

Legal Leadership During Tough Times

Ambitious new law school initiatives confront economic blows, add to award-winning clinics

Law professor A. Michael Froomkin describes how he came to create the School of Law's new Foreclosure Defense program: "A local lawyer was telling me about the thousands of foreclosure cases stacking up in judges' chambers, many with unrepresented parties who had valid defenses that were not being made because they didn't have a lawyer." Froomkin recalls that the lawyer said, "Someone should do something."

So Froomkin did.

Among the first of its kind nationwide, the Foreclosure Defense program gives recent UM law graduates \$10,000 fellowships to

South Florida-based Foreclosure Project, created by Richard Burton, J.D. '74. With one in every 28 Miami-Dade County residences in foreclosure, the program "serves a great public need," says Dean Patricia D. White.

Several other timely initiatives launched by the School of Law last year provide hands-on experience in growing fields while addressing increasingly critical needs.

The nation's first Therapeutic Jurisprudence Center opened in September. Bruce J. Winick, Silver-Rubenstein Distinguished Professor of Law and professor of psychiatry and behav-



Florida Supreme Court Justice Barbara J. Pariente, center, speaks with Dean Patricia D. White and Professor Bruce Winick at last fall's Therapeutic Jurisprudence Center inauguration.

Winick explains, will further "study how the courts can use therapeutic jurisprudence to help offenders solve the psychosocial prob-

Associate professor of law Ricardo J. Bascuas, a former assistant federal public defender, supervises the Federal Appellate Clinic, which assigns upper-level students to indigent criminal defendants referred by the Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Florida. District public defender Kathleen Williams, J.D. '82, is also instrumental in this new program.

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work part-time for six months at Broward and Miami-Dade legal aid agencies. And a new track in the LL.M. in Real Property Development places a few students per semester at the

interdisciplinary center, ioral sciences, originated this academic approach to mental health law in the late 1980s with University of Puerto Rico law school professor David B. Wexler. The

lems that often are responsible for their repeated court involvement."

Through the Immigration Clinic, students are handling an array of asylum and residency cases for low-income individuals.

"Our goal is for our students to make a lasting contribution to South Florida's diverse and dynamic immigrant community," says its director, Rebecca Sharpless, an assistant clinical law professor who was previously with the Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center.

In the Tenants' Rights Clinic, students are working with senior attorney Jeff Hearne, of Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., to help that agency represent more clients facing public housing eviction and other serious housing concerns. Added staffing from students, says Hearne, means "more families will keep a roof over their heads."