

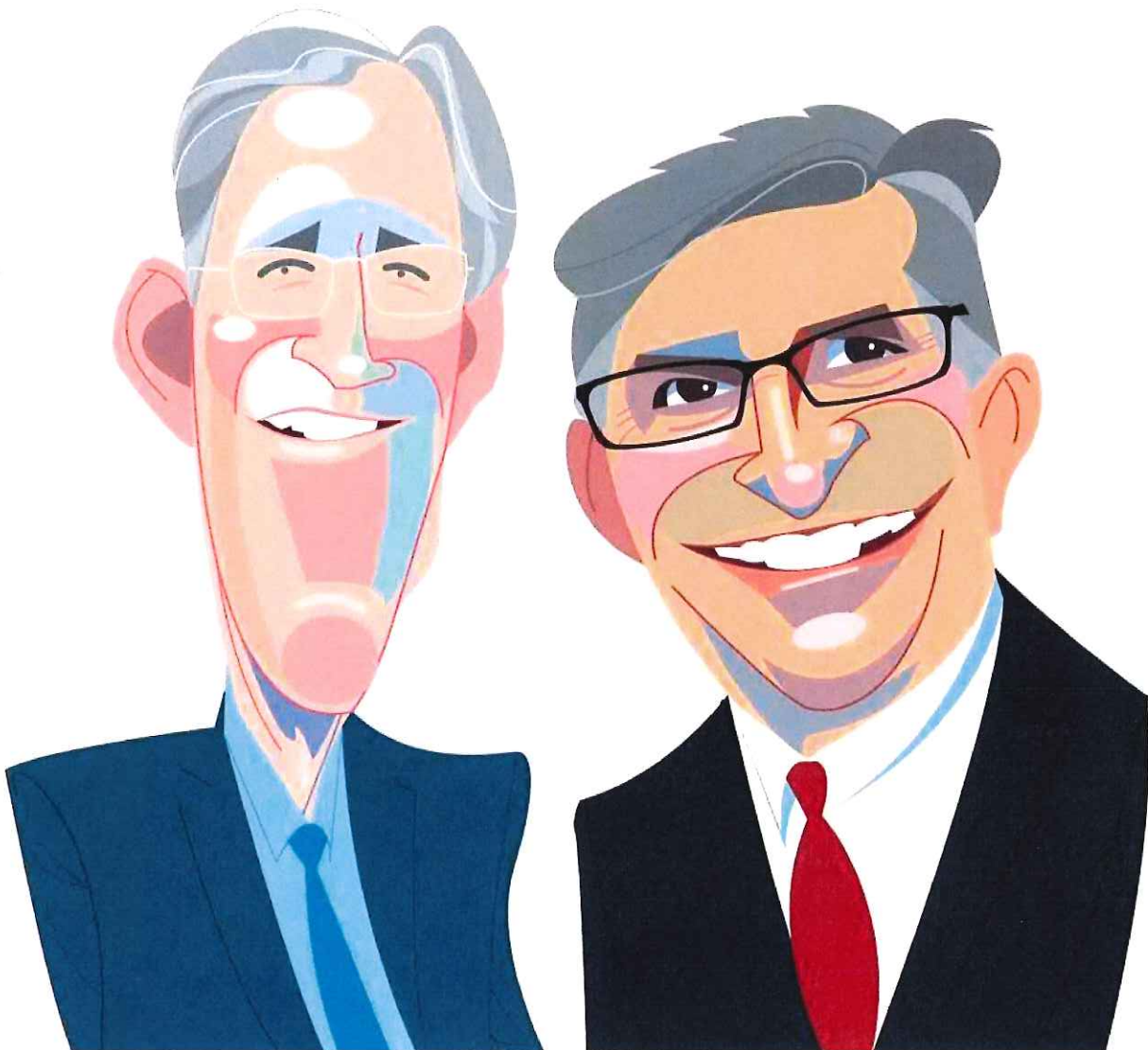


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BOLD TYPES

Bar organizations' new chiefs go way back — to the frat days



CHRIS MORRIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

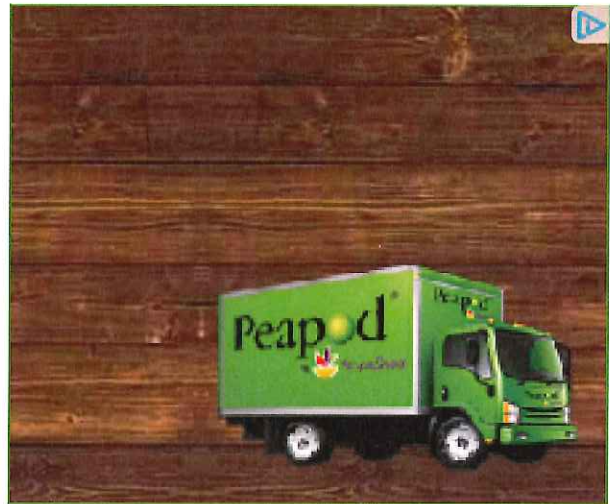
Mark Smith (left) and Vincent Pisegna were frat brothers at the St. Lawrence University chapter of Sigma Chi.

By **Globe Staff** | SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

It's not every day when the top officers at two of the state's most prominent legal organizations are friends from college — let alone a college in upstate New York.

Vincent Pisegna, the new chairman of the **Board of Bar Overseers**, and **Mark Smith**, the new president of the **Boston Bar Association**, graduated from **St. Lawrence University** in the 1970s one year apart, both of them frat brothers at **Sigma Chi**.

Pisegna, a partner at **Krokidas & Bluestein**, and Smith, a partner at **Laredo & Smith**, grew up in upstate New York. But they fell in love with Boston early in their legal careers: Pisegna went to **Northeastern University's** law school, while Smith got his JD from **Suffolk University**. After they both settled in the Boston area, they became close, often talking every few weeks.



“Once we reconnected, it was like old times,” Pisegna says.

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Now, with their two new roles, they expect to talk more frequently. They'll compare notes about issues facing their profession, as well as the usual topics like family and legal cases.

For the BBA, a big focus will be criminal justice reforms at the State House. Smith and his colleagues want to see lawmakers tackle issues such as minimum mandatory sentences and criminal background checks. Meanwhile, the BBO is focusing on improving the way clients are cared for after their attorney dies.

The two friends are also trying to bring their respective groups together to meet within the next few weeks.

“When you go to a small school like St. Lawrence, those roots run pretty deep,” Pisegna says.

Just for the record: The new president of the **Massachusetts Bar Association**, the other big legal association in town, did not go to St. Lawrence. **Christopher Sullivan** graduated from **Holy Cross** before



Comment **JON CHESTO**

Emmy finalist (and sister)

John Dowd, president of the **Dowd Agencies**, may be working far from the Hollywood limelight selling auto, home, and commercial insurance in Western Massachusetts. But on Sunday he'll be watching the **69th Emmy Awards** with a keen interest.

Dowd will be cheering on his big sister, actress **Ann Dowd**, who is nominated for an Emmy.

A Holyoke native, she has been nominated for best supporting actress in a drama for her portrayal as Aunt Lydia in "**The Handmaid's Tale**."

"Naturally, my siblings and I, along with our mom, are very proud of Ann and her accomplishments," John Dowd said in a statement.

Ann Dowd was one of seven children. She was on the path to medical school when she decided after graduating from **Holy Cross College** that she would pursue acting, instead, her brother said.

"I still think she would have been a great physician, had she gone in that direction," he said. "She enjoys helping people but life takes you down some unanticipated paths, and for Ann this was a bold step."



Natixis in its new digs

Comment

Natixis Global Asset Management's nearly 450 employees at its US headquarters spent the last week settling into the French financial firm's new local digs.

The company moved its corporate staff up Boylston Street to **Boston Properties'** new 17-story tower at **888 Boylston**, part of the **Prudential Center** complex. Natixis, considered the tower's anchor tenant, occupies six floors, or about 150,000 square feet. The tower is one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in the city, with a system that reuses rainwater and 14 wind turbines on the roof.

The new space seems easier to navigate than the corridors of Natixis's old location. While Natixis still has plenty of individual offices, the new headquarters reflects the open-floor-plan concept that has become all the rage in office design these days — including stairs that connect all floors.

“I love the fact that as you walk through, you bump into people all over the place,” says **David Giunta**, chief executive of Natixis' US operations. “We're all getting more exercise with the stairs, which never

JON CHESTO

BU's legal trailblazers

A new mural at the **Boston University School of Law** showcases notable alumni, including trailblazers in the federal court in Boston.

Depicted are three members of the **US Court of Appeals for the First**



Rogerie Thompson, the first African-American judge on the court; and **Sandra Lynch**, the first woman on the court.

“I think we kind of accidentally provided a message that’s particularly appropriate today,” said **Maureen O’Rourke**, dean of the law school.

The mural, by artist **Daniel Hertzberg**, is approximately 11½ feet tall and 25½ feet wide. It features 11 alumni, including **Emanuel Hewlett**, the first African-American graduate of BU’s law school, in 1877, and **Martha Coakley**, a 1979 graduate who was the first woman to serve as Massachusetts’ attorney general.

The external relations group, an eight-person committee of law school assistants and associate deans, sent recommendations to O’Rourke.

Also pictured: **William Cohen**, class of 1965, a Republican who was named secretary of defense by a Democratic president, Bill Clinton.

“It’s a happy celebration of what makes this school strong,” she said. “And what makes this country strong.”

NATASHA MASCARENHAS

Alray Scholars’ new chief

Janet Altman of Newton is the new executive director of the **Alray Scholars Program**, a Boston-based nonprofit that helps students who left college get back on track. Mentors offer financial aid and job assistance to help low-income graduates of Boston’s public schools complete college.




The program relies on volunteer mentors and board members. Altman's position is new, funded with a \$100,000 **Cummings Foundation** grant.

Altman joined Alray Scholars as a board member in 2011 and spent the last three years serving as program director.

“The need for Alray’s services is growing, so my top priority will be to develop a sound funding strategy and continue to build on our success,” Altman said in a news release.

NATASHA MASCARENHAS

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