

Fifth Georgia Law grad in seven years to be selected for Supreme Court clerkship

Georgia Law 2009 graduate Brian C. Lea will be heading to the U.S. Supreme Court this fall to serve as a judicial clerk for Justice Clarence Thomas, making him the fifth former Georgia Law student to be selected during the last seven years to clerk for the highest court in our country.



“This is a tremendous achievement for Brian, and we are extremely proud of him,” Dean Rebecca Hanner White said. “A U.S. Supreme Court clerkship is considered one of the most elite appointments a law school graduate can obtain. Brian’s selection is a testament to his outstanding academic ability and accomplishments, and I am confident he will do an exceptional job.”

White added, “Our students have had great success in recent years in being chosen for these very prestigious positions. It is gratifying to see their talent, hard work and dedication recognized and to know that the school provided them with an excellent foundation in the law.”

Lea graduated first in his law class, where he received numerous awards and honors for his academic achievements, served as an articles editor for the *Georgia Law Review* and was inducted into the Order of the Coif.

He served as a judicial clerk for Judge Ed Carnes of the U.S. Court of Appeals

for the 11th Circuit before joining DLA Piper as a litigation associate in the firm’s Atlanta office. He plans to remain with the firm until his October 2011 Term clerkship begins.

“I cannot think of a greater honor and privilege than clerking for our nation’s highest court,” Lea said. “I am humbled to have this opportunity and am thoroughly looking forward to working for Justice Thomas as he addresses the most important legal issues in our nation.”

Lea stated that this opportunity would not have been possible without the help and guidance of Carnes, White and Georgia Law professors Peter B. “Bo” Rutledge and Lonnie T. Brown, among others.

“Each of those people really stepped up to the plate to help me, and I am extraordinarily grateful,” Lea said. “I very much enjoyed my time at Georgia Law. The quality of the educational experience at the school is outstanding and the faculty regularly goes above and beyond the call of duty for students. It was a terrific three years.”

Lea’s clerkship will bring the total number of Georgia Law graduates who have clerked for U.S. Supreme Court justices to nine.

The other eight Georgia Law alumni who have served the highest court in this capacity are: Merritt E. McAlister (J.D.’07), clerked for Justice John Paul Stevens in 2009; Jason T. Burnette (J.D.’06), clerked for Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. in 2007; Adam M. Conrad (J.D.’05), clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas in 2006; John H. Longwell (J.D.’99), clerked for Justice Stephen G. Breyer in 2005; Anne Proffitt Dupre (J.D.’88), clerked for Justice Harry A. Blackmun in 1989; Bruce P. Brown (J.D.’84), clerked for Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in 1986; Glen M. Darbyshire (J.D.’84), clerked for Justice Thurgood Marshall in 1985; and Benna R. Solomon (J.D.’78), clerked for Justice Byron R. White in 1980.



Georgia Law scores well in sending grads to Supreme Court

Last fall, *The New York Times* examined the schools from which 2005-10 U.S. Supreme Court clerks obtained their law degrees. Georgia Law is listed third among public law schools and 11th overall.

1. Harvard University	54
2. Yale University	50
3. University of Virginia*	16
4. Stanford University	15
5. University of Chicago	12
6. Columbia University	10
7. Georgetown University	7
8. University of Michigan*	5
Northwestern University	5
New York University	5
11. University of Georgia*	4
George Washington University	4

*Public university.

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—Brian Lea (J.D.’09)