



Greetings!

Welcome to the summer edition of the Alumni Newsletter! In this issue, we are pleased to feature an interview with alumna Erin Elizabeth Mersino, a 2007 graduate of Ave Maria School of Law. Erin, a 2013 recipient of the Defender of the Faith Award from Legatus, is an accomplished attorney who focuses her practice on constitutional law and appellate litigation. For the past two years, Erin has been Chief of Supreme Court and Appellate Practice at the Great Lakes Justice Center in Lansing, Michigan. Read below to learn more about Erin's background and how she balances faith, family and her career. The month of May marked the time to say farewell to the Class of 2018, and welcome them into our proud Alumni Association. On May 11th, I was pleased to take part in the New Alumni Pinning Ceremony and Reception. It was a celebratory evening with the graduating class and their friends and families, as well as other fellow AMSL alumni. As you read this, many of our recent graduates are hard at work preparing for the upcoming bar exam on July 24th and 25th. If you happen to find yourself in the Tampa area on either of those days, feel free to stop by, say hi, and offer your support to our AMSL Florida Bar Takers. We wish them the best of luck on the exam, and much future success as they embark upon their journeys as legal professionals. Looking ahead, the Alumni Day of Prayer will take place on June 22nd this year. I hope that many of you will be able to participate in this day of reflection and blessings for your alma mater, and for one another. We are also looking forward to the 10th Reunion for the AMSL class of 2008. This reunion will be held on September 21st and 22nd in Ann Arbor, MI, and promises to be a great weekend. We encourage all alumni from the class of 2008 to plan to attend this event and reconnect with old friends.

As always, we encourage all alumni to get involved and connect with us. If you have any ideas for our newsletter, please feel free to send them to: alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jaime Hewitt'.

Jaime Hewitt, Esq.

President, Ave Maria School of Law
Alumni Association



Notes From the Dean



Dean Cieply is please to announce that the following Law Review Members were chosen to be published in our Law Review Volume 17:

1. Kimberly Swanson - Amended Rule 37 (E); Problem Solver or Problem Maker?
2. Kyle Bacchus - A Testament to the Future of Testaments: Electronic Wills are the Future
3. Katherine Cooke- Florida's Frivolous Flirtation with Shareholder Fiduciary Duty in Closely-Held Corporations
4. Erica Fernandez - HIPAA and Its Own Contradiction

FACULTY PROMOTIONS & UPDATES



Professor Maureen Milliron has been appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Dean Timothy Tracey has performed this role with distinction, and will go back to teaching full time.



Jane Adophe has been promoted to Professor.



Ligia Castaldi has been promoted to Professor.



Eric Fleetham has been appointed as the Director of the Research, Writing and Advocacy Department.



J. Kirkland Miller has been promoted to Associate Professor.

Daniella Palmiotto will be joining the tenure track faculty effective July 16, 2018.

Julie Simpson will be joining the faculty in the Research, Writing and Advocacy Department.

Congratulations to the faculty and students on their achievements!

Alumna Erin Mersino '07 successfully integrates faith, family and career

Erin Elizabeth Mersino is a skilled and accomplished attorney who focuses her legal practice on constitutional law and appellate litigation. She has worked on some highly influential cases, including the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act under the Commerce Clause and the legality of the HHS Mandate under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Erin has written numerous briefs submitted to the US Supreme Court, both as a party and as amicus curiae. Erin is passionate about the rule of law, civil rights and human dignity. She has appeared on several national television programs such as Fox and Friends, is frequently interviewed by radio and news outlets and her work has been published in USA Today, Politico Magazine, National Right to Life News, Live Action News, Life News and American Thinker. She lives with her husband, fellow Ave Maria School of Law graduate Paul Mersino '08, and their four sons in Ann Arbor, Michigan. We asked Erin to tell us about her career.



Q. Describe your position.

A. Chief of Supreme Court and Appellate Practice at the Great Lakes Justice Center in Lansing, Michigan.

Q. What has surprised you most about working in your position?

A. Unfortunately, in recent years, I have noticed an increase in bias toward the unchanged and divinely inspired teachings of the Catholic Church. There is an increased hostility toward the Church. This hostility particularly manifests itself in politics, in the law, and in the media. Issues such as the teaching that all humans have dignity and deserve life can be contorted into accusations of being anti-women's rights. This is the unfortunate reality we live in. Advocating for Catholic causes means one must be sensitive of this fact and be ready to articulately and fully describe issues with not only accuracy, but patience and love. The biggest challenge is managing the large volume of inquires that come through our office and frequently "shifting gears"

between the different areas of law. It certainly keeps one's mind sharp!

Q. What do you find most challenging about working in your position?

A. · The most challenging aspect of First Amendment litigation, specializing in free speech and freedom of religion, is overcoming the bias of some judges. I often walk into the courtroom on an uneven playing field because the judge already agrees with opposing counsel, due to the judge's political biases. Sometimes the animus is palpable, as judges can sometimes act harshly. Being treated in this manner requires a thick skin.

Q. What do you love about working in your position?

A. · Helping others and advocating for truth. I believe my work and efforts are important and serve a higher purpose. This belief drives me to work hard and always strive for excellence. Additionally, I get to work on complex, First Amendment issues. There is never a dull moment in this work.

Q. What do you want other people to know about your position?

A. · Defending individuals persecuted for their religious beliefs is a growing field. There is much opportunity in this field if you are willing to work hard.

Q. What is your personal philosophy pertaining to work?

A. · My personal philosophy can be summed up in two quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.:

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

"No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Q. Tell me about someone or something that has influenced your decision to work in your position?

A. My grandmother worked as a court reporter. My mom went to law school in the early 1960's and ended up dropping out. She was the only woman in her class at the time. My parents, and especially my dad, raised me to believe limitations were nothing and that anything could be accomplished with God and with hard work. Many times in law school, I felt embarrassed that I lacked the proper intellect or background to become an attorney. I shared this with my mom, who told me that "Life is similar to a river. When you are molded and shaped in law school, it may feel difficult, uncomfortable, even embarrassing. But when the river narrows, the stream gets stronger. You become a better and stronger person." Many times in life, I will think that what I'm faced with might be beyond my capabilities, but I come back to this reflection and immerse myself in prayer. If it is God's will, your hard work and determination will be enough. Every time I argue in court, I write at the top of my paper "God is with you." This gives me strength and peace.

Q. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to follow in your career path?

A. It is an incredibly fulfilling life. Welcome! We could use your help!

Q. What do you do when you aren't working?

A. I raise four energetic and spirited boys with my wonderful husband and fellow AMSOL alum, Paul Mersino.

Q. How has your experience at Ave Maria School of Law prepared you for your

position?

A. Prior to arguing before Judge Easterbrook in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, I thought to myself, "He can't be as tough as Professor Murphy in first year torts." And sure enough, although he was a bear, the experience was far easier and perhaps even slightly more pleasant.

Q. Do you have anything you'd like to share with fellow alumni?

A. Never doubt yourself. No matter where you came from or what obstacles you've faced- one thing is true. God meant you for greatness. Does this mean you will not face hardship? Absolutely not. As attorneys, we deal in the world of hardships. People do not come to attorneys because everything is going well. People seek our help because the world is weighing down on them in ways they have never experienced before. Hardship is one of life's only constants, but each is an opportunity to overcome. Experiencing hardships and injustice allow us to grow in holiness—and holiness and kindness are the reasons we are here.

AMSL CLE Program - Discover Your Enterprise: Getting Started As A Solo Practitioner

On Friday, August 17th, Ave Maria School of Law will be holding a Solo Practitioner Workshop from 9:00 am until 2:30 pm . Several local solo practitioners will be presenting on topics such as marketing your law firm and financial planning for small businesses. If you are interested in attending, or presenting, at future CLE programs, please email alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu.



Save the Date: August 17, 2018

**Discover Your Enterprise:
AVE MARIA SCHOOL OF LAW'S
SOLO PRACTITIONER WORKSHOP**

9:00 am - 2:30 pm
Approved CLE Credits
Local Solo Practitioner Presentations

Topics of Discussion:
"What I Wish I Knew When I Started"
Marketing Your Law Firm
Financial Planning for Small Businesses

To RSVP or find out more details:
Contact Alumni Affairs
alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu


Ave Maria School of Law
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www.avemarialaw.edu

Update on New Sports Complex

We have graciously received \$2 Million Dollars from an anonymous donor to build a Sports Complex on our campus. The future complex will be located just West of Commons. This is the largest single gift we have received for a capital improvement project. The donor gave the funds specifically to build an exercise facility.

It will include a small athletic/soccer field that will be a synthetic turf, two covered and lighted basketball courts, and a fitness center that will include aerobic and strength training equipment.

Our plans also include filling in the "water feature," and covering that area for more shaded seating outside the commons. We also plan on building a small playground in front of East Hall and an area for grilling just North of West Hall.

The Sports Complex will also serve to provide a venue for events and school gatherings.

We are extremely excited about this project, and very grateful to our donor.



Ave Law Mentor Program

It is that time of the year again! During the summer months the Career Services Office will work to update the Ave Law Mentor database. The process will include an email to individuals who have served as prior mentors or shared that they have an interest in becoming a mentor. We confirm and update all contact information, and make sure that you have been an alumnus for at least two years. Once we update the database we match first-year law students based on their geographic and/or practice area of interest. Please note that we do not always find a match with all available mentors, which means you may not hear back from us until we update the database again the next year. But please know that we appreciate your continued commitment and willingness to assist. If we can match a student with your geographic and/or practice area, we will contact you again this upcoming fall or the following spring school year with your mentee's name and contact information. If you are interested in participating as a mentor, please use the link below to complete the online form:

[Mentor Data Form](#)

Interested in employing fellow alumni?

As alumni at Ave Maria School of Law, you know the outstanding lawyers, law clerks and business professionals Ave Law graduates. If you or your employer are looking for talented long or short term employees, post or recruit from Ave Maria School of Law. Contact [Career Services](#) for recruitment options.

Ave Maria School of Law Happenings

Swearing-in Ceremony

The newest members of the Florida Bar were sworn in by the Honorable Carol Mirando, Federal Magistrate Judge of the US District Court for the Middle District of Florida, on April 20, 2018.

Congratulations! AMSL wishes you success in your careers! Pictured from left: John Humphreville '17, Mary Zizzo '17, Brett Gold '17, Sean Lux '17, Timothy Delaney '17 and Paul Udouj '17.



AMSL's Moot Court Team

Wins!

Victor Bermudez '18 and Christopher Fiore '18 beat out 20 teams from law schools across the country to win UCLA's Cyber Crimes Moot Court Competition. The competition is an annual external moot court competition exploring cutting edge issues in the field of cyber law. The team was coached by Professor Clifford Taylor and supported by the Moot Court Board, faculty and staff. Congratulations!



Alumni Day of Prayer - June 22



Please join alumni in the annual Alumni Day of Prayer on June 22. On this day, we celebrate the feast of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher, two English martyrs who were executed within two weeks of each other by King Henry VIII because they refused to compromise their faith and bend to the king's demands. Let us pray that as each one of us would have the courage to stand strong in the truth, even when the truth is unpopular or leads to our own persecution or suffering. From the prayers for today's Mass:

O God, who in martyrdom have brought true faith to its highest expression, graciously grant that, strengthened through the intercession of Saints John Fisher and Thomas More, we may confirm by the witness of our life the faith we profess with our lips. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Alumni at Ave



Colette Kellerhouse '13 and Adjunct Professor Robert Ross at the YLD Mock Uniform Calendar Event.



Kevyn Noonan Hayes '13 and Maria Vigilante '12 at the Career Services Networking Expo.



Students and alumni took part in the Immigration Legal Screening Clinic held on Sunday, May 20th. The clinic was sponsored by Americans for Immigrant Justice, Catholic Legal Services and Ave Maria School of Law.

Class of 2008 Reunion - Save the Date!

Attention class of 2008! Your 10 year class reunion will be held the weekend of September 21-23, 2018 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. More details to come!

Stay Connected!

Ave Maria School of Law encourages our alumni to stay connected. We invite you to share your personal and professional milestones, join our Networking and Referral Center, and participate in initiatives to grow and guide the next generation of Ave Maria School of Law practitioners. The Career Services & Alumni Affairs Office also offers alumni the opportunity to connect via a Professional Network on Symplicity. Please watch the video linked below for instructions on how to access Symplicity.



Join the Network

Participate in AMSL Events



VETERAN'S WALL OF HONOR

Please consider honoring a loved one by purchasing a plaque to be displayed on our Veteran's Wall of Honor. The plaque holds the name of a fallen hero, veteran, or an individual currently serving in the Armed Forces. If you are interested in learning more about the Veteran's Wall of

Honor, or if you would like to purchase a plaque, please contact Jeff McManus, Planned & Leadership Gifts Officer, at 239-687-5344.

Alumni Milestones

Class of 2006

Sarah Warner practices law at the firm of Thompson Warner, P.A. in Lawrence, Kansas, and teaches Conflicts of Laws and Appellate Practice as an adjunct professor at Washburn University School of Law. Sarah was voted and recognized as 2018 Adjunct Professor of the year by the graduating class of Washburn School of Law.

Class of 2008

Albert A. Abbou has joined the firm of Howard & Howard in Royal Oak, Michigan. Mr. Abbou prepares and prosecutes domestic and international patent applications with an emphasis in the computer, electrical and mechanical arts, as well as patents in the areas of business methods and electronic commerce. [Abbou press release](#)

Class of 2012

Timothy Gerrish has become the founding principal of Chattanooga Preparatory School, an all-boys charter school designed to serve Chattanooga's low income students. Please click on the link to read a news article about the school: [Chattanooga Preparatory School](#)

Class of 2013

Julianne Nowicki has been promoted to mid-level associate at Reed Smith LLP. Julianne works out of the Washington DC office. Her field of specialty is international trade law.

Class of 2014

Jessica (Ramirez) Thomson practices International and Domestic Taxation Law at the law firm of Richards & Sanchez, P.A. in Miami, Florida.

Class of 2015

Rebekah (Skiba) Miller and **Zachary Miller** welcomed a baby girl, Katherine Jane, on March 28, 2018.

Mary Fowler and **Beth Humann** recently started Gulf Coast Legal Group in Naples, FL. The firm specializes in personal injury, criminal defense, immigration law and family law.

Class of 2016

Spencer Shaw has joined the firm of Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt, P.A. in Fort Myers, Florida. Ms. Shaw focuses her practice in workers' compensation [Shaw press release](#)

Class of 2017

Naomi Hatton has been appointed to the Law Related Education Committee of the Florida Bar for the 2018-2019 year.

Andrea ("Andi") Phillips has joined the Department of Children and Families as a staff attorney in the Panama City office.

[Click Here to Share Your Milestone](#)

Upcoming Events

Friday, June 22, 2018
Alumni Day of Prayer

Friday, August 17, 2018
Solo Practitioner CLE
9:00am-2:30pm
Room 2035
Ave Maria School of Law, Naples, FL
For more information, email alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu

Weekend of September 21-23, 2018
10th Reunion for the Class of 2008
Ann Arbor, Michigan
For more information, email alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu

Wednesday, October 10, 2018
First Annual Ave Maria School of Law Day of Giving
Ave Maria School of Law, Naples, FL
More information forthcoming

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Ave Maria School of Law was founded in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1999, and in 2009 relocated to Naples, Florida. It is licensed by the Florida Commission for Independent Education, License Number 4007, and is fully accredited by the American Bar Association. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the division of consumer services by calling toll-free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state. <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/divisions-offices/consumer-services> 1-800-435-7352.

