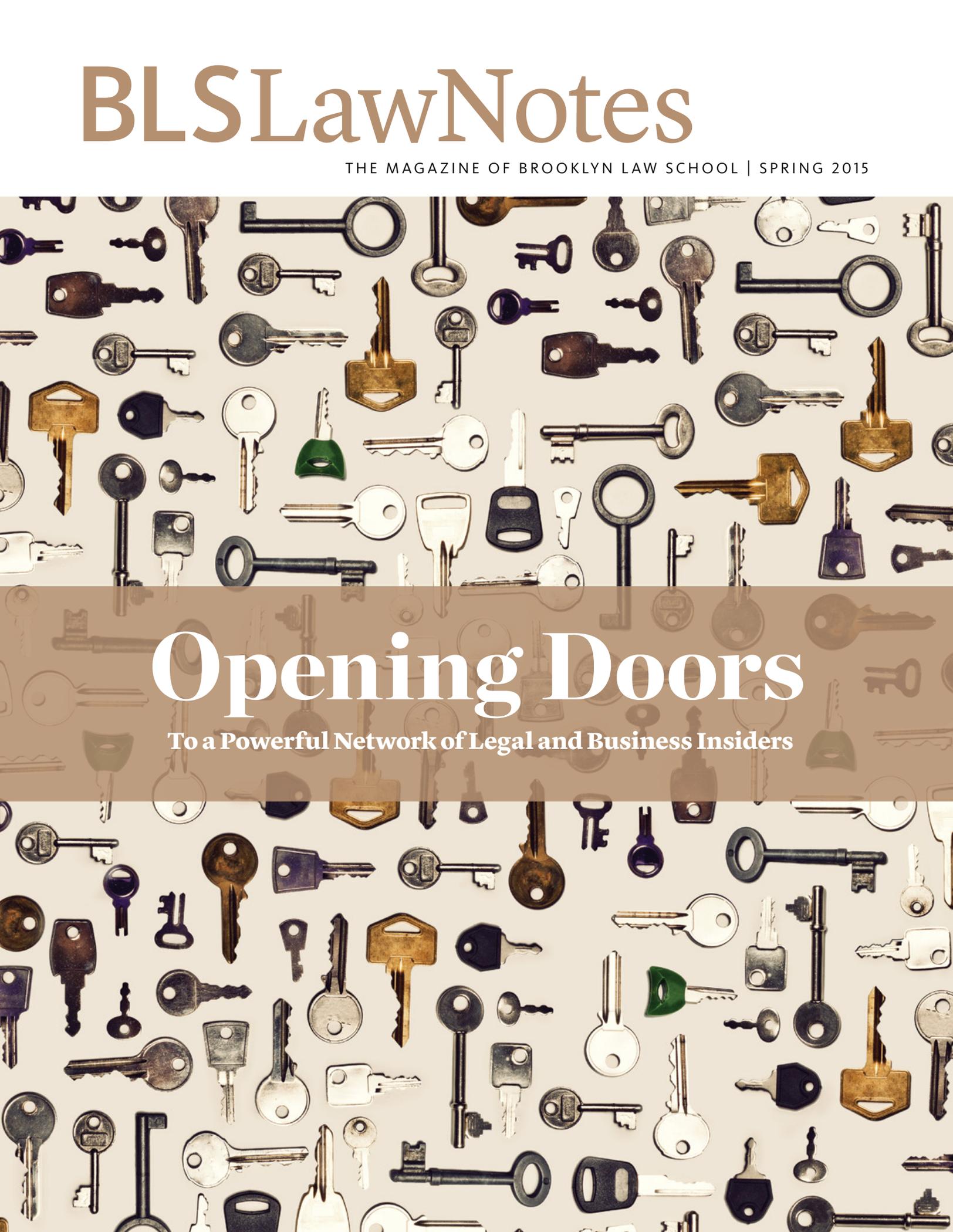


BLS LawNotes

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Opening Doors

To a Powerful Network of Legal and Business Insiders

Leading the School: The 1901 Society

THIS PAST YEAR MARKED THE BEGINNING of exciting new changes to the 1901 Society, an influential group of alumni and friends from private practice, government, and business, who have made an ongoing commitment to support the Law School. Members of the 1901 Society donate \$5,000 or more per year. Associates, who are recent graduates from the last 10 years, donate \$1,000 or more per year. Today, these supporters have enhanced opportunities to engage with the Law School in a more meaningful way and play a more active role in shaping its future.

In addition to participating in a variety of academic and social events, 1901 Society members are now taking part in “Leading the School” events, designed to solicit their input on issues facing the Law School. At these interactive planning sessions, members,

more chances to network, were particular aspects of the Society membership that appealed to me.” For Comerford, the connection to the Law School is particularly strong; his late father, Brian Comerford, was a longtime beloved tax professor.

Vinoo Varghese '00, who runs a successful criminal defense practice, Varghese & Associates P.C., and was named a 2014 NYLJ Rising Star, is another ardent supporter of the Law School and a member of the 1901 Society. Grateful for the education and opportunities he received as a student at BLS, Varghese supports the Law School financially, but aspired to contribute in other ways as well. “I wanted to give back even more,” he said, “and I believe that joining the Society was an even stronger statement of support for the School and its students.” He serves as a frequent

speaker at the Law School, as a Moot Court Honor Society judge, and he has led and recently received the Alumni Achievement Award from the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association, which he has led and advised for more than a decade.

Building on the success of the Society’s inaugural event, “Shakespeare and the Law,” the Law School hosted another interactive session for members in September 2014, “Leading the School: Addressing Jobs and Law School Affordability in the New World of Law.” The event brought together graduates to problem-solve two of the Law School’s most pressing issues: meeting the challenges of the new legal employment environment and improving law school affordability.

Members discussed innovative strategies to increase students’ job prospects and address the affordability of a legal education.

“I joined the 1901 Society because I am committed to supporting the Law School—its students, its leadership, and its tradition of excellence,” said **Colleen Caden '99**, a partner at Pryor Cashman specializing in immigration law. “The Society provides graduates like myself with a unique opportunity to socialize, network, and collaborate. While we reconnect with those we know and develop new friendships, we will be striving to ensure that those who come after us have the same opportunity to experience the many great things a legal education at BLS has to offer.” ■



LEFT (L TO R): Vice Dean Michael Cahill, Scott Hazan '73, Garynn Noel '15, and Jamie Maguire '15 at the 1901 Society's first-ever “Leading the School” planning event. RIGHT: Janeen Hall '15 and Vinoo Varghese '00, reporting back on his group's suggestions



in partnership with Dean Allard, the faculty, and the Board of Trustees, work together on key challenges for the Law School and strategize on the best ways to address these.

This opportunity to make a lasting impact on the Law School has been met with an unprecedented outpouring of support from the alumni community. Last year, the 1901 Society had three Associate Members; today there are 25, along with a robust membership of 137, which has grown substantially in the last two years.

“Our graduates have the opportunity now to become truly engaged with the direction of the Law School,” said Vice Dean Michael Cahill. “There is so much value that can be gained by listening to our alumni in this meaningful way.”

Alumni have been eager to contribute. **Sean Comerford '12**, counsel to a claims management company, Canopy Claims, said: “I had been thinking about more ways to get involved with the Law School without simply writing a check, and then I learned about the 1901 Society. Inviting graduates to engage with the School and voice concerns or give suggestions, as well as having

To learn more about the 1901 Society and how to join, contact the Development Office at 718-780-7505 or at giving@brooklaw.edu or visit brooklaw.edu.