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Lewis & Clark Law School honors Robinson, Beckham, Whittlesey

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PORTLAND – Lewis & Clark Law School honored Judge Roosevelt Robinson as its distinguished alumnus at a special awards banquet on Nov. 3 at the law school.

In addition, it recognized Stephen Dow Beckham Jr., professor of history at Lewis & Clark College, and Dennis Whittlesey, an attorney with Jackson and Kelly in Washington, D.C., and a member of the law school's board of visitors, as distinguished honorary alumni.

The law school gives the Distinguished Graduate Award to individuals who have used their Lewis & Clark law degree to make a positive mark on the community and the legal profession and whose contributions have brought honor and distinction to the law school.

It presents the Honorary Alumnus Award to individuals who are not graduates of the law school but whose generosity, support, commitment and leadership play a profound role in enhancing the institution.

Robinson, a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge, is well known for his commitment to the drug court program, an alternative to adjudicating drug and alcohol offenses that focuses on participation in treatment programs. In addition, he has helped pave the way for future lawyers and judges of color. He co-founded the Minority Law Student's Association at the law school and was a founding member of the Association of Oregon Black Lawyers. Robinson began his academic career in a one-room schoolhouse in Valdosta, Ga. He overcame the adversity of growing up under segregation to become valedictorian of his high school class and a cum laude graduate of the University of Portland.

After graduating from the law school in 1976, Robinson entered private practice and then joined the office of the Multnomah County District Attorney. He spent three years serving on the state parole board until he was appointed to the bench as a Multnomah County district court judge in 1990. In 1995 he was appointed to his current position on the Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Beckham lends his considerable expertise to the law school's Indian Law Program. Educated at the University of Oregon, the University of California at Los Angeles, and Oxford University, Beckham has taught college students for more than 30 years.

An expert on the history of North American Indians, he has authored and co-authored definitive books and articles on the subject. Beckham is the lead instructor for the law School's Indian Law Summer Program and has developed support for both Indian Law programs and scholarships.

Whittlesey, one of the leading tribal gaming attorneys in the United States, practices with the firm of Jackson & Kelly in Washington, D.C.

He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Oklahoma and both his law degree and master's degree in tax law from Georgetown University. He currently serves as legal counsel for many tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest and is the author of the first gaming contract in Oregon.

A member of the law school's Board of Visitors, Whittlesey has provided guidance to the law school for many years and has helped shape the future of the Indian Law Program.

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