

LAW IN ACTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

SPRING 2005

Student Blog Focuses on Business Law Issues

MICHAEL FORSTER ROTHBART



Laptop computers, wireless networks, blogging, instant messaging, and the availability of a wide array of on-line research tools are changing how students learn in law school.

For a cadre of UW Law School students, the business of business is, well, blogging. About eighteen students under the guidance of Professor Gordon Smith have set up a Web log called *Law & Entrepreneurship News* to track developments in business law. The Web-based journal, employing a mix of commentary and news stories, provides a resource for business lawyers and allows students to closely follow new legal wrinkles in a range of areas of interest to them.

“As I understand more legal issues, I’m able to post a story and tell people why it matters,” says Zachary Wyatt, a second-year law student and editor of copyright and trademark issues for the blog. “It’s a great addition to classroom learning.”

Smith agrees that the blog — which launched in September at <http://entrepreneur.typepad.com/news/> — provides a valuable chance to share breaking legal news and help students form opinions about the new developments. “Law school can be a rather passive experience for a lot of people — it’s really the professor at the center and students reacting,” says Smith, who specializes in corporate and securities law. “Blogging enhances their knowledge because they have more context in more recent cases.” In addition to helping individual students learn about legal topics, the blog provides a way for these law students to practice their research and writing skills.

Law & Entrepreneurship News averages about 150 hits a day.

Student editors keep abreast of subject areas such as international trade, Wisconsin issues, venture capital, taxation, franchising, and small business. The site also includes links to other business blogs.

Smith says blogging imposes a special brand of discipline. He started his personal Web site, called *Venturpreneur*, at www.venturpreneur.com/weblogs/ with an eye toward doing the work of *Law & Entrepreneurship News*.

(Continued on page 4)

Ambassador, Senator Discuss Constitutions in Lively Forum



South African Ambassador Barbara Masekela and Senator Russ Feingold

South African Ambassador to the United States Barbara Masekela joined Senator Russell Feingold at the Law School in March, for a public conversation on the role of constitutions in developing democracy. Law School Professor Heinz Klug, an expert in South African law, moderated the discussion.

(Continued on page 2)



In a few short weeks, the Class of 2005 will participate in what has become a very special event — the Law School's Presentation of the Colors Ceremony. This event, at which students receive the red and purple hoods that identify them as law graduates, brings our students and their families together prior to the larger University graduation at the Kohl Center.

It is always an exciting occasion, and it is a wonderful, intimate way for me to wish these students well. It is also a bit sad, as I am always reminded of how quickly the three years have gone. Most of these graduates will leave Madison, and almost half will leave Wisconsin, heading to jobs across the country and even around the world.

These days, however, I'm a little less nostalgic when I have to

say good-bye. The reason? Many of these 3Ls will return to Madison over the next few years to participate in the Law School's increasingly popular Reunion Weekends. For this year's graduating class, the first official reunion will be in the fall of 2010, and for many it will be their first trip back to Madison since graduation. Some will come alone and others will bring families or friends along to show them Wisconsin. All of them will find the Law School a welcoming place, filled with classmates, friends, and faculty eager to make their homecoming a special time.

How about you? If you haven't been back to the Law School recently, I encourage you to seriously consider joining us for your class reunion weekend. Over the past five years, the Law School has made Reunion Weekend a priority, and the response has been terrific. And, of course, Madison is a beautiful place to be in the fall.

I look forward to seeing many of you at this year's Reunion Weekend on October 21–22. For more information, visit the Law School's Web site at www.law.wisc.edu/alumni/reunion/index.htm. As always, thanks for your continuing support for and involvement with the Law School.

— Dean Kenneth B. Davis, Jr.

(Ambassador continued from page 1)

History Professor John Kaminski completed the panel.

Ambassador Masekela's visit was in honor of the tenth anniversary of South Africa's constitution and was made possible by the Laurie Carlson Progressive Ideas Forum.

The animated conversation between guests and an overflow audience probed the role that constitutions and the constitution-making process play in fostering democracy and democratic values. The program highlighted the importance of the historical experiences of both South Africa and the United States in understanding what is happening elsewhere in the world.

Barbara Masekela has led South Africa's diplomatic delegation to the U.S. since being appointed ambassador by President Thabo Mbeki in 2003. She is a former chief of staff to Nelson Mandela, and served as ambassador to both France and UNESCO under Mandela's administration.

In addition to her visit to the Law School, Masekela met with faculty and students in the UW African Studies Program to discuss current South African issues, and with academic and business leaders to explore areas of possible future cooperation in biotechnology.

Law in Action is the semiannual newsletter of the University of Wisconsin Law School. 975 Bascom Mall, Madison, WI 53706-1399
Law in Action is funded by private donations.

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