

LAW SCHOOL CLASS NOTES

1983

JOSEPH A. GEREMIA JR. of Bethany, CT, was recognized for the fourth consecutive year on the Connecticut and New England Super Lawyers list under the family law practice area. Joseph, whose law practice is in Waterbury, is married to Michelle Geremia, a QU biology professor.

PAUL KLEMOW of West Palm Beach, FL, founded PowerLegal, a law firm in West Palm that provides consumers with the opportunity to be represented by an attorney at costs similar to those charged by Legalzoom.

1987

LORI KIRSCH-GOODWIN of Scottsdale, AZ, conducted a webinar for Edupliance titled, "Bullying in Schools: Legal Issues & Practical Strategies."

1988

DONNA M. GENOVESE of Pleasantville, NY, is a founding partner in Goldschmidt & Genovese, matrimonial and family law, with offices in New York City and White Plains.

1989

RICHARD FRANKEL of Port Washington, NY, is of counsel with Ruskin Moscov Faltischek on Long Island and CEO of Red Rock Global Capital Ltd. He spent 26 years in law enforcement as a prosecutor and an FBI special agent. He is also an on-air consultant for ABC News. Richard is married to Christine Sommero Frankel and they have five children.

AMY LOMBARDO of Fairfield, CT, joined the health care practice of Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker in the White Plains, NY, office as of counsel this past June.

1991

KEVIN C. FERRY of Avon, CT, operates Ferry Law in New Britain, focusing on personal injury, medical malpractice

and criminal law. He has brought mindfulness to his law practice through exploring meditation in its various forms, including Tai Chi, Qi Gong, yoga, permaculture and tea culture.

1994

KEVIN LAWLOR of North Haven, CT, has been appointed the new deputy chief state's attorney for operations in the division of criminal justice by the Connecticut Criminal Justice Commission. He oversees the operational and investigative bureaus at the Office of the Chief State's Attorney and also assists in prosecutions in the state's 13 judicial districts.

DAVID L. WIKSTROM

of Florham Park, NJ, a shareholder with Javerbaum Wurgaft Hicks Kahn Wikstrom & Sinins, was sworn in as a trustee for the New Jersey State Bar Association in 2018. He recently spoke about legal malpractice in Denver before the American Association of Jurists and in Washington, D.C., before the American Bar Association. He also chairs the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Trial Certification and was again named a Super Lawyer in New Jersey Monthly Magazine in the area of plaintiffs' product liability.

1997

CHARLES LEE MUDD JR. of Western Springs, IL, was selected to participate in the First United Nations Conference on Space Law and Policy in September 2018 in Moscow. Since 2017, Charles has expanded his law firm to include representing entities involved in the commercial space industry. He completed a graduate level astrophysics class at the University of Chicago that year.

1999

THOMAS SAADI of Danbury, CT, was confirmed by the Connecticut General Assembly as commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs in February 2018. He previously served as acting commissioner, chief of staff and general counsel. Thomas is also a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, assigned as the chief legal officer

of the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion. He is also serving his 10th term on the Danbury City Council.

2003

MARK SCHNITZLER of Fairfield, CT, established his own law firm in July 2018 with offices in Fairfield and Greenwich, CT, focusing on real estate, probate litigation and personal injury.

2004

MICHAEL MENAPACE of North Granby, CT, a partner at Wiggin and Dana, was installed as the president of the Hartford County Bar Association in May. His practice focuses on complex commercial litigation, the insurance and reinsurance industries, and data breach/cyber-liability issues.

2005

CHRIS GALLAGHER of Warminster, PA, is an associate at Thomas Thomas & Hafer in August 2018, focusing on property insurance. The firm is based in central Pennsylvania.

COLIN MAHON of

Meriden, CT, a partner at Mahon Quinn and Mahon, is a board-certified workers' compensation specialist. He was recently appointed to serve a three-year term on the statewide grievance committee.

2006

STEPHEN YOST of West Redding, CT, has joined Collins Hannafin of Danbury, focusing on commercial transactions and taxation.

2011

ROB SHEPHERD, JD/MBA, recently was promoted to manager at Durbin Bennett Tax Advisors in Austin, TX, where he handles estate planning, consulting and compliance services to high net-worth individuals and their various entities.

2012

PRERNA RAO of Newtown, CT, has opened a new law firm in Trumbull, CT, Rao & Jo, with a colleague, Daniel Jo. She previously worked for five years at the Stamford-based Pickel Law Firm before opening

her own practice in September 2017.

2013

EDWIN M. HERNANDEZ GARCIA of New York, NY, an associate at Reinhardt LLP in New York City since December 2015, practices in the areas of business and family immigration.

STEFAN SAVIC leads the litigation department at Shipkevich PLLC in New York City. He recently joined the firm as a partner. He focuses his practice on various types of international arbitration and litigation.

2016

ABIGAIL MASENHEIMER of Coplay, PA, associate general counsel at Pencor Services in Palmerton, PA, was named

one of Cablefax's top regional power players for her work at Pencor Services and Blue Ridge Communications.

2017

HEATHER FENNEL was promoted to assistant general counsel at Northwell Health. She was awarded a one-year fellowship upon graduation and also was chosen to receive the Saul Katz award from Northwell, given annually to the current fellow who received the highest evaluations during the fellowship program.

2018

KATELYN DAY joined Hopkinson & Abbondanza in Portland, ME, as an associate attorney. She specializes in estate planning and real estate transactions.



Photo Autumn Driscoll

FORMAN DISCUSSES INCARCERATION

When **JAMES FORMAN JR.** was a public defender in Washington, D.C., he petitioned a judge to waive the sentence his 15-year-old black client faced, based on a lifetime of hardship.

Forman was floored when the judge, also black, cited his own hardships during the civil rights movement as rationalization for the harsh sentence he ordered. "The judge had invoked the same history that motivated me to become a public defender, but he had somehow flipped it on its head and used it as a justification for why he needed to lock up Brandon," explained the Yale Law School professor and Pulitzer prize-winning author.

Forman explores the issue of mass incarceration in his 2018 Pulitzer prize-winning book, "Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America." His talk was attended by students from the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

"One of the reasons why we have the largest prison system in the world is that we have demonized and otherized people and have created this scary conception of the criminal," he said. — **Kimberly Shepherd**

LAW DEGREE ENHANCES HR CAREER

Legal background assists Kaiser VP in human resources role

BY OLIVIA ABEL
PHOTO JAMES TENSUAN

GROWING UP IN OKLAHOMA, RICH SMITH, JD '00, didn't dream of a law career, even though he did enjoy the legal exploits of TV's "Perry Mason." "In fact, I wanted to be a businessman," he said.

The first in his family to go to college, Smith graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in management and jumped right into a personnel job at Fleming Foods. Over the next 15 years he earned an MBA and built a successful human resources career that had him hopping around the country to take increasingly senior positions.

Over time, though, Smith felt a growing desire to attend law school. "I knew if I didn't do it, I would always wonder—what if?" said Smith, who enrolled in Quinnipiac's School of Law in 1997. It was a hectic period: He continued to work full time as a human resources manager at Union Carbide in Danbury. After work, he commuted an hour to campus and attended class for more than three hours (four nights a week during some semesters). He lived this busy schedule for more than three years. He even witnessed the birth of his second son the day after his first law school exam.

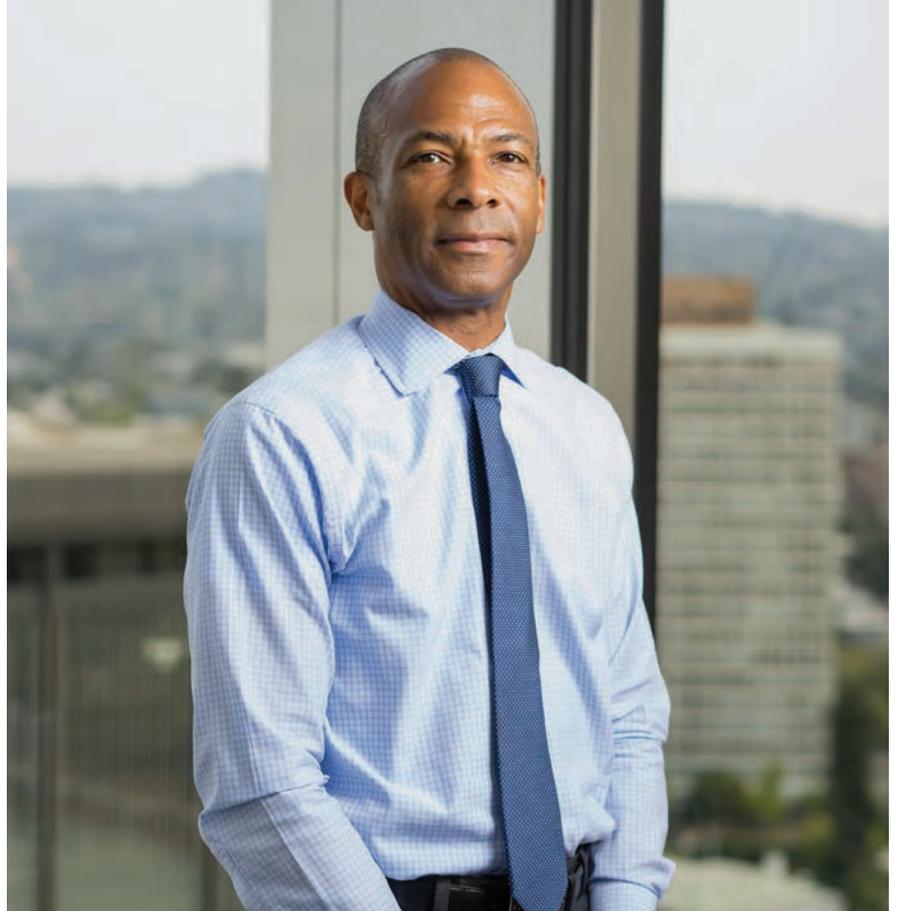
"Once I got started, I knew this was something that was interesting and exciting—and come hell or high water, I was going to finish," Smith said. After graduating cum laude in 2000, he passed the bar the first time he took it.

You won't find Smith in a courtroom, however. He is using his degree to further his HR career. He is vice president of human resources strategy and management for Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California.

"This field is becoming so much more legalistic; being a lawyer definitely gives you a step up. It really helps you think through problems and helps an organization get more value out of the role, especially in smaller or mid-sized firms that don't necessarily have inside counsel," said Smith. He meets many other non-practicing lawyers working in HR.

After law school, Smith landed a job as senior director of human resources at Pfizer in Manhattan. Eight years later he moved on to become regional vice president of human resources for Kaiser Permanente in Portland, Oregon, before assuming his current role.

"The Kaiser people were definitely interested in the fact that I was a lawyer," he said. "My last role with Kaiser was very much a tactical day-to-day role; I interacted with the unions and dealt with benefits and more. My current job is



more strategic and includes managing a large budget and the strategic investment process."

Moving his wife of 31 years and his two sons around the country—they lived in six states—was good for all of them, he said. "It took us out of our comfort zone and it was very exciting."

Does he have a favorite spot? "Every one of these places has some really fond memories, as well as things that weren't so great. Portland grew on us much more than we originally thought it would, for lots of reasons."

With such a busy schedule, he doesn't have many hobbies. "I like to get out and walk. The quiet time gives me an opportunity to think," he said. "I do like to read; John Grisham is my favorite author. And I like to hike and travel."

Looking back, Smith said one of the highlights of his career occurred before law school while he worked at Mobil Chemical. In order to become the best human resources executive possible, he needed experience working with labor unions. But Mobil Chemical had only one plant with organized labor, in Edison, New Jersey. Luckily, the position opened up and the Smith family moved once again. But the union contract was about to expire in months, and without a deal, a strike was likely.

"I went in and learned about the people and the contract and took some crash courses in labor negotiations; I successfully negotiated a new three-year agreement. The New Jersey teamsters were a little intimidating, but I got it done," he said.

"I've tried to build a career with a variety of different experiences at different levels in different geographies to show myself that I could be adaptable in any situation. I have no regrets."

Rich Smith, JD '00, put his legal education to work as vice president of human resources strategy and management at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California.