

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT



Producing Lawyer Leaders

FEBRUARY 2026

INSIDE STORY

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER CELEBRATES FALL 2025 COMMENCEMENT AND WELCOMES THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEGAL LEADERS



On Saturday, January 24, Southern University Law Center (SULC) proudly celebrated its Fall 2025 Commencement Ceremony, honoring graduates who were awarded the Juris Doctor degree during a momentous ceremony held at the Smith Brown Memorial Union. Surrounded by family, friends, faculty, and distinguished guests, the Class of 2025 marked the culmination of years of dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance.

Chancellor Alvin Washington opened the ceremony with a warm welcome, congratulating the graduates and acknowledging the support systems that helped

guide them to this milestone. He commended the class for its resilience and encouraged graduates to carry forward SULC's legacy of excellence, service, and leadership.

The keynote address was delivered by Timothy Hardy, a distinguished member of the Law Center's Class of 1981. Hardy, who was named SULC Distinguished Alumnus in 2009 and inducted into the SULC Hall of Fame in 2012, shared reflections from his accomplished career in law and public service. In 2020, Hardy was appointed by Governor John Bel Edwards to the Governor's Climate Initiatives Task Force, where he served as co-chair of the Manufacturing and Industry Committee and as a member of the Legal Advisory Group.

Hardy concluded with a powerful message on leadership and character, reminding graduates that true leadership extends beyond titles. "True leadership is humble. True leadership is based on skills and character, not titles and perks," he said. "Remain humble, resilient, passionate, empathetic, and you can conquer the world."

The ceremony concluded with closing remarks celebrating the achievements of the graduating class and officially welcoming them into the SULC alumni network as they embark on the next chapter of their legal careers.

INSIDE STORY

CAREER SERVICES BRINGS LAWMAKING AND ADVOCACY INTO FOCUS FOR SULC STUDENTS



Southern University Law Center continues its commitment to preparing practice-ready attorneys by providing students with meaningful opportunities to engage directly with the realities of law and public policy.

The Office of Career Services hosted Behind the Curtain: Lawmaking, Advocacy, and What It Really Means for Your Future Client, offering students an inside look at how laws are created, challenged, and implemented in Louisiana, and how those processes directly affect the clients they will one day serve. Participants gained knowledge into the state's legislative landscape while hearing firsthand from accomplished leaders who are actively shaping law and public policy.

The discussion connected classroom theory to real-world impact, reinforcing the critical role attorneys play as both advocates and change agents.

INSIDE STORY

CHANCELLOR WASHINGTON AND ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTED IN THE WE THE PEOPLE NETWORK

Southern University Law Center Chancellor Alvin Washington, along with distinguished alumni Edmond Jordan ('97) and Vanessa Caston LaFleur ('93), were recognized as Trail Blazers by We The People Network, Inc. during a recent celebration honoring leaders who are making a lasting impact across Louisiana.

The prestigious recognition placed the SULC honorees among an impressive group that included Governor Jeff Landry, East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Sid Edwards, Secretary of State Nancy Landry, and other influential figures from across the state. Each honoree was acknowledged for their commitment to leadership, service, and community advancement.



We The People Network, Inc., an organization dedicated to building safer and stronger communities through education, health awareness, and crime prevention, selected the Trail Blazers for their demonstrated dedication to uplifting others and driving meaningful change. The recognition of Chancellor Washington and alumni Jordan and Caston LaFleur reflects Southern University Law Center's continued legacy of producing leaders who shape policy, strengthen communities, and inspire future generations.

SULC NAMED TOP SCHOOL FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Southern University Law Center has been recognized by PreLaw Magazine as a Top Law School for Public Service for 2025–2026. This distinction underscores the Law Center's longstanding commitment to educating lawyers who are dedicated to public service, community engagement, and the advancement of justice.



INSIDE STORY



CHANCELLOR WASHINGTON'S OPEN CONVERSATION SERIES FOSTERS DIALOGUE

Southern University Law Center continued its commitment to transparency, connection, and community-building through its monthly Open Conversation with the Chancellor series. This initiative is designed to bring students, faculty, and staff together for dialogue and shared problem-solving. This month, staff from the Louisiana Department of Insurance spoke with students about careers in the insurance industry.

The open conversation series created a welcoming space for participants to exchange ideas, ask questions, and engage directly with Chancellor Alvin Washington and guest on topics impacting campus life and the future of SULC. Each session emphasizes the importance of listening to diverse perspectives and working collaboratively to strengthen the law center's culture and mission.

JOINT VENTURES

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER CONCLUDES FOURTH ABBVIE LEGAL ACADEMIES EXPERIENCE



Southern University Law Center (SULC) recently concluded the fourth installment of the AbbVie Legal Academies, a four-day immersive program designed to expose students to the real-world practice of law through direct engagement with leading legal professionals.

Throughout the experience, students learned from practicing attorneys who shared practical knowledge, industry insight, and candid perspectives on navigating today's legal landscape. The Academies provided participants with meaningful opportunities to build professional connections while gaining a deeper understanding of how legal concepts are applied in practice.

During the program, students explored core areas of the profession, including trial fundamentals, intellectual property, compliance, transactional deals, eDiscovery, and the growing role of artificial intelligence in law. These sessions were intentionally designed to strengthen students' skill sets and prepare them for the evolving demands of the modern legal field.

The success of the AbbVie Legal Academies was made possible through the leadership and coordination of the Office of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives.

STUDENT EVENTS



SULC BLSA CHAPTER NAMED CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AT SOUTHWESTERN CONFERENCE

The SULC Black Law Students Association, led by President Alexis Blanton and Vice President Araybia Brown, proudly represented the Law Center at the Southwestern Black Law Students Association Conference, where the chapter was recognized as Chapter of the Year for its outstanding excellence and impact.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

DESTINY SANDERS



Destiny Sanders was selected as a Summer 2026 Law Clerk through the Black Public Defender Association's Summer Fellowship.

MOLLY SMITH



Molly Smith secured a law clerkship with Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah, & Perkins LLP.

GENESIS ZIMMERMON



Genesis Zimmermon accepted a summer internship with the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Georgia, Criminal Division

AIMEE KUYKENDALL



Aimee Kuykendall secured a law clerk position at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services in Hammond.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

ELIZABETH BLOCH



Elizabeth Bloch was promoted to Shareholder at The Kullman Firm.

ASHLEY FIRVEN



Ashley Firven was promoted to Partner at Hammonds, Sills, Adkins, Guice, Noah & Perkins, LLP.

WHITNEY R. THOMAS



Whitney Renee Thomas was selected to join the San Antonio Bar Foundation Fellows Program, Class of 2026.

CHUCK TONEY



Chuck Toney was appointed as Director of Intergovernmental Relations with Mayor Moreno's Administration for the City of New Orleans.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

PORCHA THOMPSON



ASHLEY COX COATES



TREY BARTHOLOMEW



SHANTÉ HARVEY ROBINS



Porcha Thompson, Ashley Cox Coates, Trey Bartholomew, and Shanté Harvey Robins were selected for Leadership Baton Rouge Alumni's 2026 Cohort.

CURRENT & FUTURE EVENTS



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The Southern University Law Center is a unit of the Southern University System

Orlando F. McMeans, Interim President of the Southern University System
Alvin R. Washington, SULC Chancellor

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