



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Dean and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Atlanta's John Marshall Law School
Atlanta, GA

"To prepare lawyers who are ethical, professional, and skilled, and who have a social conscience."

Vision of AJMLS

The Opportunity

This is a time of promise at [Atlanta's John Marshall Law School \(AJMLS\)](#). Founded in 1933 as an independent educational institution dedicated to providing high-quality legal educational opportunities to non-traditional or adult learners, AJMLS is a nonprofit law school accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA).

AJMLS is strong, essential, and poised for an exciting future. Student bar-pass rates are at an all-time high. The law school achieved an ultimate bar-pass rate of 92.5% for 2022—the highest two-year AJMLS rate since the ABA updated its standards. The trend for ultimate bar-pass rates in 2023 and 2024 is equally strong, reflecting the school's ongoing commitment to excellence. Additionally, the school has recently moved to Class A, conveniently located facilities in Downtown Atlanta. Applications, average LSAT scores among incoming students, academic achievement, and employment opportunities have all risen significantly in recent years.

AJMLS has a \$17 million annual budget. Its outstanding, committed leadership, faculty, and staff currently serve 379 talented full-time and part-time students. AJMLS attracts a highly diverse student body, currently with 53% minority representation and 67% women.

AJMLS is distinctive and valuable among law schools in the region. The institution delivers on its mission of serving non-traditional students and facilitating their life and career success. The school is emphatically student-centered, with a purposeful approach to supporting each student's achievement through interactive classes, one-on-one coaching, the Academic Lab, and an inclusive, caring, and encouraging community.

Dean/CEO [Jace C. Gatewood](#), who has been a visionary and beloved leader for five years, will step down at the end of the 2024-25 academic year.



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Following a short sabbatical, he will return to the faculty in 2026. Building on historic and recent successes, the new Dean will lead AJMLS into its next great chapter, growing the school's student achievement, financial capacity, and academic reputation. Concurrently, the Dean will foster positive culture, community and collaboration, excellence, mission commitment, and excitement within the institution.

The Dean will inspire and lead AJMLS into a thriving next era.

Mandate for the Dean/CEO

The Dean/CEO reports to an engaged Board of Directors and is responsible for advancing the mission, academic excellence, resources and reputation of AJMLS. The Dean works with outstanding faculty and staff, providing leadership and focus to achieve the singular mission of fostering student success in academics, bar passage, and expanding career opportunities.

The Dean will have demonstrated superior academic achievement and will lead AJMLS's ongoing pedagogical strengths and scholarly contributions to the legal profession. The Dean will fully embrace and lead the aspirational scholastic endeavors of AJMLS, its faculty and students.

The Dean's superior academic achievement can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including:

- Previous decanal leadership at an accredited American law school;
- Academic or professorial leadership in legal education or other university or collegiate areas of study that are deemed to be related or comparable to legal education;

- Extraordinary success as a legal professional in, but not limited to, private law practice, in-house corporate law practice, governmental or nonprofit leadership.

The Dean will be passionate about advancing student-centered legal education and fostering the faculty's role and mission in providing student-centered leadership. The Dean will be a prudent fiduciary of AJMLS resources and a zealous advocate for the enhancement of AJMLS's reputation. The Dean will inspire and rally students, faculty, alumni, partners and donors to create a sustainable future in which AJMLS adapts and thrives in the evolving landscape of legal education.

The Dean/CEO will:

- 1. Be a visionary leader with a passion for student success.** The Dean will be an inspiring leader and strategic builder of AJMLS's next era. In collaboration with the Board, faculty and staff, the Dean will develop plans and lead growth in student academic achievement, bar passage success, student placement, faculty development, resource generation, and school reputational enhancement. Externally, the Dean will be a dynamic ambassador and advocate for AJMLS, in Georgia, nationally and internationally, with a primary emphasis on fostering a more organic relationship in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Internally, the Dean will foster a culture of collaboration, excellence, support, inclusion and community.
- 2. Enhance AJMLS's profile, reputation and networks.** The Dean will be a compelling outward-facing leader who commands respect in the legal community and proactively cultivates relationships with law firms, the Bench and Bar, accrediting entities, and other legal education organizations. The Dean will proactively position the law school as a valuable, leading institution within the legal community.



The Dean will inspire and rally students, faculty, alumni, partners and donors to create a sustainable future in which AJMLS adapts and thrives in the evolving landscape of legal education.



Through collaborative, inclusive leadership of the school, faculty and staff, the Dean will foster continued high morale, sense of internal community, and focus on student success, excellence, and institutional improvement.

The Dean will engage with corporate, nonprofit, philanthropic, and government partners, alumni, potential supporters and donors. Together with raising academic and bar-pass achievements, the Dean will increase the institution's rankings, applications, and student employment opportunities.

- 3. Raise increased resources.** As a nonprofit institution since 2021, AJMLS has hired development staff, re-engaged the Alumni Association and begun to assertively pursue philanthropic support consistent with the school's mission. The Dean will grow financial resources by strategically and proactively advancing fundraising and outreach. The Dean will be a material participant in AJMLS fundraising and resource development activities, with an imperative of increasing funding for operations, scholarships, faculty salaries, and an endowment as well as other initiatives and opportunities.
- 4. Enhance the culture and the business of AJMLS.** The Dean will have financial and business acumen, relationship and culture-building skills. Through collaborative, inclusive leadership of the school, faculty and staff, the Dean will foster continued high morale, sense of internal community, and focus on student success, excellence, and institutional improvement.
- 5. Lead, innovate and position AJMLS for long-term success.** Within a dynamic, competitive and ever-evolving legal educational environment, the Dean will lead forward-looking vision and transformation. A next-generation bar exam is set to launch in Georgia in 2027. AJMLS will be challenged to adopt emerging technologies and teaching methodologies, keeping pace and innovating as law school education evolves and new competitive challenges arise.

The Dean will engage with corporate, nonprofit, philanthropic, and government partners, alumni, potential supporters and donors. Together with raising academic and bar-pass achievements, the Dean will increase the institution's rankings, applications, and student employment opportunities.

Personal Assets/Experience

The ideal Dean/CEO candidate will have strong, relevant academic experience, which may include decanal experience, academic or professorial assignments in preparation for decanal leadership, and/or recognized success as a legal practitioner in private practice, in-house corporate, nonprofit, or governmental leadership. The Dean will have passion for AJMLS's mission, and for providing extraordinary student academic and career opportunities.

The Dean will bring personal assets that include:

- Demonstrated superior academic achievement.
- Leadership skills, vision and strategic acumen; orientation to the big picture as well as the details.
- Capacity to nurture, develop and promote faculty.
- Fundraising passion and acumen.
- Strong interpersonal, listening, emotional intelligence, and relational skills—a people person.
- Exceptional communication and persuasion skills.
- Self-confidence combined with humility, likeability and accessibility.
- Management skills: valuing, trusting, supporting and delegating, mentoring and inspiring people.
- Ability to make progress and decisions amidst change and ambiguity.



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Prominent graduates of AJMLS include:

- **Neal Boortz**, author, former attorney, and former talk radio host.
- **Doug Collins**, former U.S. Representative for Georgia's 9th Congressional district from 2013 to 2021.
- **Jon G. Burns**, Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives.
- **Femi Gbajabiamila (JD)**, Nigerian lawyer and politician, Chief of Staff to the President of Nigeria since 2023.
- **Ludlow Porch**, radio personality.
- **Ronald Ramsey, Sr.**, associate judge of the Traffic Division of DeKalb State Court in DeKalb County.
- **Judge G. Alan Blackburn**, late Judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, who served as Chief Judge from Jan. 2001 to Dec. 2002.

- A balance of empathy and backbone: ability to listen, collaborate, make and implement tough decisions.
- Orientation to transparency, problem analysis and resolution.
- Team management, culture building and mentoring skills.

The Organization

Atlanta's John Marshall Law School was founded in 1933 as an independent, freestanding educational institution dedicated to providing a quality educational opportunity to non-traditional or adult learners, and to other underserved segments of Georgia citizenry.

The school has achieved many important milestones in its [90+ year history](#). The first Dean of AJMLS was S.B. Fenster who, along with the other founders of the institution, brought a dedication to broadening the opportunity for legal education to those traditionally denied such career options. This dedication is evidenced by the fact that Atlanta's John Marshall was among the first of the southern law schools to integrate its student body, and women have been represented in the student body since the school's first graduating class.

Since the school's founding, AJMLS Deans have pursued continuous improvement and excellence and remained committed to providing access to legal education to those who, for whatever reason, were unable to achieve their goal from other institutions of legal education. AJMLS alumni now number over 6,350, and many have served with distinction as members of the judiciary, as public and government officials, and as members of the bar.

AJMLS received American Bar Association accreditation in 2005. After decades as a for-profit institution, the law school became a nonprofit in January 2021.

In August 2021 AJMLS moved to a beautiful new downtown location designed by the prominent architectural, engineering and design firm Stevens & Wilkinson. Multi-floor new facilities in the renowned Marquis Towers have placed the law school at the center of commerce, the courts, government, entertainment, transit, retail, and more.

Today, Atlanta's John Marshall Law School remains committed to its original mission and long tradition of offering a full-time and part-time evening program that provides access to legal education to non-traditional students. The law school is poised to grow and develop into a major institution of legal education in the southeast.

AJMLS is differentiated by its strong focus on students, through great pedagogy, experiential learning, community engagement, and multiple educational opportunities tailored to individual students' success. AJMLS has a strong focus on diversity and inclusion, supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds in their pursuit of passing the bar and launching their legal careers.

The Relationships

The Dean/CEO reports to an engaged, accomplished [Board of Directors](#). AJMLS alumnus [Adam Malone](#), a highly regarded trial lawyer, is the current Board Chair.

The Dean manages direct reports including:

- Associate Dean of Academic Programs and Administration
- Associate Dean of Assessment and Academic Performance
- Associate Dean of Student Affairs
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Development Officer



AJMLS is located in downtown Atlanta in the renowned Marquis Towers.



Atlanta offers a thriving legal community and an abundance of opportunities for professional and personal growth.

The Dean regularly collaborates with faculty, staff and students as well as donors, alumni, members of the Bar, judicial and legislative bodies, corporations and law firms, and numerous partners.

The Location

AJMLS is located in downtown Atlanta in the renowned Marquis Towers. The law school occupies four floors at 245 Peachtree Center Ave. NE.

The Atlanta Metro area, with a population of 5 million and growing, is known for its rich history, diverse culture and global economy. Atlanta offers a thriving legal community and an abundance of opportunities for professional and personal growth. Situated in the heart of downtown Atlanta, the law school is readily accessible by public transit and surrounded by vibrant businesses, restaurants and shops.

The Compensation

A competitive compensation package of salary and full benefits will be offered to attract an outstanding candidate. The anticipated range for total compensation is \$350,000 to \$375,000.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email:

AJMLS@BoardWalkConsulting.com

or call Kathy Bremer or Patti Kish at
404-262-7392
