

6-17-2011

## Dean's Annual Letter 2011

Drucilla S. Ramey

Golden Gate University School of Law, [dramey@ggu.edu](mailto:dramey@ggu.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/deansrep>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ramey, Drucilla S., "Dean's Annual Letter 2011" (2011). *Dean's Annual Report*. Paper 1.  
<http://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/deansrep/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the About GGU School of Law at GGU Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dean's Annual Report by an authorized administrator of GGU Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [jfischer@ggu.edu](mailto:jfischer@ggu.edu).

June 17, 2011

Dear Graduates and Friends,

As Golden Gate University School of Law marks its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of pioneering innovation in legal education, we have been celebrating many historic milestones achieved by this remarkable institution, its faculty, students and alumni. From the first day of classes in August 2010, to last month's inspirational graduation speech by CNN Worldwide Senior Legal Analyst Jeffrey Toobin, this has been a year of Firsts. I write today to highlight just a few of the year's extraordinary new programs and achievements and to preview for you some particularly exciting events planned for the 2011-12 academic year.

It was our great pleasure to welcome four wonderfully accomplished new tenure-track professors to our faculty last fall: **Laura Cisneros**, a Constitutional Law scholar who was the recipient of the American Association of Law School's (AALS) prestigious Award as outstanding new scholar; **Benedetta Faedi Duramy**, an international expert in international human rights, who came to us with a Stanford PhD and an impressive record of scholarly publications; **Karen Gebbia**, a nationally acclaimed bankruptcy scholar and teacher who was formerly tenured at the University of Hawaii; and **Wes Porter**, a distinguished former federal prosecutor and former GGU Adjunct Professor, who has brought to our burgeoning Litigation Center his rich background of litigation experience and scholarly achievements.

With this tremendous infusion of new initiative and talent, our highly energized faculty and staff put in place a number of important new programs and initiatives. More than ever before, our graduates are emerging with the hands-on advocacy experience—via our clinical, externship, apprenticeship and trial and appellate advocacy programs and our greatly expanded regional and national competition program—that will enable them to enter the profession far ahead of their peers from most other schools. GGU has been rated third in the nation in the percentage of students participating in such programs, and, beginning with this year, all students are required to participate in at least one such program.

As innovators in this emphasis on skills-infused learning, we launched two exciting new programs to better inform and immerse students in the particularized skills necessary to practice in specific substantive areas of the law. In their second semester, our first-year students chose from among a dozen "**Lawyering Electives**," seminar-style classes focusing on client counseling, negotiation, fact-finding, statutory interpretation, transactional skills and written and oral advocacy skills required for practice in a specific substantive area of the law. Early reviews are quite enthusiastic.

Office of the Dean

536 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA  
94105-2968  
tel: 415-442-6600  
fax: 415-495-6609  
[www.ggu.edu/law](http://www.ggu.edu/law)

Further supplementing the already robust post-first year summer opportunities available to our students via the **Honors Lawyering Program** and our Paris Comparative Law Program, Professor Wes Porter this summer launched a new Litigation Center program, the **1st STEP (Summer Trial and Evidence Program)**. This unique eight-week summer program allows selected “rising 2L” students to immerse themselves in intensive courses focusing on acquisition and strengthening of litigation and advocacy skills, including Evidence, Trial Advocacy, a specially-fashioned Evidence in the Courtroom course, and instruction by a theatre arts instructor in dramatic presentation and acting techniques. More information about 1<sup>st</sup> STEP and the Litigation Center may be found at [ggulitigation.com](http://ggulitigation.com).

We are proud of the great increase in faculty scholarship this year, including numerous law review articles ranging from the use of gender-neutral language by Supreme Court Justices to complex systems of ethical constraints on juvenile court judges. We also saw the release of two books—*Vulnerable Populations and Transformative Law Teaching: A Critical Reader*, co-edited with the Society of American Law Teachers, and based on the highly successful National Poverty Law Conference held here last spring, and *The Great Dissents of the “Lone Dissenter,”* written and edited by GGU Law professors and focusing on the pioneering civil rights and civil liberties opinions of California Supreme Court Justice Jesse W. Carter (JD 1913).

Students’ educational experience was enriched by a wide array of new programs, special initiatives and seminal events held at the Law School, including:

- Thanks to an enormously generous \$500,000 grant from the Elfenworks Foundation, led by its founder, GGU alumna Dr. Lauren Speeth, our Women’s Employment Rights Clinic (WERC) established the new **Elfenworks Center for Employment Justice**, enabling us to greatly expand our work on advocacy, legal services and education for domestic workers and other caregivers. With the hard work of ECEJ-WERC clinic students, led by Professors Marci Seville and Hina Shah, the Center negotiated large settlements on behalf of minimum wage domestic workers, and in June, as legal counsel to the California Domestic Workers Coalition, celebrated the passage of AB 889, the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, by the California Assembly.
- In addition to hosting its annual Intellectual Property Law & Policy Conference, the **IP Law Center** hosted two Distinguished IP Speaker Series events, featuring, respectively, Pamela Samuelson, Professor and Director for the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology presenting remarks on the proposed Google Book Search settlement and a highly publicized speech by Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Alex Kozinski focusing on the “death of the First Amendment” in the internet age. Under Professor Bill Gallagher’s leadership, the IP Law Center published its second *IP Law Book Review*, a unique online review of recent publications in the IP law area, available online at [gguiplc.com](http://gguiplc.com).
- The ABA gave high praise (and reaccreditation) to our summer **International Comparative Law Program in Paris**, co-directed by Professor Eric Christiansen and Professor Anne Deysine of Université Paris X Nanterre.

- Ghanaian High Court Justice Justice Gertrude Torkornoo served as the first participant in our unique **International Women Judges Graduate Fellowship Program**, receiving her LLM in Intellectual Property Law this spring. Co-sponsored by the International Association of Women Judges, and generously funded by local legal titan Elizabeth Cabraser and former New York City Bar President Robert Kaufman, the Program sponsored numerous presentations by Justice Torkornoo here and across the Bay Area. We are looking forward to welcoming our 2011-12 Fellow, Kenyan Magistrate Justice Angela Njeri Thuku.
- Alumna Amy Eskin made it possible for GGU Law to serve this year as the first **Law School Landmark Sponsor of the National Association of Women Judges**, providing the funding for her own and Professor Marci Seville's participation in NAWJ events including the Annual Conference held here in San Francisco.
- Under the leadership of Professors Paul Kibel and Alan Ramo, GGU Law in January launched a new **Center on Urban Environmental Law (CUEL)**, ggucuel.org, bringing a new focus on actionable research to our already robust environmental program. The Center focuses on large scale research projects and white papers providing legal and regulatory strategies to improve water, air, climate, and greenspace conditions, as well as the creation of law school curriculum focused specifically on urban environmental issues.
- Among its many victories this year, the **Environmental Law & Justice Clinic**, in partnership with community groups in the Bayview-Hunters Point district, achieved and celebrated the closure of San Francisco's last fossil fuel plant in early 2011.
- Our 2010 **Second Annual Chief Justice Ronald M. George Distinguished Lecture**, sponsored by over 25 major law firms and corporations, was a great success, featuring National Association of Women Judges President Justice Dana Fabe and a panel of other pioneering women Chief Justices from across the country.

As we look forward to a year of great potential and challenge, I hope you will be sure to calendar the following can't-miss events (details to follow):

- **September 24, 2011: Golden Gate University 110th Anniversary Family Picnic.** More information may be found at [ggu.edu/events](http://ggu.edu/events).
- **October 18, 2011: The Third Annual Chief Justice Ronald M. George Distinguished Lecture**, featuring **Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye** and a panel of distinguished State Supreme Court Chief Justice of Color from across the country, joined by U.S. District Court Chief Judge James Ware, and co-sponsored by the NAWJ and the California Judges Association, whose President, Judge Keith Davis, is a GGU alumnus. More information may be found at [ggu.edu/school\\_of\\_law/ronald\\_m\\_george\\_lecture\\_page](http://ggu.edu/school_of_law/ronald_m_george_lecture_page)
- **April 20-21, 2012: GGU Law's first-ever Dean Judith McKelvey Women's Reunion**, celebrating our women alumnae and the legacy of Dean Judith McKelvey, under whose leadership GGU became a pioneer in fostering the influx and success of women into law school and the highest reaches of the profession.

Following a year in which we admitted one of the most highly credentialed classes in our history, applications for the Class of 2011-12 are down here and across the country, as prospective students, influenced by a litany of cautionary stories in the media, critically decide whether law school continues to represent a wise investment in their future. Commencement Speaker Jeffrey Toobin referenced such difficult times, but urged that “Times of change and times of uncertainty—those are something to embrace rather than something to fear... Many of you will spend your careers in jobs and fields that do not even exist today. You will litigate cases in new fields on products that have not yet been invented. That thought is a little bit scary but a lot exciting.” He closed by urging our graduates to serve as “a kind of truth squad for what is going on.”

I join Mr. Toobin in observing that despite the very substantial challenges of a fragile economy, and contrary to the media’s negative portrayal of the legal profession, quality legal education will continue to provide graduates with unique and extraordinarily important opportunities to enhance justice in a recovering legal profession, be it in large firms, small firms, solo practice, non-profit organizations, government, business, or education. Today’s law graduates will continue to thrive in careers both in and beyond the law for the same reasons their forebears did—because the skills, training and habits of mind in which students are immersed throughout their legal education here will provide them with the capacity to thrive in tomorrow’s leadership roles.

GGU Law graduates have an added invaluable attribute—a special talent for making their own luck. One may, of course, speculate on the reasons for our alumni’s unsurpassed work ethic and drive—many worked full-time before and while attending GGU Law and received exceptional training and real-world experience while matriculating. This theme, however, has been true for generations and remains central to what we consider our most important work: educating individuals with the skill, determination, judgment, and moral compass to assume their responsibilities as outstanding members of the legal profession and the broader society.

I want to express my personal gratitude to all of you, our distinguished and generous friends and alumni, who support Golden Gate Law in countless ways, as we continue to serve our students, alumni, the profession and the community. Our next 110 years clearly promise to be an equally successful and joyous ride.

With kind regards,



Drucilla Stender Ramey  
Dean