To the Class of 2014 – I have been praying for you,” said Campbell University President Jerry M. Wallace. “I will not stop praying for you. I have all the faith in the world that you will excel at this noble calling as professionals in the law.”

Whitehurst shared stories from his own professional experience and discussed his thoughts on leadership in the 21st century. “I believe if we all strive to inspire, engage and be ourselves, we’ll not only win in our professional lives, but we’ll win in all aspects of our lives,” said Whitehurst.

Campbell Law Professor Lynn Buzzard, who is entering retirement with the completion of the academic year, was also honored for his 28 years of service to the law school.

The National Jurist names Campbell Law to list of top private law schools for best value

Campbell Law School has been named to a list of the top 22 private law schools in the country for best value by The National Jurist. In selecting institutions for inclusion, the publication considered a number of academic and financial variables, including price of tuition, student debt accumulation, employment success, bar passage, and cost of living figures.

This past February, Campbell Law scored high marks from The National Jurist in both bar passage and employment. Campbell Law was one of just 22 institutions nationally to receive a grade of “A+” or better in both the bar passage and employment categories in the publication’s ranking of law schools. In September 2013, The National Jurist ranked Campbell Law’s externship program 27th nationally.

Campbell Law School has been a leader in expanding its scholarship offerings, unveiling its mentorship and Flex programs, organizing its curriculum into nine practice areas, and improving upon its top-tier ranking in U.S. News & World Report.

Slightly more than one year ago, it was announced that I would vacate my post as a federal judge for the Eastern District Bankruptcy Court of North Carolina, and begin an appointment as dean of this fine institution. I can say with all honesty that the best part of each and every day since has been getting to know our students. I am forever thankful to the Class of 2014 for allowing me the opportunity to serve as their dean during my first year.

As the father of five, the main lesson I have learned is that your children learn their values more from watching what you do than from listening to what you say. I expect the same may be largely true of our graduates. To the extent that they perceive law as a calling, it is because they have noticed that our faculty views it that way. And if—as we hope—kindness, civility and respect mark the way in which they conduct their legal careers, it will be because that was the way they were treated at Campbell Law.

“Today is a transitional day in your lives,” said Campbell Law Dean J. Rich Leonard. “For the rest of your days, no matter what you are doing, whether you practice in a big city or small hamlet, whether you are a litigator, a government official, a corporate officer, or a parent at home raising children, when the question is asked, ‘What do you do?’ you will answer proudly, ‘I am a lawyer.’”

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D. Martin Warf has joined Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP as of counsel in the Raleigh office.

K&L Gates LLP has named Shiau Yen Chin-Dennis as its representative to the 2014 class of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Fellows.

Melissa K. Walker graduated from the North Carolina Bar Association’s Leadership Academy.

Mark T. Cummings graduated from the North Carolina Bar Association’s Leadership Academy.

Matthew H. Richardson was honored with the Cumberland County 12th Judicial District Bar Young Lawyer Pro Bono Service Award.

Leslie Underwood Marion has joined Smith Debnam in the firm’s Family Law practice area.

William “Bill” Pully has begun a four-year term as a member of the Campbell University Board of Trustees.

N.C. Secretary of State Elaine Marshall recently received the 2014 Public Policy Leader Award from the Charlotte chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

Shelby Duffy Benton was elected North Carolina Bar Association President-Elect.

Judge Paul Ridgeway was inducted into the Leadership Raleigh Hall of Fame.

N.C. Governor Pat McCrory has appointed Bob Sar as vice chairman of the North Carolina State Ports Authority Board of Directors.

Ulmer Zack “Zeke” Bridges, III graduated from the North Carolina Bar Association’s Leadership Academy.

Vance Jennings was appointed Disability Advocacy Section Chair of the North Carolina Advocates for Justice. He was also named a 2014 Rising Star in Social Security Disability by North Carolina Super Lawyers.

William A. Oden, III graduated from the North Carolina Bar Association’s Leadership Academy.

Campbell Law seeks to pilot a Consumer Bankruptcy Clinic, named after noted bankruptcy lawyer Trawick H. “Buzzy” Stubbs, Jr., beginning with the spring 2015 semester. The clinic would be supervised by an adjunct faculty member and would receive referrals from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and Legal Aid of N.C. Several leading members of the bankruptcy bar have contributed funds and made sufficient pledges towards the establishment of the Stubbs Bankruptcy Clinic. We hope to continue that effort with additional donations. For questions, please contact Trudi Brown at brownt@campbell.edu or 919.865.5977.
Benton named NCBA President-Elect

Shelby Duffy Benton, a 1985 Campbell Law graduate, has been named president-elect of the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA). She was elected at the organization’s annual meeting on June 21 in Wilmington.

Benton is the first Campbell Law graduate to serve the NCBA in this capacity.

“We are thrilled for Shelby to serve in this role,” said Campbell Law Dean J. Rich Leonard. “Her record of professionalism and service position her as the perfect person to lead the NCBA. She is exactly the type of professional that all of our graduates should aspire to be.”

Benton, who resides in Goldsboro and practices at Benton Family Law, was certified as a family law specialist in 1995. She will assume the role of NCBA President in June 2015 at the organization’s annual meeting in Asheville.

Benton has previously served the NCBA in a variety of leadership roles, including chairing the Family Law Section in 2009-10 and on the NCBA Board of Governors from 2010-13. She also previously served as a past president of the Wayne County Bar Association and the 8th Judicial District Bar.

Active in the community, Benton’s activities include co-founder and past-president of the youth volleyball organization Wayne Area Volleyball Enthusiasts (WAVE), chair of the Wayne County Criminal Justice Partnership Advisory Board, the Carver Elementary School Advisory Board, and the Spring Creek High School Advisory Board. She was also a Girl Scout troop leader from 1992-97.

Benton has received numerous accolades throughout her career, including the NCBA’s 2012 Citizen Lawyer Award and the 2012 Litigation Practitioner Award at the Women of Justice awards.

Campbell Law invited to participate in NITA Tournament of Champions

Campbell Law School has received an invitation to the prestigious National Institute of Trial Advocacy’s (NITA) Tournament of Champions mock trial competition. One of the premier mock trial competitions in the country, only 16 law schools are invited to the Tournament of Champions.

“This is a great achievement for our advocacy program,” said Campbell Law Dean J. Rich Leonard. “This invitation further publicly solidifies the success that our program has enjoyed, as well as the bright future ahead for our students.”

Invitations to the Tournament of Champions are based on a three-year performance record at the National Trial Competition (NTC), the American Association of Justice (AAJ) Trial Competition and previous Tournament of Champions competitions. Over the past three years, Campbell Law teams have collected four regional NTC titles and finished in the AAJ national top 10.

Campbell Law last received an invitation to the Tournament of Champions in 2001.

“I am incredibly proud of our trial advocates and coaches,” said Campbell Law Assistant Professor of Law and Director of Advocacy Dan Tilly. “Year in and year out they have proven that Campbell Law student advocates rank among the best of the best.”

Event champions receive the traveling James Seckinger Trophy, a team plaque, individual plaques, and a copy of NITA’s book, “Trial Technique & Evidence” by Michael R. Fontham. Team plaques are also awarded to runners-up and semifinalists, while the best advocates are awarded NITA Deposition Program scholarships. All participants receive a collection of NITA books and certificates.

Known for its sportsmanship and congeniality, the Tournament of Champions was founded in 1989 at the University of Akron School of Law. NITA became the primary sponsor of the competition in 1995, with LexisNexis joining in as a co-sponsor in 2005.

Campbell Law students awarded WCBA scholarships

Campbell Law School students Amanda Brookie and Emily Pappas have been awarded Wake County Bar Association (WCBA) Memorial Scholarships for the upcoming academic year. Brookie, a rising second-year student, and Pappas, a rising third-year, formally received their $5,000 scholarships during a presentation at a recent WCBA luncheon on June 3 at the Women’s Club of Raleigh.

WCBA Memorial Scholarships are annually awarded to law school students with strong ties to Wake County that have displayed solid academic achievement and a commitment to community service. The WCBA Foundation has been providing scholarships since 1989, culminating in more than $150,000 in scholarship assistance.

Dean Leonard moderates at Conference for Chief Bankruptcy Judges

Campbell Law Dean J. Rich Leonard moderated several panel discussions at the Conference for Chief Bankruptcy Judges in Washington, D.C., on June 17. Leonard, who served as a Federal Bankruptcy Judge from 1992 until taking the role as dean of Campbell Law in July 2013, guided conversations on leadership and relationship issues for Chief Bankruptcy Judges, relations with the Clerk of Court, and relations with colleagues and staff.

“I am excited to participate at this conference alongside many of my former colleagues on the Federal bench,” said Leonard. “Opportunities like this one provide me with a platform to talk about the great things happening at Campbell Law School, and that’s an offer I’ll never object to.”

Eighty Chief Bankruptcy Judges from across the United States attended the two-day conference, with a highly-lauded cast of 21 judicial officials, law school deans, and professionals serving as faculty members.
Wake Co. Public Schools discuss expanding Juvenile Justice Project

The Wake County Board of Education has discussed expanding its implementation of Campbell Law’s Juvenile Justice Project (JJP). The board discussed the potential expansion during a work session on May 19, with JJP Director Jon Powell and Dr. Marritt Pettiford of Wake County Public Schools offering a formal presentation the following day.

The JJP strives to bring conflicted students together in an effort to foster collaborative healing via mediation, rather than specifically seeking punishment. The project aims to discover how students and schools are hurt as a result of disciplinary violations, and seeks to find the best solution to repair the damage that has been done.

“We’ve seen the positive results of restorative justice in the private sector through our work with the Juvenile Justice Project at Campbell Law, and since 2009 we’ve seen similarly impressive results through our involvement with local schools,” said Powell. “We have enjoyed a very successful relationship with Wake County Public Schools for several years now, and we hope to expand our reach by increasing the use of restorative practices in schools.”

The program has addressed 229 cases across seven Wake County public schools since 2009. The public school incarnation of the JJP uses mediation to address disciplinary violations between students, with the institution’s principal having the authority to adjust outcomes as necessary. Principals can refer students to trained Campbell Law students enrolled in the JJP, who then work to mediate and resolve conflicts via restorative practices.

The program is currently seeking additional funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The grant would allow for an expansion of the program, serving more schools and allowing for a study on disciplinary outcomes as a result of program participation.

DOJ invites Professor Bolitho to teach in Republic of Georgia

Campbell Law Assistant Professor Zac Bolitho was invited by the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance and Training (OPDAT) to teach a variety of topics to judges and lawyers in the Republic of Georgia, June 19-25. While there, he presented to the Supreme Court of Georgia’s Opinion Drafting Working Group. Bolitho also delivered several presentations to Georgian prosecutors on topics including legal reasoning, statutory interpretation, and written advocacy.

The OPDAT program was created by the DOJ in response to the growing threat of international crime. OPDAT’s mission is to assist other countries in the development and maintenance of effective criminal justice institutions.

Steven S. Neff, the DOJ’s Resident Legal Advisor in the Republic of Georgia, explained that Georgia “is actively pursuing Euro-Atlantic integration as part of its long term national strategy, and a big piece of that strategy relates to the Westernization of its criminal justice system and the codification and preservation of due process rights as it moves from an inquisitorial to an adversarial model of justice.” Neff further explained that through the OPDAT program, the DOJ “routinely deploys its own Assistant U.S. Attorneys (AUSAs) to nations like Georgia for a period of time as Resident Legal Advisors (RLAs) to assist in the development of the rule of law. Combining the personal expertise of the AUSAs/RLAs with their access to other resources, they will often invite other experts such as Bolitho to help in these processes and trainings.”

Prior to joining Campbell Law, Bolitho was a federal prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Tennessee. During his time as a federal prosecutor, he handled a wide variety of cases ranging from violent crime to sophisticated white collar crime. He also previously served as a law clerk to Judge David W. McKeague of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Professor Jones lectures at Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf

Campbell Law Assistant Professor Amos Jones lectured at the University of Düsseldorf’s law school on June 11 in connection with a 2013 invitation from the German-American Lawyers Association to discuss constitutional matters of Church and State.

From the title “Cultures and the Common Law: Explaining the United States, Constitutionally and Politically,” Jones addressed an audience of law students who are spending a term examining the Anglo-American legal tradition.

“German millennials need to understand why law and politics in the United States seem to differ so profoundly at times from those of our western European friends,” Jones said. “So I argued first that understanding culture is a key to understanding how societies function and, second, that the U.S. can sometimes perform law and policy so differently from the European approach because of a religious dynamic that is uniquely—if not profoundly—Protestant.”

Focusing on interdisciplinary work of sociologists and historians, Jones then pivoted to the most provocative part of his presentation, subtitled “Things that Make You Go ‘Hmmm.’” In that portion, he identified contemporary U.S. issues thought to perplex European students and scholars alike, framing the law and politics of each within the theoretical lens established in the first part of the lecture: George W. Bush’s presidency, climate change, guns, health care, racial relations, immigration, and gay marriage.

The response was delivered by convenor Andrew Hammel, a law professor at Düsseldorf and member of the German-American Lawyers Association.

Jones, who spent his first year following graduation from the Harvard Law School as a Fulbright/Visiting Scholar in the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Comparative Constitutional Studies in Australia, joined the Campbell Law faculty in 2011. He teaches Contracts and Professional Responsibility and consults in the areas of anti-discrimination and appellate constitutional litigation.