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# THE BRIDGE

NEW ENGLAND LAW | BOSTON ALUMNI MAGAZINE

## Calling Graduates to a Higher Cause

Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh  
Addresses the Class of 2014



# CLASS ACTION

2003



**Courtney Brenner** is a financial adviser and estate planning specialist with MassMutual Eastern Pennsylvania in her hometown of Kingston, Pennsylvania.

2004

**Jen E. Hirst** earned the certified regulatory compliance manager designation from the Institute of Certified Bankers and American Bankers Association. She was promoted to compliance officer in the compliance and regulatory management department of Santander Bank in Riverside, Rhode Island.

## Brothers Win Rare Acquittal in South Carolina Murder Case

The jury was out for two hours after a four-day murder trial testing the anti-bullying law in Richland County, South Carolina, where the prosecution usually prevails. Then the verdict was read: not guilty. "Rare Richland acquittal frees defendant accused of murder in killing of bully" read the headline in the local newspaper.

"The jury could have found him guilty of murder with malice and forethought or voluntary manslaughter or self-defense," said **Luke A. Shealey '06**, the defense attorney who tried the case with his twin brother, **Brian R. Shealey '08**. "They found for self-defense."

The defendant, Anthony McWilson, had gone to high school with the victim, Michael Rahkeem Smith, and there was a documented history of Smith bullying McWilson, according to the brothers. One night, McWilson, Smith, and others were riding in a car when Smith began taunting, threatening, and punching McWilson, who called police for help. Eventually, McWilson pulled a knife and stabbed Smith.

"Anthony was stuck in a moving vehicle with a guy with a gun," said Brian. "We had to bring this as a viable defense. He called 911 three times."

In South Carolina, the prosecution controls the criminal docket, and "racism and poverty have a lot to do with how the cases are scheduled," said Luke. Though the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled the criminal docket schedule procedure unconstitutional in 2012, the brothers say the process has been slow to change.



Luke A. Shealey '06 and Brian R. Shealey '08

"As attorneys for the defense, we dig in deeper to try to fight for justice," said Luke. "It's so one-sided here."

They started their careers in their home state of South Carolina as law firm clerks working on business litigation and later moved to the Public Defender's Office, where Brian first was assigned to the McWilson case. Brian left the Public Defender's Office in 2013 and was permitted to represent McWilson as a private attorney. "I felt really passionate about this case," said Brian.

Brian and Luke formed the Shealey Law Firm, LLC, in 2013.

"Ninety-eight percent of our practice is criminal law," said Luke. "Both of us went to New England Law with no prior idea about the kind of law we wanted to practice. We were inspired by our professors who taught Criminal Law and Constitutional Law."