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Fifty Years of the UNL College of Law Multicultural Legal Society

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Fifty Years of the UNL College of Law Multicultural Legal Society

Anna Williams Shavers*

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I. INCREASING MINORITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT THE UNL COLLEGE OF LAW

Even though the University of Nebraska College of Law early in its history admitted Black students—including Dewitt Lawson, Class of 1926¹ and John Adams, Jr., Class of 1929²—and did not exclude mi-

* Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and Cline Williams Professor of Citizenship Law, University of Nebraska College of Law. I express gratitude to my research assistant and the 2021–2022 MCLS President, Genesis Agosto, and the *Nebraska Law Review* editors. Much of the information included here came from *The Nebraska Transcript* as well as the, hopefully not too faulty, memory of the author.

Note from the editor: Thank you Genesis Agosto, Alan Frank, and Steven Willborn for all of your help, especially in helping to finish this piece. It was an honor to partner with you, who knew Anna, and the culture she built, so well, particularly to publish such a special piece. While this is the last article Anna wrote, her words and her mission carry us onward.

1. Kathryn Haugstatter, *Minority Experiences Shared: Brown v. Board of Education Documentary Presented*, 25 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 1991, at 4.
2. NEBRASKA BLUE BOOK 208 (1940), <http://govdocs.nebraska.gov/docs/pilot/pubs/legisbios/leg1940-1941.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/P6LE-NKHT>]; David DeTar Newbert, *Reflections From the “Class” of ‘29*, 17 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, December/January 1983, at 20–21 (profile of John Adams, Jr., the first African American elected to the Nebraska legislature); J. CLAY SMITH JR., EMANCIPATION: THE MAKING OF THE BLACK LAWYER, 1844–1944, at 465 (1999).

nority students as some other law schools did,³ the number of minority students remained small. For over half a century, it has been the goal of the Law College to increase student diversity. Fifty years ago, in Fall 1972, three new faculty members, Alan Frank, David Ludtke, and John Snowden, Class of 1971, noticed the absence of a diverse student and faculty population at the Law College, which at the time had only one minority student, John Robinson, Class of 1973. In an attempt to address this issue, the three new faculty members, with the assistance of Mr. Robinson, established the Minority Recruitment Committee.⁴ The Minority Recruitment Committee was renamed the Minority Affairs Committee in 1978⁵ and the Multicultural Legal Society (MCLS) in 1983.⁶ MCLS and its supporters were actively involved in the pursuit of the goals of providing opportunities for students of color, hiring a diverse faculty, and enriching the experiences of all students. This Article discusses the early years of MCLS, describes its cooperative efforts with the Law College and other supporters, and finally celebrates the accomplishments of the organization and its individual members. This Article also demonstrates that the concerns of fifty years ago remain.

II. THE EARLY YEARS

The Minority Recruitment Committee formed by Professors Frank, Ludtke, and Snowden soon became associated with the Student Bar Association (SBA), with the three professors serving as its advisors.⁷ The involved students sought to encourage and recruit minority students to the Law College, helping achieve their original goal of a more diverse community at the College of Law. The eight student members of the committee included Olivia Guerra and Gene Crump, both from the Class of 1976. The dedicated members concentrated not only on the small number of students of color that came to the Law College, but also on the small number of lawyers practicing in Nebraska who were members of minority groups. The 1970 Census revealed that only .01% of the lawyers in Nebraska were minorities. Out of approximately 750 students who graduated from the College of Law from 1968 to 1973, there were only six Black students and no Native-Amer-

3. *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, 305 U.S. 337 (1938) (stressing the advantages afforded by the law schools of the adjacent states—Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois—which admit non-resident negroes).

4. Emily Rose, *Alan Frank: A Career Predicated on Service*, 44 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, no. 1, Spring 2011, at 4-5; Gene Crump, *UNL College of Law Continues to Actively Recruit Minorities*, 9 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, December 1974, at 11; *Student Briefs*, 17 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, March/April 1983, at 30, 47.

5. UNL College of Law SBA Handbook 77-78, at 63.

6. *Student Briefs*, 17 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, March/April 1983, at 30, 47.

7. Cheryl Robbins, *SBA Works To Increase Minority Representation*, 8 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, March 1974, at 8.

ican or Mexican-American students. By Fall 1973, there were three Black and two Mexican-American students enrolled.

The Committee's early efforts focused on encouraging minority students to attend law school. In April 1973, during the Committee's first year, Professors Frank and Ludtke and SBA President Jim Gordon, Class of 1974, appeared before the University's student government, ASUN, to support a resolution introduced by Senator Brian Waid, Class of 1975, to appropriate \$1,000 to the SBA for minority recruitment.⁸ The resolution passed. Assisted by these funds, the Committee contacted colleges in Nebraska and nearby states to provide information on how to apply to law school and on available financial aid for minority students. In an effort to improve the College's outreach efforts, the Committee also mailed a survey⁹ to minority students who had been admitted to the College of Law but chose not to attend.¹⁰

The Nebraska Transcript, a publication of the College of Law, published an article in December 1974 by Gene Crump highlighting that the Committee had grown and had expanded its efforts, including making trips to various parts of the State to meet with potential applicants. He noted that it was not the role of the committee to "select new students, but rather to act as a vehicle by which potential students are made aware of the opportunity to attend law school, and the steps that are necessary to achieve that goal."¹¹

By the late 1970s, the enrollment of females in law schools across the country had greatly increased, and it was no different at the Law College. In 1976, female students comprised more than one-quarter of the entering class, but minority students were only two percent of the class.¹² The committee realized their efforts should be expanded to reach minority students at an earlier age. Members began to contact high school students. Led by Committee Chair Kathy Hamilton, Class of 1977, and with the assistance of Nebraska Educational Television, the Committee also produced a film to provide information for minor-

8. Dennis Onnen, *Law School Receives \$1,000 for Minority Recruitment*, 96 DAILY NEBRASKAN no. 98, April 12, 1973.

9. The letter to the colleges, signed by Professors Frank, Ludtke, and Snowden, began, "Unfortunately, too many walk past their dreams. If you have thought or dreamed of the law, please take pause again at this stage in your education." "I do believe," said El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, "that I might have made a good lawyer. I have always loved verbal battle and challenge. You can believe me that if I had the time right now, I would not be ashamed to go back into any New York City public school and start where I left off at the ninth grade, and go through to a degree." *The Autobiography of Malcom X*, 386 (1965). Letter in the file of Professor Emeritus Alan Frank.

10. Survey in the file of Professor Emeritus Alan Frank.

11. Gene Crump, *UNL College of Law Continues to Actively Recruit Minorities*, 9 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, December 1974, at 11.

12. Rick Berkshire, *Committee Involved with Minorities*, 11 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, November 1976, at 20.

ity students interested in law school.¹³ The film, *Anything You Want to Be: Minorities and the Law*, was made available to high schools across the State.

The Committee recognized that it was not enough to make outreach efforts to minority students. It was also necessary to consider barriers to admission that might prevent interested students from pursuing their goal of attending law school. One of the potential barriers to some of the students was their score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), which is used to predict a student's success in law school, and the heavy reliance admission officers place on those scores in their admission decisions. The Committee suggested the test may contain some cultural biases, which might have an adverse effect on some groups. These concerns were voiced by others and continue today.¹⁴ To overcome the suspected cultural bias and lack of educational opportunities, many supported admissions policies that considered the race of the applicant in admission and financial aid decisions.

In addition, the Committee expanded its outreach efforts outside of Nebraska. During the five years (1979–1984) he served as Associate Dean, Professor Frank continued his efforts to increase diversity in the Law College. He and the other members of the Committee were joined in these efforts by Professor Steven Willborn, who joined the faculty in 1979. To reach students who might not have initially considered Nebraska, Professor Willborn participated in the Region III Institute of the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) held at Washburn University for students from Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. CLEO was founded jointly by the Association of American Law Schools, the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) in 1968 to assist economically and educationally disadvantaged persons in gaining admittance to law schools. Under the guidance of Associate Dean Frank and Professor Willborn, the College of Law subsequently hosted a CLEO Institute in June and July of 1984.¹⁵

After Professor Frank left the Associate Dean position, many of his tasks related to minority enrollment were taken over by newly hired Assistant Dean Ruth Witherspoon—the first African-American administrator at the Law College. Dean Witherspoon recognized that the efforts started by Professor Frank and MCLS needed to continue and increase. When Dean Witherspoon joined the Law College, only eighteen of the 452 students at the College (four percent) were minorities.

13. Nebraska Educational Television is now named Nebraska Public Media.

14. See, e.g., Aaron N. Taylor, *The Marginalization of Black Aspiring Lawyers*, 13 FIU L. REV. 489 (2019).

15. Rose McConnell, *College of Law to Host Summer CLEO Institute*, 18 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 1984, at 4–5.

Some of Dean Witherspoon's accomplishments included obtaining a grant from the LSAC to help with recruitment efforts and organizing the First Annual Minority Law Day Program held on Saturday, March 16, 1985.¹⁶ The Law College also held a Summer Pre-Law Program for high school students on June 5–7, 1985. The high school students participated in an intensive program, which included standardized test preparation, mock trial exercises, and an actual law school class.¹⁷

The efforts of MCLS and the Law College to recruit and retain minority law students continued to flourish. These efforts included the establishment of the summer SPICE program by Harvey Perlman, Class of 1966, who served as Dean of the College from 1983 to 1998. The SPICE program brought more minority high school students to the campus.¹⁸ Past and current members of MCLS continued to participate in these efforts. For example, Gene Crump, by then Nebraska's Chief Deputy Attorney General, was the featured guest speaker for the March 1985 program. A second Minority Law Day Program was held in October 1985 and included a panel of the Law College's minority alumni: Patrick A. Campbell, Class of 1979, Assistant Prosecutor, Lincoln City Attorney's Office; Jerry L. Pigsley, Class of 1981, an attorney with Nelson & Harding in Lincoln; and Alicia Santos-Luebbe, Class of 1983, an attorney with the Nebraska Department of Revenue.¹⁹

Although some opposed the use of race-conscious admission policies, the Law College used them in its attempt to diversify the student body. These types of policies were held to be constitutionally permissible by the Supreme Court in cases such as *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*,²⁰ *Gratz v. Bollinger*,²¹ *Grutter v. Bollinger*,²² and *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*.²³ This approach, along with recruitment efforts, resulted in increased numbers of minority students at the Law College. In the 1991–1992 school year, there were thirty-three minority students attending the Law College.²⁴

16. Ruth Witherspoon, *Minority Law Day*, 19 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 1985, at 23.

17. Marlene Vergara, *Minority Students Attend Summer Pre-Law Program*, 20 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 1985, at 20.

18. Sandeep Sheth, *Law College Strives for Diversity*, 26 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Summer 1992, at 12; see also Gail Egbers & Joan Giesecke, *SPICE Programs in Nebraska*, 50 COLL. & RSCH. LIBRS. NEWS, no. 9, October 1989, at 840 (news article about the second annual Summer Pre-College Instruction and Career Experience held at the University of Nebraska to prepare racial minority high schoolers for college).

19. Marlene Vergara, *Minority Law Day Program Held*, 20 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 1985, at 24.

20. *Regents of the Univ. of Cal. v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978).

21. *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 244 (2003).

22. *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).

23. *Fisher v. Univ. of Tex.*, 579 U.S. 365 (2016).

24. Sandeep Sheth, *Law College Strives for Diversity*, 26 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Summer 1992, at 12.

In 1993, the Nebraska College of Law chapter of the Black Law Student Association (BLSA) that was originally formed in Fall 1974 was reactivated.²⁵ MCLS and BLSA combined their efforts to help recruit and retain minority law students. In addition, the College of Law hired two African-American faculty members while Harvey Perlman was Dean. Professor Anna Shavers joined the faculty in 1989,²⁶ and Professor Catherine Wilson joined the faculty in 1993.²⁷ The newly hired professors subsequently became co-advisors to MCLS/BLSA.

To help retain admitted students, MCLS created a support network of senior students to help first-year students adjust and achieve success.²⁸ Even when the number of minority students remained quite small, there were those who opposed the recruitment and admission efforts. The numbers continued to grow until 2008. However, the growth was stalled when the State of Nebraska adopted a Constitutional Amendment that prohibited the consideration of race as a factor in admissions. Prior to 2008, the College of Law relied on race as one of many factors in making admission decisions. The amendment prohibited State institutions, including the Law College, from using race in governmental decision-making.²⁹ Thus, by necessity, efforts turned more to recruitment.

III. MCLS SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Efforts to increase enrollment and retention of minority students at the Law College came from both within the Law College and other supporters outside of the immediate Law College community. Several law firms throughout Nebraska created endowed law scholarships to assist in these efforts. MCLS and its advisors continued to be actively involved in recruiting trips to reach out to potential students both at CLEO programs and at other locations, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's).

In addition to organizations, many individuals have worked and continue to work tirelessly to help increase minority enrollment at the College of Law. This includes Earl Scudder, Class of 1966, and Patricia Scudder, 2009 recipients of the Alumni Outstanding Service Award; Interim Associate Dean Charles Tremper, who was active in 1988 and continued Minority Law Day programs;³⁰ and Glenda

25. University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Law Orientation '75, at 52; Jone Bosworth, *Organizations Offer Diversity*, 29 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 1995, at 16–17.

26. *Looking Back Over 40 Years of Chronicling Law College's Distinguished History*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 6.

27. *Id.* at 8.

28. *Id.*

29. NEB. CONST. art. I, § 30.

30. Peggy Polacek, *Minority Law Day a Success*, 22 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Winter 1988, at 17.

Pierce, Class of 1982, who was Assistant Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs from 1990 to 2013 and helped continue these efforts and maintained close contact with MCLS.³¹ Involvement in the overall efforts did not stop there. During the celebration of the Law College's centennial in 1991, Professor John Gradwohl, Class of 1953, and Judge Janice Gradwohl, Class of 1954, endowed the College of Law Minority and International Students Centennial Scholarship Fund.³² The Gradwohls later established a second scholarship to honor John's parents, who also had a strong interest in multicultural issues.³³ Each of these actions helped to recruit minority students to the Law School despite the Nebraska Constitutional Amendment.

Several activities were pursued to further diversity goals under the guidance of Steven Willborn when he served as Interim Dean and Dean from 2000 to 2009. During this time, the American Indian Initiative was started at the Law College to help increase Native Lawyers. The initiative, started with the generous support of Charlie Wright, Class of 1958, and his wife, Suzy, tried to identify and recruit every Native-American student attending college in Nebraska and every Nebraska Native-American student attending college anywhere.³⁴ In addition to regular outreach to these students, the initiative included an annual dinner and program on Native-American issues. Program speakers over the years of the initiative included Peter B. Beekman, Class of 1970, who served as a judge for a number of American Indian tribes, and Lance Morgan, a member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska and Co-Founder of Ho-Chunk, Inc. The Wrights also created the Standing Bear Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships for Native-American students at the College of Law.

Another significant contributor to the goal of recruiting and admitting more diverse students was the College of Law's Pre-Law Institute (PLUS) program. Beginning in 2003, the Law School Admissions Council funded PLUS programs throughout the country; the College of Law received one of the grants. The program partnered with HBCU's and other colleges to provide an experience for students from under-represented groups. The PLUS program provided preparation for both law school and the LSAT.³⁵ The University also provided support for the program, as did several law firms and other legal employers in the

31. *Looking Back Over 40 Years of Chronicling Law College's Distinguished History*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 7.

32. Susan Dunn, *Minority Fund Established*, 26 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Summer 1992, at 13.

33. *Id.*

34. *American Indian Initiative Seeks to Increase Native Lawyers*, 36 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall/Winter 2002-03, at 10; *Standing Bear Scholarship Fund*, NEB. STATE BAR FOUND., <https://www.nebarfnd.org/endowments/standing-bear-scholarship-fund> [<https://perma.cc/8QQA-GCTY>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

35. *See Progress Report*, NEB. MINORITY & JUST. IMPLEMENTATION COMM. (2004).

area. Barbara Schaefer, Class of 1978, who served as Senior Vice President at Union Pacific Corporation, was one of the PLUS program's biggest supporters. The program ended in 2008, after the adoption of the 2008 amendment to Nebraska's constitution.

The Nebraska State Bar Association recognized the College of Law's efforts at promoting diversity in the legal profession with awards presented at the 2006 Barristers' Ball. The College's PLUS program received a Visionary Award. An award was also presented to Charles E. Wright, Class of 1958, the primary sponsor of the College's Native-American Education Forum, which promotes the importance of a legal education to the Native-American community.

Professor John Gradwohl, Class of 1953, and Judge Janice Gradwohl, Class of 1954, created an annual "Game Night" held in their home, where MCLS and BLSA members could meet each other and socialize in a relaxed setting outside of school.³⁶ Beyond Game Night, the Gradwohl family opened their home to MCLS and BLSA members on many occasions over the years, including for Thanksgiving dinner. John Gradwohl died in 2014, having served on the faculty of the College of Law for fifty years.

Despite Professor Gradwohl's death, the Gradwohl family has continued its support for MCLS and BLSA in several ways. One example of this was through programming. A high standard was set for the Law College's exploration of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues when, in February 2019, the Law College hosted "The Defamation Experience," which was sponsored by both the Gradwohl family and MCLS. Generous support from the Gradwohl family allowed the experience to be brought to the Law College. "The Defamation Experience" explores diversity issues through the setting of a riveting courtroom drama in which a defamation lawsuit is infused with issues of race, class, religion, and sex. The audience serves as the jury, which is led by the judge through deliberation.³⁷

IV. IMPACT ON THE COLLEGE OF LAW

MCLS recognized that its efforts to increase diversity in the Law College would benefit the entire student population—not just the diverse students who were admitted.³⁸ The increase in minority enrollment and the activities of the Committee and MCLS have been quite apparent. The presence of diverse students contributed to robust discussions in classes.

36. Joel Fulton, *MCLS/BLSA Team with Gradwohls for Trivia Night Tradition*, 46 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2013, at 34.

37. *Gradwohl Family Brings "The Defamation Experience" to College of Law*, 52 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2019, at 21.

38. Rick Berkshire, *Committee Involved with Minorities*, 11 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, November 1976, at 20.

Actions of individual MCLS and BLSA members and other organizations helped bring in speakers, sponsor programs and create discussions about the curriculum of the Law College from the 1980s until today. One of the programs was a panel in March 1980 on “The Role of the Minority Lawyer in Society.” The panel included Gene Crump, Class of 1976; Olivia Guerra, Class of 1976; Virgil Huff;³⁹ Leona Pouncey Thurman;⁴⁰ and Terry Pichota.⁴¹ It was videotaped by the Nebraska ETV Network and subsequently broadcast statewide on the network.⁴² Another program was a symposium in March 1981, entitled, “Are the Needs of Native Americans Being Met?” This symposium included participants John Echohawk, Executive Director of the Native American Rights fund; Jacqueline Huber of the Black Hills Alliance and Women of All Red Nations; Michael Gooch, Class of 1976, Deputy Public Defender for Lancaster County and Past Director of Nebraska Intertribal Legal Services; and Nate Merrick, Omaha Tribal Court Judge.⁴³

MCLS, along with the Women’s Law Caucus and the Civil Liberties Chapter at the College of Law, also sponsored a spring symposium in April 1983 on “Controversies of the Eighties.” This symposium focused on three broad areas: (1) capital punishment, (2) access to legal services, and (3) affirmative action.⁴⁴ Also, in 1983, Arnette R. Hubbard spoke at the Law College at the MCLS’s invitation.⁴⁵ Hubbard was the first female President of the National Bar Association (NBA) and also served as President of the Cook County Bar Association, Secretary of the NBA, and the NBA’s representative to the American Bar Association House of Delegates.

In 1991, the Law College celebrated its centennial. One of the many activities held as part of the celebration was a panel entitled “Celebrating Diversity in the Law College - Past, Present, and Fu-

39. A private practitioner on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota.

40. A graduate of Howard Law School and the first African American woman to practice law in Kansas City. Kimberly R. Riley, *Leona Pouncey Thurman*, Biography, KAN. CITY PUB. LIBRARY (1999) https://kchistory.org/sites/default/files/MVSC_PDFs/Biographies/Thurman,%20Leona%20Pouncey.pdf [<https://perma.cc/4FRY-FAY2>].

41. An enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and former U.S. Attorney. PECHOTA LAW OFFICE, <https://pechotalawrc.com> [<https://perma.cc/SW6W-N7U6>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

42. *Televised Panel Features Minority Lawyers in Recruitment Effort*, 14 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, May 1980, at 11.

43. *Symposium Presented*, 15 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, April 1981, at 9.

44. *Student Briefs*, 17 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, March/April 1983, at 30, 47.

45. James Williams, *Arnett Hubbard Visits UNL College of Law*, 17 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Summer 1983, at 20.

ture.” Panelists included Linda Crump, Class of 1990, Shirley Mora James, Class of 1991, and Darell Bryan, Class of 1993.⁴⁶

In 1995, the SBA Senior Class President and MCLS and BLSA member Sharee Sanders, Class of 1995, helped select the graduation speaker: Evjue-Bascom Professor of Law Linda Green from the University of Wisconsin.

Mark Soto, Class of 2000, and Damon Barry, Class of 2000, partnered with Lincoln Public Schools and the Law College to start High School Diversity Day.⁴⁷ (They also taught hip-hop and salsa dancing while at the Law College.) Diversity Day was an introduction to minority students in high school intended to spark an interest in law school and a legal career. Several years later, MCLS and BLSA President, Arianna Crum, Class of 2016, noted she had the opportunity to host law school events dedicated to diversity, and her favorite experience “was helping host Diversity Day.”⁴⁸

In 2011, Frank Wu, then Associate Professor at the Howard University School of Law, gave a talk, “Civil Rights and Racial Justice: Why We Need Affirmative Action.” The Law College, MCLS, and BLSA sponsored the talk.⁴⁹

Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, Charles Howard Carter Professor of Law at the Emory University School of Law, delivered a talk at the College of Law on October 12, 2001, on “The Atrocities of September 11 in Islamic and Global Perspectives.” The UNL International Law Society, the Federalist Society, the Equal Justice Society, and Nebraska Clerkships in Public Interest joined MCLS and BLSA in sponsoring the talk.⁵⁰

The College's Alumni Council established the College of Law Distinguished Achievement Awards in May 2002.⁵¹ Included in the awards is the Woods & Aitken Outstanding Student Award. Two MCLS Presidents have received this Award: Joy Kathurima, Class of

46. Kathryn Haugstatter, *Minority experiences shared: Brown v. Board of Education documentary presented*, 25 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 1991, at 4.

47. Catherine Cano, *Life of a Master: Damon O. Barry '00*, 44 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2011, at 46, 47.

48. Arianna Crum, NEB. COLLEGE OF LAW <https://law.unl.edu/arianna-crum/> [<https://perma.cc/G27N-HRPQ>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

49. Professor Wu Explains Why Affirmative Action Is Needed, NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2000, at 21.

50. An-Na'im: International Law Essential to Protect Human Rights, 36 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring/Summer 2002, at 17.

51. Alumni Council Awards Honor Distinguished Achievement, 36 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall/Winter 2002-03, at 3.

2019, the Senior Class President that year,⁵² and Alisa Rosales, Class of 2005.⁵³

As part of the Lincoln Arts Council's Stories of Home Project, MCLS and BLSA co-sponsored a display of artwork entitled "All Deliberate Speed" at the University of Nebraska's Varner Hall from August 25 to September 8, 2006. Ann Gradwohl, daughter of John and Judge Jan Gradwohl, created the artwork, which was inspired by the life of Lela Knox Shanks and the Shanks Family.⁵⁴

In the 2006–2007 school year, Harvard University Law Professor Charles Ogletree came to speak at the College of Law. Professor Ogletree's speech focused on *Brown v. Board of Education*⁵⁵ and the role of education, particularly as it related to achieving equality for Blacks.⁵⁶ At the time of his speech at the College of Law, Professor Ogletree had just completed his latest book, *All Deliberate Speed*.

Rebekah Caruthers and Amber Shavers, members of the Class of 2007, co-founded the Nebraska Entertainment and Sports Law Association (NESLA) to "bring awareness to the Law College . . . about the opportunities and challenges of entertainment and sports law."⁵⁷ Subsequently, in 2011, NESLA hosted Shavers, who discussed her work in the entertainment industry, including performing pro bono work for Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. Shavers also discussed her recently published book *The Little Book of Music Law*, which takes a closer look at the stories behind several of the most compelling legal cases in the industry.⁵⁸

MCLS and BLSA students Paul Brunner, Joneice Burnett, and Rebekah Caruthers from the Class of 2007 joined other Law College students and spent their spring break volunteering for the New Orleans City Attorney's Office to help address legal issues arising from Hurricane Katrina.⁵⁹ Mr. Brunner had been a student in the Law College PLUS program before beginning law school. During his time at the College of Law, Mr. Brunner was a well-liked and active member

52. *Bradford, Perry, Anderson, Kathurima Recognized at Dean's Advisory Board Awards Luncheon*, 52 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2019, at 27.

53. *Susanne Novak, Rosales Leaves Law College with Mission to Help Others*, 39 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall/Winter 2005–06, at 16.

54. *Caitlin Barnes, Advocacy of Shanks Family Inspires Gradwohl's Artwork*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 40.

55. *Brown v. Bd. of Educ.*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

56. *Jason A. Cantone, Charles Ogletree: All Deliberate Speed*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 37.

57. *Nebraska Entertainment and Sports Law Association*, 39 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring/Summer 2006, at 24. (NESLA merged with Law and Business to form Sports, Entertainment, and Business Law).

58. *Emily Rose, New Student Organizations Cater to the Diverse Interests of Nebraska Law Students*, 44 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2011, at 56–57.

59. *Ryan Lindberg, Law Students Spend Spring Break Providing Legal Help to New Orleans*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 28.

of the community. While preparing for graduation in September 2006, he tragically died at the age of twenty-five from a sudden cardiac event. His death occurred just eight months before he was to receive his Juris Doctor degree.⁶⁰ Mr. Brunner's death had a great impact on the Law College. The Paul Brunner Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in his honor.⁶¹

These are only a few of the many events sponsored by the MCLS and BLSA that impacted the Law College in a variety of ways and which also had an impact on the broader legal community in Nebraska.

V. MULTICULTURAL AND ALUMNI OF COLOR MAKING A MARK ON THE WORLD.

As the Law College prepares to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of MCLS and its partnership with BLSA and the Law College, it has renewed its efforts to locate and maintain contact with its multicultural alumni and alumni of color to celebrate their achievements. There is much to celebrate. Their careers are varied and have taken them to places around the world. Multicultural alumni and alumni of color are in major law firms, their own firms, government service, higher education, corporations, and beyond. Some now serve as judges. Many of the alumni have maintained contact with the Law College and have participated in recruitment and programming activities engage and encourage future generations of multicultural students and students of color to achieve their dreams in the law. The Appendix is a partial list of MCLS alumni and their many and varied accomplishments.

MCLS and its members remain an integral part of the Law College community. MCLS continues its efforts to recruit and retain students of color and to create an inclusive environment at the Law College. In the most recent school year, for example, MCLS, under the leadership of President Genesis Agosto, held office hours so students can get assistance in adjusting to law school and get to know the officers and other members of MCLS; another MCLS member, Deena Keilany, was the SBA President of the third-year class; and Natasha Naseem founded the Muslim Law Students Association. MCLS and BLSA are renewing their partnership and look forward to working with the Law College in its continuing efforts to diversify the Law College through such efforts as the Nebraska Legal Diversity Council, a non-profit es-

60. *Dedicated to the Memory of Paul Donald Brunner December 21, 1980–September 20, 2006*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 66.

61. *See Paul Brunner Memorial Scholarship Fund Donors*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Winter 2008, at 82.

tablished specifically to promote diversity and inclusion in Nebraska's legal profession.⁶²

62. Victoria Baker, *College partnerships look to diversify the state's law profession*, NEB. ALUMNI ASS'N., <https://www.huskeralum.org/s/1620/magazine/interior.aspx?sid=1620&gid=1&pgid=2567> [https://perma.cc/D59U-VPTK] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

APPENDIX

The following Appendix highlights the accomplishments and achievements of several MCLS/BLSA alumni in both legal and non-legal professions. Although this Appendix is not comprehensive, we are exceptionally proud of all Nebraska Law alumni.

Several former MCLS and BLSA members became judges. The Honorable Vernon Daniels, Class of 1983, was appointed Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court for Douglas County in 2001. While in law school, Judge Daniels served as the 1983 MCLS Chairman. Judge Daniels received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the College of Law Alumni Council in 2014. In being awarded this honor, “[h]e was recognized for his commitment to diversity in the practice of law and for his willingness to be a mentor to many in various stages of their legal careers.”⁶³ Judge Daniels was also the recipient of the Nebraska State Bar Association’s 2011 Diversity Award and 2013 Award of Appreciation for his involvement in diversity causes in Nebraska’s legal field.⁶⁴

The Honorable Riko Bishop, Class of 1992, presently serves as a Judge on the Nebraska Court of Appeals. Judge Bishop was appointed on July 19, 2013. The Honorable Derek Vaughn, Class of 1999, presently serves as a Judge of the Douglas County Court in Omaha, Nebraska.⁶⁵ Judge Vaughn began working as a Douglas County Deputy Attorney immediately after earning his law degree. The Honorable Andrea Miller, Class of 2006, was the first recipient of the Nebraska State Bar Foundation Standing Bear Law Scholarship and served as board chairwoman of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs (NCIA). Judge Miller was the first Native-American District Court Judge in Nebraska and currently serves in the 12th Judicial District. She was appointed in 2017.⁶⁶

Several MCLS/BLSA alumni pursued careers in public interest after graduation. John Robinson, Class of 1973, one of the original members of the Minority Recruitment Committee, served on the Lincoln City Council. Anthony L. Young, Class of 1990, is currently the Executive Director of the Southern Arizona Legal Aid Office in Tuc-

63. *Juvenile Judge Vernon Daniels: Judge, Mentor, Teacher, Friend*, 47 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2014, at 45–46.

64. *NSBA Awards History*, NEB. STATE BAR ASS’N., https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nebar.com/resource/resmgr/about_nsba/nsba_award_history.pdf [<https://perma.cc/3NV4-EE85>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

65. *Hon. Derek R. Vaughn*, STATE OF NEB. JUD. BRANCH, <https://supremecourt.nebraska.gov/hon-derek-r-vaughn-0> [<https://perma.cc/R8GP-LT2E>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

66. *Former NCIA Board Chairwoman Andrea Miller Is First Native American District Judge*, NEB. COMM’N OF INDIAN AFFS., (Jan. 30, 2018), <https://indianaffairs.state.ne.us/former-ncia-board-chairwoman-andrea-miller-is-first-native-american-district-judge/> [<https://perma.cc/VM38-3YMG>].

son, Arizona. Sharee Sanders Gordon, Class of 1995, is the Director of the Neighborhood School Safety Program at the Los Angeles City Attorney.⁶⁷ Duane A. Austria, Class of 1997, worked as Deputy County Attorney and, in 2000, started a career at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Since his retirement, Mr. Austria has built communities by volunteering for the American Red Cross.⁶⁸ Joy M. Smith-McCormick, Class of 2002, was named a 2019 Tampa Bay Business Journal's Top Corporate Counsel in honor of her work accomplishments. Ms. Smith-McCormick presently serves as Assistant County Attorney in Hillsborough County, Florida, and holds a leadership role on the Florida Bar's Education Law Committee.⁶⁹

Similarly, Odies Williams, IV, Class of 2005, currently acts as a Special Agent and Legal expert with the Department of Commerce. Mr. Williams has remained close to MCLS and the Law College and has served on the Law College Alumni Council and Dean's Advisory Board. Wendy Anika Carey, Class 2007, is the Supervisory Attorney Adviser with the Social Security Administration's Office of Hearings Operations in Seattle, Washington. Yohance L. Christie, Class of 2009, serves as the Lincoln City Attorney after being appointed in 2020 by Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird.⁷⁰ Previously, Mr. Christie served more than ten years as a Deputy Public Defender in Lancaster County, Nebraska. In September 2021, the Lincoln Young Professional Group named Mr. Christie the 2021 Young Professional of the Year.⁷¹ Jamie Reyes, Class of 2010, served as Legal Counsel for the Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations and is now Transportation Director and Rail Safety Manager at the Nebraska Public Service Commission. Gustavo Gutierrez, Class of 2011, serves as an Attorney with the Legal Aid Society in New York. Omaid Zabih, also of the Class of 2011, serves as the Strategy Senior Director for Nebraska Appleseed.

Many MCLS/BLSA alumni followed more traditional routes and are currently practicing attorneys in law firms. Damon Barry, Class of 2000, was named Managing Partner of the Denver Office of Ballard

67. Sharee Sanders Gordon, LINKEDIN, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sharee-sanders-gordon-2a22801a0/> [<https://perma.cc/ZR3R-WNZY>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

68. *Cindy Lange-Kubick: The Man in the Red Cross Vest and 50 Years of Diving in to Help*, LINCOLN J. STAR (Nov. 15, 2020), https://journalstar.com/news/local/cindy-lange-kubick-the-man-in-the-red-cross-vest-and-50-years-of-diving/article_5c8b9772-81f2-5ce0-a372-b42dafebb277.html [<https://perma.cc/LVC5-H5ZZ>].

69. *AlumNotes*, 53 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2020, at 42, 45.

70. *Id.* at 47.

71. *Lincoln YPG Announces Second Annual Young Lincoln Leader Award Winners*, LINCOLN YOUNG PROS. GRP. (Oct. 1, 2021), <https://www.lincolnypg.com/blog/blog-detail/1825-lincoln-ypg-announces-second-annual-young-lincoln-leader-award-winners> [<https://perma.cc/W2MY-Z79V>].

Spahr in January 2021.⁷² In 2010, UNL honored Mr. Barry as part of the UNL Alumni Master's Week.⁷³ EBONY magazine also recognized him as one of its "30 Leaders of the Future."⁷⁴ Most recently, Mr. Barry received Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Dean Advisory Board at the College of Law in 2022. Aliza Anvari, Class of 2003, is a Senior Litigation Attorney with the Law Office of Jill Elaine Greene LLC in New Jersey. Lily Amare, Class of 2015, practices as an attorney at Cline Williams Wright Johnson & Oldfather, LLP in Lincoln, Nebraska. Kate Martz, Class of 2012, is a Partner with the Baylor Evnen, LLP in Lincoln, Nebraska. Gatluak Ramdiet, Class of 2019, presently is an Associate Attorney with Martin Clearwater & Bell LLP, a New York City law firm. Mr. Ramdiet previously served as an Assistant District Attorney Bronx County District Attorney's Office.⁷⁵ Both Joy M. Kathurima and Deanna M. Piña, Class of 2019, practice law at the Hightower Reff Law firm located in Omaha, Nebraska.⁷⁶

Some MCLS/BLSA alumni have founded their own firms. Carlos Monzón, Class of 1994, and Raul Guerra, Class of 2005, practice together at the Monzón, Guerra & Associates Law Firm in Lincoln, Nebraska, specializing in immigration and criminal defense.⁷⁷ Susan Ugai, Class of 1981, founded her own firm—Ugai & Lindgren. (Ms. Ugai and Jose J. Soto, Class of 1984, have served as keynote speakers at the annual Freedom Breakfast honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Lincoln, Nebraska.) Jaye Ballard, Class of 1995, practiced law as a prosecutor with the Kings County District Attorney's Office before founding his own firm in New York, focusing on Criminal Defense and Family Law.⁷⁸ Shirley Mora James, Class of 1991, Jason P. Galindo, Class of 1993, and Peng Li, Class of 2016, founded their own firms in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jerry Brooks, Class of 2006, founded his own firm in Texas. Reginald Young and LaShawn Young, both mem-

72. *Ballard Spahr Names Damon Barry Denver Office Managing Partner*, BALLARD SPAHR (Jan. 4, 2021), <https://www.ballardspahr.com/insights/news/2021/01/ballard-spahr-names-damon-barry-denver-office-managing-partner> [https://perma.cc/6FQ2-QYY9].

73. Catherine Cano, *Life of a Master: Damon O. Barry*, '00, 44 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2011, at 46.

74. Robin Hadfield, *Magazine Names Barry Ebony Future Leader*, 36 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring/Summer 2002, at 54.

75. Gatluak B. Ramdiet, Esq., LINKEDIN, https://www.linkedin.com/in/gatluak-b-ramdiet-esq-259492a6/?miniProfileUrn=urn%3Ali%3Afs_miniProfile%3AACoAABZ-9-UB5yHIbtjf_J8S6ULN0djcWTcJ_GU [https://perma.cc/5L6Q-SLLV] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

76. *Our Team*, HIGHTOWER REFF L., <https://hrlawomaha.com/our-team/> [https://perma.cc/6FXP-ZFSU] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

77. *An Experienced Law Firm Dedicated to Your Success*, MONZÓN, GUERRA & ASSOCS., <https://www.monzonlaw.com/firm-overview/> [https://perma.cc/Z3UE-Z3LT] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

78. *Jaye Ballard, Esq.*, DONALDSON & CHILLIEST, LLP, <http://www.dcnylaw.com/jaye-ballard.html> [https://perma.cc/E3KA-243C] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

bers of the Class of 1995, started their own firm, Young & Young Attorneys at Law, located in Omaha, Nebraska. Young & Young Attorneys at Law was the recipient of the 2015 Omaha NAACP Freedom Fighter Award.

While several MCLS/BLSA alumni work in private law firms, other alumni went on to serve as corporate counsel. Olivia Guerra Keating, Class of 1976, one of the original student members of the Minority Recruitment Committee/MCLS, had a two-decade career as corporate Counsel of Mutual of Omaha before her death in 2018 at the age of 75. Ms. Guerra Keating also served on the Omaha Personnel Board, the Nebraska Mexican American Commission, and the Women of Color Caucus.⁷⁹ Gene Crump, also of Class of 1976, retired from his position as Associate General Counsel in the University of Nebraska Office of the Vice President and General Counsel.

In 2007, De “Dan” Hong, Class of 1993, was the first to receive the Nebraska Alumni Association’s Outstanding International Alumnus Award.⁸⁰ After graduation, Mr. Hong worked in New York City before joining Hong Kong Novel Enterprises as Chief Counsel in its Shanghai office. Indhira LaPuma, Class of 2005, became Counsel in the Intellectual Property Practice of Smith, Gambrell & Russell (SGR), LLP, and Director of Operations for SGR Labs in April 2019. Daniel E. Dawes, Class of 2006, Director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine, is a nationally renowned scholar and leader in the health equity and social justice movements. In 2011, Mr. Dawes received an Early Achiever Award from the University of Nebraska Alumni Association.⁸¹ Mr. Dawes has published two books, *150 Years of ObamaCare* (2016) and *The Political Determinants of Health* (2020).

Other MCLS/BLSA alumni pursued different ventures outside of the practice of law. After a successful career practicing law, Eartha Johnson, Class of 1994, formed LegalWatch, Inc.—a legal staffing and training company aimed at advising other companies and their employees about how to avoid litigation.⁸² She is the President and CEO. Stephen M. Foster, also of Class of 1994, is the Founder/CEO of FOSS Sports, LP, General Counsel at BiGAUSTIN Sports, and works as an

79. *In Memoriam*, 51 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2018, at 34.

80. *Hong First to Receive Outstanding International Alumnus Award*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Winter 2008, at 36 (Hong remarking how MCLS members delivered meals to his home after the birth of his child while he was a student).

81. *Law Grad Fights for Better Healthcare for the Economically Disenfranchised*, UNIV. OF NEB.-LINCOLN, <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/stories/4855> [https://perma.cc/YBC5-83VD] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

82. *Alumni Masters Week: Opportunities to Meet Eartha Jean Johnson*, NEB. COLL. OF L., <https://newsroom.unl.edu/announce/law/704/4226> [https://perma.cc/YR6V-8GLJ] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

on-air personality in Austin, Texas.⁸³ Carmen Lester, Class of 2002, presently serves as the Chief Clinical Officer at Lincoln Surgical Hospital since 2008.⁸⁴ Rebekah Caruthers, Class of 2007, is a political strategist and serves as the principal at Caruthers Consulting and Managing Partner for CAE Strategies.⁸⁵ Amber Shavers, Class of 2007, became Chief of Staff of New 42 in New York City in the Fall of 2021.⁸⁶ David G. Mulugheta, Class of 2010, is an NFL agent and equity partner at Athletes First.⁸⁷ Mr. Mulugheta has received nationwide attention for his negotiation skills and fairness to his clients.⁸⁸

Other MCLS/BLSA alumni pursued careers in academia. Alicia E. Santos, Class 1983, LL.M. Class of 2010, was appointed Assistant Director of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Compliance at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.⁸⁹ Jose J. Soto, Class of 1984, is the Vice President of Affirmative Action, Equity, and Diversity at Southeast Community College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Soto received the Cultural Awareness Award from KZUM radio. Linda R. Crump, Class of 1990, Emeritus Assistant to the Chancellor for Equity, Access, and Diversity Programs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was elected president of the Nebraska State Bar Association for 2006–2007.⁹⁰ In 2014, Ms. Crump received the Richard S. Arnold Award for Distinguished Service and Lifetime Achievement from the Eighth Circuit Bar Association during the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference.⁹¹

Valencia Davis, Class 2002, serves as a Career Staff Attorney at the Florida Supreme Court and as an Adjunct Professor at the Univer-

83. *Invest in Your Success and Be an Entrepreneur—Talk Business with Stephen M. Foster*, UNIV. OF TEX.-AUSTIN, <https://education.utexas.edu/events/413/invest-your-success-be-entrepreneur-talk-business-stephen-m-foster> [https://perma.cc/5LPH-PQW3] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

84. *Carmen Lester*, LINKEDIN, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/carmen-lester-005202b> [https://perma.cc/SS5C-N3H2] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

85. *Meet our Trainers: Rebekah Caruthers*, NAT'L DEMOCRATIC TRAINING COMM., <https://traindemocrats.org/people/rebekah-caruthers/> [https://perma.cc/24WP-NYPC] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

86. *Staff*, NEW 42, <https://www.new42.org/our-story/staff/> [https://perma.cc/F8NY-Z5P2] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

87. Jori Epstein, *Who Is David Mulugheta? How 36-year-old Son of Eritrean Immigrants Is 'Changing the Trajectory' for NFL Agents*, USA TODAY (June 11, 2019, 9:20 AM), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/2019/06/10/david-mulugheta-nfl-earl-thomas-landon-collins-jalen-ramsey/1366790001/> [https://perma.cc/C9PV-2BSX].

88. *See* Katie Pfanennstiel, *Football Agent Mulugheta Maintains, 'For Success, Be All in, but Find Balance'*, 53 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2020, at 29.

89. *AlumNotes*, 44 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2011, at 50, 53.

90. *AlumNotes*, 40 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Spring 2007, at 54, 58.

91. *AlumNotes*, 47 NEB. TRANSCRIPT, Fall 2014, at 49, 52.

sity of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida.⁹² Jamie A. Parson, Class of 2009, is a tenured Assistant Professor in the Department of Finance, Banking and Insurance at Appalachian State University and was named Interim Chief Diversity Officer of Appalachian State in May 2021.⁹³ Sam Padilla, Class of 2012, is the Export Control Director for the University of Nebraska System and the University of Nebraska Medical Center.⁹⁴

Two former MCLS Presidents presently work at the College of Law. Ariana Lopez, Class of 2021, serves as the Assistant Director of Recruitment, and Genesis M. Agosto, Class of 2022, serves as the College of Law's new Assistant Professor of Law Library as of Fall 2022.

Editor's Note: On March 25, 2022, the Multicultural Legal Society celebrated its 50th anniversary with a dinner at the Cornhusker Hotel. In attendance were many current members and MCLS alums. Most regrettably, Anna Shavers, the author of this article, who had done much of the planning for this event, passed away shortly before the celebration. MCLS is deeply grateful for all that she has done for the organization and to promote diversity at the Law College and throughout the state and nation.

92. *Faculty Profile: Valencia Davis*, FSU L. FOCUS (June 21, 2019), https://law.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu1581/files/Focus%20Newsletters/2019/06.21.2019_Newsletter.pdf [<https://perma.cc/9DEG-LEQA>].

93. *Diversity and Inclusion at Appalachian: Jamie Parson, J.D., Interim Chief Diversity Officer*, APPALACHIAN STATE UNIV., <https://diversity.appstate.edu/cdo/> [<https://perma.cc/636P-GRCL>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).

94. *Sam Padilla*, UNIV. OF NEB. SYSTEM, <https://nebraska.edu/offices-policies/provosts-office/evpp-staff-page/sam-padilla> [<https://perma.cc/8LZK-LUY9>] (last visited Oct. 7, 2022).