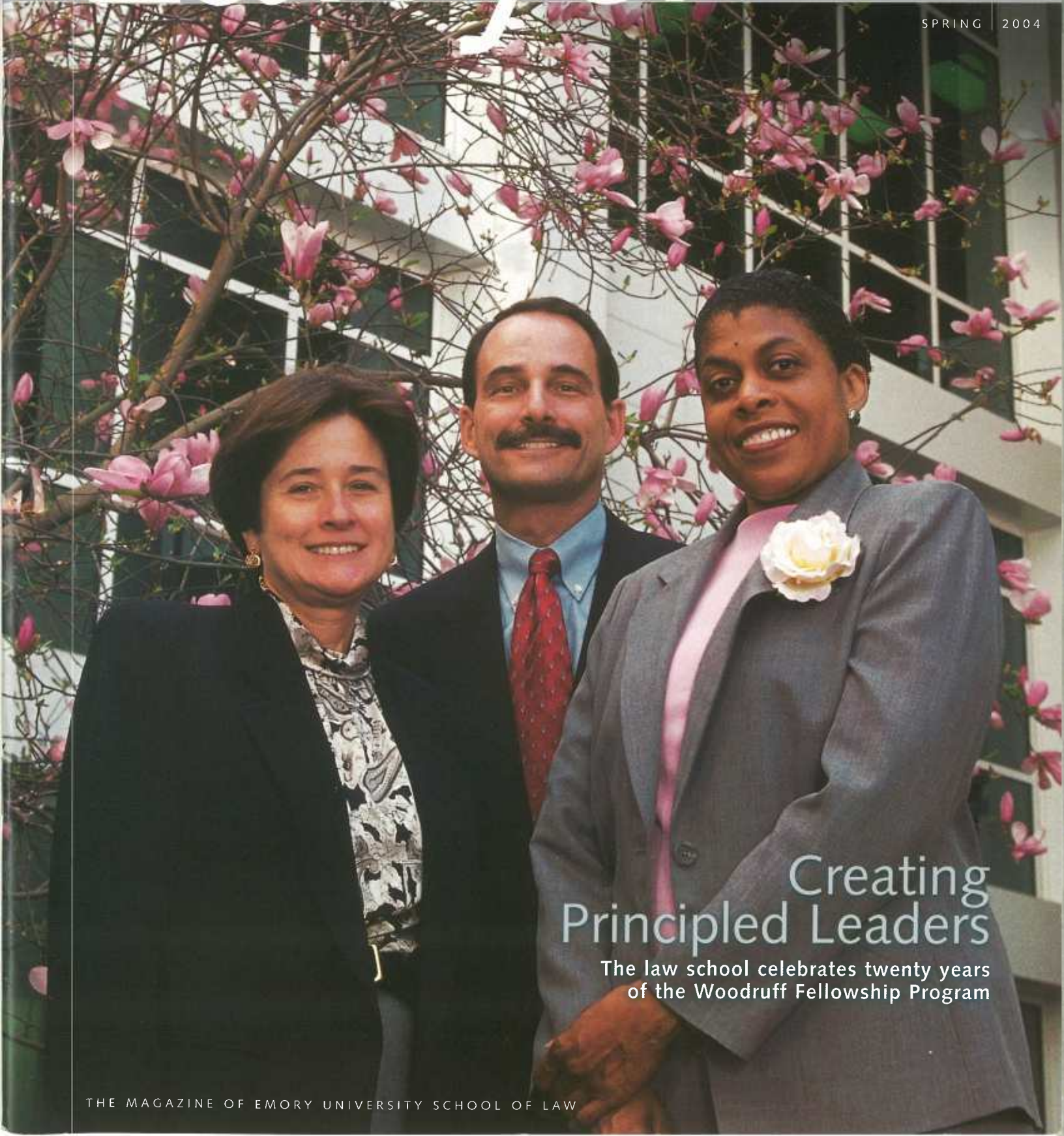


# Emory Lawyer

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## Creating Principled Leaders

The law school celebrates twenty years  
of the Woodruff Fellowship Program

by  
Beverly James

# Changing Lives, Creating Leaders

EMORY LAW SCHOOL CELEBRATES THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE ROBERT W. WOODRUFF FELLOWSHIP

The two women were already managing careers, families, and personal lives. The young man was fresh out of college. When they walked through the doors of Gambrell Hall in 1981, Sharon Barnes, Gerard "Gerry" Gaeng, and Beth Tyler became the first graduating class (1984) of Woodruff Scholars at Emory Law School. It would change their lives in ways they never imagined.

In 1979 Emory University received a gift of more than \$105 million from the late Robert W. Woodruff. Part of the endowment was used to develop and support scholarships for promising students. At the law school, the Robert W. Woodruff Fellowships in Law provide five students with a full three years' tuition and stipends for living expenses.

There are seventy-nine alumni of the Woodruff law fellowship program. (See box.)

Each year the competition gets stronger. This year, more than 300 students were nominated to compete for the fellowships, and fifteen finalists were named recently. These finalists will have the opportunity to visit Emory this spring to interview for the five fellowship awards.

Lynell Cadray, assistant dean of admission, says that this is one of her favorite projects. "The students are so bright and talented, they could choose to go anywhere in the country; therefore, it is quite an honor to have them seriously considering Emory. The selection

The Woodruff gave me tremendous professional opportunities and the benefit of an outstanding education. Plus, it was great to be part of something historic.

*Gerard Gaeng*

## WOODRUFF SCHOLARS

Cherie S. Adams '92L  
Athanasios Agelakopoulos '03L  
John DeSaussure Allison '91L  
Margaret Elizabeth Bagley '95L  
Anthony M. Balloon '02L  
Sharon Chester Barnes '84L  
Scott Fain Bertschi '90C '94L  
Maryann Blouin '96L

Sara Walden Brown '02L  
Barbara Jo Call '85L  
Stephen Ho Chen '95C-'00L  
Ginny Y. Chung '96L  
Sharon A. Cobb '87L  
Neal Cohen '03L  
Carol Colby '90L  
Lizabeth C. Collier '89L

Pamela Y. Cook-Montague '88L  
Rance Lamar Craft '95L  
Jing Deng '90L  
Teresa Annette Durham '89L  
Michael D. Floyd '87L  
Kelley A. Friedgen '99C-'03L  
Gerard J. Gaeng '84L  
Janis Mary Gomez '97L



committee, which consists of several faculty members and two Woodruff alumni, seeks students who will add immensely to the student body. From leadership abilities to community involvement, Woodruff Fellows come to Emory with vast experiences—including experiences abroad, corporate work experience, and an array of life experiences. They are deeply committed to community service, and Mr. Woodruff would be proud of that.”

A yearning for a new career, a lifelong desire to practice law, and a new start after tragedy struck led the three who would become the first Woodruff Scholars to Emory Law School.

Barnes, an Atlanta-area native, was living in St. Louis with her husband, a medical school student, and their fifteen-month-old

son. She taught high school English and coached a pompom squad.

Then misfortune found her. Her husband, only thirty, suffered a fatal heart attack just days after completing a residency in anesthesiology. “I had just found out I was three weeks pregnant with our second child and had planned to tell him that day,” Barnes says. “Plus, I was so excited because my husband and I had been talking about my doing something different with my life now that he would be out of school.”

A devastated Barnes moved back to Atlanta to sort out her future plans. “We had such a great partnership, and I wondered what I would do with my life now. My husband had always encouraged me to try law school. And I knew that moping and feeling sorry for myself wouldn’t be good for my sons, Jason and Brandon.”

With encouragement from her parents, Barnes



(From left)  
Beth Tyler,  
Gerard Gaeng,  
and Sharon Barnes  
pose in 1981 with  
the late Robert W.  
Woodruff.

Timothy J. Goodwin '90L  
Jane A. Gordon '89L  
Charles M. Grant '86L  
Gordon Lee Hamrick IV '96Ox-  
'98C-'01L  
Corey Fleming Hirokawa '00L  
David E. Huizenga '00L  
Robin M. Hutchinson '85C-'88L

Michele Jacobsen '93L  
Marina Kaldina '00L  
Liang Leon Kan '97L  
Kevin M. Kearney '87L  
Christopher James Kellner  
'94C-'94G-'97L  
Neil J. Kiely '94L  
Andrew R. Klein '88L

Tara Kneller '97L  
Catherine Morris Knight '93L  
Jacob P. Kuttner '95L  
Darryl Scott Laddin '90L  
Douglas J. MacGinnitie '92L  
Julie V. Mayfield '96L  
Sheryl L. McCalla '92L

applied to law school. Invited to apply for the Woodruff scholarship, Barnes says she was stunned to learn she was chosen as a Fellow. "Mr. Woodruff heard that I was a recent widow and he offered to increase the stipend to help pay for childcare. I declined because I was just happy that I could live at home and study full-time. It was the most incredibly generous thing anyone ever had done for me," she says.

Barnes, the managing attorney for staff counsel with the Infinity Insurance Company, credits the Woodruff with saving her and her children's lives. "The Woodruff took away all excuses for failing. It gave me something to focus on at a time when I felt life had played me a horrible hand. And it helped me find my place in the world again," says Barnes, who also teaches part-time at Georgia State.

For Gaeng, the road to Emory was paved with promises of a bright future in law. A professor at Towson University in Maryland told Gaeng—considered an outstanding student—about the recent gift to Emory from Mr. Woodruff. After applying, the philosophy major was invited to visit the law school as a finalist.

"I already had been accepted at Harvard, Berkeley, and other top law schools," Gaeng says. "When I visited Emory, I knew it was the right program for me. I learned how outstanding the trial-advocacy program is, and the faculty seemed very dedicated to the development of students. I was convinced that I wanted to be part of an institution on the rise."

After graduating, Gaeng clerked in a federal court, worked in the Maryland attorney general's office, and served as counsel to a commission created by Congress to investigate the savings and loans scandals of the 1980s. Gaeng is now in private practice focusing on complex business litigation.

"The Woodruff gave me tremendous professional opportunities and the benefit of an outstanding education. Plus, it was great to be part of something historic," adds the father of four.

For Tyler, coming to Emory Law was as familiar as walking through her own front door. After earning an undergraduate degree in French from Emory College in 1970, Tyler taught middle and high school for two years, then worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Boston and the Department of Labor in Atlanta.

She finally ended up at Emory as coordinator for Equal Opportunity Programs. "I was working with a lot of lawyers, and dealing with action plans and the processes. I was doing all the work, and they were getting all the money, so I went to law school," Tyler jokes.

The married mother of two was nervous about being an older student. "I was in my early thirties and I thought I'd be out of place, so I let my hair grow and bought a bunch of blue jeans," Tyler says. "But I had no problem fitting in. After working for that long, I thought law school was fun."

Her daughters were only five and seven at the time, so Tyler counted on lots of help from her husband and a housekeeper. And a full scholarship didn't hurt either. "I don't know if I would have quit and gone back to school without the money. But because I had it, I was motivated to do well, and I worked harder than I otherwise would have," she says.

Tyler credits the Woodruff fellowship with allowing her to explore fully a second career in law. "The Woodruff allowed me to take advantage of the great connections at Emory Law," she says. Tyler clerked with Judge Elbert Tuttle in the Eleventh Circuit, then went to King & Spalding, where she focused on corporate law and was a founding member of the intellectual property

#### WOODRUFF SCHOLARS, CONTINUED

William M. McHugh Jr. '94L  
Linda Giunta Michaelson '90L  
Maria Viette Morris '01L  
Joel A. Nichols '00L-'00T  
Eric S. Ogrey '95L  
Francisca C. Oosthuizen '00L  
Alan W. Pope '94L  
Mark G. Pottorff '85L  
Marc Rawls '99L  
Elaine Cribbs Rizza, Esq. '88L  
Robert D. Rose '01L

Ethan Michael Rosenzweig '02L  
Kelly Rowe '85L  
Amelia Toy Rudolph '88C-'91L  
Julie L. Seitz '95L  
Robin Brown Shahar, Esq. '91L  
Paula Gallito Shakelton '03L  
Laurence Shore '89L  
Erin Michelle Sky '00L  
Dennis M. Sweetnam '85L  
Kristina Garcia Szurkus '98L  
Robert Brian Tanner '01L

B. Ellen Taylor '86L  
Diane Davis Thomas '99L  
Vicki Williamson Travis '00B-'00L  
Cheryl F. Turner '94C-'99L  
Beth H. Tyler '70C-'84C-'84L  
Amy Beth Vannatter '93L  
Vahn Wagner '95C-'98L  
Emily L. Miller Washburn '01L  
Mark D. Wasserman '86L  
Michael Weiss '03L  
Lori Beth Wittlin '98L

department. Eventually, Tyler left King & Spalding to work for the Olympic committee. She is now vice president of law, deputy general counsel, and general counsel for subscriber networks at Scientific Atlanta.

"I had a lot of great experiences at King & Spalding, and the Olympics were a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A big part of this is the Woodruff scholarship. It definitely made the decision to attend law school a lot easier," Tyler explains.

Tyler, who graduated first in the class of 1984, embraces the Woodruff fellowship program as a family experience. Her daughter, Corey Fleming Hirokawa, was a Woodruff scholar and graduated first in the class of 2000.

Barnes, Gaeng, and Tyler say that being Woodruff fellows imbued them with a deep sense of commitment to community. Gaeng and Tyler have taken on pro bono

cases, while Barnes "returned a tremendous favor" by aiding imprisoned mothers and their children via the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys. Also, Gaeng and Tyler are members of the Emory Law School Council and of the Barristers Club.

Gaeng takes particular pride in offering legal help to those least likely to afford good representation. He has worked pro bono on death penalty cases, one of which was remanded by the United States Supreme Court and ended with a life sentence instead of execution. "In the last year, the client was granted a new trial based on DNA evidence that has just become available," Gaeng says. "The Woodruff gave me some insight into the values of community involvement and giving back to the community the benefits of what we had been given. I couldn't ask for anything more fulfilling."



#### LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Corey Fleming Hirokawa was determined to try any career except law. She was only seven years old when her mother, Beth Tyler, attended Emory Law School as a Woodruff Fellow. Her father, too, was a practicing lawyer.

After graduating summa cum laude from Dartmouth College in 1995, she spent two years writing for a legal newspaper. "I thought I would go into reporting, but I realized I was more interested in the legal matter," she says. "I was rebellious about not wanting to be a lawyer, but in the end I realized it was the right career for me."

Though she interviewed at several schools, Hirokawa made Emory a family tradition by accepting an offer to become a Woodruff Fellow. Like her mother, Hirokawa graduated first in her class.

"I'm very proud of my mom; she accomplished a lot, and it's cool that I could do some of the same things," says Hirokawa, who practices civil litigation with Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore in Atlanta. "Mom was an inspiration, but she never pushed me to go to law school. She let me choose my own path."

—B. J.