COLLEGE OF LAW

In September 1982, Georgia State University established a law school to make legal education in Georgia more accessible through a flexible, full-time and part-time practice-based program in downtown Atlanta. With 100 students and five faculty members, our founding dean, Ben F. Johnson Jr., set about transforming legal education in Atlanta.

Today, the College of Law boasts a rich tradition of educating dedicated lawyers committed to serving their communities. With an innovative curriculum that blends theory and practice and a new home to support 21st-century legal instruction, we are ready to burn brighter.

In fewer than 34 years, Georgia State Law has evolved from an inspired idea to the leader in producing thoughtful, responsible lawyers. Our graduates are proof of this; and our faculty and students bear witness to it. When you consider the many challenges facing society and the legal profession today, it is clear: Georgia needs Georgia State Law.

Our Vision

Georgia State Law will be an accessible top 50 public urban law school. We will educate passionate problem-solvers ready to tackle today’s legal challenges. Our faculty will shape key legal and policy issues facing our city, state, nation and world. Our students help provide disadvantaged Georgians much-needed access to justice.

Georgia State Law will lead public debate by bringing together business leaders, the legal profession and policy-makers to resolve disputes and find common ground.

Now, more than ever, Georgia State Law needs you.

We Serve and Assist Others

Through our clinics, experiential education courses and Externship Program, Georgia State Law makes a difference in Georgia. Our students and faculty help Georgians gain access to the legal system to resolve barriers to health, tax disputes, investment fraud and safety issues from domestic violence. Our students provide free legal assistance to state agencies and nonprofit organizations.

The Health Law Partnership (HeLP) Clinic is a partnership with Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and Atlanta Legal Aid Society in which students address social and economic barriers to health in low-income families. The clinic handles about 60 cases per year; helping more than 150 families since 2007.
The Philip C. Cook Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic partners with the IRS to assist low-income Georgians with tax problems. On average, the clinic serves 375 individuals a year. Since its founding, the clinic has opened 3,598 cases, working an average of 500 a year.

The Investor Advocacy Clinic assists small investors who suffer losses from broker misconduct and cannot afford legal representation. Students also conduct workshops on smart investing and maintain the clinic blog.

Each year, our Externship Program places about 180 students with Atlanta nonprofit organizations, government agencies and judges to assist with legal work. Outside of Atlanta, the Summer Intellectual Property Program in Washington, D.C., gives students the opportunity to earn academic credit while gaining invaluable insights into the patent application process at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The GSU Law Volunteer Clinic for Veterans provides free legal services to veterans on campus. A partnership among the College of Law, ROTC Department and the Military and Veterans Law Section of the State Bar of Georgia, the clinic and its volunteers will help veterans with most legal issues, including veterans’ benefits, rating and discharge issues, divorce, wills, landlord/tenant issues and others.

The Case for Georgia State Law

• “Participating in the tax clinic at Georgia State was the most valuable experience I had in law school because it provided me with the skills and confidence to be a better attorney. The clinic operates like a small law firm where students get hands-on experience on what it’s like to represent real clients with real problems,” Michael Coverstone (J.D. ’14), who participated in the Philip C. Cook Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic and is now an attorney with Gomel, Davis & Watson LLP in Atlanta

• “The practice of law is all about communication – verbal and non-verbal. The clinic afforded me with numerous opportunities to work on developing both forms of communication and helped me to become comfortable talking with clients through experience,” Darius Wood (J.D. ’16) helps small investors in Georgia recoup financial losses due to broker misconduct through our Investor Advocacy Clinic.

• Mawuli Davis (J.D.’02) fights for social justice throughout Georgia. “We have been successful in fighting for social justice because we take it personally when someone in our community is injured. We have handled incidents of police shooting unarmed African-American men, paralyzing individuals they are taking into custody and arresting people without probable cause,’ Davis said. “These cases are emotionally draining and difficult to win, but we have engaged the community when we handle them. They have responded by not only supporting the impacted families but the overall cause.”

• Will Arnold (J.D. ’12) took his experience in Courtney Anderson’s health equity class to help preserve historic communities throughout Georgia, such as Atlanta’s West End. ‘I don’t want my community to remain a struggling community,’ Arnold said. ‘I simply want to help restore the values that were here. I’ve always seen this city as a powerhouse of thriving African-Americans, and I’ve come to understand Atlanta as a place where we can gauge the condition of African-Americans throughout the country. It’s also a place where we can seek to preserve our sense of identity as a people on a large scale. There are not a lot of places like Atlanta.’

Georgia State Law Needs Your Help

• Increasing the number of annually funded and endowed scholarships, to ensure any student admitted to Georgia State Law can attend, regardless of personal financial ability

• Strengthening funding for our Dean’s Scholars Program, which provides funding to outstanding students who enhance our program.
We’re Accessible

In the heart of downtown Atlanta, Georgia State Law is within steps of federal, state and local courts, numerous government agencies and nonprofit organizations, major law firms and corporations. We are at the epicenter of the action.

The Law Library is the official library of the Supreme Court of Georgia. The General Assembly calls on our faculty members to help rewrite, modify or reform Georgia’s legal code. The College of Law, with its flexible programming, is the law school of choice for legislative staff and representatives. Our affordability ensures students from all backgrounds may pursue a legal education, which helps diversify the legal profession.

The Case for Georgia State Law

• “Georgia State Law is really a family, especially for those of us in the part-time program that started in 2011,” says Brittnie Ballenger (J.D. ’14). “We would walk into class with ‘dinner’ and talk about our day as we prepared for class to start, and we really helped each other out.” She considers her professors and Professor of Law Roy Sobelson as part of that family, and appreciates how they were approachable and willing to assist students outside class. In particular, Professor of Law Tanya Washington made a lasting impression.

• “I’ve been able, because of the support of the endowed chairs, to bring back to the Gold Dome many of the ideas I’ve learned,” says Mary Radford, the Marjorie Fine Knowles Professor of Law. “Consequently, I’ve been very lucky to be instrumental in changing state law related to probate, guardianship and trust law.” In 2011, Radford became the president of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, which was founded in 1949 to counsel families on estate and family planning issues. She is the first academic to serve as the group’s president.

• In 2011, HB 24 passed the House overwhelmingly (162-5) and passed the Senate (50-3) on the last day of the legislative session. “We’ve basically gotten back in step with the rest of the country, and that’s gratifying because there’s no need for Georgia to be a straggler and we’re really wasting a lot of time and money with those rules,” says Paul Milich, professor of law, who helped rewrite the Georgia’s evidence code to align with the Federal Rules of Evidence. “These new rules are slicker. They’re going to be more efficient, more economical. They’re going to make it easier for us to do the business of trying cases.”

Georgia State Law Needs Your Help

• Increasing the number of our endowed faculty chairs that allow us to continue attracting and retaining a faculty passionate about and capable of teaching and mentoring students at the highest level, while ensuring our faculty-student ratio remains low.

• Increasing funding for faculty enrichment and curriculum development to support teaching innovation in traditional legal theory courses, experiential course development and travel for experiential learning and professional conferences.

We Advance Atlanta and the Legal Profession

Through the Atlanta Center for International Arbitration and Mediation and the Center on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Georgia State Law positions Atlanta as a worldwide leader in resolving disputes, locally and internationally. Georgia State Law is the only law school with a commercial enterprise devoted to resolving commercial disputes.

The law school and its new Center for Intellectual Property shape entrepreneurship by serving clients in the university’s start-up incubators and facilitating policy and procedures within the corporate IP arena.

The Center for Law, Health and Society, ranked sixth in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, helps advance the key role law plays in promoting society’s health through policy changes, research to alleviate health disparities, the HeLP Legal Services Clinic and outreach programs. The center with 12 professors comprises one of the largest health law faculty in the nation.
Lawyers are central to the planning process that helps urban centers, local and internationally, thrive. The Center for the Comparative Study of Metropolitan Growth advances interdisciplinary research on urban growth, management issues and historic preservation — with Atlanta as a learning laboratory.

The National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism sponsors workshops and develops online resources centered on teaching legal ethics and promoting professionalism.

The Case for Georgia State Law

- The Health Law Partnership Legal Services Clinic, created by Associate Clinical Professors Lisa Radtke Bliss and Sylvia Caley (J.D. ’89), partners with physicians and medical students from Morehouse School of Medicine, Emory School of Medicine, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Emory University and Georgia State to tackle legal matters for Georgia children that affect their health and well-being.
- The Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues has appointed Georgia State Law Bobby Lee Professor of Law Paul A. Lombardo as a senior adviser. The 13-member commission is charged with advising the president on the bioethical, legal and social issues that arise in the context of biomedicine and related areas of science and technology.
- Professor of Law Michael B. Landau, an internationally recognized authority on intellectual property and entertainment law issues, released the latest update to his nine-volume treatise, Lindey on Entertainment, Publishing and the Arts: Agreements and the Law, one of the leading reference sets in its field. “I take great pride in writing Lindey on Entertainment, Publishing & the Arts. Over the years, I have had students tell me that the main reason they came to Georgia State was that I wrote Lindey,” Landau said.
- W. Lee Burge Chair in Law and Ethics Clark Cunningham worked on the revised Georgia Student Practice Rule with the Chief Justice’s Commission on Professionalism, the Board of Bar Examiners, the state’s five law schools and the Supreme Court of Georgia. Cunningham, Georgia State Law’s liaison to the commission, said the impetus for the student practice rule change was a challenge to expand access to justice from Justice Carol Hunstein during her term as chief justice. Cunningham and others at the National Institute for Teaching Ethics and Professionalism assessed student practice rules from every state and the District of Columbia and presented their findings to a committee formed by the Board of Bar Examiners, which drafted the new rule for Georgia. In September 2015, Georgia State second-year students were sworn in under the revised rule to represent domestic violence victims in Cobb County.

Georgia State Law Needs Your Help

- Increase funding to allow continued curricular development of skills courses to better prepare our students for the profession.
- Increase funding to help establish an entrepreneurship clinic to help bring innovations to market and create an immigration clinic to help Atlanta’s growing immigration population and expand HeLP’s legal services to Georgia children.
- Increase funding to enhance the reach of our established centers and create a center devoted to resolving access to justice issues in our criminal system.

How You Can Help

Our vision of the future for Georgia State Law is a bold one: Top 50 law school, recruiting bright, deserving students from all backgrounds to work with a world-class faculty and emerge from their law study ready to make a difference in the profession, in Atlanta and the nation. To do this, we need you to help the college burn brighter:

Your support will enable us to educate more passionate problem-solvers to expand the access to justice in their home communities throughout Georgia and the nation. Your investment allows the college to recruit and retain world-class faculty members whose work positively affects the legal profession and their areas of expertise. Your commitment will help Georgia State Law continue to lead reforming legal education, to modernizing student learning, to attracting the best of this generation to our building, to fostering extensive community collaboration, to being a catalyst for change and redefining the modern urban campus.
Giving Opportunities

**Student Success - $3 Million**
- Endowed Scholarships ($2 Million)
- Current-use Scholarships ($1 Million)

**Faculty Excellence - $3 Million**
- Endowed Chairs/Professorships ($3 Million)

**Innovate Programs and Facilities - $2.25 Million**
- Lawyering Advocacy Program ($500,000)
- Entrepreneurship Clinic for start-up businesses ($1 Million)
- HeLP Legal Services Clinic for vulnerable children ($500,000)
- A new Immigration Law Clinic ($250,000)

**Centers of Excellence - $2.6 Million**
- Center for International Arbitration and Mediation ($1 Million)
- Center for Law, Health and Society ($500,000)
- Center for Intellectual Property Law ($500,000)
- Center for Comparative Study of Metropolitan Growth ($100,000)
- A new Center for Access to Justice ($500,000)

**85 Park Place Naming Opportunities - $17.1 Million**
- Law Building ($10 Million)
- Law Library ($5 Million)
- Ceremonial Courtroom/Auditorium ($1 Million)
- Law Library Reading Room ($500,000)
- Presidential Terrace ($350,000)
- Rare Books Conference Room ($250,000)

Contact

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