



News Release

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Thomas Jefferson School of Law Honored as "Diversity Pipeline Architect" by CLEO

SAN DIEGO - - The Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) Council recognized Thomas Jefferson School of Law as one of its "45 for 45" honorees during CLEO's 45th anniversary celebration reception at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on September 26.

This year marks the 45th year of CLEO's efforts helping to bring greater diversity to the legal profession. To showcase this momentous occasion, CLEO titled the theme of the celebration "45 for 45." This refers to the 45 law schools, 45 individuals and 45 law firms, corporations, and associations that have played a critical role in the financial viability of CLEO since 2000.

During the summers of 2006, 2008 and 2011, TJSL hosted CLEO Summer Institutes, which altogether brought about 150 CLEO Scholars to the law school for six weeks of courses taught by TJSL professors, individualized guidance, networking and other activities to prepare them for the rigors of law school. The purpose of the annual Summer Institute program is to provide traditionally under-represented and disadvantaged groups an opportunity to "jump start" their legal careers. CLEO was founded as a non-profit project of the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education to expand opportunities for minority and low-income students to attend law school. Many CLEO Scholars are the first member of their family to graduate from college. Some who attended the summer programs chose to attend TJSL.

According to the announcement sent to TJSL Dean Tom Guernsey, the CLEO staff stated: "In honor of our esteemed Council Chairman Emeritus, the late William A. 'Buddy' Blakey, we are recognizing these 135 generous financial supporters as the inaugural group of 'William A. Blakey Diversity Pipeline Architects.' Buddy dedicated his life to ensuring the educational 'pipeline' was readily accessible to all students who exhibited the aptitude, fortitude and passion to successfully pursue a quality education. By supporting CLEO and organizations like it, our 'pipeline architects' are doing their part to help ensure the legacy he worked diligently to establish is carried on."

"CLEO represents an extension of our continuing commitment to diversity and to providing access to legal education," says Tim Spearman, TJSL's Director of Admissions. "We were very honored to be selected to host three CLEO Summer Institutes and we are extremely honored to be recognized by CLEO now as a 'Pipeline Architect.'"

In recent years, TJSL has consistently been ranked among the most diverse law schools in the nation. The law school's Fall 2013 entering class has about 50 percent students of color. In its annual law school issue last December, *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* ranked TJSL as one of the "Top 12 Law Schools for Hispanics."

"Until the diversity of the legal profession adequately reflects the diversity of this nation, law schools need to actively ensure there is diversity in legal education," said TJSL's Dean Guernsey. "Supporting CLEO programs is just one example of Thomas Jefferson School of Law's pipeline efforts. We are proud to be a school of opportunity and of the rich diversity of our student body."

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