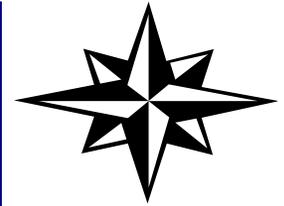


# SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISORS



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First, let me extend everyone a Happy New Year! SAPLA has had changes in our leadership in the past year. Our Immediate Past President Mary Alice Tetro retired after many years of great service as a prelaw advisor at North Carolina State University. Tyra Mason, who served half of her term as President of SAPLA from June 2010 through June 2011, resigned her Presidency after suffering what I am afraid to say seems to be happening everywhere - budget cuts at colleges and universities. Both Tyra and Mary Alice are doing well and we miss their many years of experience. With that being said, it is the ever-changing climate of prelaw advising that makes being involved with SAPLA even more important.

The world of prelaw advising is changing. It is no longer a "safe" option to simply go to law school because one does not know what else to do. That default position has become a dangerous one. The promise of lucrative salaries at big law firms is not as certain as it used to be. With the ever-rising cost of law school, your advisees need to think

carefully before undertaking a career in the law. One way to help understand these new changes is to come to conferences and learn how to best prepare your students for the changes taking place in the legal world. **The next conference will be held on June 13-16, 2012 at the Pre-Law Advisors National Council Conference in Washington D.C. Please register for the conference by visiting the PLANC website, [www.PLANC.org](http://www.PLANC.org).** Please note that your 2012-2013 SAPLA membership dues are included with your registration for the conference. See the article by Gerald Wilson later in this newsletter for more details.

Budget cuts are affecting us all and another great way to stay informed is through the SAPLA website ([www.SAPLAonline.org](http://www.SAPLAonline.org)), which has been recently updated, and the SAPLA Facebook page. Both are used to share valuable information with you, so be sure to check them out! We are also introducing a new feature to the website called *Meet The Law Schools*. This new feature is a way for you to learn

more about the law schools in the SAPLA region directly from the Deans and Directors of Admissions. See the article by Wendy McMillian for more info. Please feel free to submit articles and topics for future newsletters as well.

2012 marks the 30th anniversary of SAPLA, and we have been blessed with dedicated leadership over the years. I am proud to follow in their stead. Please know that the purpose of SAPLA is to help educate, inform, and assist prelaw advisors, so if you need any information or have an idea to share to enhance SAPLA, feel free to contact any SAPLA officer. We really appreciate all that members do!

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at a PLANC in June!

*Wendy Vonnegut,  
J.D.*

President, Southern Assn. of  
Pre-Law Advisors

### SAPLA

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SPRING/SUMMER 2012

#### Wendy Vonnegut

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President

#### Rodia Vance

Emory University  
1st Vice President

#### Wendy McMillian

University of Alabama  
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#### Rebecca Davis

Georgia Southern University  
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#### Scott Lucas

The Citadel  
Representative at Large

#### John S. Benfield

Charleston School of Law  
Law School Representative

#### Gerald L. Wilson

Duke University  
PLANC Representative

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISORS

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MEET THE SAPLA BOARD!



**Wendy Vonnegut, President**

Wendy is the Director of the Legal Studies Program and Associate Professor at Methodist University in Fayetteville, NC. Through her role, she has also served as the Pre-Law Advisor at Methodist for over a decade. Wendy has her B.A from University of North Carolina at Wilmington and her J.D. from the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University. Wendy has been a member of SAPLA since 2002.

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**Rodia Vance, 1st Vice President**

Rodia is an Associate Director in The Career Center at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. In her role, Rodia provides career counseling and also serves as the University Pre-Law Advisor for all current students and alumni while managing the Pre-Law Advising Office at Emory. Rodia also acts as the Staff Advisor for Emory's Pre-Law Society and Mock Trial Team. Rodia holds a M.S. in Professional Counseling from Georgia State University and her B.S. degree from the University of Florida, where she graduated with Honors. Rodia has been a member of SAPLA since 2002.

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**Wendy McMillian, 2nd Vice President**

Wendy McMillian is the Director of Pre-Law Advising in the Office of Pre-Professional Student Services at The University of Alabama. Along with helping students with their academic and career planning, she teaches a freshman level pre-law compass course and a junior-level pre-law seminar course, assists students with the law school application process, provides several resources through the office such as practice LSATs and a law school fair, and is the advisor for the Pre-Law Student Association (PLSA). She also coordinates summer orientation for the College of Arts & Sciences at The University. Wendy has a master's degree from The University of Alabama in Higher Education Administration with a concentration in student personnel work. Her professional memberships include the Southern Association of Pre-Law Advisors (SAPLA), PLANC, and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Wendy has been a member of SAPLA since 2007.

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**Rebecca "Bekki" Davis, Secretary**

Bekki is an Associate Professor of political science at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia, where she has taught since 1994, and is the founding Director of Georgia Southern University's Office of Pre-Law Advising. She is the author of "A Middle-Class African-American Child in Desegregating Savannah: The Reminiscences of Justice Leah Ward Sears," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Summer 2011), "Overcoming the "Defect of Sex": Georgia Women's Fight for Access to Jury Service," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Spring 2007), and she co-authored *Judge Faye Sanders Martin: Head Full of Sense, Heart Full of Gold*, Mercer University Press (2004). She holds an M.A. from Georgia Southern University (1989) and a J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law (1992). Bekki has been a member of SAPLA since 2002.

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISORS

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MEET THE SAPLA BOARD!



**Michelle Rahman, Treasurer**

Michelle Rahman has been Dean of Admissions at the University of Richmond School of Law since 1990, and has been associated with the Office of Admissions since 1985. In her position, Dean Rahman manages the full admissions process, from recruiting prospective students and evaluating applications to facilitating decision-making with the Admissions Committee. She also administers financial aid and scholarships for the law school in addition to arranging on-campus housing for law students. Michelle has been a member of SAPLA since 1986.



**Scott Lucas, Representative at Large**

Scott Lucas is a professor of English literature and the designated pre-law advisor at The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina. He holds a BA from the University of California, Berkeley, and a PhD from Duke University. He is the author of the monograph *“A Mirror for Magistrates” and the Politics of the English Reformation* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2009) and of numerous articles on English Renaissance literature and history. Scott has been a member of SAPLA since 2001.



**John Benfield, Law School Representative**

John S. Benfield is Associate Dean of Administration and Alumni Development at the Charleston School of Law. He earned his BA degree from Wofford College and his MA degree from the University of South Carolina. Dean Benfield joined the Charleston School of Law as its first full-time employee when the school was created in October 2003. Prior to joining the Charleston School of Law, Dean Benfield was the Assistant Dean of Admission at the University of South Carolina School of Law. He has more than 20 years of law school admission experience. As the Associate Dean at Charleston, he has been involved with many areas of the school, including admission, financial aid, registrar, student affairs, and alumni and development. Dean Benfield has been active with LSAC serving on the New Admission Personnel and Faculty Member Workshop Planning Work Group and the Annual Meeting and Educational Conference Planning Work Group. John has been a member of SAPLA since 1991.



**Gerald Wilson, PLANC Representative**

Gerald Lee Wilson, Senior Associate Dean, Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, Duke University, has served as the University's Pre-Law Advisor for 42 years. He edits the SAPLA Handbook for Pre-Law Advisors and co-edits The NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists. Gerald was one of the original founders of SAPLA in 1982 and served as the second President of the organization from 1983-84. Gerald also served as the first Chair of the Pre-Law Advisors National Council (PLANC) from 1984 through 1989.

## PLANC IS COMING!!!

**The Sixth Quadrennial PLANC (Pre-Law Advisors National Council) National Pre-Law Advisors' Conference will be held in Washington, DC from Wednesday, June 13 through Saturday, June 16, 2012.** The theme for the Conference is "*Law 2012: Understanding Changes and Choices: Addressing Conventional Wisdom.*" How and to what extent will the changing nature of the legal profession, the increasing use of technology and changes in the legal job market affect our role as pre-law advisors and the way we advise our applicants?

Training for new pre-law advisors and an interactive workshop for veteran pre-law advisors will be offered on Wednesday, June 13, to be followed by panels, plenaries, visits to law schools in the DC area and the opportunity to meet with law school representatives throughout the nation on Saturday, June 16 at the DC Law School Forum sponsored by LSAC.

Information about Conference registration and hotel reservations at the Conference site, the Washington Marriott, are posted

on the PLANC Website, [www.planc.org](http://www.planc.org).

As a pre-law advisor who has attended all of the five previous National Conferences and who served as the first Chair of PLANC, I cannot urge you strongly enough to place this Conference on your calendar and in your annual budget. The workshops, panels and plenaries offer a real opportunity for rookie and veteran pre-law advisors to enhance their skills, share their expertise, establish relationships with other pre-law advisors and law school representatives, plus receive updates directly from the Law School Admission Council's liaison to pre-law advisors, Anne Brandt.

SAPLA is well-represented in the planning of the Conference, with our President, Wendy Vonnegut, serving as the Program Chair for the conference and Rodia Vance, our 1st Vice President, sitting on the Planning Committee as well. But we want to make sure that SAPLA as a whole is well-represented at PLANC this year. *Our goal is to have at least 100 pre-law advisors from the SAPLA region attend the conference. Let's*

*make a strong showing for SAPLA!*

**Remember that PLANC only happens once every four years...**this is a great opportunity to network and forge relationships with advisors and law school admissions representatives from across the country to help build your knowledge base and skill set for pre-law advising. Because our conferences are scheduled by budget year, the next SAPLA conference will not be held until October, 2013. So, don't miss out on this great opportunity! Stay tuned to the SAPLA website and the SAPLA Facebook page for details on scholarships that SAPLA will be offering to members for assistance with costs to attend the conference. Pre-Law Advisors at HBCU and HACU schools should contact LSAC for details on financial assistance available to you to attend conferences.

***WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!***

*Gerald L. Wilson, Ph.D.*

*Duke University*

*SAPLA Representative to PLANC*

## MEET THE LAW SCHOOLS

SAPLA is proud to announce a new benefit for our membership!

In our new *Meet the Law Schools* series, we will highlight 2 admissions representatives each month from the various

law schools within the SAPLA region. As a pre-law advisor, you will have the opportunity to learn more about your contact at the law school, what is unique about each school, and get advice from a person in law school

admissions. Click on the *Resources* link on the SAPLA website ([www.SAPLAonline.org](http://www.SAPLAonline.org)) to read these quick pieces!

*Wendy McMillian*  
*University of Alabama*  
*SAPLA 2nd Vice President*

## SAPLA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE 2011

When the economy tanked beginning in Fall 2008, SAPLA's membership numbers began to decline as well. Concerned about increasing membership, SAPLA's Board realized that 2011 would present a particular challenge for the organization due to the fact that we would not be hosting a conference that year and some colleges and universities have policies against paying for dues in professional organizations unless they are rolled into a conference fee.

Because the dizzying changes in the legal world make it particularly imperative that pre-law students get sound advice, the SAPLA Board voted to adopt a one-time, non-conference-year membership fee of \$25.00 for pre-law advisors and law schools.

As part of our membership drive initiative, SAPLA mailed letters to the presidents and chief academic officers of all colleges and universities in our region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia). We urged these administration officials to consider the importance of

having adequate pre-law advising on their campuses to ensure that students have the guidance they need. We also encouraged them to ensure that all pre-law advisors on their campuses were properly registered with the LSAC. Furthermore, we emphasized the importance of promoting diversity in the profession, underscored the advantages of cultivating grateful, well-advised alumni, and listed the advantages to joining SAPLA: a copy of the *NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists*, the *SAPLA Pre-Law Advisors Handbook*, our newsletters, and member eligibility for financial support for conferences.

We are happy to report that our efforts have born fruit! We are now 242 members strong, up from 137 members in 2010! If you know of a Pre-Law Advisor on your campus, or at another college or university in the SAPLA region, who is not a member of SAPLA, feel free to forward this newsletter to them. A 2011-2012 membership form is included on the next page, which they can submit to activate their membership in SAPLA. *Please note that all members who attend PLANC in June will have their 2012-*

*2013 membership fee included in the conference registration fee.*

SAPLA conferences have been off-schedule for the past couple of years due to a joint meeting with NAPLA in June 2010 and the upcoming PLANC conference in June 2012. Because the Board is sensitive to the financial constraints facing many advisors, our goal is to refrain from having more than one conference in the same budget year. Occasionally, this has the effect of the organization's conference "skipping" a year. 2011 was such a year. Moving forward, SAPLA will be back on track with regular annual meetings, beginning in the fall of 2013. We are currently planning to host this conference in Atlanta, GA in conjunction with the LSAC Atlanta Law School Forum. Stay tuned for more details! In the meantime, we hope to see *all* of our new (and veteran) members at the Pre-Law Advisors National Council conference in Washington, D.C. in June 2012!

*Rebecca "Bekki" Davis*  
*Georgia Southern University*  
*SAPLA Secretary*



**SAPLA**

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**Southern Association of Pre Law Advisors  
Membership Form  
Membership Dues 2011-2012**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Law School Representative

Primary Pre-Law Advisor at your institution:

- If yes, is your contact information currently available and up-to-date with the Law School Admission Council? If no, please contact: Tracy Beck, [tbeck@lsac.org](mailto:tbeck@lsac.org)

Secondary Pre-Law Advisor at your institution:

- Those who serve in this role at an institution are not listed in the Official Pre Law Directory. We would like to have our membership lists, as current and complete, as possible, so please complete this form and send to the SAPLA Treasurer.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Area code and Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: Please check the appropriate category:

\$25.00— Pre Law Advisor

\$25.00— Law School &/or Associate Membership

Receive from SAPLA: the NAPLA/SAPLA Book of Law School Lists, the SAPLA Pre-Law Advisers Handbook and the SAPLA Newsletter.

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**Make Checks payable to SAPLA**

**Federal Tax ID Number:** SAPLA Federal Tax I.D. # 54-0505-965

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**Complete the form and mail or fax form to:**

**Michelle Rahman, SAPLA Treasurer  
University of Richmond, School of Law  
Richmond, Virginia 23173  
[mrahman@richmond.edu](mailto:mrahman@richmond.edu)  
Phone: 804.289.8189/Fax: 804.287.6516**



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## IMPORTANT DATES & INFO

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- **February 11, 2012**—LSAT February Administration
- **June 11, 2012**—June LSAT administration
- **June 13 - 16, 2012**— **Pre-Law Advisors National Council Conference in Washington, DC.** Plan to attend the quadrennial PLANC conference in Washington, DC! Conference Chair Cindy Cogdill (Columbia University) and Program Chair Wendy Vonnegut (Methodist University) are working with a committee of representatives from all six of the regional APLAs to plan the national conference. Register at [www.PLANC.org](http://www.PLANC.org)!
- **New Tools for the Trade:** If any pre-law advisor does not have a user name and password to log on to the advisors-only area of [www.lisac.org](http://www.lisac.org), email [prelaw@lisac.org](mailto:prelaw@lisac.org) for assistance.
- **Are you having a law school fair or professional and graduate school fair on your campus?** Have you picked your date? Do you know the event dates of other schools in your area so you can schedule consecutive events? Coordinating local events in close proximity to each other helps admissions officers attend more events at lower costs, and can increase attendance of law schools at your fairs! Use the LSAC Recruitment Calendar (<http://www.lisac.org/Choosing/recruitment-calendar.asp>) to register your campus event and to learn more about other events in your region.