



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jurists/Writers Impress Writers/Judges *Winners of First Journal of Legal Education Fiction Contest Announced*

July 13, 2012, LOS ANGELES- Give writers a unique opportunity to showcase their creativity and watch them soar. Winners of the first Journal of Legal Education Fiction Contest impressed the competition's prominent judges with their imagination, skill and wit.

Presenting a rare opportunity for writers to have their work read by internationally known best-selling authors such as Michael Connolly, the Association of American Law Schools' Journal of Legal Education (JLE) and Southwestern Law School announced the competition last December. The original short works of fiction had to be related to law school or the practice of law. The top 10 stories will be published in the February 2013 edition of the JLE, and the top 20 stories will be posted online.

Steven Semeraro, a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, won the contest with "The Birds They Sang at the Break of Day." His story topped an impressive 129 competition entries, which came from diverse writers throughout the United States. There were also international submissions from Canada, Germany, Ireland, France, Luxembourg, Israel, and South Africa. Contestants who submitted entries included professors, deans, judges, lawyers, law students, and professional writers.

International bestselling authors served as judges for the competition. "I was honestly blown away by the level of creativity and craft in these stories," said Connolly, author of bestselling legal-themed novels such as *The Lincoln Lawyer*, *The Brass Verdict*, *The Fifth Witness*, *The Reversal* and *The Drop*. "These writers delved into all facets of the law but more importantly they dug down deep into characters. It's a winning combination. *The Birds They Sang at the Break of Day* is a wonderful story that should be read widely. And it's not the only one. Many, many of these stories should be published and read. These writers certainly have something to say."

In addition to Professor Semeraro's first place story, the following writers were among the top ten winners:

- Peter Brennan, an engineer and writer living in Philadelphia, "The Lizard, the Justice & the Drunk"
- Gerald T. Hendrickson, Esq., a lawyer from St. Paul, Minnesota, "No Defense"
- Leslie Gielow Jacobs, Professor at McGeorge School of Law, "Snow White"
- Kyle Mallinak is a third-year law student at University of Virginia, "Prague Spring"
- Melissa F. Miller, a lawyer and published writer from Pennsylvania, "Black Thursday"
- Patrick C. O'Reilly, a lawyer and faculty member at SUNY Buffalo School of Law, "Lunch at MacDougal's"
- Risa Peris works in business and is a published writer from Phoenix, "She Wore Blue"
- John Power, a lawyer in Chicago, "Trusts"
- Marc Weitz, a lawyer in LA and Southwestern alumnus, "The Jirga"

“As practitioners and law professors, attorneys are always performing for judges, juries, clients, and students,” said Semararo, whose story focuses on a recent law school graduate who plays drums in a live karaoke band, gets advice from a homeless, alcoholic, former street lawyer who never actually went to law school, and has chosen to exclusively defend DUI cases. “The legal fiction writing contest is a welcome chance for us to get off the stage for a while and create the characters that we wish we could be.”

Denise Hamilton, author of the Eve Diamond crime novels, *Damage Control* and *The Last Embrace* also served as a contest judge. “I was impressed by the high quality of the entries,” she said. “Their breadth and imagination was astounding: Ghost stories, science fiction, stories set in far-flung Africa and Afghanistan and France as well as closer to home. Congratulations to all.”

Other judges included writer Marshall Goldberg ("L.A. Law," "Paper Chase," "Newhart," "It's Gary Shandling's Show") and Charles Rosenberg (legal consultant to "Paper Chase," "L.A. Law," "The Practice" and "Boston Legal," and author of the recently released legal thriller *Death on a High Floor*).

Southwestern Associate Dean Molly Selvin, the managing editor of the JLE and coordinator of the contest said, “The quality of entries for this competition proves there is a plethora of creativity, wit and skill in the legal writing community. The judges were delighted by so many entries from talented writers, legal scholars and practitioners.”

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The Journal of Legal Education is a quarterly publication of the Association of American Law Schools. The primary purpose of the Journal is to foster a rich interchange of ideas and information about legal education and related matters, including but not limited to the legal profession, legal theory, and legal scholarship. With a readership of more than 10,000 law teachers and about 500 subscribers, the Journal offers an unusually effective medium for communication to the law school world. The Journal is currently being hosted by Southwestern, with Dean Bryant G. Garth and Professor Gowri Ramachandran as co-editors, and Associate Dean Molly Selvin as associate editor.