College of Law launches $12 million campaign to fund scholarships, professorships and academics

This fall, Stetson University College of Law launched an ambitious plan designed to raise $12 million by the end of 2005 for scholarships, academic enrichment, professorships and faculty chairs. The Cornerstone Campaign is designed to firmly establish Stetson’s place in the forefront of the nation’s leading law schools.

“The Cornerstone Campaign marks the first such fundraising campaign in Stetson’s distinguished 102-year history,” said Dean Gary Vause. “It will provide the resources necessary to solidify Stetson’s position among the very best of America’s law schools.”

Vause said the direct beneficiaries of this campaign would be College of Law students, who will enjoy the long-term benefits of greater faculty eminence, strengthened curricular programs and increased scholarship support. (For a complete financial breakdown of the campaign, see “Where is the money going?” article on page 25.)

“All of these investments are designed to strengthen Stetson’s academic programs and offerings, improve faculty, and make Stetson’s unique legal education available to more highly qualified students,” Vause said. “The Cornerstone Campaign is not about bricks and mortar; it’s about raising the level of quality in everything we do to become nationally recognized as one of America’s leaders in legal education.”

For more information about the Cornerstone Campaign, contact Associate Vice President for College Relations Dotti Bressi at (727) 562-7818.

“The Cornerstone Campaign is the largest fundraising campaign in the history of the law school. It is designed to build upon its endowment and lay the foundation for tomorrow. Stetson’s ultimate success will be measured by the people who choose to participate in The Cornerstone Campaign, and I am proud to help assure that future generations of students, faculty, staff and graduates will prosper from the legacy left behind.”

WM. REECE SMITH JR.
Chair Emeritus, Carlton Fields, P.A. & Distinguished Professorial Lecturer at Stetson University College of Law
Co-Chair, The Cornerstone Campaign
Where is the money going?

The Cornerstone Campaign seeks to raise $12 million by the end of 2005. These funds will better enable Stetson University College of Law to attract highly qualified students, strengthen faculty and staff, create academic distinction and enhance student life. The funds are being raised to meet the following goals:

- **SCHOLARSHIPS**: The school hopes to raise $6.5 MILLION for student scholarships and awards, and to make more scholarship dollars available to attract the best and the brightest, including low-income students who might not otherwise be able to afford Stetson.

- **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT**: Stetson will dedicate $2.25 MILLION of campaign funds for academic enrichment to expand areas of concentration including: Advocacy, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Elder Law, Health Law and International Law and Business.

- **FACULTY CHAIRS & PROFESSORSHIPS**: Stetson will use $2.25 MILLION to recruit, retain and reward outstanding faculty with faculty chairs and professorships.

- **FACULTY & STAFF DEVELOPMENT**: Stetson will earmark $1 MILLION for research and training programs.

$1 million gift establishes Faculty Chair in Elder Law

Leo Govoni, president of Boston Asset Management Inc., in partnership with John Staunton ’97, vice president of the Center for Special Needs Trust Administration Inc. made a $1 million commitment to establish the nation’s first Faculty Chair in Elder Law.

Govoni made an initial pledge of $500,000 earlier in the year to establish a Distinguished Professorship in Elder Law. After working with Professor Rebecca Morgan ’80, Govoni went to John Staunton to ask that they partner together to transform the distinguished professorship into a faculty chair.

“Our donation to establish a faculty chair was inspired by the work of Professor Rebecca Morgan,” said Govoni. “She has distinguished herself as one of our nation’s preeminent experts in the area of elder law. Stetson’s Center for Excellence in Elder Law is gaining national recognition and we are proud to be a part of one of the best law schools in the country.”

“We are extremely grateful for this gift by Mr. Govoni and Mr. Staunton. Their generosity in this campaign will have a significant impact on Stetson’s work in elder law,” said Dean Gary Vause.

Professor Morgan has been on Stetson’s faculty since 1985. She is past president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys and serves on the American Bar Association Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly.

“The generosity of Mr. Govoni and Mr. Staunton is extremely significant because it establishes our country’s first Faculty Chair in Elder Law. This chair elevates Stetson’s national prominence as an outstanding law school,” said Professor Morgan.
Faculty, staff help boost campaign effort

The Cornerstone Campaign for Stetson University College of Law got a significant boost during the spring of 2002 when faculty and staff made financial commitments totaling $165,396. This figure represents the internal commitment of the Stetson family to ensure the future of the law school.

Director of Faculty Support Services Connie Evans, Dean Emeritus Bruce Jacob '59, Professor Thomas C. Marks Jr. '63, Professor Luz Nagle and Coordinator of Student Accounts and Accounts Payable Tracy Rich served as the leadership committee of the faculty/staff portion of the campaign.

Mason family creates scholarship to honor father

The Clearwater firm of Mason & Associates, P.A. established the Joseph C. Mason Jr. Scholarship at Stetson with a $25,000 gift from the family-operated law firm. The scholarship awards $1,000 a year to a student who demonstrates interest in becoming a patent attorney. Connie Davies, a second-year student, received the first award. "I think it's wonderful that Mason & Associates takes such a direct and meaningful approach to encouraging law students," said Davies.

Sisters Jane Mason Goldman and Anne S. Mason '84 established the scholarship in honor of their father Joseph C. Mason Jr. "My father always says that work and career are just part of the equation of living a satisfied life," said Jane Mason Goldman. "Anne and I realize everyday how fortunate we are, having had the opportunity to grow up with such great parents."
Alumni establish funds to honor favorite advocacy professors

Faculty Chair to honor Professor William McKinley Smiley Jr.

A group of law alumni has committed over $1 million in lead gifts to establish the William McKinley Smiley Jr. Faculty Chair at Stetson. These alumni include Christian D. Searcy Sr. ’73 and his law firm of Searcy, Denney, Scarola, Barnhart & Shipley, P.A., Michael C. Maher ’65, and S. Sammy Cacciatore Jr. ’66. Their financial commitments will honor Professor Smiley’s many lifetime achievements, while also helping to ensure the success and notoriety of Stetson’s advocacy program.

“Mickey Smiley helped establish a tradition of excellence at Stetson. He is a nationally recognized educator whose teachings have helped shape the careers of numerous outstanding lawyers,” said Dean Gary Vause. “I am grateful for the generosity of our alumni who have demonstrated their admiration for their professor and their continued support of Stetson.”

Professor Smiley has taught trial skills and related subjects at Stetson for 36 years. He has served on the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and is frequently asked to lecture on trial advocacy.

High tech courtroom to honor William R. Eleazer

Stetson plans to construct a state-of-the-art courtroom on campus to honor Distinguished Professor Emeritus William R. Eleazer. The courtroom will have the latest advances in classroom technology including Internet connections, large screen projections, advanced lighting and acoustical walls.

A group of former Stetson trial team members, led by Karen Williams ’94 and Shirin Vesley ’94, are spearheading this fundraising initiative to honor Professor Eleazer.

“We are deeply grateful for the gifts and pledges received from our former trial team members,” said Dean Vause. “Their commitment to this courtroom will help maintain Stetson’s national prominence in trial advocacy.”

“This courtroom will allow students the opportunity to watch jury deliberations and better understand how jurors interpret facts and arrive at decisions,” said Professor Roberta Kemp Flowers, Director, Center for Excellence in Advocacy. “Stetson students will be among the first in the nation to experience a virtually paperless trial.”

The Eleazer courtroom will provide an environment to conduct valuable research about jury trends by methods such as mock trials, focus groups, the selection of jurors and volunteer surveys.

Distinguished Professor Emeritus William R. Eleazer was a full-time faculty member at Stetson from 1979 through 1999. He continues to teach trial advocacy after his retirement. He was instrumental in guiding Stetson’s Trial Team to national victories and for setting the standards for others to follow. His untiring devotion to his students helped establish Stetson’s national reputation as a leader in the area of trial advocacy.

“We have a long standing tradition of training students to be ethical, professional and successful advocates and this high-tech courtroom will maintain Stetson’s preeminence in the area of trial advocacy,” said Professor Flowers.

“If we are to advance as a leader within legal education, we must call upon our alumni and friends to invest in our future. This campaign gives us an opportunity to ‘Pay It Forward’ to future generations, and say thank you for what we have already received. I encourage you to make the law school a priority in your personal charitable giving for the next few years. I can think of no greater investment worthy of our support.”

S. SAMMY CACCIAFORE JR. ’66
Partner, Nance, Cacciatore & Hamilton
Co-Chair, The Cornerstone Campaign