For the third year, the Law Library of Louisiana staffed an exhibit table at the annual Fall Judges Conference, held at the Omni Royal Orleans Hotel on October 1–3, 2017. The educational conference is sponsored by the Louisiana Judicial College and is attended by judges from across the state. Director of the Law Library, Miriam Childs, and Research Lawyer/Librarian, Sara Pic, eagerly set up the exhibit table with a display of library brochures and pamphlets in anticipation of talking to judges and conference attendees. The information professionals are always ready to serve the justices, judges, and their staffs in all of their research needs.

During the Fall Judges Conference, the Red Mass was celebrated at St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square, on Monday, October 2. Most Reverend Gregory Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans, was the Celebrant of the Red Mass, which was attended by judges and lawyers from all over the state. The Red Mass is a celebration of the opening of the judicial year, and is an invocation of God’s blessing and guidance in the administration of justice. The Red Mass tradition is centuries old, having been celebrated in Rome, Paris, and London. The Red Mass was sponsored by the Catholic Bishops of the State of Louisiana and the St. Thomas More Catholic Lawyers Association, and has been held annually since 1953. At the conclusion of the ceremony, attendees were invited to memorial exercises in the Louisiana Supreme Court’s courtroom to honor lawyers and judges who passed away during the year.


Law Library of Louisiana Information

- SLLS 50th Anniversary
- Chief Honored at SULC Anniversary
- White-Bazile Receives LSBA Award
- Upcoming Free CLEs
- CLE on Louisiana Constitutions
- Calling All LASC Descendants
- Farewell to Louis V. de la Vergne
- Announcements

At Your Service

- Miriam Childs - Director
- Francis Norton - Research Lawyer/Librarian
- Sara Pic - Research Lawyer/Librarian
- Cynthia Jones - Librarian
- Tara Lombardi - Librarian
- Gail Bragg - Administrative Assistant
- Calissa Fosse - Library Associate
- Ruth Mahoney - Library Associate
This November, “Justice is Golden” as Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) celebrates its golden 50th anniversary. Celebrations begin on November 9, 2017 with an invitation-only event at the Louisiana Supreme Court. American Bar Association President Hilarie Bass, Louisiana State Bar Association President Dona Kay Renegar, Legal Services Corporation (LSC) President Jim Sandman, and SLLS's Board of Directors President Vivian Guillory will speak on the “Future of Civil Legal Aid.” Immediately afterward follows a reception, as well as the grand opening of the “Justice is Golden” exhibit in the Louisiana Supreme Court Museum. The exhibit commemorates SLLS’s 50 years of history and will remain on public display in the Museum during SLLS’s 50th anniversary year.

SLLS's predecessor, New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation (NOLAC), was incorporated with the purpose of serving the legal needs of low-income Louisianians in November 1967. Prior to its establishment, low-income people who couldn't afford legal services would line up around the block hoping to retain a volunteer attorney through a program run by the New Orleans Bar Association. Some of these members were so struck by the vast deep need for aid they founded the Legal Aid Bureau, the first organized pro bono legal service institution in the New Orleans area. Federal funding for civil legal aid became available in 1967 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s “War on Poverty,” and with it, NOLAC was formed. One of the original attorneys with NOLAC, staffing its first office in New Orleans’s Lower 9th Ward, was current Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson.

At that time, NOLAC served 5 parishes - Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, St. Charles, and Plaquemines. In 2003, NOLAC merged with SLLS, which had provided legal aid to five North Shore parishes since 1979. SLLS's service area included twelve more parishes when it expanded to service the greater Baton Rouge and greater Houma regions. SLLS currently operates six offices, with 101 employees, and operates five Self-Help Desks in partnership with local courts. In its early days, NOLAC and SLLS were funded almost entirely by the federally-established LSC. Today, only 43% of funding is from LSC, with the rest provided by over 75 other sources. The second largest funder currently is the Louisiana Bar Foundation. In 2016, SLLS handled over 11,000 cases, helping 27,000 vulnerable Louisianians, and reached another 13,500 through community education. SLLS also administers the statewide legal self-help website, LouisianaLawHelp.org, which saw 143,000 visitors last year. SLLS helped its clients achieve or avoid the loss of over $22.3 million last year. A 2016 Louisiana Bar Foundation Economic Impact Study found that for every $1 invested supporting civil legal aid, there was $8.73 of social return on investment. In addition, pro bono lawyers working with SLLS donated 5,465 hours of service valued at almost $1 million dollars, while law students provided over 10,000 hours of volunteer service.

SLLS's priorities include:
- Protecting domestic violence victims and abused children
- Preserving homes, improving housing conditions, and defending housing rights
- Safeguarding the rights of special populations like disaster victims, seniors, veterans, the homeless, or people living with disabilities
- Increasing the income of consumers and the working poor
- Improving health, education access, and employment opportunity
- Providing self-help resources, community education, and legal information to the public

SLLS will also host special 50th anniversary events at every Louisiana law school, as well as several community forums to engage and educate members of the public about the importance of civil legal aid. Finally, with 75% of all lawyers in Louisiana living or working in SLLS’s 22-parish service area, it plans to launch a “50 for 50” campaign encouraging every Louisiana lawyer to donate $50 to support civil legal aid in honor of SLLS’s 50th Anniversary. To support this golden opportunity or learn more, visit www.SLLS.org.
**CHIEF HONORED AT SULC 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

*by Miriam Childs*

A portrait of Chief Justice Bernette Joshua Johnson was unveiled on September 1, 2017 at a gala celebrating Southern University Law Center’s (SULC) 70th anniversary. The celebration, named “70 Years of Access and Opportunity,” was held in Baton Rouge. SULC Chancellor John K. Pierre presented the portrait to Chief Justice Johnson. The portrait, commissioned by SULC, will hang in its Judicial Hallway to commemorate Chief Justice Johnson as the first African-American Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

A lawsuit by Charles J. Hatfield, III was the catalyst that brought Southern University Law Center into existence. In 1946, Mr. Hatfield, a military veteran, applied for admission to LSU Law School, the only state school that offered a law degree. Though academically qualified, Mr. Hatfield’s admission was denied because he was an African American. Mr. Hatfield retained A.P. Tureaud, a New Orleans civil rights attorney, to file a lawsuit on his behalf. Even though Mr. Hatfield did not prevail, the Louisiana State Board of Education started the process of establishing a law school for African-Americans. The school would be called Southern University School of Law, and the first class began on September 1, 1947, but Mr. Hatfield never enrolled. SULC conferred an Honorary Juris Doctorate upon him in 2002.

Chief Justice Johnson was sworn in as the 25th Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court on February 1, 2013. After receiving a B.A. in 1964 from Spelman College, Chief Justice Johnson attended LSU’s Paul M. Hebert Law School. She was one of the first African-American women to graduate from LSU’s law program, earning a J.D. in 1969. While a law student, Chief Justice Johnson interned with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, working on cases filed to implement the Civil Rights Act of 1964. After receiving her J.D., Chief Justice Johnson became the managing attorney at the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation (NOLAC) from 1969-1973. From 1974-1977, Chief Justice Johnson litigated numerous cases in federal and state district courts, as well as in Juvenile Court. Chief Justice Johnson served as Deputy City Attorney for the City of New Orleans from 1981-1984. During her tenure, she gained extensive experience in Civil District Court (CDC) and U.S. District Court litigating police brutality and tort claims filed against the City. Chief Justice Johnson was elected to the CDC in 1984, becoming the first woman to serve as a judge in that jurisdiction. She was re-elected in 1990 and elevated to Chief Judge in 1994. Chief Justice Johnson was appointed as an Associate Justice to the Louisiana Supreme Court effective October 31, 1994. Chief Justice Johnson ran for the newly created 7th Supreme Court District in 2000 and was re-elected in 2010.

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, SULC ‘89 graduate and former Executive Vice President and Global Treasurer of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., was the gala’s keynote speaker, providing remarks on the impact of SULC’s 70-year legacy and how graduates “cannot help but walk tall” to the over 300 guests. Attendees with ties to Charles J. Hatfield, SULC’s first dean A. A. Lenoir, and the school’s first graduating class were given a chance to address the audience with remembrances and further remarks on SULC’s far-reaching community impact. Current 1L student Eric Hatfield, grandson of Charles Hatfield, spoke about his grandfather’s fight. Attendees were also treated to a special film created for the 70th anniversary. The celebration was filmed and can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1dbwZGsaOA.
Angela White-Bazile, the Louisiana Supreme Court’s Executive Counsel under Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson, is the 2017 recipient of the Louisiana State Bar Association’s (LSBA) President’s Award. The award was presented to Ms. White-Bazile by Darrel J. Papillion, LSBA 2016-2017 President, during the 76th LSBA Annual Meeting in June 2017. The recipient of the President’s Award is selected by the LSBA President for exemplary service to the Association throughout the Bar year. Ms. White-Bazile was chosen for her exemplary efforts in advancing the partnership between the Louisiana Supreme Court and the LSBA.

Angela White-Bazile received her J.D. from Southern University Law Center in 1996 and has over twenty years of experience as an attorney. In private practice, Ms. White-Bazile held associate attorney positions with Dr. Kevin U. Stephens & Associates and Thornhill Law Firm, and an in-house counsel position with Prudential Life Insurance. Prior to serving as Executive Counsel, Ms. White-Bazile was a research attorney for Chief Justice Bernette J. Johnson. She has held law clerk positions with 4th Circuit Court of Appeal Judges Robert Katz and Rosemary Ledet, as well as pro tempore Civil District Court Judge Mickey P. Landry.

Ms. White-Bazile is an active and visible member of the LSBA, serving on the Diversity Committee and the Governance Committee, among others. She holds memberships in several professional organizations, including the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society. Please join us in congratulating Ms. White-Bazile for her well-deserved honor and recognition.

There’s still time to RSVP for the Thursday, October 26th free 1 credit CLE program co-sponsored by the Law Library of Louisiana and the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society entitled “Who is Sally Miller? The Stranger Than Fiction Case of Miller v. Belmonti.”

The lecture will be presented by retired Judge Hadley Ward Fontenot, who will explain and examine a 19th century New Orleans case, both on the trial court level and on appeal before the Louisiana Supreme Court, which culminated in Miller v. Belmonti (11Rob.La.339 (1845)). Its controversy generated newspaper articles throughout the country and it has been cited by a number of varied courts. Set against the backdrop of antebellum Louisiana, the case brought to light the burning issues of the period, beginning with the exploitation of helpless immigrants, and ultimately exposing the cruelty and contradictions of the institution of African slavery. Judge Fontenot’s presentation will draw upon related publications, as well as a review of original court documents, judicial opinions, news articles, and other writings regarding the matter. The program will begin at noon in the Louisiana Supreme Court courtroom. Email CLE@lasc.org to RSVP.

SAVE THE DATES:

Tuesday, November 14 @ 5:30 p.m. – The Plessy and Ferguson Foundation, in commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the Plessy oral arguments heard before Judge Ferguson in Orleans Criminal District Court on Nov. 18, 1892, will present a mock trial re-enactment in the Louisiana Supreme Court courtroom. There will be a reception in the museum afterwards. The Law Library and the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society are co-sponsoring this free CLE event and reception. Additional details, including how to RSVP, will be forthcoming.

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CLE by Warren Billings on History of Louisiana Constitutions

by Cynthia Jones

In 1993, Warren Billings and Edward Haas edited a slim volume entitled, *In Search of Fundamental Law: Louisiana’s Constitutions, 1812 – 1974*. The work was published by The Center for Louisiana Studies out of the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, Louisiana. It contained ten essays written by men and women who were at the time established scholars and historians, as well as people who were working to establish their careers in academia and archival work. Published in 1993, this work was part of the bicentennial celebration of the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, which produced the distinguishing document of the United States, its Constitution. The purpose of the book was to examine constitutionalism as expressed in the fundamental law of the states – in this instance, Louisiana.

On Friday, September 29, Warren Billings returned to the Louisiana Supreme Court to present a one-hour CLE entitled, “*In Search of Fundamental Law: Louisiana Constitutions, 1812 – 1974 – A Reconsideration 25 Years On*.” During the course of an hour, Professor Billings recounted how the book moved from historical inquiry to scholarly realization; how authors and subject specialists were tapped and coaxed into writing; the ins and outs of editing other scholars’ writing; the frustrations and success of finding a publisher; getting a book reviewed; and finally, how one “lets go” once a book is released. Professor Billings’s program was full of insight and scholarly musings as well as humor and some sadness in as much as many of the authors – most of whom had substantial and rewarding academic careers – have died. In closing, Professor Billings noted this little book remains relevant today when there is much discussion on whether Louisiana’s Constitution needs an overhaul.

Upcoming Free CLEs Sponsored by the Law Library and SCLAHS (cont.)

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**Wednesday, November 29 @ noon** – A free 1 credit in Ethics CLE entitled “Bessie Margolin and the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials” will be presented at the National World War II Museum as part of its Lagniappe Lecture Series. From New Orleans’s Jewish orphanage in which she was raised to the United States Supreme Court in which she championed workers’ rights, Bessie Margolin made her mark on the biggest issues of her day – including the Nazi war crimes trials after WWII. Marlene Trestman, author of *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin,* will discuss Margolin’s important work in Nuremberg in 1946 shaping the historic American Military Tribunals that brought to justice more than two hundred second-tier Nazis, including the judges, doctors, and industrialists. A book signing will be held afterwards in the National World War II Museum Store from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. The Law Library and the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society are co-sponsoring this event. For more information, please call 504-528-1944 x463.

**Thursday, December 7 @ 9:00 a.m.** – The A.P. Tureaud American Inns of Court and the Law Library of Louisiana will again present their annual end-of-the-year free 2 credit CLE on Ethics & Professionalism. Additional details, including program topics and how to RSVP, will be forthcoming.
CALLING ALL DESCENDANTS OF SUPREME COURT JUSTICES!

by Tara Lombardi

Are you related to one of our late Louisiana Supreme Court justices? Do you have photos, memorabilia, or portraits you would like to share or donate to the library? If so, we would love to have copies of your material to add to our collection. Some of our recent acquisitions from families of justices include the succession of Justice Zenon Labauve (1865–1868) and images of three portraits of Justice Rice Garland (1840–1846).

We currently have files for each individual justice who served at the Louisiana Supreme Court, from Dominick A. Hall in 1813 to, most recently, Justice James Genovese who joined the court in January 2017. These files contain short biographies that the library has compiled, important opinions, photos, family histories, portrait details, induction and retirement addresses, obituaries, and other information on their lives and careers.

The later the justice served on the court, the more information we have on them, but information on some justices remains a mystery. For instance, we have only recently found an image of Dominick Hall, the first Louisiana Supreme Court judge. Therefore, it is very exciting and useful to the Law Library when we receive someone else’s research on our justices. Evelyn Wilson, professor at Southern University Law Center (retired) and author of The Justices of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, 1865–1880, has given the Law Library her research files for the book, which include information on eighteen former justices. Wilson’s unique research enhances our historical holdings and makes studying the court’s history a more robust endeavor. The judiciary, the bar, and the public are invited to utilize these resources at the Law Library.


If you have information on one of our justices to share with the Law Library, please contact Tara Lombardi at 504-310-2402 or tlombardi@lasc.org.

FAREWELL TO LOUIS V. DE LA VERGNE

by Miriam Childs

Louis Victor de la Vergne, a member of the Supreme Court of Louisiana Historical Society and a friend of the Law Library, passed away on September 15, 2017, after a brief illness. A New Orleans native, Louis was born in 1938 and attended the New Orleans Academy in his youth. After attending Tulane for his undergraduate studies, Louis went on to earn a J.D. from Tulane’s School of Law in 1965. Louis was proud of his distinguished ancestry, which included leading figures in the formative period of Louisiana’s legal history. Hugues Lavergne was a New Orleans lawyer, banker, and notary in the 19th Century. Jacques Villeré, father-in-law to Hugues, served in the Battle of New Orleans, commanding the First Division of the Louisiana Militia. In 1816, Villeré became Louisiana’s second governor. Gustavus Schmidt was born in Sweden in 1795 and moved to New Orleans in 1829. Schmidt’s granddaughter married into the de la Vergne family. Schmidt established the first law journal in Louisiana, the Louisiana Law Journal (1841), and authored the seminal text The Civil Law of Spain and Mexico in 1851. He also founded the predecessor institution of Tulane’s law school. Upon his death, Schmidt’s remarkable library was sold. The catalogue of his library was published by Louis, Michael Hoeflich, and Kjell Modéer in 2005.

Louis and his family are known to the civil law scholar community for the continued on page 7
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Farewell to Louis V. de la Vergne (cont.)

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“de la Vergne volume.” This volume is a deluxe copy of the Digest of the Civil Laws Now in Force in the Territory of Orleans (1808). Louis Moreau-Lislet and James Brown were the two prominent New Orleans attorneys commissioned by the Territorial Legislature to draft a compilation of colonial laws still in effect in the Orleans Territory. The Digest was published in French and English, as was all legislation in Louisiana at the time. The de la Vergne volume is a particular copy of the Digest with Moreau-Lislet’s notes on the sources of the laws interleaved between the laws written in English on the left hand side and in French on the right. Opposite the English text, Moreau-Lislet lists Roman and Spanish laws that are related to the chapter’s subject. Opposite the French text, Moreau-Lislet gives citations to Spanish or Roman legal works that provided the substance of Spanish colonial Louisiana laws. The de la Vergne volume was bound in high-quality leather, with Moreau-Lislet’s name embossed in gold on the cover. How the de la Vergne volume became part of the family is subject to speculation, but since Hugues Lavergne and Moreau-Lislet were contemporaries, it is possible that Moreau-Lislet gave it to Hugues as a gift. The volume was then passed down in the de la Vergne family from generation to generation. The importance of the de la Vergne volume to Louisiana’s legal heritage cannot be overstated.

Louis generously shared information about his ancestors and their contributions to Louisiana’s legal history with scholars all over the world. The Law Library’s collection includes the titles mentioned in this article, available for use by researchers: Louisiana Law Journal, 1841–1842; The Civil Law of Spain and Mexico, The 1877 Sale Catalogue of Gustavus Schmidt’s Library; the Digest of 1808; and a photolithographic copy of the de la Vergne volume. All titles except the Catalogue are located in the Rare Book Room. Further information and references about the De La Vergne Volume can be found in the Summer 2008 issue of De Novo, viewable at http://www.lasc.org/law_library/denovo/2008_Summer_DeNovo.pdf.

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Library Outreach

The Law Library was busy with outreach this past summer and beginning of fall. In addition to the Fall Judges Conference (highlighted on page 1), the library staffed an information table at the Louisiana Justice Community Conference, a conference for all Louisiana legal aid attorneys. The library also continued its outreach to public librarians with its Legal Education and Assistance Program (LEAP) trainings in St. Charles Parish and in Algiers, in partnership with the Louisiana State Bar Association. The public librarians are always grateful for the information and support the Law Library provides to help with public library patrons’ legal research needs, many of whom are self-represented. Research Lawyer/Librarian Fran Norton also presented at the National Federation of Paralegal Associations Research Boot Camp, held in New Orleans. His program was on free and low-cost public databases for legal research.