

## IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



the coronavirus pandemic, the Vermont Law School community emerged stronger, more resilient, and with numerous positive outcomes. I will always remember this last year as one where I saw the very best of VLS.

Our faculty and staff developed creative strategies to offer the optimal VLS experience virtually, and students made the most of meeting and learning remotely. Meanwhile, alumni made an active effort to support fellow Swans by offering job and internship opportunities, participating in events, and serving as mentors, among other highlights.

Overall, VLS received \$4,645,601 in contributions from more than 1,000 alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, parents, friends, foundations, corporations, and government agencies. From providing scholarship aid to supporting program enhancements and experiential learning, and beyond, the impact of these gifts is far-reaching.

Full-time faculty giving participation soared to 100 percent for the first time in many years, with staff trailing not far behind, and alumni recorded their highest participation total since FY15. This boost in giving demonstrates increased optimism in VLS' future. In addition, for the third consecutive year, Vermont Law School closed its year-end books with a budget surplus.

I want to express my utmost gratitude for your thoughtful ideas, dynamic volunteerism, and generous philanthropic giving—all of which continue to make so much possible for the institution and our students. There is a lot to be excited about, and together, we can build upon the current momentum and carry VLS to new heights.

Gratefully,

Beth McCormack Interim President and Dean

generous donorsspanning 48 states (plus D.C.), 8 countries, and 2 territories—supported VLS

class years represented alumni giving

made a gift for the first time



resumed giving after a hiatus



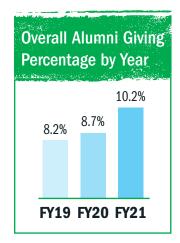
\$170k+

in donor-funded scholarships awarded to 47 students

## **ALUMNI SUPPORT**

Vermont Law School closed out FY21 with alumni giving participation at 10.2 percent, which marked a 1.5 percent increase over FY20, and the highest participation total since FY15.

From the Annual Fund to scholarships, just to highlight a couple key areas, alumni supported a variety of institutional priorities. In addition, VLS received gifts from graduates spanning all 45 class years (1976–2021)!







Recent Graduating Class (Past 10 years) with Highest Giving Participation for FY21

## **FY21 HIGHLIGHTS**

\$4,645,601

Total Amount Raised:

\$2,358,475 Government Funding

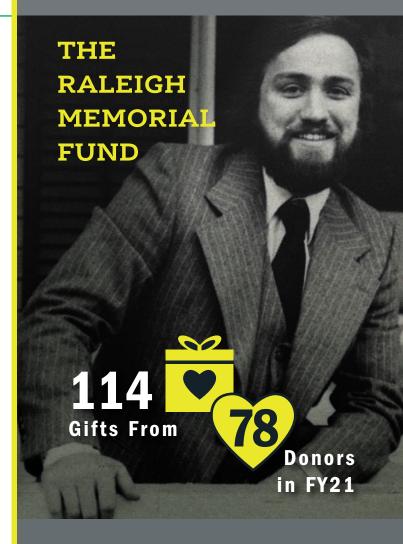
\$1,592,115 Grants and Contract

> \$695,011 Individual Giving

\$695,011

Restricted Gifts





Established in 2012 following the tragic deaths of Chris Raleigh JD'80 and his 10-year-old son, Travis, the Raleigh Memorial Fund was designed to help current VLS students with unexpected expenses in times of need (i.e., health issues, family crisis), or with opportunities to participate in extracurricular educational offerings (i.e., travel/accommodations for a regional or national moot court competition).

This effort was launched by Chris' classmates to carry on the Raleigh family's legacy in a meaningful way, and in FY21, this special initiative surpassed the \$50,000 mark and became a permanent endowed fund at Vermont Law School. Since its inception, the Raleigh Memorial Fund has assisted numerous Swans, and now it will continue to impact countless others well into the future.



My clinical experience at the SRLC was incredibly rewarding and fulfilling. The human aspect of clinic work, and knowing I helped move clients' cases forward—even if in a small way—is what I value most. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, which helped me grow as an advocate, a future lawyer, and a human."

- Beth Bowles JD'21

South Royalton Legal Clinic (SRLC) programs receive more financial support from foundations and individuals than any other clinic at Vermont Law School. This is a direct reflection of the thousands of hours of free legal assistance SRLC provides annually to predominately low-income, at-risk Vermonters.

In fiscal year 2021, the three South Royalton Legal Clinic programs—the Family Law Program, Vermont Immigrant Assistance, and the Veterans Legal Advocacy Project—served **642** individuals who could not afford to hire attorneys and whose legal challenges would have been insurmountable without the help of the clinic. SRLC's legal assistance includes everything from brief, but vital consults and referrals, to full legal representation in high-stakes proceedings. While most cases last days or weeks, some can last several years. Managing this caseload would not be possible without the more than **12,000** hours contributed by student clinicians over the course of FY21, and the considerable financial support—over **\$500,000**—provided by foundations and individuals.

SRLC's clients reside throughout Vermont, with a majority in the Upper Valley and Chittenden County. With the assistance of the clinic's five staff attorneys, two administrative staff, and many student clinicians, the impact on the lives of those served over the last fiscal year has been immense. At least **58** Vermonters were able to address and solve complex immigration issues; more than **70** survivors of domestic violence received valuable guidance and representation; **166** veterans were able to access benefits,

avoid foreclosures and evictions, or receive assistance resolving myriad legal issues; and more than **44** children were represented in Family Court during their parent's contentious divorce proceedings. Plus, over **300** additional low-income individuals received free assistance on a wide range of civil legal matters.

The impact of this assistance extends well beyond the number of clients and consults. Each case affects families and extended families, multiplying these numbers several times over. Accordingly, the real reach of SRLC's work over the course of just one year is well into the thousands. It should also be noted that the economic impact of legal aid is significant. For every dollar in pro bono legal assistance provided, eleven dollars is returned to the Vermont economy due to decreased demand for government support programs; the positive effect of stable housing and family situations on employment and education; avoidance of negative health effects related to legal jeopardy; and the regularizing of immigration status that allows people to work and earn college degrees. By this measure—as determined by a recent Vermont Bar Foundation study—SRLC's annual economic impact exceeds \$15,000,000!

There is also a major effect on the lives and careers of SRLC student clinicians—many of whom mention their experience reminds them of why they came to law school in the first place.





