presented with an existing set of circumstances and finite resources to solve the problem. It is challenging and gives you an opportunity to be very creative. It can be very satisfying when you craft solutions that make the best of a bad situation.

### Why did you choose New York Law School?

I grew up in New Jersey and needed to go someplace where I could commute from home. I was paying for law school myself. I also thought if I wanted to start practicing law in New York City, then it would be best to go to law school there.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

Professor Karen Gross, now President of Southern Vermont College (and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at New York Law School), took an interest in my career. She has been an invaluable mentor and a dear friend. She also gave me opportunities to speak that led to further opportunities. She has really poured her wisdom and knowledge into me, and I am very grateful.

### What is your favorite law school memory?

I was asking someone what page we were on the first day of school in Contracts, and Professor Gross went all *Paper Chase* on me and called me down for talking!

### You were recently inducted into the American College of Bankruptcy. How did that feel?

It was an incredibly humbling experience. Not only am I the first person in Charlotte to be inducted into the College, but I'm also the first Fellow who works part time. I pride myself on that accomplishment because it shows me and other professionals that you can have a life and a career.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

The economy is in such a strange place right now; bankruptcy is a hot field. It might not always be the flavor of the month, but I suspect restructuring work will be around for a long time to come.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

Spending time with my amazing husband and four wonderful children.

### Tell us a fun/unique fact about yourself.

My whole family spent one month last year on a missions trip running camps for kids in Yap, Micronesia.

# ▶ Susan E. Cohig '02

Senior Vice President, Club Consulting & Services, NHL Enterprises, L.P.  
New York, New York



“I work with an energetic group of people, both at the League office and with our teams, in a very fun business. We should all be so lucky to be able to work in a business we love. I am very lucky!”



### What do you do?

I work with all 30 National Hockey League (NHL) teams to identify and exploit sales—ticketing and corporate sponsorship—and marketing opportunities. I liaise between the teams and the League office on various programs and initiatives. And I manage team compliance issues related to, among other things, the licensing of League and team intellectual property and the use of player images.

### How/why did you get your job?

I was part of the management team that operated the NBA Denver Nuggets. Our ownership purchased the NHL Quebec Nordiques and moved them to Colorado where we launched the Colorado Avalanche, which won the Stanley Cup in its first season. I worked closely with the NHL to launch the franchise. When an opportunity opened up at the League office, they asked me if I would be interested in relocating to New York.

### Why did you choose New York Law School?

It had an evening program and was conveniently accessible to my work. I also was impressed by the experience and high caliber of the teaching staff.

### What NYLS courses have you found to be most valuable in your career?

The writing classes have been the most beneficial to me as a basic tool that I use in every area. I encourage anyone in law school to take as many writing classes as possible.

### What is your favorite law school memory?

Overall, I remember how committed the professors were to making sure we were learning the material. A few specifics include Professor Aleta G. Estreicher's exam study sessions, going to night court as part of Professor James F. Simon's legal writing class, and successfully surviving an almost 30 minute Socratic method grilling by Professor David Chang—a number of my classmates came up to me after class and congratulated me.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

Learn the business of the business that you're in. Legal theories may be helpful, but being able to understand and contribute to the growth of the business is critical. Also, understand that the best business deals are those where everyone benefits, as opposed to negotiating to exploit and disadvantage the prospective partner. The best partnerships are those where both parties win.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

I love spending time with my daughter Kaitlin. Hands down, she is my greatest achievement.

### Tell us a fun/unique fact about yourself.

I love music. Over the course of my life, I've probably been to more than 300 concerts, including multiple Bruce Springsteen, Grateful Dead, Prince, and Go Go's shows.

# John Du '98

Partner, Jun He Law Offices LLC  
New York, New York



"I am very proud to be able to contribute my part to the better understanding between China and the United States, arguably the two most important world powers of the 21st century."



### What do you do?

I am a partner at the New York office of Jun He Law Offices, one of the top Chinese law firms, with headquarters in Beijing. My practice focuses on legal issues relating to U.S.-China cross-border transactions. I represent U.S. business entities doing business in China as well as Chinese business entities doing business in the U.S.

### How/why did you get your job?

I grew up and completed college in China before coming to the U.S. Before law school, I earned an M.B.A. in International Marketing. My deep understanding of China, especially the international business environment and the U.S.-China business relationship, helped me get into the field. The rest was luck.

### Why did you choose New York Law School?

One reason was the diversity in the student population. My classmates came from many different backgrounds and included doctors, professors, policemen, architects, patent agents, financial analysts, engineers, entrepreneurs, and news writers.

### What is your favorite law school memory?

One memorable moment was when I made my way to the editorial board of the School's *Journal of Human Rights* through a writing competition, overcoming my disappointment that I was not selected based on my first semester grades. But the highest point of my law school experience was when I switched my graduation cap tassel from right to left—mission accomplished after four years of hard work.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

Yvette Chang '95 was a 3L when I entered law school. She was active in the Asian Law Students Association and organized mentoring sessions, which I found helpful. She came back to the Law School after graduation to talk about her practical experience at law firms. Her dedication to the School, especially to the Asian student community, was inspiring to me.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

The practice of law in my field is not only about advocacy; it also requires a good deal of diplomacy and the ability to bridge the gap of understanding between different cultures. Therefore, it is critical to have an open mind in learning.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

Travel, especially to cultural sites. My most memorable trip was to Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

### What would you do if you weren't a lawyer?

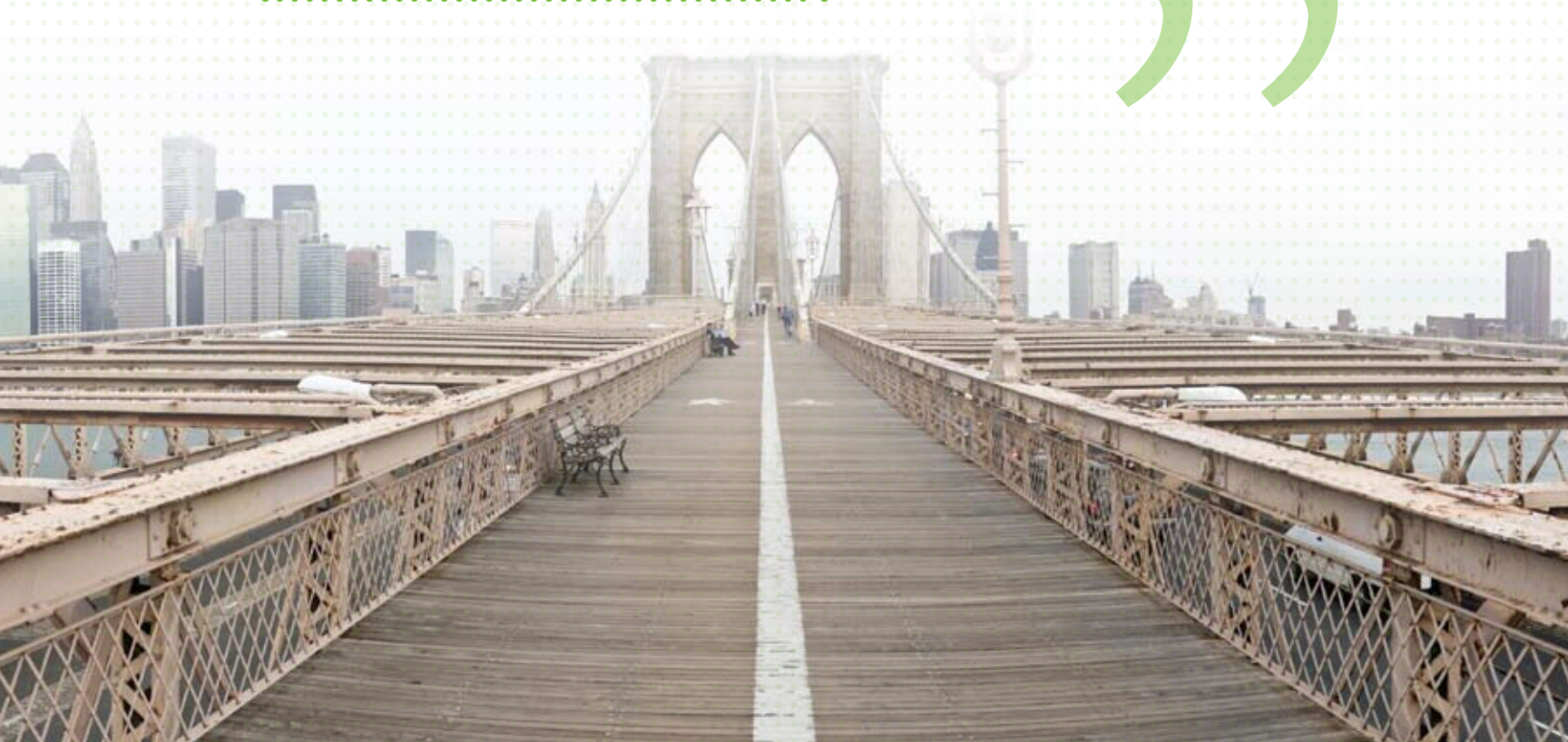
I love observing and reading about different cultures and often fantasize about my life as an anthropologist or geographer. I am learning photography and hopefully one day my photographs may be published in *National Geographic*.

# Lino Solis '96

Vice President and General Counsel, Thor Equities, LLC  
New York, New York



“In 2005, our company purchased a mall in northwest Philadelphia that we redeveloped along with the surrounding community. . . . I am proud to say that our efforts will help create nearly 250 full- and part-time jobs.”



### What do you do?

I am Vice President and General Counsel of Thor Equities, LLC, a dynamic and entrepreneurially-based retail real estate development company. Over the past six years, I have helped establish and manage the in-house legal department at Thor Equities, which includes responsibility over public-private partnerships, government relations, leasing transactions, fund-related issues, refinancing, development/acquisitions, litigation, corporate governance, and legal compliance.

### What does your typical day look like?

A typical day consists of closing deals as efficiently as possible, while leaving my clients in the best possible legal and business position. At the same time, we take the time to partner with local community leaders and elected officials across the country to determine how best to partner and serve their communities.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

I love the fact that we have an opportunity to change the face of urban America across the country. For example, back in 2003, we partnered with a local community in New Orleans and took an old blighted strip center in the 9th Ward of Gentilly Woods and created a thriving center with new tenants, new jobs, and amazing activity. I truly enjoy giving back and the community connection that my work allows me. I also enjoy talking to our investors about our development projects and the wonderful people who live in these great communities. We follow a win-win type philosophy.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

My mentor was Ventura Simmons '94. We connected the first week of school, and he quickly went to work advising me in the legal method and how to live the law school life. Ventura, like me, was married, and he gave me valuable insight into law school from a married perspective. Also, my study partner, Iris Springer '96, helped keep me grounded during the tough periods. Her knowledge, friendship, and patience were essential to my development and overall legal experience.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

Sign up for as many externships/internships as possible within the real estate world. Also, join the Center for Real Estate Studies, and take as many classes as possible focused on real estate transactions. Participate in various student bar committees and join a real estate group within those committees.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

I love spending time with my family. Some favorite family pastimes are walking over the Brooklyn Bridge and spending summer months on Martha's Vineyard. We also enjoy independent movies at the Angelika theater and Film Forum and walking around New York in the spring and early fall.

### Tell us a fun/unique fact about yourself.

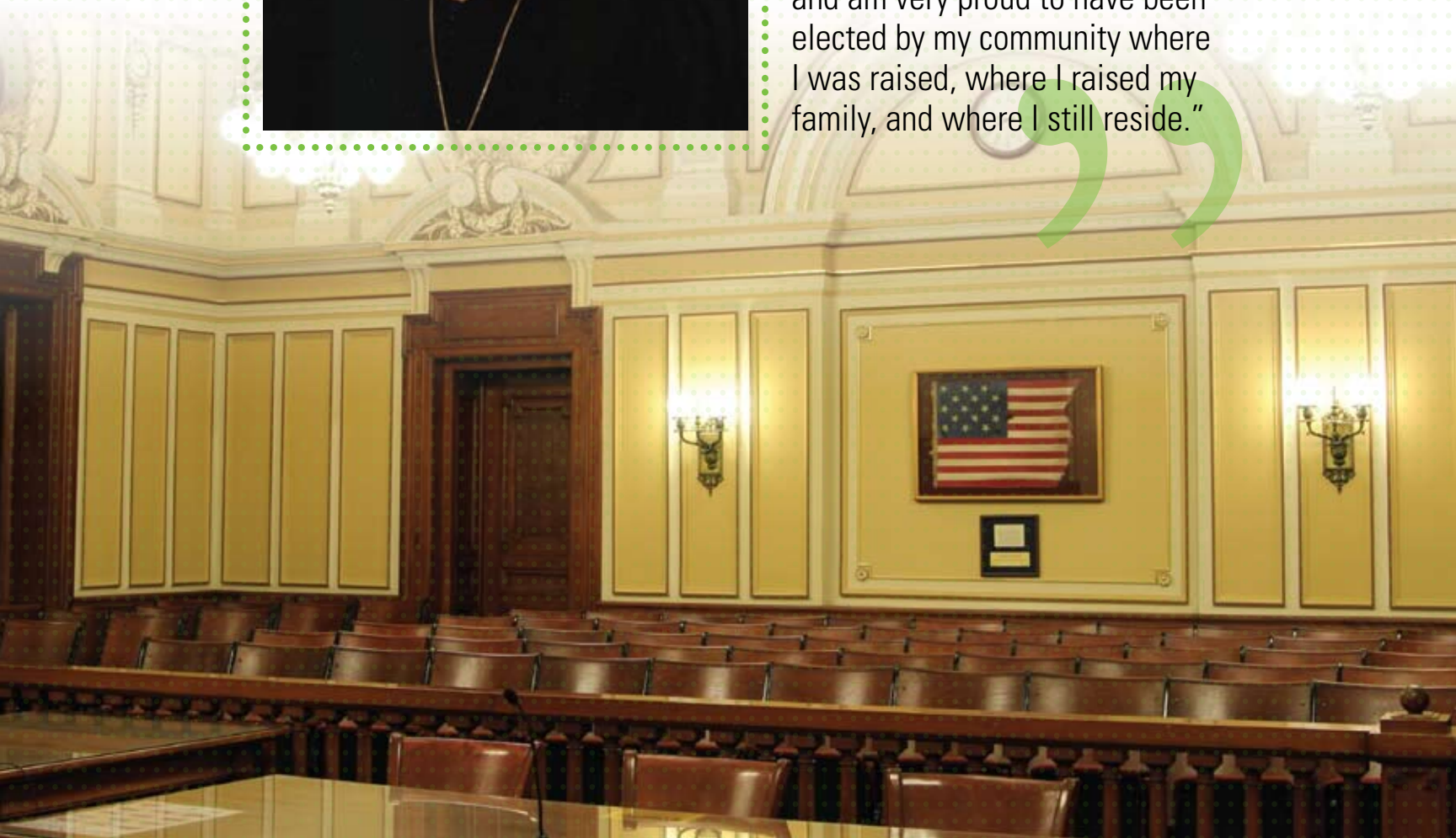
At the end of my first semester, I called a little known entertainment company by the name of Bad Boy Entertainment and secured an interview with none other than Sean "P. Diddy" Combs. When they offered me an unpaid summer position, I told them I was a New York Law School 1L with a B+ in Civil Procedure and demanded "really big cash" for my legal services. They essentially told me to take it or leave it, and I went on to work at a slip and fall firm on Broadway. Needless to say, life may have delivered an interesting twist if I had considered working as an unpaid intern with Bad Boy Entertainment back in 1994. This is why we hire at least six to eight legal interns at Thor Equities each year and encourage students to intern and work for free when possible.

# Hon. Faviola A. Soto '78

Judge, New York State Court of Claims  
New York, New York



"I am the first judge of Dominican descent to sit on any court of the State of New York and am very proud to have been elected by my community where I was raised, where I raised my family, and where I still reside."



### What do you do?

I am a Judge of the Court of Claims, appointed by Governor George Pataki in June 2006. As a “Paragraph A” Judge, I decide civil cases against the State of New York.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

I achieve great satisfaction from deciding cases fairly and based on the merits. While ensuring that everyone has their day in court, I also strive to move cases in an expeditious and efficient manner. Deciding the facts and the law is a heavy responsibility, one that I take most seriously. On a lighter note, I like being the boss and running the show.

### What does your typical day look like?

My day is spent both on the bench and in chambers. In the courtroom, I conduct conferences, hear oral argument on motions, supervise and decide discovery disputes, and settle cases. I also preside over trials, deciding the law as well as the facts. In chambers, I prepare for the matters before me, do research, and write, write, write.

### Why did you choose New York Law School?

I selected New York Law School because it offered an excellent education and a full scholarship. Without the scholarship I could not have attended law school or been able to follow my public service dream and take my first job as a legal services attorney earning \$14,000 a year.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

I remember arguing a point before my entire class on an issue I had briefed. I thought I would fall flat on my face, but once I opened my mouth, the words just flowed and everyone in the room seemed to disappear except for my professor, (the late) Sylvia D. Garland '60. Professor Garland taught me invaluable lessons, and I developed a high standard of practice, which I expect from all attorneys who appear before me.

### What was your favorite law school experience?

My favorite experience at law school was graduation. I was the first in my family to graduate from college, and graduating from law school was a big accomplishment for me and my family. At the ceremony, my family took up an entire section and I felt as if I had my own cheering squad.

### What advice do you have for current students interested in your field of law?

Work hard and have high professional and ethical standards. Remain or become passionate about and dedicated to not only the law, but also the community and your family and friends.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

I enjoy cooking and still cook a fresh meal every day. One day I plan to write a recipe book.

# Kenneth Werner '78

President of Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution  
Burbank, California



“My favorite law school memory was interviewing a client in the holding cell behind the courtroom and then walking back in to court to represent him.”



### What do you do?

I'm President of Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution (WBDTD). The division licenses rights to Warner Bros. content to domestic television stations, basic and pay television cable services, and broadcast networks.

### How/why did you get your job?

My immediately preceding position was as the head of distribution for The WB Network. In that capacity I participated in the deal that created The CW and its distribution system. Upon conclusion of that assignment, Warner Bros. approached me to fill the position of President of WBDTD because the then-current president was retiring.

### What do you enjoy most about your work?

Figuring out how the organization moves forward. And developing and implementing business strategy, as well as how the organization treats and develops its team members.

### What does your typical day look like?

There is no typical day per se. I travel quite a bit. When on the road it's all business from breakfast through dinner. When not out of town, I am an early riser, up by 6:00 a.m. I check e-mail first; scan *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*; and help get my daughters out the door. At the office, my days are generally filled with meetings inside and outside the division. There is one constant: the phone seems affixed to my ear until I arrive back at home and my Blackberry is beside me usually until I go to bed.

### What NYLS courses have you found to be most valuable in your career?

Professor Eugene Cerruti taught and ran a criminal defense clinic for third-year students, where we defended clients charged with misdemeanors in criminal court. (The late) Professor Charles Morgan Jr. taught a civil rights class in which we discussed the major cases he litigated from a social, legal, and tactical point of view. And Professor James F. Simon taught a seminar on the Supreme Court. All three courses were extremely helpful in preparing me for my career.

### Was there anyone at the Law School who had a significant impact on you?

Professors Cerruti, Morgan, and Simon each had a significant impact on me. They approached the study of law in a broader context, looking at strategy, notions of right and wrong, societal context, and practicality—all of which resonated in a fundamental way. Additionally, they were accessible, passionate, and excellent teachers.

### What do you enjoy doing most when you are not at work?

Preparing and eating a big meal for family and friends.

### Tell us a fun/unique fact about yourself.

Upon moving to California more than 22 years ago, I gave up shoes for classic white Reebok sneakers, although I have been known to wear black sneakers.

**Born**

Little Rock, AR

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School  
M.B.A. Hampton University  
B.S. U.S. Air Force Academy

**Current Employment**

President, Oracle Corporation

**Personal Factoid**

Got rejected 125 times before getting his first job offer on Wall Street.

As president of the world's largest database software company, Phillips is responsible for corporate strategy. This puts him across the table from colleagues he worked with as managing director of Morgan Stanley's technology group. Phillips is a trustee of the Law School.

*Charles E. Phillips Jr.*

I was going to **law school** at night while I was already on **Wall Street**. I'd go to class, go back to work at nine, and get home at midnight.

## Charles E. Phillips Jr. '93

President, Oracle Corporation

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I'm very proud of what New York Law School does for the community. It gives people who really want a law degree a way to do it. I don't think there's any other way I could have done it.

The uniqueness of the Law School, in my opinion, is that you learn from people who are actually "doing." No matter the subject, at New York Law School I was always taught by professors who had been working in their fields for many years. The debate in the classroom was not purely academic. And none of the professors I had were simply going through the motions. They were passionate about what they were doing. So no matter what you, as a student, were feeling about the law, you ended up becoming as passionate about it as your professors were.

Because of its location, New York Law School gets some of the best legal practitioners in the world. These people are there in downtown New York and they want to share their knowledge. The result is an incredible selection of professors.

My attitude toward law school is that whatever career you pursue, if you've studied law you tend to ask better, deeper questions about whatever it is you're doing. You also better appreciate how our society is structured. The law touches everything we do. Fundamentally, this country was founded by a bunch of lawyers, for the most part. So if you're interested in politics or government, it's hard to appreciate how our country works, and why we are what we are, without understanding the law.

Knowing law also gives you a certain power. I use the law a lot in my current job. There are many issues in intellectual property, mergers and acquisitions, and contract law. Most people in business are intimidated by the law; people who don't know it, fear it. Having a legal background gives me confidence in analyzing each new situation that arises.

**Born**

Troy, NY

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School  
L.L.M. (Tax) New York University  
B.A. Manhattanville College

**Current Employment**

Deputy Chancellor for Finance  
and Administration, New York City  
Department of Education

**Personal Factoid**

Oldest of nine children.

One of the top municipal finance administrators in New York State, Grimm has maintained close ties to the Law School. She has taught as an adjunct professor for more than 10 years, and she is also a member of the Board of Trustees, where she serves as Chair of the Budget and Audit Committee.

*Kathleen Grimm*

New York Law School is much more than a law school to me. It's a **community** of faculty, administrators, students, and alumni. What makes a community great is **everybody's participation.**

## Kathleen Grimm '80

Deputy Chancellor for Finance and Administration,  
New York City Department of Education

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The wonderful education students get at New York Law School allows them to look at problems they encounter—whether as a lawyer or an elected official or a person running a business—in a special way, and know how to solve them. That is a tremendous resource for anyone to have.

I decided to go to law school at night after starting my career as a social worker and administrator at a Brooklyn hospital. I felt I had more to learn, and that New York Law School was the place to do it. I really enjoyed the experience of studying law in the evenings with working people of varied backgrounds. I learned to look at the law and see what wasn't there, as much as what was, and to use the law to make the everyday world work better for others. I found finance and property issues to be fascinating. There's really a great beauty to it, the way the law, trusts, wills, and tax interrelate. You can't do one without the other.

My parents were very good public citizens. They showed me you can make a difference in people's lives, and that has been an important part of my background. Now, as Deputy Chancellor for Finance and Administration for the New York City Department of Education, I am in charge of the service and business functions for all of New York City's public schools. I make sure that 1,500 schools open every morning, that they're clean and safe, that kids get to school safely on the buses, that they have food for breakfast, lunch, and snacks, that the food is good and nutritional, that we have good lighting and adequate space, good science labs, the proper allocation of funding, good IT services and health services, safety services, and support services.

The one thing that is perhaps hard for people to understand about the Department of Education is the scale. We serve over one million children a day. We have 8,000 buses running every day to both public and parochial schools. And we serve 860,000 meals five days a week. It's an amazing world of service focused on helping our children learn, and I love it.

**Born**

Evanston, IL

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School

B.S. DePaul University

**Current Employment**

Associate, Genova, Burns & Vernoia

**Personal Factoid**

Met husband Seth Dymond '03  
at New York Law School.

In the five years since her graduation, Dymond has remained connected to the Law School in numerous ways. She has been an advisor of the Moot Court Association and is currently on the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association. Dymond is often invited to speak to students about her experiences as a corporate political activity lawyer.

*Jisha V. Dymond*

The partner who hired me was **blown away** by the fact that I brought a brief I wrote on Vermont campaign finance law in Professor Strossen's Advanced Constitutional Law class to the **interview**.

## Jisha V. Dymond '03

Associate, Genova, Burns & Vernoia

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I didn't know a single lawyer growing up. My parents emigrated from India in the 1970s and knew engineers and doctors but no lawyers. Their primary goal was giving my siblings and me a good education. They always told me I could do anything I wanted with my life.

I chose New York Law School because of its location in the greatest city in the world and its diversity. Aside from racial or gender diversity, an education becomes a valuable experience when the conversation is between people who come from all sorts of backgrounds. It's the only way to challenge conventional wisdom. I didn't want to hear the same thing from the same types of people. And I was right; my classmates were business owners, police officers, refugees, people from the wealthiest zip codes—and of course, your everyday child of immigrants from the Midwest.

My thorough and rigorous preparation at New York Law School has helped me tremendously. Without fail the professors were excellent. When I was hired as a first year associate, I already knew what a table of citations looked like and how a brief should be organized because I'd learned to write them, and speak eloquently, in Moot Court—very helpful skills in our profession.

People say that political law seems like a cool area of law and ask me how I got into it. I say that I'm incredibly lucky. Political law is cyclical work; it's very busy and fast paced during election season. We advise corporations, trade associations, and PACs on their political activities. On the one hand, we want to protect their right to participate in the political process, but on the other hand, we want to safeguard their business contracts by preventing any illegalities or the appearance of impropriety.

My confidence in myself stems from my parents, certainly, but also from learning at New York Law School, and then going out and working hard and getting good results. I realized: Oh, I can do that. It's all about having the right tools.

**Born**

Bronx, NY

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School

LL.B. New York Law School

B.A. Queens College of the City  
University of New York

**Current Employment**

Founder and Senior Partner,  
Pegalis & Erickson, LLC

**Personal Factoid**

His father was a milkman and eventually  
a New York Law School graduate.

Pegalis has represented over a thousand  
clients in his 40 plus years as a medical  
malpractice lawyer and has written a  
three-volume text on medical malpractice.  
He and his law firm have won precedent-  
setting jury award verdicts. He teaches  
Medical Malpractice at the Law School  
and has been a member of the Board of  
Trustees since 1995.

*Steven E. Pegalis*

New York Law School trains **ethical lawyers** who benefit the public. Students come here to get an **education** and go on and do **something good**.

## Steven E. Pegalis '65

Founder and Senior Partner, Pegalis & Erickson, LLC

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I believe that a legal education is a means to each individual's chosen ends, and each individual has to deal with defining those ends, whichever way is best for him or her. But however one deals with it, the law is a very noble profession. When you make a commitment grounded in the ethical basics of law, and add diligence and hard work, a legal career will be very rewarding.

As a medical malpractice lawyer, I deal with fascinating cases that are packed with raw emotion. In addition to the emotional challenge, each case pushes me to master a great deal of technical information as well. When I take on a case, I have to know all the technical/medical details at least as well as the doctors and nurses who are going to be on the other side. I also need to be able to put things together in a very cogent way, consistent with the law so as to advocate a position in a clear convincing way. It's very challenging.

The best part of my job is the ongoing relationship I've had with many of my clients. They are the ones who have inspired me. When you advocate for clients who are dealing with major personal tragedies, and they are handling them well, it's hard to complain about your own problems. It's hard not to be inspired by them. They make the hard work gratifying.

I enjoy staying involved and serving New York Law School, as a trustee and as an adjunct professor. In my mind, part of educating students is teaching them that law is not just Smith against Jones. It involves real people with real problems. Participating in the creation of the future generation of ethical, well-trained, confident lawyers is a satisfying endeavor.

**Born**

Bronx, NY

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School

B.A. Fordham University

**Current Employment**

Associate, Proskauer Rose LLP

**Personal Factoid**

Raising her 2-year-old, Alessandra, in Uniondale, New York, where she grew up.

An associate at Proskauer Rose, Hermes applied for a six-month externship at the Brooklyn District Attorney's office, which has allowed her to explore her interest in criminal law by participating actively in litigation. At New York Law School, Hermes served as Notes and Comments Editor of the *New York Law School Law Review*.

Cynara Hermes

I used to be a **wallflower**. My third week at my externship, one of my cases went to trial. I gave the opening statement and conducted the direct examination of a witness. Afterwards, **I really felt a transformation.**

## Cynara Hermes '03

Associate, Proskauer Rose LLP

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When I first visited New York Law School, I really liked the diversity I saw as I walked through the halls, as well as the variety of courses offered. The School more than met my expectations. The professors were excellent; they had extensive knowledge about their subject areas, and always made themselves available to the students.

My law school experience truly prepared me for practice. Among others, Professor Sadiq Reza's Criminal Procedure course, Professor Michael Perlin's seminar on The Mentally Disabled Defendant, and Criminal Law with Professor David Chang have all helped me in my career. Legal education taught me critical thinking and analysis—how to really dissect an issue.

As a general commercial litigator at Proskauer, I work on a wide array of issues, although I focus primarily on white-collar criminal defense. When I saw the opportunity for the *Partners in Prosecution* externship at the Brooklyn D.A.'s office, I was very excited because of my interest in criminal law. The externship program was founded by District Attorney Charles Hynes in 2003, and this is the first year Proskauer has participated. To really understand criminal defense, it is important to see what the other side is like, and I'm proud to be the first from our firm to participate.

My cases involve felonies and misdemeanors—drugs, guns, and DWIs. At first it was extremely nerve-racking. My respect for the judge left me feeling intimidated. But I gained confidence knowing the law is on my side.

Recently I participated in the Supreme Court induction sponsored by the Law School and attended an alumni luncheon afterwards. The event made me realize how important it is to stay connected to the Law School. The table I was sitting at was filled with interesting, successful alumni, some using their degrees in unexpected ways—including the inventor of the Chipwich ice cream sandwich and a fund-raiser for the World Wildlife Fund. It was a great networking opportunity and a reminder that there are a lot of things you can do with your law degree. It made me proud to see that I was surrounded by a community of successful New York Law School graduates.

**Born**

Brooklyn, NY

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School

B.A. University of Maryland

**Clerkships**

Hon. Frank M. Coffin,

U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

Hon. Leonie M. Brinkema,

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Virginia

**Current Employment**

Partner at Jenner & Block

**Personal Factoid**

Billed more than 2,000 pro bono hours over the past three years.

Although a relatively recent graduate, Tenney has returned to the Law School numerous times to speak at career panels and advise students about their employment options.

*Amy Tenney*

I have worked closely with graduates of **top-rated law schools** and am confident that the quality of **my legal education rivals theirs.**

## Amy Tenney '00

Partner, Jenner & Block

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In my last semester of law school, I took an incredible appellate advocacy seminar taught by Professor Nadine Strossen. For the last project, each student had to argue the merits of a pending U.S. Supreme Court case before the class. I was insecure before I began, but when I finished I felt so exhilarated that I just wanted to do it again. Even today, as a practicing attorney, there is nothing quite like the feeling of being able to persuade a court through oral argument.

I had considered attending other law schools, but not after meeting Professor Strossen. She gave a lecture on Maryland's campus a day before I defended my thesis, which focused on First Amendment protections of pornography and relied in part on her book, *Defending Pornography*. Although she and I had been corresponding via e-mail for a few months, we never met in person until that day. After the lecture, she asked me for a copy of my thesis. When she offered me a job, I immediately stopped vacillating about which law school to attend. I started working for Professor Strossen as a research assistant, and was her chief aide by the time I left her office four years later. Working during the day and taking classes at night, I had a life that revolved entirely around the School. Fortunately, this allowed me to get to know many other professors, including Carlin Meyer and Lenni Benson. They are wonderful mentors and I remain close with all of them. Although I graduated from the Law School eight years ago, my relationship with each of them continues to grow and I value their wise career and life advice, as well as their friendship.

*Professor Nadine Strossen, President of the ACLU from 1991 to 2008, has written, lectured, and practiced extensively in the areas of constitutional law, civil liberties, and international human rights; Professor Lenni Benson is recognized nationally for her work in immigration and political asylum law; and Professor Carlin Meyer, who has taught at the Law School for almost 30 years, frequently speaks on issues of sex, sexuality, family and gender, as well as employment law and practice.*

**Born**

Yonkers, NY

**Education**

J.D. New York Law School  
B.S. SUNY Regents College

**Clerkship**

Hon. Roger Miner '56, U.S. Court  
of Appeals for the Second Circuit

**Current Employment**

Partner, Cleary Gottlieb Steen  
& Hamilton LLP

**Personal Factoid**

Still lives in Massapequa, Long Island,  
where he lived when he was a cop.

Raymond returns to New York Law School each fall to recruit students to work at Cleary Gottlieb. He has also been a guest speaker at the Law School's "Spotlight on Evening Division," a lecture series in which prominent alumni address students.

*Robert Raymond*

I didn't predict I'd end up a **partner in a big law firm**. This law school gives people like me **opportunities** we wouldn't have had otherwise.

## Robert Raymond '94

Partner, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

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I didn't predict I'd end up as a partner at Cleary Gottlieb. I didn't really know anything about the big law firms. I expected I'd build a practice out on Long Island. It was my New York Law School professors who encouraged me to take a look.

Before law school, I was a New York City cop for twelve and a half years. It was a great career. What prompted my interest in studying law was realizing that I wanted to be the one asking the questions in court! Then I heard that New York Law School offered a scholarship for police officers. I won the scholarship and got a golden opportunity.

What was great about the Evening Division was the cross section of people: My class consisted of cops, dentists, someone on the board of Philip Morris, corrections officers, and the controller of a small brokerage firm. It made it a lot of fun just sitting in class and hearing the different perspectives.

What stands out most for me is how the professors take a genuine interest in their students. They're not just happy to see you when you come to speak to them; they genuinely care about you and your future as members of the legal profession. They take their roles as teachers and mentors seriously. The group of professors I had opened my eyes to a whole new world. Professor Robert Blecker was particularly important in my career. I had interviewed with one of his old law school classmates at another firm and I had a feeling he would call him for a reference. A couple of days later he tracked me down in the hall and said, "I've been looking for you. My law school classmate called me looking for a reference on you. I didn't know you were interested in a big firm. Are you interested in Cleary Gottlieb?" I said, "Sure, but they already turned me down!" He told me he thought Cleary would be a great fit and he got me my interview—and I got a job. The only thing he said to me about it later was, "Don't forget New York Law School." And I haven't. I recruit on campus every year. For about 12 students so far, I've gotten them offers to come work here at Cleary Gottlieb.