We are deeply appreciative of the support we have received from our donors to Vermont Law School in the past fiscal year. As outlined in more detail in this report, we raised more than $4 million in cash and pledges in FY17—thanks to your generous contributions.

Your financial support demonstrates the value you place on a Vermont Law School education. You make it possible for us to provide much-needed scholarships to deserving students, to hire and retain our passionate and inspiring faculty, to support legal clinics that provide counsel to those who have limited funds, and to develop the next generation of leaders who will go on to serve in areas ranging from environmental policy to restorative justice.

On a personal level, I am thrilled by the opportunity to serve as the school's ninth president and dean and honored to be taking the reins from my predecessor, Marc Mihaly, who did so much to build relationships with donors, legislative leaders, and others as reflected in the strong financial results outlined in this report.

Vermont Law School is a leader in environmental law and policy and in clinical and experiential education. As envisioned in our strategic plan, VLS will strengthen commitments to provide a supportive and student-centered legal and master's education and expand offerings to meet new challenges, such as a proposed master's degree program in restorative justice. We will seek to build our endowment to support flexible, outcome-based programs for students; further develop online access to a range of courses and degree programs; increase international opportunities; support VLS-owned housing; attract talented faculty, renowned speakers, and scholars; and increase scholarship support.

I hope you join me in these efforts.

Thank you for your support of Vermont Law School.

Thomas McHenry
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Vermont Law School invests in those who will use the power of the law to make a difference in our communities and the world. We couldn’t do this without the support of those of you included in this report. THANK YOU.

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LEADER IN PHILANTHROPY

TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT ROBERT B. FISKE JR. HAS HAD ON VERMONT LAW SCHOOL, START with Oakes Hall. Fiske, who began his second tenure as a trustee in 2011, points to Oakes as a major accomplishment of his time on the board. During the capital campaign for Oakes, which opened in 1998, he led support of the classroom building as chair of the board’s development committee. Senior counsel with the New York law firm Davis Polk, Fiske was the first recipient of the VLS Philanthropic Leadership Award, presented at commencement in May. He has homes in Darien, Connecticut, and Barnard, Vermont.

Fiske notes the many ways VLS impacts Vermont. “Vermont Law School’s clinics in the area provide an enormously wide range of services. It has close connections with the Vermont judiciary and good relations with the governor, senators and state legislature. It contributes to legislative issues in Vermont and Vermont governance in general, and provides a steady supply of graduates to Vermont’s legal community.”

His influence on the legal community and the law has been widespread. Last year, Fiske received the Lewis F. Powell Jr. Award for Professionalism and Ethics from the American Inns of Court, an association of legal professionals that offers mentoring and career-long continuing education opportunities. In Davis Polk’s litigation department, he focuses on professional liability, securities, products liability and white-collar crime. He also has extensive government prosecutorial experience, including as assistant U.S. attorney and U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and as independent counsel for the Whitewater investigation in 1994 during Bill Clinton’s presidency.

Fiske is a member of the Independent Commission on New York City Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform. He received Michigan Law School’s inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011 and The American Lawyer Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. In 2007, he received the Fordham-Stein Prize, given by the Stein Center for Law and Ethics at Fordham University’s School of Law to those in the legal profession who represent outstanding professional conduct and advance justice.

Fiske’s support for VLS has been broad. He served about 10 years as a trustee starting in 1990, the year his son, Robert, earned a JD from VLS. He has served on various board committees and now is chair of the investment committee. Over time, Fiske has supported challenges to raise money for endowed scholarships, student loan-forgiveness programs and the Fund for VLS, which provides operating funds.

“Bob’s integrity, thoughtfulness and wise counsel have elevated the overall performance of our board, helping us to navigate some turbulent seas in the last several years,” VLS Board of Trustees Chair Chris Dutton says. “His calming presence and generous spirit have allowed us as a board to support and assist Dean and President Marc Mihaly and his team, so that we now begin a new administration under Tom McHenry ready for the challenges ahead.”

Fiske’s generous spirit moves others to give back, and he encourages that. “It’s helping support a law school that’s a leader in the environmental area and such an important part of Vermont,” he says.
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In honor of Elijah T. LaChance ’17
The Family LaChance

In memory of Barbara Leopold
Christopher ’78 and Jennifer Leopold

In memory of Dr. Arthur and Rayna Loewy
Todd M. Heine ’11, JD, LLM, Master 2 Droit

In honor of my parents: Joseph and Madeline Maccario
Judge and Mrs. Joseph Maccario ’77

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Ms. Suzan Dunkel (Marshall) P’96

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Tony and Julie Mollica P’18

In memory of Karen S. Purdyka ’78
Jeffrey ’78 and Lea Ann Rosenthal P’12

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Ms. Jane Chewning Prugh P’08

In honor of Mackenzie V. Royce ’04
Craig Evan Royce P’04

In memory of Zander Rubin
John and Sandra Dooley

In memory of James T. Shea ’83
Denyse Coyle Galda

In memory of Geoffrey B. Shields
Boe Morgan ’07
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David ’92 and Lisa Celone

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Mr. Don A. Smith and Mrs. Rachel C. Smith P’02

In honor of Amy M. Spicer, celebrating your success
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Spicer P’96

In honor of Rory T. Thibault
Peter and Lynn Kelley P’07

In honor of Edward Wadsworth’s devotion and participation in the 3M Committee
Anonymous

In memory of Judge Sterry R. Waterman
Jenny and Joe Ryall

In memory of Sundee L. Webber, our wonderful classmate
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13.86%
8.38%
8.74%
2.56%
3.55%
11.06%
6.59%
7.03%
7.53%
5.31%
16.58%
Zachary Mangelito 08
Nicholas D. Mangold 10
Daphneyse C. Marcellin 19
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Tara A. Reilly ’83 and John H.
Reilly ’83
Bill Reynolds ’87
Lamar S. Rhodes ’04
Daniel O’3 and Britt Richardson
Parker M. Riehle ’92
Laurie Ristino*
Jessie (Marshall) Roberts ’80
Christian ’85 and Cheryl Robin
Jeffrey ’78 and Lea Ann Rosenthal
P’12
2008
7.92% PARTICIPATION
2009
4.04% PARTICIPATION
2010
3.92% PARTICIPATION
2011
5.56% PARTICIPATION
2012
8.91% PARTICIPATION
2013
3.70% PARTICIPATION
2014
5.37% PARTICIPATION
2015
1.85% PARTICIPATION
2016
2.85% PARTICIPATION
2017
9.09% PARTICIPATION

** = TRUSTEE DURING FY 2017  *** = TRUSTEE EMERITUS/FORMER TRUSTEE  †= DECEASED  ^ = FACULTY/STAFF
KAREN OELSCHLAEGER JD’16 HAD THE MOST POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF HER LIFE AT VERMONT LAW SCHOOL: A HELPFUL mentorship, invaluable hands-on clinic experiences, and attention to social justice issues she cares about. “Both in terms of education and community, it couldn’t have been more on par with what I wanted from law school,” says Oelschlaeger, of Montpelier, deputy Windsor County state’s attorney in White River Junction. “I was so grateful for the amount of support I received as a law student. That made it possible to go.”

Now Oelschlaeger is making it possible for other students to attend VLS. She established the Karen Oelschlaeger Scholarship for the Public Interest, an annual award to an LGBTQ student in the JD or Accelerated JD programs who wants to practice public-interest law, including government work.

Oelschlaeger is among a growing number of younger VLS alumni who give support through varied philanthropical options. “Karen is giving a scholarship so someone who may not be able to afford law school can go to law school. That’s amazing as a graduate of 2016,” Vice President for Alumni Relations and Development Mary Welz says. “More recent alums are stepping up quite a bit...The goal is to have all our alums identify themselves as donors. That’s an important piece of our fundraising effort.”

Oelschlaeger chose a termed scholarship, with which a donor commits to give a minimum of $5,000 for five years and determines which type of student may receive the award. “I really love the idea of a termed scholarship,” says Oelschlaeger, 33. “I liked knowing where my money was going...I could think about what kind of student I wanted to help support and what social good I hope to see from it.”

Shannon Griffo JD/MSEL’07 and Joe Griffo JD’07 made an unrestricted gift to VLS this year that put them in the Leaders’ Circle, for donors who give a minimum of $1,000 per year for five years. Shannon is an Environmental Protection Agency lawyer, and Joe is a Navy Judge Advocate General attorney. Both 36, they met at VLS and live in Virginia.

“The bottom line is that we really believe in the institution, and we love the school,” Joe Griffo says. “Despite it being as small as it is, its reputation is outside its footprint.”

Although VLS has a smaller footprint, its impact is worldwide. That’s one reason Griffo hopes the support he and his wife give will inspire other alumni to contribute to the school. “You’re making an investment that is guaranteed to have a huge payback factor,” he says. “Vermont Law School has a proven track record of making a difference.”

The couple supports VLS indirectly, too. They own rental property near the school, and most of their tenants are law students. “We’re helping to keep the institution going,” Griffo says. “It absolutely gives us more skin in the game.”

Oelschlaeger is helping to keep VLS going, too. She encourages other alumni to step up if possible. “If someone else enjoyed their experience at Vermont Law School or gained something there that they did not gain from another educational experience,” she says, “I think it’s worth rewarding the school.”
CONTRIBUTIONS

Gifts from our many supporters provide the means to expand academic programs, sustain our clinics, enhance student life, recruit accomplished faculty, and increase financial aid. We are especially grateful to our ever-growing number of donors giving at the Leaders’ Circle level ($1,000 per year for five years) and above.

$4.42M FY17 GRAND TOTAL

CASH DONATIONS $2,187,000
PLEDGE COMMITMENTS $2,235,000

GOVERNMENT 24% ($1.08M)
FOUNDATIONS 28% ($1.22M)
INDIVIDUALS 47% ($2.09M)
CORPORATIONS 1% ($24.5K)

Gifts and grants are an important source of revenue for operation costs at Vermont Law School and represent 20 percent of total revenues.

$22M VLS REVENUE

LEADERS’ CIRCLE GIVING

The number of donors giving at the Leaders’ Circle level and above has significantly increased since 2014.

335% INCREASE
FISCAL YEAR 2017 WAS A YEAR OF FORWARD PROGRESS FOR VERMONT LAW SCHOOL. NEARLY 800 ALUMNI, TRUSTEES, parents, corporations, government agencies, foundations, and friends of Vermont Law School joined together to raise $2,187,000 to fund VLS operations. VLS received an additional $2,235,000 in pledge commitments, raising the total over a whopping $4,420,000.

That is an amazing feat for a small, relatively young school such as ours. You helped make it happen. Philanthropic gifts are critical to our ability to provide our students with a first-rate education, and to offer scholarships to ease their student loan debt.

Some notable achievements during FY17 include:

» Unprecedented giving to the Fund for VLS, topping out at just over $720,000
» A 7.2 percent increase in alumni gifts
» A 20 percent growth in Leaders’ Circle members
» Funding for the ENRLC, SRLC, and the IEE increased by 33 percent
» In his last five months as president and dean of VLS, Marc Mihaly successfully secured gifts and pledges totaling $1,030,000 in support of Vermont Law School’s strategic plan
» Our CAFS and U.S.-Asia programs secured $1,300,000 in private and public funding

Giving comes in many forms. For those of you who offer your support as trustees, VLSAA board members, advisory committee members, reunion volunteers, regional representatives, mentors, admissions volunteers, employers of graduates, or those who simply help spread the word about what an amazing education our students receive, we thank you. Your efforts on behalf of VLS contribute to our ability to maintain and fortify the work we do on behalf of our students.

I am so thankful for all who have chosen to stand by Vermont Law School, and I am excited and optimistic for even more success in FY18.

With gratitude,

Mary L. Welz
Vice President, Offices for Alumni Relations and Development
Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy within this report. If your records do not reflect the information provided, please notify the Offices for Alumni Relations and Development by emailing jlawrence@vermontlaw.edu or by calling (802) 831-1325.
# COUNTMEIN 2017 REUNION GIVING CHALLENGE

The third annual reunion giving challenge (known as “#COUNTMEIN”) proved that VLS alumni always rise to the challenge. Reunion year classes competed against each other to see which class could win with the highest rate of participation in giving. The six-week campaign culminated on Friday evening of Homecoming Weekend, June 23-24, 2017. With a 27 percent participation rate, the Class of 1982 won the challenge, earning the Reunion Class Participation Award, and helping raise an unprecedented $720,700 for the Fund for VLS. Vermont Law School uses the fund to assist students with financial aid packages, provide student services, and attract and retain quality faculty and staff.
President and Dean Thomas McHenry, right, and Associate Dean David Mears JD/MSL’91, director of the Environmental Law Center, march in the alumni parade during Vermont Law School’s reunion and homecoming weekend in June.

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