“Whenever I talk with students, faculty, and alumni of the School of Law, one thing is very clear: there’s a real feeling of momentum in the air, a sense that we’re on the cusp of a big leap forward. With your help, we’ll make that leap, boldly and decisively.”

Robert Wilcox, Dean
“The end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all the states of created beings capable of law, where there is no law, there is no freedom.”

- John Locke

With a commitment to building outstanding programs in key areas like small business law, children’s law, environmental law, and rule of law -- and with a strong focus on the professional development of its students -- the School of Law at the University of South Carolina has built an enviable reputation. The School is widely known for producing excellent lawyers prepared to practice throughout the world, and for providing vital legal expertise and public service true to its public mission. Founded in 1867, the University of South Carolina combines a rich tradition of quality with the flexibility to adjust to changes in the legal profession.

Now we seek to build on our longstanding tradition of excellence and significantly accelerate our progress by making strategic investments in areas of existing or emerging strength. With a strong vision for success, and with the support of our alumni and friends, we will transform our very good law school into a great one.

Carolina’sPromise provides you the opportunity to expand the School of Law’s important role in shaping the development of law at local, national, and international levels and to enhance its contribution to the vibrancy of the social, political, and economic life of South Carolina.
"I chose the School of Law at USC because I’m from Columbia and this is where I want to practice law. There’s a great USC alumni network in this state, and I believe that attending this school will set me up for success as I pursue my legal career."

Phillips McWilliams
“Our profession is good, if practiced in the spirit of it; it is damnable fraud and iniquity when its true spirit is supplied by a spirit of mischief-making and money catching.”

- Daniel Webster

It’s safe to say few law students have experienced first-hand the kind of lawlessness Phillips McWilliams witnessed as a US Army officer serving in Iraq.

It’s likely even fewer have applied that experience to their perspective on the value of the rule of law, and the importance of leadership skills in guarding the stability the rule of law provides.

“I planned to go to law school right after college,” said McWilliams, “but halfway through my undergrad studies I joined ROTC, which led to four years in the Army. After that, it was clearer than ever that a career in law was the way to achieve what I wanted for myself and my family, while continuing to serve others.”

McWilliams, a member of the Honor Council and the editorial staff of The South Carolina Law Review, has also been elected president of the Service Members and Veterans in Law Society. There he’s working to connect veterans who are practicing attorneys with veterans attending the School of Law, creating a support network among individuals who share a similar background.

“I had a lot of leadership experience prior to attending law school,” he said. “It’s helped shape who I am, and it drives me to take on more leadership roles here.”

When you support the School of Law – helping exceptional students like Phillips McWilliams to more fully develop their potential – you help create a strong foundation for the legal community of tomorrow.
“While I certainly value the formal education that I received at the law school, I feel that my extracurricular activities were just as influential in preparing me for the practice of law.”

Felicia Sampson Preston
“No man is above the law and no man is below it: nor do we ask any man’s permission when we ask him to obey it.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

Anyone who sees Felicia Sampson Preston’s resumé can tell she has tremendous potential as a litigator just by looking at all the moot court awards she won at USC.

That kind of opportunity to hone and showcase budding legal talents is just one reason why programs like Moot Court and the South Carolina Law Review are such a valuable part of our students’ educations. For Preston, participating in moot court and serving as a law review editor and a law student ambassador provided invaluable professional training.

“On my first day of work as a federal judicial clerk, I knew I had a lot to learn,” says the 2011 School of Law graduate. “But because of the out-of-classroom experiences that I had during law school, I was at least confident that I had the skills necessary to do my job well.”

That is why, Preston says, “I would urge alumni and other donors to invest in out-of-classroom experiences at the law school. While classroom experience is great for building a foundation in thinking like a lawyer, legal experience out in the real world gives students insight into what it feels like to be a lawyer.”

Your support of the USC School of Law provides scholarship assistance, research, and teaching opportunities that encourage top faculty to join and stay with us, and many other direct benefits. It also makes possible a wide range of valuable experiences on and off campus – including internships and job placement guidance – for our most promising students.
“I measure my legal education most not in the awards, accolades, or grades I achieved but in the type of person I came to be once through the program. USC fostered in me a desire to help my fellow man through the fight for continued peace through justice.”

Scott Medlyn
“Our defense is not in our armaments, nor in science, nor in going underground. Our defense is in law and order.”

- Albert Einstein

“It was incredibly meaningful and motivating to be able to see the law as more than just an academic exercise.”

That’s how Scott Medlyn, ’02, sums up his law student experience with USC’s Pro Bono program. “Active learning is far and away the best learning,” he says.

Medlyn continues to work with the Pro Bono program as an alumnus, and he’s found it to be an excellent source of legal talent for support of his work as an officer in the U.S. Air Force’s Judge Advocate General Corps.

Medlyn has represented several of the defendants being held at the Naval Station in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and USC Law students have helped him research, draft motions, and monitor relevant legislation.

“I had limited time to address very complex international issues,” Medlyn says, “and the students’ assistance was absolutely invaluable.”

Excellent programs – such as the Children’s Law Center, the Center on Professionalism, and our Pro Bono program – are a hallmark of the USC School of Law, enriching the community and enhancing the quality education we provide. Your support can transform the experience of our students and the lives of the thousands of South Carolinians our programs serve.
“Thousands of children in South Carolina depend on legal advocates for protection from abuse and for access to necessary health care, support, and education. The life outcomes for these vulnerable children will be only as good as the training and skill level of the legal professionals who serve them.”

Harry Davis, Jr.  
Director, Children’s Law Center
Training events, information and technical assistance, written resource materials, guides to case law...whatever it takes.

The Children’s Law Center exists to provide every possible type of assistance to South Carolina legal professionals involved in child welfare or juvenile justice matters. The goal is to help those who serve children enhance their knowledge while supplementing and sharpening their skills, so that court proceedings will have the best possible outcomes for children.

The Children’s Law Center was established in 1995 within the USC School of Law to promote awareness and increased knowledge of children’s legal issues and to improve the administration of justice in children’s cases. The Center provides research and various trainings for professionals and volunteers who advocate for children, including training for county solicitors, law enforcement, and DSS caseworkers on how to conduct forensic interviews of abused children and techniques for prosecution of adult child abusers.

The Center is approved to provide training by the South Carolina Supreme Court, the South Carolina Bar, the Criminal Justice Academy, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Mental Health, and the Department of Education. This year, the Center will provide or facilitate over 225 training programs and professional meeting activities to over 5,000 people – all at offsite locations.

With support from individuals like you, we will soon relocate to our new home, the Whaley House. This historic home located in downtown Columbia will provide ideal training and meeting facilities, parking and office requirements necessary to fulfill the mission of the Children’s Law Center to “enhance justice for children through the education of adults.”
“By supporting professionalism education and training for first-year and third-year students at the School of Law, and by playing a critical role in the establishment of the National Legal Mentoring Consortium, the Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough Center on Professionalism is significantly impacting the legal profession across the country.”

John E. Montgomery, Director
NMR&S Center on Professionalism
“In the heart of every lawyer worthy of the name, there burns a deep ambition to bear himself so that the profession may be stronger for his passage through its ranks, and that he may leave the law itself a better instrument of human justice than he found it.”

- John W. Davis

There may be no higher standard for those who practice law than to be regarded as a model of professionalism. It is the measure of competence—“book learning” and technical skills—balanced by a profound and personal dedication to ethics, honest representation, and compassion.

The Center on Professionalism was created in 1999 to promote the ideals of professionalism in the practice of law and the operation of the judicial system. It is not only an important resource for research and the dissemination of information and ideas, but it also plays a key role in developing and promoting initiatives that further those ideals through professional and student education, conferences and symposia, and its widely praised mentoring programs.

The Center on Professionalism has become a model for effective, easily administered mentoring programs throughout the country.

The Center relies on the experience and expertise of a 22-member Advisory Board of South Carolina legal professionals, and a 10-member National Advisory Board comprised of respected judges, law professors, and lawyers from across the country.

It is no overstatement to say that the nation benefits from the support of the legal profession provided by the School of Law. From education of law students to providing in-depth resources for experienced professionals, the School of Law is able, because of continuing support from individuals and organizations, to make those invaluable benefits possible.
“Law school is really about teaching young people about life, the details of legal life, and how to be an attorney. USC’s law faculty is really superb in that role.”

Bill Reynolds
“Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.”

- Harper Lee

Nothing in law school has a more transformative impact on students than its faculty.

As teachers, scholars, and mentors, our faculty – which includes many distinguished scholars regarded as national and international leaders in their fields – shapes the school’s culture and, in profound ways, their students’ future in law.

Bill Reynolds, ’00, a partner and estate-planning attorney with the Todd and Johnson law firm, sees the impact our faculty has on the legal community on a regular basis. But it was as a law student that he benefited most from their expertise.

After 20 years as an Air Force fighter pilot, Reynolds entered law school, intending to join his family’s law firm in Sumter, but some of his professors had other ideas about his future. They saw in him the talent and people skills for estate planning and steered him toward that opportunity at the Columbia firm he now heads.

“Alan Medlin, Robert Wilcox, Bill Quirk, and Lad Boyle all took a pretty keen interest in what I was going to do after law school,” Reynolds says. “The degree to which USC faculty are committed to helping students is outstanding. And when they help place the right people in the right jobs, the legal community benefits tremendously, too.”

Your support will help attract and retain outstanding law professors, providing them with ample opportunity for professional development. That’s vital to our ability to offer our students the best possible education, to accomplishing our mission of public service to the legal community, and to casting ours as a world-class school of law.

THE CAMPAIGN for the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
“When I walk into school every morning, I feel like the luckiest person ever. I get to do what so many people my age dream of doing, but either they can’t take that leap or they’re afraid to.”

Sara Svedberg
“That old law about ‘an eye for an eye’ leaves everybody blind. The time is always right to do the right thing.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

For Sara Svedberg, the choice to enter law school after 10 years as a newspaper editor was appealing, but not easy.

“When you’ve been in the workforce for so long and you have a family to support, going back to school can be scary,” she says. But when students bring a wealth of other kinds of professional experience with them to the USC School of Law, they become rare and valuable assets to the legal community they enter upon graduation.

That’s why scholarship support can make a big difference for students like Svedberg – and for the other USC students who benefit from exposure to their perspectives and experience. “There are so many things you give up when you start law school,” Svedberg says, “and in my position, it’s not a decision you can make lightly.”

But in her case, the sacrifices have been worthwhile. With an outstanding academic performance—she received the highest scores in three of her first-year classes—her future is bright and she’s excited about her options.

“A law degree opens so many doors,” she says. “Just being here makes me really feel like I’m going to have a world of new opportunities.”

What can your support do for our students? More than you might imagine. Many universities traditionally provide scant financial support to law students. Scholarships and other resources can dramatically impact our ability to recruit top talent, ensuring that all qualified students receive an outstanding legal education.
“I remember that in my first class on my first day of my first year of law school I was asked the first question in my contracts class by Dean Crystal. The facts of the Monge v. Beebe Rubber Company case are emblazoned in my brain for eternity.”

Mayor Steve Benjamin
Steve Benjamin, ’94, knows what the American Dream is all about.

He made headlines in 1999 when, at only 29 years old, he was chosen to lead the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services. Then he made history in 2010 when, in a record turnout, he was elected the first black Mayor of Columbia and the City’s first new mayor in 20 years.

But Mayor Benjamin will tell you it all began on campus as a student at the University of South Carolina and USC School of Law.

“The education I received at the School of Law has allowed me to live the American Dream,” he says. “I stand on the shoulders of giants from generations past. Now it’s my turn to offer my shoulders to generations on the way.”

The mayor says law school is “a training ground for leadership and, while these young men and women study today, tomorrow they’ll write our laws and defend our liberty. Their judgment will one day determine innocence or guilt and determine the course of our nation’s future.”

“We owe it to them – and to ourselves – to provide them the best education possible so that, when that time comes, they can rise to the challenge.”

Whether it opens a door to new ideas or leads to a eureka moment in legal research, your gift to the USC School of Law can emblazon a memory that sparks the drive for success in a student today. Please make Carolina’s Promise your promise.
“I feel like attending the law school at USC opened many doors and provided me great opportunities in my career. Through my scholarship, I wanted to help give other women the same opportunity to study law at a wonderful school.”

Judge Karen Williams
"The law is the last result of human wisdom acting upon human experience for the benefit of the public."

- Samuel Johnson

"It is our family’s belief," says Karen Williams, ’80, “that a law school education is the best education one can receive because you learn about every facet of life.”

Williams’ own distinguished legal career, which led to her service as Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, is testament to that fact. And the opportunities her education afforded her inspired Judge Williams to endow a scholarship that is now creating similar opportunities for others who aspire to follow in her footsteps.

“Some of the best and brightest students do not have the advantage of financial support,” Judge Williams notes. “It’s very rewarding to know that my contribution is impacting the lives of the scholarship’s recipients. I feel blessed to be able to give back, and I want my fellow alumni who have been as blessed as I to feel there is an obligation to our alma mater.”

“It is only our support,” she adds, “that can assure that future generations will have the opportunities we have had.”

Strong academic programs require outstanding people and strong financial resources. The drive of our students and the dedication of our faculty are evidence that the first half of that equation is in place. Now we seek the resource base to bring our potential to fruition. State funding provides less than 10 percent of the University’s budget, so support from alumni and friends like you is essential.
“Our graduates are far better prepared than most to hit the ground running when they enter the legal profession. Our faculty-development initiatives, focused on enhancing areas of existing or emerging strength, will help us to become a national powerhouse in critical fields like environmental law and small business representation.”

Robert Wilcox, Dean
This is an exciting moment in the history of the USC School of Law.

As the legal profession is changing, the School of Law is embracing the opportunity to establish its reputation in the vanguard of quality modern legal education. We have an increasingly strong focus on professional development, manifested in our newly enhanced legal writing program. The Nelson Mullins Center on Professionalism has emerged as the nation’s premier resource for law student and new lawyer mentoring programs.

The investments we’ve made in our students, programs, and faculty already pay impressive dividends. Your support will make the difference in how much we’re able to accomplish going forward – not only for our students, but also for the countless others who are served, directly or indirectly, by our school: the legal community for whom our faculty provide expertise, the individuals and organizations for whom our students and faculty provide pro bono legal assistance, and the millions of South Carolinians who benefit from the talents and services of our alumni.

I am honored and thrilled by the opportunity to help shape the future of this venerable institution at this pivotal juncture, and I invite you to join us as we transform our students’ experience in ways that will allow them in turn to have a transformative impact on the legal profession.

To lend your support, please contact:
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giving.sc.edu/law or (803) 777-7207
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina 29208 USA
to the school of law

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