

Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice to be dedicated in New Orleans

One of the nation's leading litigants against oil and gas companies funds center to help law students and indigent clients

What: Dedication of the The [Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice](#), Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, 540 Broadway St., Uptown New Orleans

When: Tuesday, Oct. 25, 5:30 – 7 p.m. CDT

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BACKGROUND: In 2008, Stuart H. Smith, J.D. '86, pledged a major gift to the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. The Law Clinic at the college was renamed as the Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice as a result of Smith's generous gift. A portion of his gift was also used to endow a new professorship to honor of one of Smith's mentors at the law school, John P. "Jack" Nelson, Jr. Professor Nelson, who died in 2006, was also an alumnus of Loyola's College of Law.

"Without the financial support and education I received at Loyola, I would not have achieved the success that I have," said Smith, who was recently featured in the critically-acclaimed documentary THE BIG FIX, about the on-going oil spill and environmental crisis in the Gulf of Mexico.

Smith has practiced law for nearly 25 years, litigating against oil companies and other energy-related corporations for damages associated with radioactive oilfield waste and the damages caused by produced water and sludges oil companies discharge into the environment. In 2001, Smith was lead counsel in an oilfield radiation case that resulted in a verdict of \$1.056 billion against ExxonMobil for contaminating private property it leased from the Grefer family in Harvey, Louisiana. Smith is currently representing the Louisiana Environmental Action Network as well as commercial fishermen and charter boat captains, whose livelihoods have been damaged by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The clinic is a fully functioning legal clinic which allows third-year law students the opportunity to represent indigent clients under the supervision of experienced

attorneys, according to Loyola University's President, the Rev. Kevin Wildes SJ.

Career Services educates law students and alumni regarding their professional development in the practice of law, and the methods of achieving career ambitions and employment options that exist for those in possession of a Juris Doctor degree. By participating in the Law Clinic, the Extern Program, and the Street Law Program, student practitioners not only have the chance to experience firsthand what representing clients is like, but they also have an opportunity to further the Jesuit ideals of scholarship and service at Loyola by providing legal representation to the needy.

"Part of Loyola's mission is to educate the whole student and to benefit the larger community. It's very satisfying to be dean of a law school that prepares students to be leaders for the rights of the voiceless in our society," said [María Pabón López](#), dean of the College of Law. "The new building is a natural extension of not only the kind of services that we offer in the clinic, including the Workplace Justice Project and community legal assistance, but the experience students receive, which is priceless after graduation."

The Dominican Conference Center, at the corner of Broadway and Dominican Streets, was built in 1958 as a student residence hall for Dominican College. A contemporary adaptation of the existing modern style building now allows additional "elbow room" for the Law Clinic and Career Services. The extensive renovation of the building focused on creating necessary spaces for offices, conference rooms and classrooms to relieve inadequate facilities for these programs. In line with Loyola's stewardship goals, the project is striving for Silver Level LEED certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. As a result, energy, air quality, and water efficient design were paramount in all decisions related to the renovation, in line with Mr. Smith's wishes.