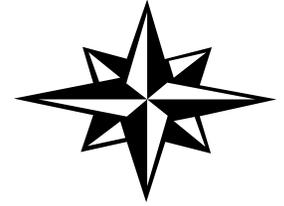


SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISERS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Each time I am asked for the "letter from the President" I try to pull together what has happened in your organization, and the larger group, to keep each of us as up-to-date as possible on new information that affects our doing a better job with our various populations. It is also a time to provide our members with what our organization has been doing as we continuously try to grow in our profession.

As you may know, these past six months have brought a number of health issues within my family, that forced me to not just slow down but to stop entirely. The most traumatic and life altering was our son's brain injury in September. I would like to thank all who were supportive as we survived this life changing family event. I moved from functioning daily and to, at times, not knowing what day it was. His report today can only be put into a word, miraculous. Except for timing and skilled Doctors his case was fatal, but his recovery is extraordinary. I share this side of my personal life probably because that is who I am, but also to say we all have living issues through which we walk daily. It was my experience that those who stepped in for me served to allow me to focus on my family when I needed to and then return to work.

During these months your leadership stepped into place just as we would expect. Tyra has consistently been the driving force behind the newsletters doing a great job and she is pressing each of us to get the details of our duties into a manual so we can continue to improve SAPLA. The LSAC

Forums, whose numbers are up according to all the data, were again served by Pre-Law Advisers. Miami was in early September, Tyra and I were there with a couple of local folks, but for next year we need some local people to take the lead on this one. Wendy was the coordinator of the Atlanta event and even with all the other pre-law volunteer advisers the number of students was enormous, so we will need more hands next fall. Bekki has kept our membership records and meeting notes current and Michelle has assisted us with our financial planning and appropriate use of our funds. Gerald serves as our connection to both PLANC and to NAPLA and keeps the information flowing to all of us. Peter is a constant rock and always ready to assist wherever he is needed. Although those of us who are in the "professional" role as advisers are rarely without something to do, I continue to applaud our faculty ranks as their balancing act can become more complex with all the details of pre-law advising, teaching and tenure!

If you have not already become familiar with the LSACnet.org tools may I encourage you make contact with the Law School Admission Council. We are all moving to a more "paperless" system and our reports, well just about everything we use for advising and reports is coming to us electronically. The PLANC Board has been asked to review a new area of for LSAC, the Skills Readiness Inventory. The Law School Admission Council is

excited to announce the unveiling of the new Skills Readiness Inventory, a four-part online diagnostic tool that allows individuals to determine their proficiencies in the skill areas of Critical Reading, Reasoning With Arguments, Reasoning With Rules, and Writing - skills critical for success in many upper-undergraduate and post-graduate programs. Rather than receiving scores, Skills Readiness Inventory users are given valuable coursework advice and skill-improvement strategies. This is in the "development" phase and you will be notified when it becomes available to your students.

We met as a joint board with NAPLA in early November and the conference is moving forward. Duke Law is our host, Durham is our site, and the Washington Duke Inn has offered us an extraordinary rate for a nationally known Five-Star hotel. We have been invited to visit a few schools in the area so you will have the opportunity to meet other schools during the event. All the details will be on our website by March and we are excited about this collaboration with Duke and NAPLA.

As we look ahead, our roles will change next summer, at the conference. At that time, Tyra Mason moves into the role of President, Wendy Vonnegut into the position of First Vice-President and I will serve as Past President and look forward to the duties of Chair-Elect for PLANC.

Best Wishes and Thank You.

Mary A. Tetro

SAPLA

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FALL/WINTER 2009

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF PRE-LAW ADVISERS

And the Top 10 Are.....



David Letterman has his top ten lists and I have mine. Analyzing legal film has long been an avid interest of mine. Using some of my favorite films in the classroom as legal text has greatly enhanced the learning experience for my students during the past decade. In fact, I have structured my Justice and the Judicial Process course around film and the controversial legal issues raised in those film. Movies with legal themes which inspire, motivate, inform, and provide realistic courtroom scenes are strongly preferred over those which merely entertain. This, in fact, comprises my personal four-prong test for using any particular film in the classroom. All of the following legal movies should inspire, inform, and provide realistic courtroom depictions for our prelaw students. As Prewlaw Advisors, we should encourage our students to view each one of them. Perhaps it will motivate them to become the type of lawyer who can make a difference in this world.

Anatomy Of A Murder: Nominated for seven Academy Awards in 1959, this classic legal film is not simply the best criminal law movie of all time; it is the best legal movie ever produced. The law is sound, the courtroom scenes are realistic, and the trial tactics are worthy of emulating. Jimmy Stewart plays a small-town defense attorney representing a hot-headed Army Lieutenant who, while allegedly temporarily insane, shot his wife's alleged bartending rapist. Note the clever manner by which Stewart convinces his client to choose the legal excuse of insanity as his defense rather than justification. George C. Scott proves a worthy opponent as the big-time prosecuting attorney from Lansing. The sparring between Scott and Stewart provides riveting courtroom drama. Difficult

moral and legal issues surrounding the insanity defense are explored in some depth. You may reexamine your view on the insanity defense as a legal excuse for homicide. Should the M'Naghten right-wrong test apply or should the irresistible impulse test be employed to determine Lieutenant Manion's (Ben Gazzara) criminal culpability? A hint: The Lieutenant knows the difference between right and wrong. Perhaps *People v. Durfee*, 62 Michigan 486, 1886, will be helpful in answering the defense's dilemma. After a very slow beginning, the action moves quickly. You judge whether or not justice was accomplished.

The Rainmaker: Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, this Grisham film presents a number of legal issues for consideration: civil fraud, breach of warranty, divorce, probate, and even justifiable homicide. The movie begins with recent law school graduate Rudy Baylor, played by Matt Damon, searching for a job – a rite of passage for every rookie lawyer. He ends up working for the sleaziest attorney in Memphis and with side-kick Danny DeVito who has failed the bar exam several times. A very high profile insurance case is given to Rudy as a law student. His client, whose death is imminent without a bone marrow transplant, signs the contingency agreement as his blood drips onto the contract. Despite facing very long odds against a battery of corporate lawyers, Rudy seeks to unveil the truth to the jury. In this film, the reward is truly in the journey. In the end, the rookie gets the girl and hero status; corporate America once again is the villain

12 Angry Men: Angry doesn't begin to describe it in this 1957 classic. The two fundamental underpinnings of our criminal justice system are the presumption of innocence and reasonable doubt. I have found nothing – in film or otherwise – which better explains the legal concept of reasonable doubt to undergraduate students. Henry Fonda, as the voice of reason, represents Justice; while E.G. Marshall, as a man of logic, represents the Law. The initial jury vote is 11-1 to convict the son for the crime of murdering his father. But through a gradual reexamination of the testimony and the other evidence, doubt raises its head and the vote becomes 11-1 to acquit. How many reasonable doubts are there? Count them as you watch this movie a second and a third

time – and you will.

The Accused: Based on an actual New Bedford case involving a gang-rape prosecution, this compelling film will strike you at your core. You will never again think that a woman may have provocatively "asked for it." Gender bias, plea bargaining, criminal solicitation, and rape are the legal themes examined by this film starring Oscar winning Jody Foster, who once said that the seven minute rape scene which took all day to film was the most difficult performance of her career. This movie tests the limits of legal justice and social responsibility. Kelly McGillis plays the prosecutor who plea bargains away the rape case for a charge with a minimal sentence. She then fights a male dominated system to maximize the light sentences of the rapists and to convict those onlookers who cheered and encouraged the barroom rape for the crime of solicitation. This film will impact victims of sexual assault in a manner similar to the way that *Saving Private Ryan* affected World War II veterans and *The Amistad* affected African-Americans.

To Kill A Mockingbird: Based on Harper Lee's 1960 Pulitzer Prize novel, this film was not well received in the South when it was first released. But over time, Atticus Finch, played by Best Actor Gregory Peck, has become Hollywood's movie hero of all time. Atticus capably defends a black man who is wrongfully accused of sexually assaulting a white girl. Set in a racially divided, small rural town in the 1930's, Mr. Robinson is found guilty for the sole reason that the word of so-called white trash (the alleged victim and her despicable father) must be taken as gospel over the word of a respectable black man in the courtrooms of that era - despite the eloquent closing argument of Atticus Finch who implored the jury, "Do the right thing; in the name of God, do the right thing." The cross-examination of the prosecution's witnesses provides valuable tactical lessons.

The Amistad: Based upon the 1841 United States Supreme Court case, *The Amistad*, 40 U.S. 518, this film focuses on a major turning point in U.S. history. The courtroom scenes confront the foundations of the American justice system and are accurate depictions of the judicial process in Colonial America. The legal question becomes whether the Africans

are people or property. Unlike in the *Dred Scott* case, the Supreme Court justices reach the correct decision. Cinque's personal story and John Quincy Adams's argument will move you. Contrast this case with a similar case decided by John Marshall, *The Antelope*, 23 U.S. 66.

The Verdict: If you have lawyers somewhere in your life, Frank Galvin (Paul Newman) may remind you of someone you know. While this film teaches many lessons about professional responsibility and legal ethics, it is, along with *The Rainmaker*, one of the cornerstones of tort cinema. This film also provides a powerful example of how not to practice as an attorney and how not to preside as a judge. Alcoholic Galvin has a very winnable, big judgment medical malpractice suit fall in his lap. He can settle or he can try the case; unwisely, he chooses to try it. Everything goes wrong at the trial including his expert witness not showing and the judge making an erroneous hearsay ruling from the bench. Despite all the negative energy, in his closing argument Galvin begs the jury to "act as if you believe and faith will be given to you." The jury gets religion and Galvin's client gets her judgment.

A Time To Kill: Is there? A time to kill, that is. If you don't think so now, you may rethink your position after viewing this film. If your ten year daughter were brutalized, raped, and left for dead - and it did not appear to you that justice would be done - would you consider taking the law into your own hands? The father, played by Samuel L. Jackson, decides to lay in wait

at the county courthouse and shoot the despicable defendants as they slowly walk to their arraignment. This looks like murder in the first degree, doesn't it? That's what the Klan thinks as they terrorize the judicial process. Matthew McConaughey argues otherwise in his compelling closing argument. Jury nullification is one of the key legal concepts explored in this film. This movie is generally the student favorite.

Philadelphia: This landmark film explores the tort of wrongful termination when homophobic senior law partners fire, for pretextual reasons, rising legal star Andy Beckett (Tom Hanks) who is HIV positive. Denzel Washington, who must overcome his own phobias, ably represents Hanks in captivating court scenes. "Explain to me like I'm a seven year old," is a line which Washington makes famous. Employers who discriminate against the disabled in hiring and promotion practices are examined in some depth.

Paper Chase: All pre-law students should watch this movie before applying for law school. Contract Professor Kingsley is old school when it comes to using the Socratic method in the classroom. If you do not feel the pain of the 1L's, it's only because you have not yet walked in their shoes. You'll observe how law school study groups work and how law school classes differ from undergraduate classes. The best scene is at the end when grades are given their appropriate due.

Honorable Mention: Judgment at Nurem-

berg, Inherit The Wind, Runaway Jury, A Civil Action, A Class Action, And Justice For All, Kramer v. Kramer, Presumed Innocent, The Wrong Man, and Witness For The Prosecution.

Now let the debate begin. What are your top ten?

Article Submitted by Rick Poland

Flagler College



DISCOVERLAW.ORG GROUND EFFORT BEGINS

As LSAC's Diversity Initiatives continues to add new features to the *Discoverlaw.org* website, student participation and usage continues to grow. Designed to reach racial and ethnic minorities in their first and second years of college, the diversity website - now a year old - has begun sending out "push e-mails" to alert students who register with the site to new content. In accordance with the site's stated mission of helping its target audience consider law as a career and better prepare for the law school application process, Diversity Initiatives

has targeted specific regions for concentrated activities, including presentations to student organizations on campus, workshops with law school representatives, and display tables at career fairs. Campus coordinators are being hired in Los Angeles, Miami, Atlanta, Chicago, Raleigh-Durham, Albuquerque, Philadelphia, and Houston to help with this ground effort. *Discoverlaw.org* also plans to partner with the National Bar Association (the oldest African American bar association) and the Hispanic National Bar Association this year. Partner-

ships with law schools, state and local bar associations, and other organizations are being sought as well.

Discoverlaw.org provides students with resources, tips, and tools on how to become a competitive law school applicant and encourages racially and ethnically diverse students to discover career opportunities in law. The website also helps those students choose a path in undergraduate school to help them succeed. *Discoverlaw.org* was recently featured at the ABA National Conference for the Minority Lawyer in Philadelphia

and at the ABA National Law-related Education Leadership Conference in Chicago.

The *Discoverlaw.org* campaign is a cooperative effort. In addition to the Diversity Initiatives team, other departments - including Communications, Legal Affairs, Information Services, and Psychometric Research - are vital to the success of this initiative.

For more information please send an email to DiscoverLaw@LSAC.org or call 215.968.1338.

Source: LSAC.org & DiscoverLaw.org

ONLINE GUIDE FILLS VOID OF TRADITIONAL RESOURCES BY PROVIDING INSIGHT INTO LAW SCHOOL PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAMS



Resource helps applicants find “best” schools based on personal criteria

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Researching the “best” law school rankings might be easy, but finding the best law school for *you* is a much more daunting task. The redesigned and updated 2009 [Equal Justice Works Guide to Law Schools](#) makes that task easier. The result of a unique collaboration between Equal Justice Works and more than 150 law schools, the online guide fills a void left by commercial law school resource guides and rankings and helps users make more informed decisions about their choices of schools and careers by allowing them to compare schools based on the criteria most relevant to them.

Traditional law school resource guides provide information about tuition, test scores, and post-graduate placements, but often ignore information that may be more important to an individual applicant – information about student and faculty involvement in public interest projects, overall affordability and availability of programs that provide practical skills training through work with real clients and cases. The Equal Justice Works Guide helps students find the best match for them by allowing side-by-side comparisons of law school financial aid and affordability factors, faculty involvement, the range of clinical, externship and pro bono opportunities, and offerings in specific areas of interest such as Human Rights, Immigration or Environmental Law.

“For many students, the highest ranked law school may not be ‘the best’ school for them,” said David Stern, Chief Executive Officer for Equal Justice Works. “Our goal in creating this guide was to provide a resource to help law

school applicants look beyond lists and rankings and undertake independent research to find schools that meet both their practical needs and their educational goals. We also created The Guide as a tool to highlight the range of ways law schools are preparing students to fulfill their professional responsibility to provide quality legal services to under-represented people and causes.”

The 2009 Equal Justice Works Guide to Law Schools provides updated and more comprehensive school profiles than previous versions, and has been redesigned to include a new navigation menu. Enhanced search capabilities also allow users to create their own set of search criteria and compare responses with contextual information. For instance, a user query for loan repayment assistance programs will also produce information about overall tuition costs and average student debt.

“The information found in The Equal Justice Works Guide to Law Schools is the ‘missing piece’ needed to make the law school research process comprehensive and complete for prospective students,” said Diane Chin, Director of the John and Terry Levin Center for Public Service and Public Interest Law at Stanford University Law School.

“Law schools are at a critical point in determining how they will train future leaders in the profession, incorporate increasing opportunities for students to get hands-on training through clinical courses, externships and pro bono opportunities, as well as create more resources and opportunities for those dedicated to public interest careers. The Guide is the best resource to capture this vital information for those making important decisions about their futures.” In addition to law school applicants, The Guide provides valuable information to current students who are looking for fresh ideas regarding student group activities, curricular and co-curricular offerings at other schools; law school faculty and staff who are looking for ideas to improve or expand their current programs; and public service employers seeking schools that provide students with courses, practical skills training and opportunities that are a good match for

their hiring needs.

The 2009 Equal Justice Guide to Law Schools is available at www.ejwguide.com.

Equal Justice Works, a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in 1986 by law students dedicated to working for equal justice on behalf of underserved communities and causes. Today, Equal Justice Works is the national leader in creating summer and postgraduate public interest opportunities for law students and lawyers as well as in urging more public interest programming at law schools. For more information, visit www.equaljusticeworks.org



SAPLA

Southern Association of Pre Law Advisers
Membership Form
Membership Dues for 2009-2010

Name: _____

Position: _____

Title: _____

Institution: _____

Law School Representative

Primary Pre-Law Adviser at your institution:

- If yes, is your contact information currently available and up-to-date with Law Services? If no, please contact: Tracy Beck, tbeck@lsac.org

Secondary Pre-Law Adviser 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 Registrar.

Address: _____

Area code and Phone Number _____

Email: _____

Dues: Please check the appropriate category:

\$50.00 Pre Law Adviser/Advisers

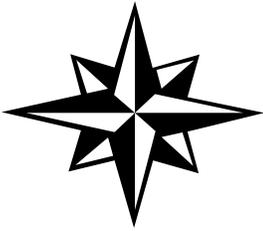
\$65.00 Law School &/or Associate Membership

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

Make Checks payable to SAPLA

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

Complete the form, make checks payable to SAPLA & mail or fax form to:
Registrar- Michelle Rahman, SAPLA Registrar- mrahman@richmond.edu
University of Richmond, School of Law
Richmond, Virginia 23173
Phone: 804.289.8189/Fax: 804.287.6516



Pre Professional Law Program
Florida A&M University
112 Tucker Hall
515 Orr Drive

SAPLA

Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
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Mailing Address Line 5

We're on the Web!

www.ncsu.edu/prelaw/sapla

SAPLA IMPORTANT DATES & INFO

Congratulations Mary!

At the March 8, 2009 meeting of the PLANC Board in Philadelphia SAPLA's current President, Mary Alice Tetro, was elected Chair-elect of the PLANC Board. She will serve in this capacity until she becomes Chair of the Board in 2011. Mary Alice is the University Coordinator of Pre-Law Services at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. In addition to her service as President of SAPLA, Mary Alice has taken an active role on committees sponsored by Law Services and has served as a pre-law advisor at a number of Law Services sponsored Law Forums. She will be the third SAPLA member to serve as Chair of PLANC following Gerald Wilson (1984-1989) and Nim Batchelor (2003-2005.)



- **February 6, 2010** - LSAT
- **June 9 - 12, 2010** - NAPLA/SAPLA Joint Conference in Durham, NC
- HACU/HBCU - LSAC Pre Law Advisors Conference - Atlanta, GA - Dates to be announced
- LSAC 2010 Forum - **Saturday, September 11** - Miami, FL (Volunteers are needed to assist with advising forum attendees. If you are interested, please contact Tyra Mason at tyra.mason@famu.edu with your availability.)
- LSAC 2010 Forum - **Saturday, November 6** - Atlanta, GA (Volunteers are needed to assist with advising forum attendees. If you are interested, please contact Wendy Vonnegut wendy@methodist.edu with your availability.)
- New Tools for the Trade: LSACnet.org. If any pre law advisor does not have a user name and password to log in to the members only area of www.lsacnet.org, email prelaw@lsac.org.