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SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

Cutting-Edge Entertainment Law Programs

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The **Donald E. Biederman Entertainment and Media Law Institute** at Southwestern Law School has been training tomorrow's entertainment and media lawyers for more than 15 years

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Professor Jay Gendron with two of his students.

ENTERTAINMENT LAW EPICENTER

Having just celebrated its 15th anniversary,
the Donald E. Biederman Entertainment and Media Law Institute
continues to offer students unrivalled learning opportunities



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hen Professor Robert Lind joined Southwestern's full-time faculty in 1981, the law school already boasted an entertainment law curriculum. It was way ahead of its time considering that most other law schools did not view entertainment law as a scholarly pursuit

worthy of support. There were a handful of courses in copyright, intellectual property, entertainment and mass communications law. There were even programs in place to invite industry leaders to speak at the school.

However, Professor Lind, one of the country's leading copyright law experts, and several of his colleagues realized entertainment law could be a signature offering for Southwestern. With its proximity to Hollywood and a dedicated alumni network that included leading practitioners in the field, Southwestern was uniquely positioned to provide students with practical experience in an exciting and growing practice area. They felt that providing a focus on entertainment training and practice would benefit both students and the entertainment industry.

Starting in 1983, Professor Lind, along with Professor Steven Rood and Adjunct Professor Don Biederman, began to explore ways to expand the law school's entertainment law curriculum, including new cutting-edge courses taught by leading industry experts, a variety of externships, an international study component, and a specialized Master of Laws degree program.





Together with Don Biederman, **Robert Lind** (L) and **Michael Epstein** (above) played an integral role in structuring the Biederman Institute.

“We wanted to recruit top adjuncts,” Professor Lind recalls. “We saw that it would be more advantageous in the long run for Southwestern to train students who become entertainment attorneys than to merely offer several entertainment courses for students who just fancy the notion of becoming entertainment attorneys.”

In the 1990s, the number of entertainment courses were increased. Professor Michael Epstein, a media law expert, was hired to bolster course offerings in that field. Professor Silvia Faerman, an expert in international intellectual property issues, joined Southwestern to add an international component to the program. Professor Marin Scordato proposed the establishment of an Institute to serve as an umbrella over all of the law school’s entertainment law programming. When Professor Biederman, a longtime friend of the law school, retired after nearly two decades as Executive Vice President and General Counsel of

Warner/Chappell Music, he became the Institute’s founding director in 2000. Originally named The National Entertainment and Media Law Institute, it was renamed the Donald E. Biederman Entertainment and Media Law Institute following Professor Biederman’s death in 2002.

From 2003 to 2008, the Institute was overseen by Professor David C. Kohler, who joined Southwestern after a distinguished career as general counsel for such industry giants as TBS and CNN. Building on the foundation established by his predecessor, Professor Kohler established partnerships with major organizations such as the Media Law Resource Center, increased externship opportunities, instituted the Journal of International Media and Entertainment Law (JIMEL) and organized annual conferences on the latest developments in entertainment and media law. He also recruited additional leading entertainment law experts to serve as advisors, adjuncts, and guest lecturers.

Tamara Moore, Associate Director of the Institute, who has worked with all the directors over the years, says that both Professor Biederman’s and Professor Kohler’s passion for the Institute continues to have a tremendous influence on the programs and people associated with it. “Don and Dave shared an unwavering passion to teach and mentor students who aspired to careers in entertainment and media law. Their objective was to create a cutting-edge curriculum along with a robust externship placement program that would provide students with the education and practical skills required for the demands of these industries. Their legacy continues to permeate the Biederman Institute today and their commitment to excellence and innovation resonates with our current faculty, staff, students and alumni, both domestically and internationally.” She also points out, “The success of the Institute meant so much to Don and Dave that their

“There are many special things about Southwestern Law School, but its prominence in entertainment and media law is one of its most impressive achievements.”

—DEAN SUSAN WESTERBERG PRAGER

families have remained actively involved and have also established memorial funds dedicated to their legacies that support Institute-related scholarships and activities.”

Rigorous Academics and Real-World Experience

Today, the Institute operates as the official hub for all things related to Southwestern’s robust entertainment and media law program: It counts seven full-time professors—all of whom

are accomplished entertainment lawyers and have deep roots in the industry—some 40 adjuncts, and nearly 50 course offerings on everything from music publishing and motion picture production law to technology agreements and video game law. A comprehensive externship program allows students to earn credit while working for companies such as Lionsgate Entertainment, MGM, BET Networks, Funny or Die, and many others. Entertainment practicums provide

students with the opportunity to develop their skills in a law firm setting. Students can also take advantage of entertainment law-centered summer programs in Los Angeles and London. Additionally, the Institute launched the first LL.M. in Entertainment and Media Law program in the country, and most recently, a brand new two-year J.D. focused on entertainment and media Law.

Such offerings have turned Southwestern into the entertainment law powerhouse Professor Lind imagined all those years ago. It has been recognized as among the top 12 law schools in the country for entertainment law by *The Hollywood Reporter* for all four years that the publication has run the list, and No. 1 in Top Law Schools for Entertainment Law by *lawstreetmedia.com*.

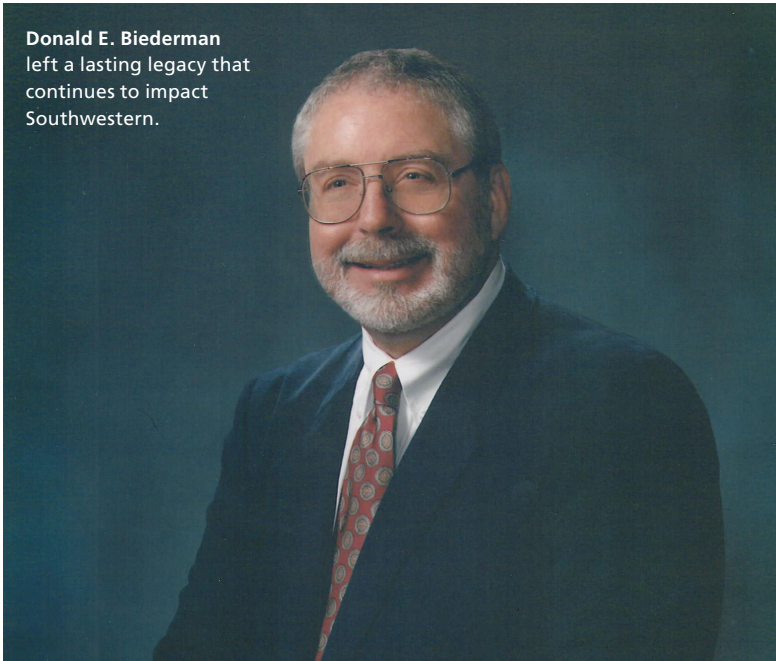
“There are many special things about Southwestern Law School, but its prominence in entertainment and media law is certainly one of its most impressive achievements,” says Dean Susan Westerberg Prager. “The Biederman Institute, the nation’s largest entertainment law curriculum, and the many prominent alumni are all evidence of Southwestern’s standing in these vibrant fields.”

That was certainly important for Matthew Alsberg ’15, currently a lawyer in business development with Sony PlayStation. After a brief



Matthew Alsberg '15, a lawyer in business development with Sony PlayStation, says his time at Southwestern prepared him for real-world practice.

Donald E. Biederman
left a lasting legacy that
continues to impact
Southwestern.



REMEMBERING DONALD E. BIEDERMAN

**The legal innovator and educational leader infused
Southwestern with his passion for entertainment law**

A highly admired teacher, scholar and pioneer of entertainment and media law, Donald E. Biederman (1934–2002) began his long and storied affiliation with Southwestern in 1983 as an adjunct professor. Drawing from his wealth of experience in the field—including nearly two decades in leadership roles at Warner/Chappell Music, Inc., one of the world's largest music publishing companies—he taught innovative courses to hundreds of students. Upon his appointment as director of Southwestern's Entertainment and Media Law Institute in 2000, he recruited leading entertainment law experts from around the world to serve as adjunct professors and guest lecturers. He was devoted to the Institute, which was named in his honor, and to the countless students he inspired.

Professor Biederman was the author or editor of some of the most comprehensive and widely used publications on entertainment and media law, including *International Entertainment Law* (with Lon Sobel, Praeger Publishers, 2003) and *Law & Business of the Entertainment Industries: Fourth Edition* (with Martin Silfen, et.al., Praeger Publishers, 2001). He gave generously of his time to the legal profession and the community, and in 2000 was named Entertainment Lawyer of the Year by the Beverly Hills Bar Association.

"Dad taught at a lot of law schools, but he had a special affinity for Southwestern," says Professor Biederman's son, Jeff Biederman, a leading entertainment lawyer with Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, and a member of the Biederman Institute's adjunct faculty and executive board. "The law school appealed to him because he saw that students really wanted to learn there. He just loved the spirit of the place."

career as a hip-hop artist, Alsberg enrolled in Southwestern's four-year evening program and found his calling. He took advantage of as many opportunities as he could, including a course on Emerging Issues in the Entertainment Industry with Adjunct Professor Wayne Levin '88, general counsel and chief strategic officer of Lionsgate. "Professor Levin told us to get out of the old mold of thinking," Alsberg says, "and that these days, we have to understand many disciplines—business, technology, science."

He also participated in two invaluable externships: one with Berman/Braun (now Whalerock), a production company in Santa Monica; and the other with Sony PlayStation, which led to his current position. Alsberg, the first evening student to be named a prestigious Biederman Scholar—an honor granted to promising entertainment law students each year—says the Southwestern experience prepared him well for real-world practice. "I really appreciated the rigor and the solid academic foundation it provided," he says. "And the networking opportunities were also phenomenal."

Southwestern Firsts

- **1st law school** to establish an Entertainment and Media Law Institute
- **1st law school** to offer summer programs on entertainment law in both LA and London
- **1st law school** to launch a major entertainment law clinic, the Entertainment and the Arts Legal Clinic, which provides legal assistance to independent filmmakers and other creative artists
- **1st law school** to offer an Entertainment and Media Law LL.M. program
- **1st law school** to offer a two-year J.D. focused on entertainment and media law
- **1st law school** to offer an award-winning entertainment and media law blog

“Most of our students think the Legal Arts Clinic is the coolest class, because it’s real. They perform nitty-gritty work on difficult issues and gain invaluable experience.”

—PROFESSOR JAY GENDRON

Diverse Learning Opportunities

According to Professor Lind, who directed the Biederman Institute in 2010 and is currently its Co-Director with Neil Ollivierra, approximately a quarter of incoming students at Southwestern say they intend to pursue entertainment law. So the law school has gone the extra mile to give students not just a comprehensive curriculum and a vast array of externship opportunities, but also a wide choice of entertainment-related programs, events and activities on campus.

One such offering is the Entertainment and the Arts Legal Clinic, in which students provide legal services to independent filmmakers and other creative artists under faculty supervision. Students offer filmmakers working on a “micro-budget” hands-on legal advice about everything from securing permits to negotiating music clearance rights—and often get to see their names in the credits

as a result. Professor Jay Gendron, a former Warner Bros. executive who co-teaches the clinic with Professor Penelope Glass, says the experience is a win-win for both the students and the filmmakers.

“Most of our students think this is the coolest class, because it’s real,” Professor Gendron says. “They perform nitty-gritty work on difficult issues and gain invaluable experience. And our clients are thrilled to have this resource that can save them thousands of dollars on legal affairs by having the class take care of them.”

As a student in the clinic, Angelica Merida ’13 primarily handled music issues, drafting complex composer and score agreements, as well as master use and synch licenses, among other projects. “I learned about client relations, teamwork, and trust building, and gained a lot of drafting knowledge,” Merida says. “The [clinic] gave me the forum in which to exercise my skills without fear because

I had my team and my professors' support." Merida is now an associate in business and legal affairs at BMG, representing artists and rights owners in the music industry.

Another ongoing program at Southwestern is the "Conversation With..." series, in which faculty members sit down with prominent industry experts for lively dialogues. The featured guests have included such well-known leaders as mega sports agent Arn Tellem; legendary first amendment attorney Martin Garbus; ASCAP President, songwriter and performer Paul Williams; and Gordon H. Smith '79, president and CEO of the National Association of Broadcasters and a former U.S. senator from Oregon.

Students looking to expand their exposure to a global perspective on entertainment law can enroll in the London Summer Program in International Entertainment & Media Law, created by Professor Lon Sobel. The immersive, five-week experience is headquartered at the prestigious University of London and is the only summer-abroad program of its kind.

The law school's domestic Summer Entertainment Law Program in Los Angeles features a variety of courses taught by top practitioners, customizable externships, and meetings with leading alumni working in the field.

On campus, Southwestern students can sharpen their legal research, writing, and editing skills through the *The Journal of International Media and Entertainment Law*, edited by students working with faculty supervisors under the guidance of Professor Michael Epstein. The journal, published in association with the ABA's Forums on

Communications Law and the Entertainment and Sports Industries, provides a thoughtful forum for exploring the complex legal issues affecting today's rapidly changing media landscape.

Students can also enroll in a unique course on Entertainment Law and Web 2.0, which produces the award-winning Biederman Blog. Participants in the two-unit course, overseen by Adjunct Professor Craig Matsuda and Professor Michael Scott, research, write, edit, and post articles for the blog on daily developments in entertainment law, usually with an eye toward emerging issues in copyright cases. *The ABA Journal* has recognized the

Biederman Blog as one of the top legal blogs in the country.

The LL.M. Advantage

Nick Francescon, J.D. '08, LL.M. '11, says Southwestern's LL.M. (Masters of Law) degree in Entertainment and Media Law "was the perfect choice for me. It was just what I needed to manage my career transition." An attorney with Covington & Burling in Beijing, he works on high-profile international transactions, primarily between Chinese entities and U.S. movie studios interested in accessing the Chinese market.

While earning his J.D. at Southwestern, "Entertainment law wasn't on my radar at all,"

Nick Francescon, J.D. '08, LL.M. '11, an attorney with Covington & Burling in Beijing, credits the Biederman Institute with giving him the skills and knowledge he needed to advance in his career in international entertainment law.





Nathaniel Hargress, LL.M '09, is now at Viacom Media Networks, and says Southwestern's diverse coursework prepared him for many facets of entertainment law.

Francescon says. "I was more interested in business litigation. But I gradually realized I was better suited to the transactional side of law, and entertainment issues in particular." So he decided to complement his J.D. with the LL.M. offered by Southwestern's Biederman Institute, which he says, "gave me broad knowledge and hands-on skills that would have taken a much longer time to acquire if I were not in an academic setting," and affording him an edge in a highly competitive job market.

Nathaniel Hargress LL.M. '09, Senior Counsel for Business and Legal Affairs at Viacom Media Networks, concurs with Francescon, "Southwestern prepared me for career success by offering a multitude of courses focusing on entertainment law," he says.

"Because of my diverse coursework in this area, I have felt comfortable dealing with issues in music, television, film and new media." Hargress was recently recognized with the "2016 Rising Star" award from the Association of Media and Entertainment Counsel.

The LL.M. program can be completed in one year of full-time

study or over two to four years of part-time study. Students gain essential skills in this constantly changing area of practice, so they can continue to effectively and responsibly represent their clients. The program is unparalleled in its breadth and depth, and the faculty are always expanding the curriculum.

The Alumni Network

In 2011, the Biederman Institute launched Southwestern's Entertainment and Intellectual Property Law Alumni Association (SWEIP) to bring together alumni who work in entertainment or IP transaction law or litigation; those who work for an entertainment company or entertainer; and those who work on the creative side of the entertainment industry. Its mission is to cultivate relationships within the business, raise Southwestern's profile as a leading school for entertainment law, and organize relevant and compelling activities for alumni and students.

SWEIP has become one of the Biederman Institute's most important and influential champions. Founding president Eric

Early '93, partner in Los Angeles-based Early Sullivan Wright Gizer & McRae, is passionately committed to spreading the word about his alma mater, and SWEIP, he says, is a great way to do so. In return for the education and career Southwestern enabled him to pursue, Early has played a leading role in creating a cohesive community of current and aspiring entertainment lawyers. "I enjoy doing it for a school I very much believe in," he says.

Like Early, Deborah Drooz '85 is deeply connected to her alma mater and shows her support by serving as an adjunct professor and mentor to students and alumni. Currently Of Counsel in the firm of Pisanelli Bice, and one of the top plaintiffs' defamation attorneys in the country, Drooz was named Outstanding Adjunct Professor in Entertainment and Media Law during the Biederman Institute's Awards event in 2012. "I was so pleased and proud to have been asked by the late Don Biederman to come back to the law school to teach," says Professor Drooz, who, like many alumni in entertainment law, credits Professor Lind with sparking her interest in her chosen field.

Yet another alumna dedicated to giving back is Cindy Johnson J.D. '00, LL.M. '07. As president of the Southwestern Alumni Association, Johnson is committed to expanding the law school's outreach to prospective students, creating career opportunities for recent graduates, and raising money for scholarships. An entertainment lawyer in private practice, Johnson says she was attracted to Southwestern because it offered more entertainment law courses than any other law school she knew of. "[Southwestern] opened up a whole new world for me—especially my classes with Robert Lind, who is the guru of copyright law," she says. "I also had the honor of studying with the great Don Biederman. So I really wanted to pay it forward and make a difference in others' lives."

Johnson and her husband, Neville Johnson '75, one of the top entertainment litigators in the country, participate in Institute events and mentoring programs throughout the year and have made a leadership gift to support students at the law school. They serve as

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—CINDY JOHNSON, J.D. '00, LL.M. '07,
& PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHWESTERN ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION



Professor Neil Ollivierra '07 is the new Co-Director of the Biederman Institute.

examples of how Southwestern's entertainment law program has had a transformative impact on generations of students.

Hoping to have an impact on future generations of students is Professor Neil Ollivierra '07, recently named as Co-Director of the Biederman Institute. In announcing his appointment, Dean Prager

said, "As a senior entertainment lawyer and executive, experienced legal educator and former musician and artist, Professor Ollivierra brings invaluable expertise and insight into the law and business of the entertainment and media industries from both a practical and academic perspective."

Professor Ollivierra, himself

a graduate of the Entertainment and Media Law Program, has experience in software development and is in the midst of building a robust database that will serve students and alumni from their first days at Southwestern through their entertainment law or media law careers. Of this database, Professor Lind says, "The ability to track the progress made by students will help us place them in rewarding positions. The tracking of our alums and the positions they have held, as well as the expertise they have developed, will allow us to assist and facilitate the needs of those who are interested in broadening their employment portfolio."

Prior to his appointment at Southwestern, Professor Ollivierra served as inhouse counsel to various motion picture and television studios at the highest level of business and legal affairs. He spent the bulk of his career at Lionsgate Entertainment as Vice President of Business and Legal Affairs for the studio's theatrical production division.

Of his new position as professor

Entertainment Law at Southwestern: By the Numbers

and co-director he says, “The study of entertainment law in the present day and age is an exciting adventure into new artistic discoveries and the fast-evolving means and methods of their corresponding exhibition, distribution and consumption, whether for purposes of commercial monetization, or purely for political, cultural and scientific advancement. By logical extension, the study of entertainment law necessarily includes the study of creativity, technology, business, politics, logic, mathematics, and a host of other related disciplines.

“The faculty and staff at Southwestern Law School—including the school’s adjunct professors who concurrently operate as executives and legal counsel for the most celebrated studios, record labels, publishers, galleries, museums, law firms and talent agencies in the world—have long sought to cultivate among Southwestern’s students an appreciation of the bigger picture, as well as the minutiae. I feel privileged and honored to join the faculty at Southwestern in the preservation and expansion of the school’s esteemed heritage and tradition.”

15

Number of years since the Biederman Entertainment and Media Law Institute was formally established

50+

Number of alumni who serve as general counsel or executive vice presidents in the entertainment industry.

Top 12

Listed in *The Hollywood Reporter’s* annual roster of America’s Top Entertainment Law Schools for four years running.

Top 40

Second-most represented law school in *Los Angeles Business Journal’s* Los Angeles’ Top 40 Intellectual Property Lawyers.

Top 100

The Biederman Blog, the first comprehensive student-produced entertainment law blog, has been included in the ABA Journal’s Blawg 100, three years in a row.

10

Years Southwestern has produced the *Journal of International Media & Entertainment Law*, in association with the Forums on Communications Law and the Entertainment and Sports Industries of the ABA.

35

Number of years that Professor Robert Lind has taught entertainment law and other courses at Southwestern

4,000

Number of students that Professor Lind has taught in those 35 years, more than one-quarter of the law school’s graduates.



SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

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