

Inter Alia

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2

October 1997

The Newsletter of
San Joaquin
College of Law

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Congratulations to SJCL Achievers!

As a new school year begins, it's time to look back and commemorate the hard work and dedication of those graduates who passed the Bar Exam as well as the law, tax and paralegal students who made it past their final examinations and on to graduation.

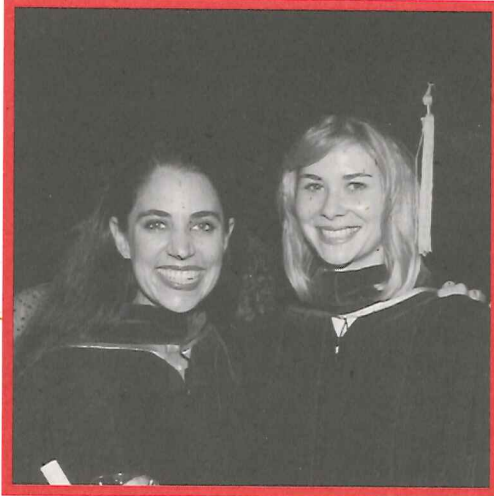


Photo courtesy of Bernardo Salado Photography
Graduates Traci Fritzler and Michelle
Green beam with joy and relief at the
reception following graduation ceremonies.

The twenty-fourth graduating class of San Joaquin College of Law received their Juris Doctor degrees on Saturday, May 24, during ceremonies held at the William Saroyan Theatre in Fresno. Joining them were those students who successfully completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Taxation degree.

Justice Rebecca A. Wiseman, Fifth District Court of Appeal, provided the keynote address, urging the graduates to become actively involved in the legal community and to always apply the high ethical standards they were taught at SJCL to all areas of their personal and professional lives.

More than 1,000 people attended the graduation ceremonies to wish the graduates luck as they finished their years of studying the law.

The thirtieth class of Paralegals took their place in SJCL history on Friday, February 21, as they received their Paralegal Certificates during a graduation dinner at DiCicco's in Clovis. (See graduates' names on page 6.)

After months of waiting, nail-biting and anxiety, those SJCL graduates who took the Bar Exam in February 1997 received their results on May 23. (See page 6.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

May 1997 Law School Graduates

Steven Alfieris
Bonnie Anderson
Mark Asami
Jane Austin
Annette Ballatore-Williamson
Carol Bard
Judith Barron*
Robert Bassett
Sara Blanchard*
John Brekhus
Susan Brown
Timothy Cox
Leslie Dillahunty
Philippe Dwelshauvers
Thomas East
Keith Fagundes
John Fennacy
Janet Fiorentino
Traci Fritzler

Vanessa Girmus
Danny Green**
Michelle Green
Alvin Harper
Angela Hill
Cynthia Hopper
Aaron Johnson
Mark Koogler
Daniel Kopfman
Lydia Kumskow
Samuel Kylo
Linden Lindahl
Michelle Lipperd*
Patricia Lloyd
David Milligan
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Jose Negrete

Vimala Nowlis*
Nicholas Pavlovich
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Angela Ransom
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Lawrence Solaegui
Brian Sottile
Karen Spinardi*
Mark Suddjian
Cheryl Turner
Joan Watters
Janice Westerberg
Roger Wilson
Richard Wolf, Jr.
Judith Wright

* graduated with distinction
** graduated with high honors

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Message from the Dean

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Sally Perring
*Associate Dean for
Academic Affairs*

WASC Revisited

In 1993, SJCL received full WASC accreditation. In granting us accreditation, the WASC Commission stated:

"The College is an educational resource of great significance for students, especially those who are unable to pursue legal training in other localities.

Given the fact that the School is, in fact, a regional resource, the Commission is especially gratified to learn of your strong commitment to diversity and to serving persons from all parts of the community. Of great importance, the College is a place where both staff and students believe that their importance as individual human beings is recognized."

WASC accreditation is valuable to the school. First and foremost, it validates what we all know--we're doing a great job providing legal training to residents of the San Joaquin Valley. Also, it allows our current students to participate in federal financial aid programs. Finally, it is a necessary step to any future plans we may have to go for ABA accreditation. The time has come when we must prepare for the Commission's consideration of our reaffirmation of accreditation.

A WASC site visit will take place in the Fall of 1998 to evaluate the school's continuing compliance with the standards for accreditation established by WASC. While this may sound like it is far in the future, the future is now.

Prior to WASC's site visit, the school must submit a written self-study, supported by copious documentation. A self-study represents the institution's critical appraisal of how it is doing. The



written self-study is due July 15, 1998, less than a year from now. The self-study is not just an administratively-generated document to support our continuing accreditation, but a thorough review and brainstorming opportunity for all constituencies of the school focused upon the WASC standards.

In order to make the self-study meaningful for the school, we are calling upon everyone to help.

SURVEYS: Almost everyone who receives a copy of *Inter Alia* will also be receiving at least one survey.

Separate surveys will be sent to Board members, faculty, staff, current students and alumni. The surveys will be asking a wide range of questions designed to help us appraise how we've done, how we are doing and how we can do better in the future. The surveys will be meaningful, however, only if a

significant number of people respond. **TAKE THE TIME TO COMPLETE THOUGHTFULLY THE SURVEY(S) YOU RECEIVE.**

TASKFORCE COMMITTEES:

We are forming ten taskforce committees to focus on specific aspects of the operation of the school. Committee members will be volunteering around 10 to 15 hours a month to help with the self-study, including one to three meetings a month through December. Each committee will have full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, students, staff, alumni and Board members. Members of the committees will be using the results of the surveys and other information to review and think about such things as Planning, Finances, Governance, Educational programs and the Library. Certainly anyone interested in volunteering to help in this endeavor can give me a call. Taskforce committees must have their reports in by January 15, 1998, so the written self-study can be drafted and reviewed by all who participated.

A self-study is, for a small institution like SJCL, an ambitious and extensive undertaking. We need to depend upon the greater SJCL community to help us in this process. Please heed this call and be ready to serve when you are contacted.

SJCL WANTS YOU!

San Joaquin College of Law

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Law Alumni Profile

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Commissioner Nancy Cisneros (’80)

by Geoffrey H. Sims (’03)

Many *pro per* family law litigants get their first feel for a courtroom in Fresno County Superior Court’s Department 90, located downstairs in the Golden State Plaza.

There, they encounter a 1980 SJCL graduate, Commissioner Nancy Cisneros, who presides over a crowded daily docket deciding issues of child custody, child visitation, child support and spousal support. Since she transferred to Department 90 from the Juvenile Court, Cisneros works through a daily calendar of 60 to 70 cases, assisted by an able support staff and rotating district attorneys.

Nancy Currier, as she was known in law school, was born in Chicago and, before moving to San Francisco in the late 1960’s, attended Illinois State, working toward a teaching credential. After employment in the Financial District as a secretary, Commissioner Cisneros moved to Fresno to finish her degree in English and Theatre Arts at California State University, Fresno. After graduating, she worked as a substitute schoolteacher, but found law school irresistible.

She recalls her first night in law school when, in Legal Research & Writing, instructor John Missirlian arrived in class in jeans and sandals. She remembers thinking, ‘This isn’t going to be so bad.’ Then the next night, the professor was Judge Wanger and “it was like somebody dumped a bucket of cold water on the whole class - it was so scary.”



After graduating from SJCL, Cisneros worked as a staff research attorney for the Superior Court (Criminal Law and Motion Department) with Judges Charles Hamlin and Hollis Best. She later followed Judge Hamlin when he was elevated to the Fifth District Court of Appeal.

Nancy was appointed a Commissioner in 1988. Her first post was with the then-fledgling Juvenile Court. While there, she formed the impression that Juvenile Court personnel are “very committed people who care” and that Juvenile Court suited her and her desire to contribute to the needs of our youth.

She fervently believes that the resources available in the community must be maximized but that it is vital that the system promote the efficient use of governmental resources.

“It is important that we utilize the available community and family resources that are presently going largely untapped,” she says.

In October 1994, Commissioner Cisneros transferred from Juvenile Court to Family Court. In Department 90, she sees primarily *pro per* parties, while attorney-represented cases comprise a small percentage of her caseload.

To assist *pro per* litigants, Nancy feels there is a strong need for the Court to provide information to the parties before they come to their hearings.

Nancy loved law school and recalls those years with great fondness. The Class of 1980 was small, less than 25, but she remembers them as a “diverse group.” Since each class was small, she found herself exposed to differing views. That, she says, is the key to SJCL’s success and why it produces excellent lawyers year after year.

Her most humorous law school memory is about the classrooms themselves. At that time, SJCL used “borrowed” classrooms because it had no main campus of its own. Therefore, like others before her, Nancy typed her exams in the Fresno Pacific biology lab on tables which were wired for electricity.

Each year, SJCL spring finals coincided with Fresno Pacific’s biology clasclass finals. While SJCL students

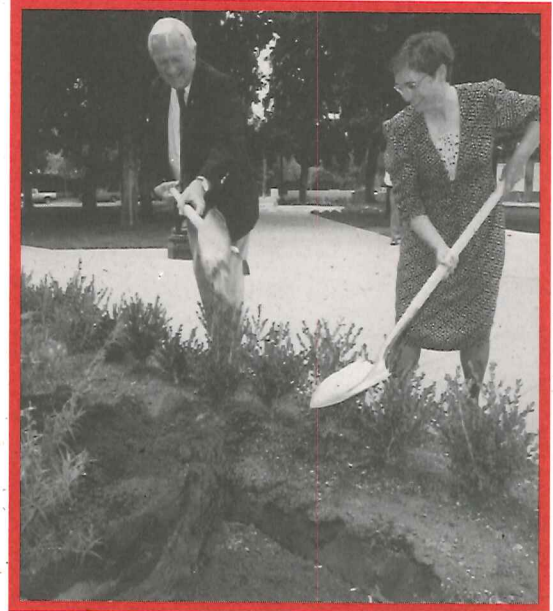


Photo courtesy of Clovis Independent

On July 16, Dean Janice L. Pearson and Clovis Mayor Pro-Tem Harry Armstrong buried a time capsule in the front garden of SJCL’s new campus. The capsule contains memorabilia from the Law School and the surrounding Clovis and Fresno communities. The capsule is scheduled to be opened in 2049, when SJCL’s lease expires.

class finals, which required the students to dissect a dead cat. “So every year we’d go in there...and you’d have your typewriter...and you’d set it down on the floor and pick up the dissecting pan with the dead cat and set that on the floor to make room for your typewriter, all the while smelling the formaldehyde. I found myself thinking one year ‘You know, I’m going to have to take a dead cat with me when I take the Bar Exam or I’m not going to be able to think...’”

Nancy married husband David Cisneros fourteen years ago. They have no children, but they are owned and loved by two Boxers and have a variety of feral cats around their home. In her leisure time, Cisneros reads murder mysteries, particularly those about serial killers.

She was named 1997 California Commissioner of the Year, which is her proudest achievement on the bench. Recipients of the award are nominated by the district attorneys practicing in each county, proving she has earned the respect and admiration of those who practice in her courtroom.

After years in practice and on the bench, Nancy Cisneros has distilled her philosophy to a simple ideology, one that could benefit all of us: “Find a way to make a living and still do something that connects with your soul.”

Gifts

Thank
You!

San Joaquin College of Law gratefully acknowledges all those who have generously supported the Law School. To you, we say thank you for all that you do for the College. This list contains donations received by SJCL from January through August, 1997.

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Message from the Student Bar Association

by David Moeck, President

During my law school career, I have had the unique opportunity to be involved in the recent changes involving SJCL—first as a Student Bar representative in the old location and now, during the current 1997-98 school year, as Student Bar President. I am proud to be associated with so many people who are working toward one goal: providing the highest quality legal education possible.

The Student Bar Association is doing its part to assist the SJCL student body in making the transition from law students to future attorneys. We have set in motion several programs that will bring local practitioners and the students of our school closer together. This month, we will have the first ever "Resume Drop," allowing students the opportunity to have their resumes distributed throughout the Fresno legal community. This program will not only enhance employment opportunities, but will also showcase the student talent that SJCL has to offer.

In the planning stages, there is a program that will coordinate "mixer" nights between upper division students and the Fresno County Young Lawyers Association. Students can begin networking with local attorneys, thereby gaining exposure to the legal community as graduation nears.

Most importantly, I would like to say WELCOME to the 1997-98 First Year Class! This will surely be one of the most exciting undertakings of your lives. Do not lose sight of what has brought you here to begin this adventure. Keep in mind the fact that the profession we seek is a noble one, dedicated to the service of others. I encourage you to foster that spirit of service here at San Joaquin College of Law and to get involved with the school, Student Bar and any student activities whenever possible.

To the returning students, welcome back to SJCL! The law school experience has been a tremendous challenge, one we fortunately have managed to survive. Now that the end is in sight, let's not lose the enthusiasm, dedication and drive that have helped to sustain us this far.

Best wishes to everyone for a successful year!

George A. Hopper Moot Court Competition

The Summer 1997 George A. Hopper Moot Court Competition took place July 8 and 10. The instructors for the course were Sarah Schmidt ('88), Marlene Hubbell ('92) and Patti Williams ('93). The final round was held in SJCL's new courtroom, with the Hon. Lawrence O'Neill, Hon. John Fitch and Hon. James Thaxter presiding. A reception was held for the winners of the competition on July 10.

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SJCL Staff Profile

Christie Ballard Associate Dean for Advancement

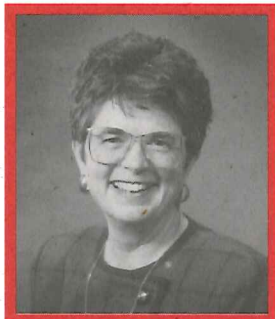
"You have to feel good about what you do. I feel good about this institution and what it does for the community," says Christie Ballard, SJCL's Associate Dean for Advancement and member of the Class of 1996. Christie took and passed the Bar Exam in July 1996 and started as associate dean in August 1996.

Six years ago, Christie was looking for a new direction that would combine her past experiences with a new challenge. Judge Annette LaRue suggested that she try law school. "I chose SJCL because of its reputation in the community," Christie says. "The Law School was local and offered night classes. As an established member of the community, it would have been difficult to consider law school if it had meant leaving town and starting over somewhere else."

While in law school, Christie completed an externship with Federal Magistrate Hollis G. Best and clerked with a local family law practitioner. She was also president of the Student Bar Association in 1995-96.

Christie received a B.A. from CSU, Chico in Physical Education and Foreign Language-Italian and German, cum laude in 1973. Just prior to attending law school she enjoyed a long career as a construction estimator and as manager for a marble and granite fabrication shop for J. Dean Ballard & Sons.

"While in law school, I decided that the practice of law was not the only part of law that interested me. I wanted to pursue other avenues. The associate dean position here at SJCL is an opportunity to help promote an institution that makes a huge impact on our community. I believe in this place and what it does. It's great to be part of that."



As Associate Dean for Advancement, Christie is responsible to the Dean. She oversees all avenues of institutional advancement including public relations, alumni relations and fund development. "Right now, fund development is the most important aspect of my work at the Law School. My greatest challenge is the completion of the capital campaign. SJCL's alumni have really supported the campaign, but the reality is that we [the alums] are small in number. We are also fortunate to have other members of the community who believe in this institution and who have supported it financially.

"I'm proud to walk in this building every day as a staff member and an alum," Christie says. "It goes back to liking what you do. I came into a department filled with energetic and qualified people. I wouldn't trade my staff for anything.

"I remember vividly my first impression of the Shields building," she adds. "I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?' Students and alumni now have a campus they can be proud to call home. It's a fine reminder of what can be done by folks when they put their minds to it. The architect, the Trustees and the law school administration made a commitment to the preservation of the historic aspects of this building, and I truly admire that decision.

"The building is a wonderful blend of old and new. The smiles on the students' faces when they saw the new campus for the first time must have lasted a week. That image will stick with me a long time."

A Rotarian since 1991, Christie is also a member of the Rosecrest Guild of the Salvation Army. She enjoys long distance running and has completed five marathons and one ultra-marathon. The ultra-marathon (31 miles) took place the weekend after she completed the Bar Exam. "It was a great release after the stress of the Bar [Exam]!", Christie laughs.

She is the proud daughter of Albert and Paula Sartor of Fresno, who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in September 1995.

Thank you, Christie, for your continued involvement with SJCL.

Congratulations!

...Continued from Page 1
May 1997 M.S., Taxation Graduates

Kathleen James
Timothy Jan
Christina Wyneken

February 1997 Paralegal Graduates

Christa Craig
Brenda Doody
Allison Hesnault
Holly Hutchison
Monica Oates
Monique Roberts
David Sanchez
Georgina Sanchez
Gina L'Ecuyer Stevenson

February 1997 Bar Passers

Jon Adams
Patrick Aguirre
Leah Ann Alcazar
Doreen Cole
Darren Cullins
James Doan
Linda Durost
Jenell Hudson
Diane Itzenhauser
Ty Kharazi
Mario Langone
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James Myers
and Charlotte Wade
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and Jennifer Reisz

MCLE CALENDAR *for* **Fall/Winter 1997**

San Joaquin College of Law is proud to provide the Central Valley with continuing legal education seminars. Mark your calendars now to ensure that you get the MCLE hours you need.

OCTOBER:

22 "Battling Gender Bias"

NOVEMBER:

1 "Fourth Annual Family Law
Developments and Strategies Program"

DECEMBER:

11 "Legal Ethics 1998"

JANUARY 1998:

"Marathon Month:" A variety of programs to help attorneys complete their 36 hours of MCLE credit.

(Note: Compliance Group A-G must complete their 36 hours by January 31, 1998.)

For more information on these programs, contact Sydney Fournet at (209) 323-2100.

SJCL Staff Profile

John Eleazarian

"When I was a graduate student in Economics, I had to read 200 pages of material dealing with anti-trust laws. That's all it took to get me hooked on law."

- Earning a B.A. in Math and Economics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1973, John completed his M.A. in Economics at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1978. He was studying for his Ph.D. when he read those fateful pages on antitrust law and quickly changed disciplines, earning his J.D. from UCLA in 1979.

After working in the Los Angeles area, John has been a shareholder of the law firm of Kimble, MacMichael & Upton since 1982, practicing commercial law and bankruptcy. He is a member of the Business Bankruptcy Committee of the American Bar Association section of Business Law and Tax Law; the American Bankruptcy Institute and the Central California Bankruptcy Association. He has been a member of the Board of Trustees of Fresno Pacific University since 1989 and served as treasurer for the organization since 1994.

Following a suggestion by SJCL graduate Dick Lee, John began teaching bankruptcy law at SJCL in 1985. "I really enjoy teaching law," he says, "especially at the new campus. I was here the first night the school opened the doors of the building, using the library to do legal research.

"More importantly, I like being associated with a legal institution that has such an exceptionally diverse student population," John adds. "It's fun and rewarding for me as a teacher to be able to motivate adults with significant life

SJCL's Delta Theta Phi plans for 1997-98

During the International 50th Biennial Convention of the Delta Theta Phi Fraternity held Aug. 6-10 in Cleveland, OH, SJCL's Hollis Best Senate was named an Outstanding Student Senate in Region VI. This is the second consecutive year SJCL was so recognized.

Not willing to rest on past laurels, the current officers of the Best senate have already been preparing for another outstanding year of service to the senate members, the student body and the Central Valley community.

Current plans include the continuation of the first year student's "Shock Control" seminar; the employment speaker series; end-of-year exam writing workshop and member scholarships. In addition to these successful programs, the 1997-98 year will see the reactivation of an alumni senate to serve the Central Valley region; establishing a mentor program for juvenile probationers released from the Caruthers Boot Camp; and sponsorship of a youth literacy/work study project.

The senate is always looking for service project ideas as well as for fundraising opportunities. If you have any ideas you would like to share, please contact the senate at 323-2100 or 277-8121.

News Briefs

Campus Tours Offered

If you haven't yet had a chance to visit SJCL's new campus, please call Christie Ballard, Associate Dean for Advancement, to arrange a tour of the facilities. You'll be glad you did!

Eleazarian

...Continued from Page 7

experience in other areas about the study of law.

"There is a wide range of ages at SJCL and the older, returning students can ask some really penetrating questions that keep me on my toes."

When he's not practicing or teaching law, John enjoys spending time with his wife, Adele, and their two daughters, 11-year-old Amy and Lisa, 9. His hobbies include rock-climbing, playing the piano, golfing, singing in the church choir and bridge.

Is he ever sorry that he switched majors back in graduate school? "No," says John. "Law is a lot more fun than economics!"

Thank you, John, for adding to the quality of education at SJCL!

Moot Court

...Continued from Page 5

Thank you to all those who donated their time to judge the various rounds of the competition. Congratulations to the following award winners and to all the students who participated in the Moot Court Competition!

First Place Team: Gary Brunsvick (2nd Year) and Troy Roach (5th Year)

Second Place Team: Jennifer Morrison (3rd Year) and Kathleen McGurty (3rd Year)

Semi-Finalists: Sandra McIntyre (4th Year) and Kirsten Corey (4th Year)

Kristine Howe (3rd Year) and Sean O'Rourke (3rd Year)

First Place Best Oral Advocate: Gary Brunsvick

Second Place Best Oral Advocate: Kristine Howe

Third Place Best Oral Advocate: Suzanne McGuire (3rd Year)

First Place Best Brief: Jennifer Morrison and Kathleen McGurty

Second Place Best Brief: Kirsten Corey and Sandra McIntyre

Third Place Best Brief: Kevin Cook (3rd Year) and Suzanne McGuire

CEB Closeout Book Sale

The SJCL bookstore is having a closeout sale on CEB books. These books are all available to SJCL students and alumni at drastically reduced prices.

Titles on sale include: California Breach of Contract Remedies (\$28); California Government Tort Liability Practice, Third Edition (\$48); California Uninsured Motorist (\$22); Mechanics Liens and Other Remedies (\$38.25); Mortgage and Deed of Trust Practice, Second Edition (\$36); California Real Property Financing-Basic Loan Documentation (\$40); California Real Property Financing-Workouts and Bankruptcy (\$40); California Real Property Remedies Practice (\$38); California Residential Tenant-Landlord Practice (\$38.50); California Condominium and Planned Development Practice (\$44); California Zoning Practice (\$28); Competitive Business Practices, Second Edition (\$46) and Taxation of Real Property Transfers (\$38).

Necessary updates for these volumes are available by contacting CEB.

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