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American Ag Law Association Presents Awards

The American Agricultural Law Association (AALA) awards program recognizes its members' contributions to the association and to the development and practice of agricultural law. Each year, it recognizes AALA members who have demonstrated excellence as private practitioners, as in-house counsel, as academics, or through their involvement in government or nongovernmental organizations with Excellence in Agricultural Law awards. AALA also gives Professional Scholarship awards to recognize members' writings, either in the form of scholarly articles or practice-related works like appellate or trial-court briefs. Student scholarly work is recognized with the Student Scholarship Award. This year's awards were presented Nov. 6 during the association's annual educational symposium in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Ashley Ellixson, chief business operations officer at the United Dairymen of Arizona (UDA) in Tempe, Arizona, received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award for her involvement in nongovernmental organizations. She oversees UDA's communications, information technology, human resources and safety departments. She also is responsible for government relations and handles the various legal issues that arise in conjunction with UDA's sustainability efforts.

Ellixson has a bachelor's degree in business finance from Arizona State University and a Juris Doctor (J.D.) with a certificate of science, engineering and technology law from Texas Tech University School of Law. She also holds a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in agricultural and food law from the University of Arkansas School of Law.

Paul Goeringer, an Extension specialist in agricultural and resource economics at the University of Maryland, received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award for academia. He specializes in legal risk management as it relates to agriculture. He has worked with county Extension educators, providing valuable legal education about agricultural leasing and estate planning.

Goeringer is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. His J.D. is from the University of Oklahoma. He also graduated from the University of Arkansas with an LL.M. in agricultural law and a master's degree in agricultural economics. He is licensed to practice law in Oklahoma.

Marvin Beshore, of counsel at Johnson Duffie in Pennsylvania, received the Excellence in Agricultural Law Award for private practice. He is recognized nationally as an authority on federal milk marketing regulations under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act. He has represented national, regional and local dairy farmer cooperatives with members in the 48 contiguous states. His practice also involves counseling and representing clients in estate planning and administration, real estate transactions, zoning and land use, nonprofit organizations, and other civil matters.

Beshore's education includes a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Dickinson College and a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center.

The Student Scholarship Award went to Bethany Sumpter, who received her J.D. from the Texas A&M University School of Law earlier this year. Her award-winning commentary, "The Growing Monopoly in the Corn Seed Industry: Is It Time for the Government to Interfere?", appeared in the *Texas A&M Law Review*.

"This particularly well-done student work evaluates the legal question of whether a monopoly exists in today's seed-corn market, while forecasting the road ahead if a monopoly emerges," said Anthony Schutz, a professor at the University of Nebraska College of Law, who chaired the awards committee.

ALA recognized Todd Janzen, Brianna Schroeder and Daniel McInerny with a Professional Scholarship Award for an amicus brief they submitted, along with Andrew McNeil, in *Himsel v. Himsel* on behalf of the Indiana Agricultural Law Foundation and the Indiana Pork Producers Association. All four attorneys are based in Indianapolis, Indiana. Janzen and Schroeder are with Janzen Schroeder Agricultural Law LLC, and McInerny and McNeil are with Bose McKinney & Evans LLP.

"This well-done brief exhibits strong and effective advocacy in an important agricultural law case concerning Indiana's right to farm act," Schutz said.

A Professional Scholarship Award went to Jennifer Zwagerman, director of the Drake Agricultural Law Center. Her article, "Agriculture & Data Privacy: I Want a HIPPA(Pottamus) for Christmas ... Maybe", appeared in the *Texas A&M Law Review*.

"This law review article does what great law review articles should," Schutz said. "It provides a comprehensive explanation of a policy issue, explains the legal response and its shortcomings, and provides an analysis of possible improvements and alternatives."

Another Professional Scholarship Award went to Jessica Shoemaker, a professor at the Nebraska College of Law. Her article, “Fee Simple Failures: Rural Landscapes and Race” appeared in the *Michigan Law Review*.

“This law review article is an important work in agricultural law, deconstructing the basic foundation of property law in light of its use, abuse and persistence,” Schutz said. “It chronicles the racial history and present distribution of agricultural land, and it calls for policy change to rectify longstanding and emerging injustices.”

The recipient of the AALA Distinguished Service Award is selected by the prior three recipients of the award. The selection is based on a member’s consistent demonstration of dedication to furthering the development of agricultural law, strengthening the legal profession, increasing the size and influence of AALA, and fulfilling the law-related information needs of lawyers and citizens alike.

Schutz was recognized with the award. Last year’s recipient, Stephen Carpenter, deputy director and senior staff attorney at the Farmers’ Legal Action Group, presented the award.

“Anthony’s annual environmental law presentations at our conferences, his thoughtful writings on agricultural law, his committee service, his recruiting efforts on behalf of the AALA, and his incredible record of teaching agricultural law all combine to support his nomination,” wrote Susan Schneider, director of the LL.M. program in agricultural and food law at the University of Arkansas School of Law, in nominating Schutz.

“He is always willing to share information and resources; he works honestly and transparently with all sides of every ag issue; he offers thoughtful commentary and is not afraid to raise difficult issues. He never seeks recognition or personal gain. He just does the work and cares deeply about agricultural and food law issues.”

The American Agricultural Law Association (<https://www.aglaw-assn.org>) serves as the premier association for agricultural law and policy professionals. Its mission is to inform and engage the law and policy professionals who serve all facets of the agricultural and food communities.

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