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THE BLSA APPEAL

National Black Law Students Association
The University of Memphis
Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter

BLSA Officers

President – Regina M. Thompson
Executive Secretary – Danielle M. Salton
Community Service Chair – Ashley N. B. Finch
Fundraising & Activities Chair – Kioni S. Logan
Vice President – Faith N. Sanford
Treasurer – Dawn M. Campbell
Professional Liaison – Kristen J. Downey
Parliamentarian – Brian C. Dockery
National Black Law Students Association

The University of Memphis

Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter

The National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA), is the largest student-run organization in the nation. NBLSA has chapters in more than 200 law schools representing 48 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and six foreign countries.

The organization encourages the development of talented, socially conscious law students. Additionally, NBLSA engages in legal activism to effectuate change in the legal community.

While, the organization may have “black law students” in the name, BLSA and NBLSA are organizations geared towards helping students of all colors and ethnicities; these organizations are not limited to African American students only.

One of the goals of our local chapter is to assist you in successfully completing your legal education. To accomplish this goal, we have implemented a number of academic, professional, and social programs,

To learn more about the national organization please visit http://www.nblsa.org
BLSA SPOTLIGHT

Kristen Downey

BLSA Professional Liaison

Kristen Downey is a second year law student at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law and a member of the Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA). Kristen graduated from Christian Brothers University with honors, where she majored in psychology and minored in sociology. Kristen is a native Memphian where her great uncle, The Honorable Judge Jerry Stokes was appointed by Governor Phil Bredesen to serve the Thirtieth Circuit Court Division 6.

In addition to being a part of BLSA, Kristen is also a member of the Association for Women Attorneys (AWA) and a graduate member of the Beta Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is also a member of The University of Memphis Law Review where she works as a second year staff member. Kristen was an intern for Maureen Holland of Holland and Associates, PLLC prior to law school. She also worked as a legal intern for AutoZone this summer. Kristen gained practical and valuable legal skills through both experiences.

Kristen attributes her success to her mother and father, who taught her that with smart work and determination anything is possible! It is Kristen’s hope to make a lasting impact in the City of Memphis, where she was born and raised. Kristen has demonstrated her love for Memphis through various community service projects, ranging from mentoring elementary school children to feeding the homeless. It is her hope to give back as much as possible to the City that has provided so many opportunities for her.
Danielle Salton

BLSA Secretary

Danielle Marie Salton is a second year law student at The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Danielle is pursuing her J.D./MBA as part of the Dual Degree program offered at The University of Memphis. She graduated from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville with Bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Communication Studies. Danielle is a member of The University of Memphis Law Review, Black Law Students Association (BLSA), Christian Legal Society (CLS), and Public Action Law Society (PALS).

Since she was twelve years old, Danielle dreamed of attending law school. She hopes that with a legal education she will be able to positively affect the lives of many within her community and beyond. Giving her time to her community is of upmost importance to her. Danielle views her legal education as a responsibility to serve the greater good.

Danielle volunteers weekly with the Community Legal Center, assisting attorneys within the Immigration Justice Program. She participated in PALS’s Alternative Spring Break, helping clients prepare applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). During the summer after her 1L year she interned with Latino Memphis’ Derechos Program, filing asylum applications on behalf of clients. While immigration law was not necessarily an initial interest of hers, she has thoroughly enjoyed working with clients and assisting attorneys in finding the appropriate avenues for relief.

Outside of law school, Danielle is an active member of Gamma Sigma Sigma National Service Sorority’s Memphis Pearls Alumni Colony, volunteering in the community with other alumni members. Danielle also mentors a “little sister” through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Memphis.
Shanell Tyler

Shanell Tyler is a second year student at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. In addition to her membership in the Benjamin L. Hooks Chapter of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA), she serves as a treasurer of the Christian Legal Society (CLS), a peer mentor, a student ambassador, and a law school diversity committee member. She has also excelled in the classroom and received the CALI award for Property II. Shanell is a graduate of the University of Memphis, where she graduated with a Summa Cum Laude honors distinction and received a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. Shanell is originally from Clarksville, Tennessee, but she has fallen in love with the city of Memphis. She plans to stay in Memphis after law school graduation and work to help better her community.

Aside from her love of Memphis Law, she is also very passionate about mentoring young children and helping them succeed. In her past, she has spent time working as an after school math tutor and a daycare teacher. After losing her mother at the age of thirteen and growing up in a single parent home, Shanell learned the value in taking time to care for and guide others. Shanell credits much of her success to the mentorship and care of others. She truly believes that investing in children’s lives is a key investment in the future of this city. She hopes to use her law degree to help make legal resources more accessible to young mothers and children throughout the Memphis community.

Shanell’s favorite motivational quote comes from Proverbs 31: 8-9, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” These words serve as a constant reminder to her that the legal profession is one rooted in service and love for others. Shanell hopes to embody these principles going forward in her education and legal career.
Challenges in Voting Rights

On Monday, August 24th, the Black Law Students Association (BLSA), Public Action Law Society (PALS), and Student Bar Association (SBA) hosted a voting rights presentation by Attorney Jon Sherman. Under the current Tennessee voting scheme, students cannot use their college-issued IDs for identification to vote, but professors and faculty can use their college-issued IDs. Mr. Sherman, an attorney from the Fair Elections Legal Network (FELN), is currently involved in a lawsuit to force Tennessee to accept student ID cards as voter ID. Mr. Sherman informed the students at Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law about the current voting ID restriction laws in various states and how they have evolved over the past few years. He presented to students the justifications given by state legislature regarding their voter ID laws, such as the prevention of fraud and concerns about IDs may be duplicated. He discussed his challenges to such legislation, including a comparison of other acceptable IDs that may be duplicated. Students engaged in discussion with Mr. Sherman about voting restrictions, posing possible solutions and alternatives to the current voter ID law. Although many of the law students did not fit the criteria for being represented in the action, they left the presentation with a genuine interest in the development of the voter identification law in Tennessee.

Tennessee Students are Fighting for their Right to Vote!
YOU CAN HELP!

A lawsuit was recently filed to force Tennessee to accept student photo ID cards as voter ID.

Student IDs are not accepted at polling places, even though Tennessee state college and university faculty and staff can use their campus ID cards to vote.

If you:
- Do not have a Tennessee or federal government photo ID, and
- Do not drive a car in Tennessee
you could potentially be part of this case and help student IDs be included on the list of voter IDs.

If you want more information and would be interested in being a part of this case OR if you know someone else who may qualify for the case contact:

Jon Sherman
from the Fair Elections Legal Network at jcherman@fairelectionsnetwork.com or (202)248-5346
www.FairElectionsNetwork.com
BLSA 1L Mixer

On Friday, August 28th, current and prospective members of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) attended the home of the National Bar Association’s (NBA’s) President Emeritus, David McKinney. Various attorneys from the Memphis Bar shared valuable information with the law students in attendance. Additionally, the students received advice from City of Memphis Mayor, A.C. Wharton.

(pictured here: BLSA members with Mayor Wharton)

(pictured here: BLSA members with Attorney Rebekka Freeman)
UPCOMING EVENTS

Student Diversity Panel

Throughout the 2015 – 2016 school year, the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) will host four panels focused on topics in diversity and inclusion. On Monday, September 14th at noon, BLSA and the OUTLAW Gay-Straight Alliance are partnering to bring the first of our four-part diversity panel series. Part one will focus on the issues and challenges the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community faces and the steps we need to take to become a more inclusive and accepting community.

The Panel

Maria Furrmann
Mayor’s Office, LGBTQ Liaison

Elokin Capece
Operations Manager, MGLCC

Janine Heiner
Managing Director, Safeways, Inc.

Mel Borrelli
Memphis Law Student

Sydney VanWinkle
Memphis Law Student

Jonathan Frimpong
Memphis Law Student

Join us for a discussion on diversity!
Learn how we can become a more inclusive and accepting community as we discuss issues and challenges experienced by our LGBT community!

Monday, September 14, 2015
Noon
Wade Auditorium
The University of Memphis,
Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

DIVERSITY PANEL
PRESENTED BY BLSA AND OUTLAW
Open to the Public. Lunch will be provided.
BLSA Blood Drive

Fall Blood Drive

September 23, 2015
Student Lounge
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sponsored By:

Lifeblood

Fast Facts about Blood

- There is no substitute for blood.
- Every three minutes, someone needs a life-sustaining blood transfusion.
- Every eight minutes, someone gives blood.
- One in ten people who enter a hospital will need blood.
- Less than half the population is eligible to give blood.
- Red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days (six weeks).
- Victims of car accidents can require up to 50 units of blood per hour until they stabilize.
- Sickle Cell patients require up to four units per month for life.
- Cancer treatments can require four or more units of blood.
- Brain surgery requires anywhere from two to 25 units.
- Hip replacement surgery calls for two to five units.

To schedule appointment, go to:
https://ww2.clublifeblood.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/60141

Contact: Ashley Finch
anfinch@memphis.edu
BLSA Mock Interviews

Conquering the Interview

Local employers and attorneys will engage in speed-style mock interviews with students* to prepare them for actual interviews. Interviewers will share tips about how to approach difficult interview questions, the DOs and DON’Ts of interviewing, and advise students on how to set themselves apart from other prospects in an interview.

September 30, 2015
12:00 p.m.
Wade Auditorium

*BLSA Members Only
BLSA ALL-STARS

Special Congratulations To:

Erica Coleman, 2L: Newly Appointed BLSA Chaplain
Shanell Tyler, 2L: CALI Award, Property II
BLSA DONORS

The Black Law Students Association would like to send a special thank you to:

Dawn Campbell, BLSA Treasurer

Professor Donna S. Harkness, CELA, Professor of Clinical Law and Director, Elder Law Clinic

Professor Christina Zawisza, Professor of Clinical Law and Director, Child and Family Litigation Clinic

All Students and Faculty who donated to the BLSA School Supply Drive

BIRTHDAYS

Kioni Logan, 2L September 5th
Naomi Reaves, 1L, September 16th
Denania Galloway, 2L, September 20th
Zach Stephens, 2L, September 24th
JaKeva Dotson, 3L, September 26th

Please share this newsletter with friends, colleagues and family. If anyone would like to be added to this mailing list, please email fnsnford@memphis.edu