



University of Louisville
Louis D. Brandeis School of Law

Alumni/ae Awards Banquet

October 7, 2009

ANNUAL LAW ALUMNI/AE AWARDS DINNER

University of Louisville
Louis D. Brandeis School of Law

James M. Chen, Dean

Welcome

Dinner

Introductions and Award Presentations

Alumni Fellow

Justice Lisabeth Hughes Abramson '80

Lawrence Grauman Award

Robert L. Ackerson '58

Distinguished Alumni/ae Awards

Mary E. Barrazotto '86
Ronald E. Meisburg '74
the Honorable Geoffrey P. Morris '71
Kathleen Pellegrino '76
Shelton R. Weber '54

Recent Alumnus Award

Demetrius "D" Holloway '00

Dean's Service Award

Thomas M. Williams

Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching

Kathleen S. Bean

About Our Award Winners



Justice Lisabeth Hughes Abramson ('80)

Lisabeth Hughes Abramson was sworn in as a justice for the Supreme Court of Kentucky on Sept. 10, 2007, after being appointed to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of the late Justice William E. McNulty, Jr. In November 2008, the voters of Jefferson County elected her to serve as the justice from the 4th Supreme Court District.

Justice Abramson first served in the Kentucky judiciary as a Court of Appeals judge from 1997 to 1998. From January 1999 until July 2006, Justice Abramson served as a circuit judge for the 30th Judicial Circuit in Division Three of the Jefferson Circuit Court. In July 2006, she was reappointed to the Court of Appeals and later elected unopposed to that court where she was serving at the time of her appointment to the Supreme Court.

Justice Abramson earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Louisville, graduating in 1977 with highest honors. She graduated magna cum laude from the University of Louisville School of Law in 1980 and was named the Outstanding Graduate of her law school class. Before serving as a judge, she practiced law for 15 years, concentrating on business and commercial litigation.

Justice Abramson is a past president of the University of Louisville School of Law Alumni Council and is a Master of the Louis D. Brandeis Inn of Court. She also serves as a trustee for the Kentucky Judicial Form Retirement System Board, and is the Supreme Court representative on the Kentucky IOLTA Board and the KBA Continuing Legal Education Commission. She is a frequent lecturer for the Kentucky Circuit Judges College and a 2007 graduate of Leadership Louisville.

Justice Abramson is a native of Princeton, Ky. She and her husband, Professor Leslie W. Abramson, have three sons.

Robert L. Ackerson ('58)

Bob began practicing law in 1958 and founded the firm which is now Ackerson & Yann, where his practice concentrated on business, tax and personal and estate planning. He was a member of the Regional Counsel and Internal Revenue Service from 1959-1963. Last summer Bob was recognized by the Kentucky Bar Association as a Senior Counselor for fifty years of service to the Kentucky bar. He was a strong supporter of the university's athletic program, and the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, a past member of the American Bar Association, the Kentucky Bar Association, Delta Theta Pi and a directory of Family Place. Bob was regarded by members of his firm as a friend, mentor and esteemed colleague—the tribute to him on the firm's website states the following: "We are all saddened and diminished by the loss of Bob. We are grateful for his legacy at our firm and intend to carry on with the highest level of professionalism and competence that Bob provided throughout his distinguished career."



Mary E. Barrazotto ('86)

Mary Barrazotto is vice president, associate general counsel for Brown-Forman Corporation. She represents Brown-Forman Beverages in all regulatory issues involved with the marketing and sale of their products in the US as well as all marketing matters globally.

Barrazotto began her legal career as an associate with the law firm of Wyatt Tarrant & Combs. In 1990, she joined Brown-Forman as senior attorney. In 1992, Barrazotto was appointed corporate officer, three years later to assistant vice president, and to vice president in 1998. She was appointed to her current position in 2002.

Barrazotto serves as Brown-Forman's representative to the Laws and Regulations Committee and Code Review Board of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS). In addition, she serves on the Wine Institute's Public Policy Committee. Along with her professional responsibilities, she actively participates in community-based, volunteer organizations. She is a former Chairperson of Metro United Way and was President of the Louisville Bar Association. She currently serves on the boards of Maryhurst, Louisville's Public Radio Partnership, the Louisville Bar Foundation and Kentucky Country Day.

Barrazotto earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Virginia and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Louisville.

A native of Arlington, VA, Barrazotto resides in Louisville with her husband, Louis Waterman, and their two children, Mark and Kate.



Ronald E. Meisburg ('74)

Ronald Meisburg was nominated by President Bush to be General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board in June, 2005. Mr. Meisburg's nomination was confirmed by the Senate in August, 2006, for a four year term ending in August, 2010.

Mr. Meisburg also served as a member of the National Labor Relations Board under a recess appointment from President Bush in December, 2003. He served under the recess appointment until the Senate adjourned *sine die* in December, 2004.

Prior to his service with the Board, Mr. Meisburg was in the private practice of labor law for twenty-three years, most recently as a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart and, prior to that, Heenan, Althen & Roles. In private practice, Mr. Meisburg advised management clients with respect to issues arising under federal labor and employment law and labor agreements; served as labor counsel in complex business transactions; assisted clients in preparing and presenting arbitration cases; and represented clients in litigation before federal agencies and courts.

Prior to entering private practice in 1980, Mr. Meisburg was an appellate litigator in the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of Labor, in Washington, D.C. In 1978 he was awarded the Secretary of Labor's Distinguished Achievement Award. Mr. Meisburg is also a fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers.

Mr. Meisburg was born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and is a graduate of Carson-Newman College and the University of Louisville's Brandeis School of Law. He is married to Mary Helen Ratchford, and they reside in Arlington, Virginia.



The Honorable Geoffrey P. Morris ('71)

Since 1992 Judge Morris has served as judge for Jefferson Circuit Court (General Trial Division), Division 11. He has conducted over 400 civil and criminal trials and has written appellate decisions for cases on appeal from the Jefferson County District Court. Judge Morris has presided over two special Grand Juries and has maintained a yearly docket of approximately 900 civil and criminal cases. He has served as president of the Louisville Bar Association (1981), the Louisville Bar Foundation (1982), the Kentucky Academy of Justice (1976) and as chairperson of the LBA Criminal Practice Committee (1978). Prior to his services on the bench he served as Assistant Commonwealth Attorney (1976-1985) was in private practice, focusing on the areas of criminal defense and personal injury litigation, and was a deputy public defender.



Kathleen Pellegrino ('76)

Kathleen was graduated in 1968 with a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin. She was a reporter for the Kansas City Star, before joining the Associated Press in Louisville in 1972. She entered the then University of Louisville Law School in 1974 and was graduated *cum laude* in December, 1976. She joined the law firm Segal, Isenberg, Sales and Stewart, where she practiced labor law until July, 1982, when she joined Humana Inc. Other than a brief stint at Galen Health Care Inc., the hospital company spun off by Humana in 1993, she has remained with Humana, where she is Vice President and Deputy General Counsel. She has served as chair of the Jefferson County Women Lawyers Association and the Corporate Counsel sections of the Louisville and Kentucky Bar Associations. She also has been active in support of the Legal Aid Society and serves on the board of the Home of the Innocents.



Shelton R. Weber ('54)

Shelley has practiced law in Louisville for 50 years and is a co-founder of the firm Weber & Rose. His practice focuses on the fields of corporate law, probate and labor relations. He has represented management in organizing campaigns, negotiations, mediation, arbitration and in matters before the National Labor Relations Board. He has a long history of volunteer involvement and has served as past chairman of both the National Board of Governors of Volunteer Trustees of Not-for-Profit Hospitals and the Board of Trustees of Jewish Hospital. He has also received the prestigious Allen Society Award for his continuous

services to the United Way. Shelley was an attorney in the Judge Advocate General's Department of the United States Air Force and an Assistant Jefferson County Attorney under County Judge Marlow W. Cook.

Demetrius "D" Holloway ('00)

D is currently a member of the Employment Law Service Group at Stites & Harbison. He also assists in business litigation matters, and in the defense of civil suits involving personal injury, products liability, breach of contract, and common law tort claims. D has assisted in the defense of state and federal civil suits involving Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. D volunteers as a member of the board of the Boys & Girls Club of Kentuckiana and the Louisville Enterprise Group. While at law school he was member of the *Journal of Law and Education*, the Black Law Students Association, and the Student Bar Association.



Thomas M. Williams

Thomas M. Williams is a member of the Louisville law firm of Stoll Keenon Ogden. Tom grew up in the Cincinnati area and attended the College of William & Mary on golf scholarship. He graduated with a BA in philosophy in 1986. Tom moved to Louisville in 1990 upon receipt of his Juris Doctor from the University of Cincinnati, College of Law.

Tom's legal practice focuses in management-side labor and employment law. He has been recognized by Best Lawyers and Chambers USA as a leader in the field. In 2008 and 2009, he was honored as one of the top 50 attorneys in the state of Kentucky by Super Lawyers.

Tom has been an active member of the Louisville legal community. In 2007, he served as President of the Louisville Bar Association. Tom currently serves as Co-chair of a subcommittee of the Louisville Bar Association called "Louisville Peace Works" whose mission is to help recognize Louisville as a city of peace and diplomacy. Under that committee, Tom is working with community leaders in introducing restorative justice concepts to Kentucky courts.

In addition to his bar work, Tom serves on the boards of the Thomas Merton Institute, Interfaith Paths to Peace and Leadership Louisville. Tom is the 2009 Board Chair for Leadership Louisville and is helping that organization launch its Connector Project that has received recent publicity.

As an interesting footnote, Tom was instrumental in securing the passage of a law to honor Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech with a marker at the Lincoln memorial in Washington D.C. The dedication of a marker took place in August of 2003 where Tom spoke along with Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Representative John Lewis. Last year, Tom drafted and advanced a local ordinance to name Thomas Merton Square in downtown Louisville. He also led a consortium of groups that erected a banner of Thomas Merton and the Dalia Lama at the George Garvin Brown garden in downtown Louisville.

Tom and his wife, Sarah, have three children under ten years old: Lilly, Lincoln and Nelson. The family attends Holy Trinity Catholic Church.



Professor Kathleen S. Bean

Before joining the faculty in 1983, Professor Bean clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, served as staff attorney for the Legal Services Corporation of Iowa, and as director of a student legal services clinic at Drake University School of Law. Her work at Legal Services emphasized domestic and child custody work; the clinic she directed served low-income clients.

After coming to Louisville, Professor Bean has remained active in work involving women, children, and the poor. Most recently she served as the Law School's Brandeis Fellow, spending most of her Fall 2008 semester volunteering at the Louisville Legal Aid Society. Much of her other volunteer work has been with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). She has participated in the University/Community Partnership Initiative "Every 1 Reads," by tutoring at a local elementary school. Previously she served for three years as Chair of the JCPS Youth Performing Arts School Scholarship Committee. Professor Bean has also served as a board member for the Louisville Legal Aid Society and for the National Consumer Law Center in Boston; she was a member of the Kentucky Supreme Court Gender Bias Task Force; and she has volunteered as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for Jefferson County and for Habitat for Humanity.

Professor Bean's teaching is focused primarily on legal writing and analysis. In 2000, she was awarded the Brandeis Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award; in 2001, she was awarded the University's Distinguished Teaching Professor Award. In addition to her first-year teaching, Professor Bean teaches the law school's Juvenile Justice seminar; this course involves students in job-shadowing a public defender or prosecutor who works on child delinquency matters, and courtroom visits concerning child dependency matters. Her recent scholarship focuses on children's issues, and she has also done extensive research on Kentucky's early women lawyers.

Professor Bean graduated with Honors from Drake University School of Law where she served as Editor in Chief of the *Drake Law Review*. She is a member of COIF and is an honorary member of the School of Law's Brandeis Honor Society.