

# CASUAL CONVERSATIONS

Get to know members of the Maryland Carey Law community.



## FACULTY

### Seema Kakade

Assistant Professor of Law and  
Director, Environmental Law Clinic

BS, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
JD, George Washington University

#### Hometown:

St. Paul, Minnesota

#### What is your greatest accomplishment?

Picking the right life partner. I have known my husband since I was 12 years old and he is terrific. Because of him I have a wonderful support system, fantastic children, and a friend and confidant.

#### What book(s) are you currently reading?

*Educated*, by Tara Westover

#### What is your favorite place on campus?

The 3rd floor of the law school, the location of my office. It is a hallway where there is always something happening. Law students are engaging with professors on clinic matters. Clinic directors are talking with each other about the operation of clinics and the best way to teach our students. It is a collegial and professional environment, and also lively!

#### What is your best memory of teaching at Maryland Carey Law thus far?

My mock class for Discover Law day. I had about 20 high school students attend the class. When I entered the classroom they were already in the room and eager to learn. They were clearly expecting that I was going to talk about law, and in particular, trials. However, we did an exercise on problem solving. The class was really fun and allowed them to think creatively and realize how difficult it can be to get to a good compromise.

#### Who is your favorite fictional lawyer?

Mitch McDeere from the book and movie, *The Firm*. I loved his tenacity and his refusal to let a bad situation get the better of him. And who doesn't love Tom Cruise?

#### What is your favorite Supreme Court case of all time?

*Massachusetts v. EPA*, one of the most significant cases on carbon dioxide regulation.

#### Hometown:

Columbia, Maryland

#### What is your greatest accomplishment?

My greatest personal accomplishment thus far is my newborn son, Charles, Jr. As for my greatest professional accomplishment, that has yet to be seen.

#### What is your best memory of Maryland Carey Law?

Receiving the Roger Howell Award. It was humbling to be honored and recognized by my professors, mentors, advisors, and peers as reflecting the myriad qualities embodied by the award and its past and future recipients. A close second is my experience as a member and co-captain of the National Trial Team.

#### Do you have any advice for current law school students?

Embrace your professional (and personal) journey as yours, and no one else's. Be ready for your interests and objectives to evolve. Learn from every experience, whether it be a success or failure. Find someone who does what you're interested in doing and speak with them about their career development.

Then find someone who you consider successful—even if their career is not exactly where you wish to be—and do the same.

#### Who is your favorite fictional lawyer?

A tie between Clair Huxtable and Matt Murdock.

#### What book(s) are you currently reading?

*Locking Up Our Own* by James Forman, Jr. and *Barracoon* by Zora Neale Hurston

#### What is your favorite Supreme Court Case of all time?

*Gideon v. Wainwright*. A judge for whom I clerked spoke often of justice as a process, not necessarily any specific result of a process. *Gideon* is a significant pillar in protecting the integrity of our adversarial criminal process and affording to each of us the "fundamental safeguards of liberty" recognized by that and later decisions. Also on my short list are *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* and *New York Times Co. v. United States*, both of which reflect the importance of a free press and open public discourse as necessary elements of our society and an informed citizenry.



## ALUMNUS

### Charles Austin

Class of 2012  
Associate Attorney at  
Crowell & Moring LLP  
National Trial Team Coach

BA, Temple University  
JD, University of Maryland Francis King  
Carey School of Law



# STUDENT

## Courtney Bennett

Class of 2019

BS, Bethune-Cookman University  
MBA, Texas A&M University-Texarkana

**Hometown:**  
Atlanta, Georgia

**What student organizations, activities, internships, etc. have you been involved with at Maryland Carey Law?**

Black Law Student Association Treasurer, Thurgood Marshall Trial Team Captain, Black Law Student Association General Body Member, Criminal Law Association

**Who is your favorite Supreme Court Justice of all time?**

Thurgood Marshall, a graduate of a historically black college and university (HBCU), who transferred his civil rights activism to the highest court in America.

**What is your greatest accomplishment?**

Working full-time and attending law school at night. This journey is not for the faint of heart.

**Name something that people would be surprised to know about you.**

I completed the Iron Girl Sprint Distance and New York City Olympic Distance

Triathlon in 2014. Yes, I am one of few that can say, "I swam in the Hudson River, biked through the boroughs of New York, and ran through Central Park."

**What is your best moment at Maryland Carey Law thus far?**

Speaking in front of the Mayor of Baltimore, Baltimore State's Attorney, and so many profound leaders within the Baltimore community for the Billy Murphy Family Scholarship Benefit.

**What is your favorite TV show?**

Grey's Anatomy. The suspense of saving lives and intertwining political and moral values within the show is done so eloquently.

**What is your favorite place to visit in Baltimore?**

Teavolve Café and Lounge for red velvet pancakes and tea.

**Hometown:**  
Huntington, New York

**What is your greatest accomplishment?**

While I was a student at Towson University, I started a chapter of a nonprofit organization called Invisible Children. This was my first real experience being part of a nonprofit organization and I learned so much about what goes into building something from the ground up, while working for a cause I cared deeply about. It was exciting, challenging, and eye-opening all at once. During the two and half years running this chapter, I was able to build a foundation for a career in nonprofit work which I continue to build on today.

**What is the best part of working at Maryland Carey Law?**

Learning about the incredible careers and experiences of the alumni. I continue to be inspired by all the amazing accomplishments I learn about every day.

**Name something that people would be surprised to know about you.**

I have an above average knowledge of pop culture.

**What is your favorite place to visit in Baltimore?**

Bertha's Mussels in Fells Point

**What was your dream job as a kid?**

Playing shortstop for a New York baseball team I prefer not to disclose.

**What is your favorite TV show?**

The Office



# STAFF

## Andrew Altshuler

Director of Alumni Engagement

BS, Towson University  
MS, University of Maryland,  
University College