



GATORS IN GOTHAM

UFLAW GRADS MAKING MARK IN BIG APPLE

BY KRISTIN HARMEL

In the heart of New York City, a thousand miles north of Gainesville, thrives a community of attorneys with one thing in common: a degree from the University of Florida College of Law.

There are reportedly close to 300 UFLaw alumni working in New York City, most not aware there are so many other Gator lawyers in their midst. And they're very surprised to find that in the Manhattan area – including Connecticut, New Jersey and New York – there are about 5,300 Gators of all degrees.

According to Ian Leavengood '00, Deloitte & Touche LLP, tax manager and president of the overall Gotham Gators Club, "New York state is second only to Florida in applications to UF. So there are a lot of family ties, and plenty of students have these roots before they even go to Gainesville."

"It's also the financial capital of the world – as well as world capital for public relations, advertising and marketing."

Leavengood said. "Because UF has such strong professional programs – medicine, law, journalism, accounting, business, advertising – you have alumni who want to be in the best market for success plus those Gators who come back home."

David Cohen '89, senior vice president and general counsel for the N.Y. Mets, agrees with Leavengood that the connection between South Florida, UF and New York always has been strong. "They're like sister states."

As for Gator attorneys in Gotham, Leavengood points out "UF is a top public law school with an exceptional Grad Tax program. As a financial capital, New York is a great place for the practice of tax law as well as for mergers and acquisitions."

If a recent survey of Big Apple Gator lawyers is any indication, some prominent movers and shakers hail from UF and are impacting most segments of the New York legal profession. Four of the most influential practicing in New York and 78 of their peers...



Stephen D. Gardner '64

Partner, Kronish Lieb Weiner & Hellman
Professor, NYU School of Law

For Gators who graduated in the early 60s, the name **Stephen Gardner** might ring a bell. After all, the Miami native – who earned his bachelors degree from UF in 1961 and graduated from law school three years later – was a big man on campus.

He was president of Florida Blue Key, and very active in many campus organizations.

But his name might mean even more to anyone who ever practiced law in New York City. As a partner at Kronish Lieb Weiner & Hellman, one of the city's prestigious law firms (he was the managing partner for 19 years) and as a professor at New York University School of Law

since 1966, he has touched a lot of lives and made a name for himself in the Big Apple.

After graduating from UF's law school and receiving an LL.M. in taxation from NYU, Gardner worked in Orlando for seven months before being offered a full-time teaching job in Manhattan at NYU. He accepted and hasn't looked back. He made New York home, where he and his

In 1980, she moved to New York, where women were more commonplace



Betty Stinson '67

Bronx Supreme Court Justice

When Betty Stinson started at UF's law school in 1964, female law students were few and far between.

"There was one term when there were 12 women in the school, and it was the first time in history there had been that many," she says. "They took a photo of us in the jury box. It was an unusual event."

When she graduated in 1967, she didn't find the road to job success as easy as she'd thought it would be.

"Women in a courtroom were a strange phenomenon in Florida," she says.

In 1980, she moved to New York, where women were more commonplace in the legal system. Sixteen years later, she was elected to the bench as a Civil Court judge for the City of New York. She continued her ascent quickly and was elected to the New York State Supreme Court bench in 2000. She serves in Bronx County, assigned to the Civil Branch. (The NY Supreme Court is analogous to the Circuit Courts in Florida, the highest trial court.)

Today, she's just a couple of years into a 14-year term, and she's enjoying every second of it.

"I feel that I make a difference," she says. "In one way, I help younger lawyers learn skills they're going to need. I also help the citizens who come to jury service to appreciate the justice system and their importance to it."

"I think that because some of the decisions I write reflect changes in society – and what I feel should be changes in the law to go along with those – I also make a difference," she says.



Christine Markussen '72

Chief Counsel, Real Estate Investments
Metropolitan Life

After two years running a MetLife division she founded in Warsaw, Poland, UF alumna **Christine Markussen** received a promotion in 2001 and began preparing to move back to start her new job as chief counsel in charge of real estate investments.

Her first day on the job was Tuesday, September 11.

"I remember driving into the city the night of the 10th," she says. "I was with my husband, and we said, 'Wow, this is wonderful!' We had a view of the World Trade Center from our apartment."

The next day, as Markussen began with MetLife's New York office, the world changed forever. Markussen embraced her role as a New Yorker with open arms and began to rebuild with the rest of the city.

Today, Markussen oversees all legal aspects of MetLife's real estate portfolio, worth around \$40 billion.

"We have lawyers across the country that do legal work to support the company's real estate investments," she says. "We invest in shopping centers, office buildings, hotels, apartments and agricultural opportunities. We have an incredibly varied portfolio."

Markussen works an average of 55-to-60 hour work week and enjoys the job completely.

"I'm having a wonderful time. The people in my team are wonderful, and the work is interesting."

Not that interesting work is anything new to this former Gator. She started with MetLife in Atlanta and soon had a job as a general counsel in the London office. She returned to the states to become corporate secretary and the Chairman's chief of staff.

After two years, Markussen accepted a position in South America in international operations. Next was Poland, where she started a life insurance and



David Cohen '89

Senior Vice President and
General Counsel, New York Mets

David Cohen always has been a baseball fan. But he never guessed as he was growing up in North Miami Beach he would one day be instrumental in inking multi-million dollar contracts with some of the top names in the game.

Cohen spent years as an Atlanta Braves fan, but when the Mets asked him to come aboard in May 1995, he promptly abandoned his affinity for the Braves, the Mets' league rivals.

"That interest in the Braves wouldn't have worked too well here," he says.

In his eight years with the Mets, he's participated in some of the most interesting deals in baseball, including the signing of pitcher Tom Glavine – a former Braves' star.

"I work on contracts of all our major players," he says. "I also participate in baseball salary arbitration. It's a process by which certain baseball players with certain numbers of years of experience are entitled to seek arbitration to determine their salary. It's very

much a legal process with preparation of briefs and oral arguments, but the precedent is other baseball salaries and statistics rather than court decisions."

During the baseball season, Cohen typically spends the day working, then stays at Shea Stadium – where administrative offices are located – for home games.

"I'm there in a quasi-working capacity," he says. "A game for us is really a working event, but there is some opportunity to watch the proceedings."

For Cohen, things around the office never get dull.

wife, Mary Voce, also an attorney, raised their two sons. Gardner taught full-time until 1969, and has been a part-time professor in the graduate tax program ever since.

Thirty-one years ago, he joined the KLW&H firm, where he still practices as a tax attorney.

"I represent a number of large corporations, advising them on tax planning and in disputes with the IRS," he

says. "I have done that for at least the last 25 years. I spend a third to half of my time dealing with disputes with the IRS at all levels, administratively as well as in court."

With his UF years nearly four decades behind him, Gardner still lists Gator memories as some of his best.

"I enjoyed seven years there and wouldn't trade those years for anything," he says. "I liked them immensely."

in the legal system.

Stinson practiced for 13 years in Florida with the Department of Transportation, in private practice and with the Commission on Human Relations before heading to New York, where she worked in private practice and as a law secretary for two New York State Supreme Court justices. While with the state supreme court, she assisted in the discovery process and settlement phase of the Happyland Fire Case, which centered around an arsonist who killed 87 people in a 1990 inferno at a Bronx club.

In Florida, she was one of three attorneys who brought an antitrust suit on behalf of the Feminist Women's Health Center in Tallahassee against the head of the Florida Board of Medical Examiners and five local OB-GYN practitioners for pressuring young doctors not to perform abortions.

Stinson lives in the Bronx with her domestic partner and their twins, and plans to stay on the bench into her 70s.

"It's challenging," she says. "The people you meet, the lives you can touch, the difference you can make . . . it really means something."

retirement savings business for MetLife.

"It was a lifetime experience," she says. "My job was to identify business opportunities in Eastern Europe and Russia. The Poles have a special feeling for Americans, and it meant a lot to them, I think, that MetLife would send me and my family over and that we would learn to speak Polish."

It's little surprise that Markussen has accomplished so much. After all, she started young.

After growing up in Milwaukee, she moved to Florida when she was 16 and began attending the University of Florida, earning a bachelor's degree in history.

After working for a time at the welfare department in children and family serv-

es, she enrolled at UFLaw with aspirations of criminal law. But when a classmate was shot on a routine visit to a local jail, she rethought her plan.

"The shooting brought home to me I would be dealing with criminals on a regular basis," she said.

She wound up instead as a real estate lawyer, and after traveling the world for MetLife, she's back in the field in which she started.

Markussen is proud of her Gator roots, and returned to the law school this spring as a panelist at the 4th Annual Legal and Policy Issues in the Americas Conference coordinated by the Center for Governmental Responsibility.

"It's basically handling a wide variety of issues and often jumping from one thing to the next in a very short span of time," he says. "It's rare when I have a day when I can focus on one issue. More often, it's a bunch of things happening at the same time."

An accounting major at Florida International University, Cohen worked on *Florida Law Review* while in law school, and counts UF memories as some of his fondest.

"There were great teachers and a real intelligent population of students," he says. "At the same time, it was a really enjoyable atmosphere, from football games to social events. It was a well-rounded experience."

Cohen makes a yearly trip back to his native Sunshine State each March, when he joins the Mets for a long weekend of spring training games in Port St. Lucie. But his heart is in the city he now calls home.

"I'm fortunate to have a great job," he says.

Grads Prominent Throughout Gotham Business, Courts, Academia

In addition to the four featured New York area UFLaw alums (left) and UF Gotham Gator Club President Ian Leavengood (next page), several hundred graduates of the law school hold key positions in corporate, academic, governmental and public service sectors in the Big Apple. The ones listed responded to a *UFLaw Magazine* survey asking for information about their employment:

1960s

- **Stephen Tochner '64**
Partner / Kronish Lieb Weiner & Hellman, LLP
- **George W. Johnson '67**
Professor of Law / Brooklyn Law School
- **Mitchell H. Spingarn '68**
Assistant Prosecutor / Passaic County New Jersey
- **Alex Spitzer '69**
Senior Vice President-Taxes / Nestle Holdings, Inc
- **Lynne M. Davis '85**
Senior Counsel, Investment Law / TIAA-CREF
- **H. Douglas Garfield '85**
Tax Director, Pepsi-Cola Company / PepsiCo, Inc.
- **Leslie Y. Garfield '85**
Professor of Law / Pace Law School
- **Karen Heiss Eisen '85**
Director, Recruitment and Professional Development / Budd Larner Rosenbaum Greenberg & Sade

1970s

- **Richard A. Stettine '70**
Attorney / Richard A. Stettine, PC
- **Robert E. Carrigan '72**
Adjunct Professor / New York Law School; Practicing Attorney – Appeals
- **David H. Schmutte '72**
Professor of Law / Fordham Law School
- **Louis A. Tally '72**
Attorney / Self Employed
- **Joseph T. Jurkowski '74**
Managing Director / Bear Stearns & Co. Inc
- **Howard R. Snyder '74**
Partner / Fumuso Kelly DeVerna Snyder Swart & Farrell, LLP
- **Ronald Schwartzman '78**
General Counsel, Vice President / UniTeller Financial Services, Inc.
- **Edmund Dejowski '79**
Deputy Administrator / City of New York Human Resources
- **Mark K. Lindenberg '85**
Partner / Goldberg Scudieri Lindenberg & Block, PC
- **Michael W. Smith '85**
Executive Vice President, Professional Liability / American International Group
- **Maurice Stone '85**
Counsel / Harwood Lloyd, LLC
- **Suzanne A. Solomon '86**
Legal Research, Writing & Editorial Services / Suzanne A Solomon, Esq.
- **Gregg A. Stone '86**
Partner / Kirsch Gelbard & Stone, PA
- **Mark A. Nelson '87**
Vice President, Counsel / Alliance Capital Management Corporation
- **Susanne M. Roxbury '87**
President / Susanne M. Roxbury, Esq.
- **Scott Markowitz '88**
Partner / Tootman Nachamie Spizz & Tohns, PC
- **Hilary D. Unger '88**
Attorney / New York County Defender Services
- **Andrew D. Fisher '89**
Legal Consultant / Con Edison Communications, LLC
- **Gerard L. Mulhall '89**
Staff Counsel / Rosso Apoznanski & Hellreich
- **Richard I. Stern '89**
Chief Legal Officer / Sky Capital, LLC

1980s

- **Kathleen Watson '80**
Hearing Examiner / Nassau County Family Court
- **David H. Vickrey '81**
Director of Intellectual Property / Akzo Nobel, Inc.
- **Thomas R. Arnold '83**
Principal, Senior Vice President / ING Realty Partners
- **Katherine Davidson '83**
Attorney / Davidson Law Office
- **Russell Levitt '83**
Tax Managing Director / KPMG, LLP
- **Carla Martin '83**
Senior Editor / Research Institute of America
- **Helen Bonomo Tvetenstrand '84**
Retired / Thacher Proffitt & Wood

1990s

- **Paul M. Faver '90**
Managing Director / JB Real Estate Investment Group
- **Frank J. Kontely '90**
Partner / Purcell Ries Shannon Mulcahy & O'Neill

Continued...

Prominent Gotham Grads *continued*

- **Juliet T. Wyne '90**
Deputy Attorney General / State of New Jersey, Division of Law
 - **Bret Herman '91**
Commodities Trader / Self Employed
 - **Randall J. Shaw '91**
Vice President / ABN AMRO Healthcare Banking
 - **Sunil K. Agarwal '92**
President / Sunil K. Agarwal, PC
 - **Steve Becker '92**
Partner / Special Situation Funds
 - **Bongard Stremler '92**
Of Counsel / DiLorenzo & Rush
 - **Walter Alex Fallis '92**
Associate / Willkie Farr & Gallagher
 - **Robert Limerick '92**
Director, Global Tax / Merrill Lynch
 - **Caren L. Loguercio Sikora '92**
Principal Law Clerk to Hon. Emily Pines / N.Y.S Supreme Court – Suffolk County
 - **Erin Richardson '92**
Attorney / Self Employed
 - **Rabbi Marla J. Feldman '93**
Director, Commission on Social Action / Union of American Hebrew Congregation
 - **Ronna Horwitz-Bard '93**
Partner / Turley Redmans & Rosasco, LLP
 - **Deborah L. Lifshay '93**
Consultant / Pearl Meyer & Partners
 - **Jeffrey A. Tochner '93**
Associate / Latham & Watkins, LLP
 - **Linda B. Zuech '93**
Deputy Town Attorney / Town of North Hempstead
 - **David H. Hall '94**
Senior Manager – Tax / Price Waterhouse Coopers
 - **Steven J. Horn '94**
Director, Head of U.S. Operations / Deutsche Bank
 - **Trenton J. Schmatz '94**
Special Agent / Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - **Navaid Alam '95**
Director / Infrastructure Funding Group
 - **Joshua Benjamin '95**
Staff Attorney / Legal Aid Society-Criminal Defense Division
 - **Seth A. Levine '95**
Albin & Richman, PC
 - **Jamie B. Rainerman Mandel '95**
Associate / Duane Morris LLP
 - **Richard F. Silverstein Nisim '95**
Associate / Duane Morris, LLP
 - **Steven Zimmerman '95**
Attorney / Law Office of K. Steven Zimmerman
 - **Scott A. Simon '96**
Associate / Levy Boonshoft & Spinelli, PC
 - **Leza S. Tellam '96**
Senior Counsel for Mergers and Acquisitions / Citigroup, Inc.
 - **Douglas Davis '97**
Editor on Blue's Clue's, Producer of Documentary "NY 24" / Nickelodeon
 - **Kenneth P. Gavsie '98**
Associate / Weil Gotshal & Manges, LLP
 - **Michael J. Schmidt '98**
Manager – Mergers & Acquisitions / Deloitte & Touche
 - **Michael Stenberg '98**
Partner, Insurance Coverage/Defense litigation / Lustig & Brown
 - **Sam Borek '99**
Program Director / Camp Laurel
 - **George A. Callas '99**
Senior Associate, Tax / KPMG LLP
 - **Michelle Weithaas '99**
Senior Project Manager / Interbrand Wood Healthcare
- 2000s**
- **Michael Hirsch '00**
Senior Tax Consultant / Deloitte & Touche
 - **Christopher Jackson '00**
Urban Renewal Corporation
 - **Wendy Rubinstein '00**
Associate / DeCotiis FitzPatrick Cole & Wisler
 - **Veronica Theresa Tucci '00**
Associate / Brown Raysman Millstein Felder & Steiner, LLP
 - **Adam D. Wadler '00**
Attorney / Stern Keiser Panken & Wohl, LLP
 - **Stacy L. Eberhart '02**
Tax Consultant / Deloitte & Touche, LLP
 - **Douglas D. Nguyen '02**
Assistant Vice President / Wachovia Corp.
 - **Alexa R. Sherr '02**
Litigation Associate / Greenberg Traurig



Four Gators at a recent New York City event were Ian Leavengood '00 (story below), two-year president of UF's Gotham Gator Club; presidential candidate Sen. Bob Graham (UF '59); Laura Hammond Schmidt (UF '97 J-school grad and Ogilvy Public Relations account director) and Michael Schmidt '98 (UF '94 B.S.B.A.-Finance), mergers and acquisitions manager with Deloitte & Touche.

Law Grad's Leadership Helps Gotham Gators Achieve Plaudits

UF College of Law grads make up only a small percentage of its total membership, but it is in part due to the leadership of a Gator law grad that the University of Florida Gotham Gators Club (www.gothamgators.com) is an honored group as far as the UF Alumni Association is concerned.



In fact, according to UFAA's Duane Wiles, director of Club Relations and Special Interest Groups, "the NYC-based group has been one of our most active out-of-state clubs for the last couple of years."

In his 24-plus months as president of the Gotham Club, Ian Leavengood '00 helped the New York area group achieve positive notoriety back home – with UFAA honoring the club with five major awards since 1999.

Perhaps it is partly attributable to Leavengood's Florida Blue Key experience, and his UF undergraduate activities (including Alpha Tau Omega, Florida Cicerones, Preview Orientation program director) that got him elected to the university's Hall of Fame. He graduated *with honors* with a B.S. and M.S. in tax accounting in 1995, and went to work for Procter & Gamble Distributing Co., as an internal business consultant. He returned to UFLaw in '97, and during his second stint on campus served as a judicial extern to Florida Supreme Court Justice Ben Overton.

Leavengood, born and raised in St. Petersburg, is currently a tax attorney / accountant for Deloitte & Touche LLP, specializing in federal taxation of mergers and acquisitions.

According to UFAA's Wiles, there are almost 5,300 known Gator alumni living in the NYC area, and the Gotham Gators consist of approximately 780 dues paying members. Awards received by the group include Outstanding Overall Programming, 1999-00; Outstanding Communications, 1999-00 and 2000-01; Outstanding Membership, 2000-01; and Outstanding Individual UFAA Club Member 2000-01: Leavengood. 