



Texas Southern University
THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW
DEAN'S WEEKLY UPDATE

Jan. 22, 2007

Significant Activities, Requests, or Information

Highlights

- **LAW STUDENTS SPEND THE SEMESTER IN THE LEGISLATURE**
State Senator Rodney Ellis has enlisted outstanding group of 18 law students in the Texas Legislative Internship Program. The students will work in both the House and the Senate, including the office of Speaker Craddick. This outstanding group of law students will represent the University well in the legislature.

- **LAW SCHOOL LOSES PIONEER**
Thurgood Marshall School of Law mourns the passing of **Mrs. Lois L. Prestage Woods** (class of 1951). Woods earned both the bachelor's degree and the law degree from Texas Southern University. In a long list of firsts, she was the first female graduate from the law school. She was also the first African American female appointed to the American Arbitration Association of Texas, as well as the first African American female to serve as a classroom teacher at the University of Houston High School Equivalency Program. She endowed the Lois P. Woods scholarship fund at the law school.

- **TMSL ALUMNUS WINS TRUCKER CASE – PENALTY PHASE**
Attorney Craig Washington led a team of five TMSL law graduates and 10 students from the legal clinic in obtaining a life verdict rather than a death sentence. This was the second trial on the same facts and the first time the government sought the death penalty for human smuggling. For the second time, Washington was able to convince a jury that a death sentence was inappropriate. The controversial and emotion-filled case involved a federal human smuggling case in which 19 persons died in the trailer of Mr. Tyrone Williams' abandoned trailer when Mr. Williams' efforts to smuggle them into the United States resulted in their deaths. The United States Attorney sought the death penalty. Previously, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals removed the presiding judge on the basis if an overcrowded docket.

- **LAW SCHOOL-LED D.C. FORUM ARTICLES PUBLISHED**
Last January, the law school's Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy collaborated with The Historically Black Colleges & Universities Law Schools: Florida A&M University College of Law, Howard University School of Law, North Carolina Central University School of Law, Southern University Law Center, and the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law in sponsoring "[A Scholar's Forum: Judge Samuel A. Alito, Jr. - An](#)

African-American Perspective. C-SPAN covered the event. The speakers included L. Darnell Weeden of TSU, David Green of North Carolina Central University, Wade Henderson of University of the District of Columbia, Russell Jones of Southern University, and John Brittain of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights. The panels were moderated by Deans James Douglas of FAMU, Freddie Pritcher of Southern University, Raymond Pierce of North Carolina Central University, Shelly Broderick of the University of the District of Columbia, and Kurt Schmoke of Howard University. The papers have now been published in the Southern University Law Journal.

Admissions

- Law school admissions applications now number 501. Of these applicants, there are 126 offers of acceptance and 126 rejections. The application deadline is April 1, 2006.

Professors' Activities

- The law school welcomed back Distinguished Professor James M. Douglas after he spent nearly two years as the head of the Florida A&M College of Law in Orlando, Florida.
- On January 16, 2007, Distinguished Professor James M. Douglas gave the Thurgood Marshall lecture at the law school on the Role of the Lawyer in Society.
- Professor Emeka Duruigbo served as an expert to the stakeholder's conference in Nigerian Environmental Law during the winter break.
- Professor Eboni Nelson will serve as a visiting professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law this semester.
- Adjunct Trial Practice Professor Ricky Raven was named litigation chief in Thompson and Knight's Houston Office. Thompson and Knight was founded in 1887 and have 420 lawyers in the United States, Algeria, London, Mexico, France, and Brazil.
- TMSL Alumnus Charles Portz ('82) has joined the law school as an adjunct professor in Post Conviction Remedies. Portz, a principal in Houston's Portz & Portz Law Firm, serving as the attorney for Brandy Briggs in her reversal of a 17-year conviction in the death of her two month old son. After serving five years in prison, Portz won a reversal of the conviction in the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

***NOTE:** The Weekly Report is presented to the President and Provost each week to highlight the School of Law activities, events and accomplishments.