Joel A. Nichols

EXPERIENCE

The University of Alabama School of Law
Vice Dean and Professor of Law, 2024 to present

University of St. Thomas (MN) School of Law
Interim Dean and Mengler Chair in Law, 2022-2024
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, 2013-2022
Professor of Law, 2012-2024
Associate Professor, 2007-2012 *(tenure granted, 9/2009)*

Emory University Center for the Study of Law and Religion
Senior Fellow, 2009 to present

Pepperdine University School of Law
Associate Professor and Rick J. Caruso Research Fellow in Law, 2006-2007
Assistant Professor of Law, 2003-2006

Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering
Associate, 2001-2003

Hon. Gerald Bard Tjoflat, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit
Law Clerk, 2000-2001

EDUCATION

Harvard University, Graduate School of Education
Institute for Management and Leadership in Education (2026)

Emory University School of Law
Juris Doctor, *with highest honors*, May 2000
Cumulative GPA: 4.100/4.300 (top 5% = 3.709)
Honors: Robert W. Woodruff Fellow in Law
Order of the Coif
Emory Law Journal – Editorial Board, Articles Editor
Herman Dooyeweerd Prize in Law and Religion

Candler School of Theology, Emory University
Master of Divinity, May 2000
Cumulative GPA: 4.0/4.0
Honors: Dean's Award in Theology and Ministry
M.Div. Honors Program
Award for Academic Excellence

Abilene Christian University
Bachelor of Arts, *summa cum laude*, May 1995
Cumulative GPA: 4.0/4.0
Honors: Purple and White Award (inaugural recipient; service/integrity)
Honor Man, Class of 1995 (sole recipient; academic/character)
Jack Pope Fellow in Public Service

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE

Admitted to practice: Alabama State Bar (admitted 2025), Minnesota State Bar (admitted 2013), State Bar of Texas (inactive; admitted 2000)

American Bar Association (ABA), Member

American Bar Foundation Fellow

Association of American Law Schools (AALS)

- AALS Membership Review Committee (Member, 2027-2029)
- Section Leadership, including:
  - Section on Associate Deans (Chair, 2018-19, and others)
  - Section on Family and Juvenile Law (Chair, 2016-2017, and others)
  - Section on Law and Religion (Executive Committee and others)

Co-Chair and Planning Committee member, ABA Associate Dean's Conference (2025)

Community Service

- Prior board service includes Minnesota Continuing Legal Education (MinnCLE); Minneapolis Downtown Council; Restoration Anglican Church; Viva Network (North America); Viva International (United Kingdom)
- United Way of West Alabama, Volunteer Allocation Team

Contributor and Member, Committees on Early Bar Admission and NextGen Bar, Minnesota

Program Review Evaluator (2026). Invited by highly-ranked private law school to serve as External Reviewer with onsite visit and follow-up assessment

Referee or Reviewer for numerous presses and institutions. Select examples include: Aspen Publications; Cambridge University Press, *Journal of Law and Religion*, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research - Council for the Humanities, Rowman & Littlefield; University of Virginia Press; Universities in the United States and United Kingdom

Site Team Member for Accreditation or Membership (2019, 2021, 2024, 2026)
Served by invitation as ABA/AALS representative on teams to law schools

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Research Handbook on Family Law and Religion (edited collection) (Edward Elgar Publishing, forthcoming April 2027) (with Karin Carmit Yefet), approx. 500 pp.

Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment (6th ed.) (Oxford University Press, forthcoming July 2027) (with John Witte Jr. and Richard W. Garnett), approx. 450 pp.

—*Prior editions as coauthor:* 5th (2022, Oxford); 4th (2016, Oxford); 3rd (2011, Westview). Also translated into multiple other languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Georgian.

Marriage and Divorce in a Multicultural Context: Multi-Tiered Marriage and the Boundaries of Civil Law and Religion (edited collection) (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 392 pp. (also available in paperback, 2013).

Articles and book chapters

"Introduction to the Research Handbook on Family Law and Religion" in *Research Handbook on Family Law and Religion* (forthcoming April 2027) (with Karin Carmit Yefet).

"Religious Liberty in the Thirteenth Colony," in *Faith in Law, Law in Faith: Reflecting on the Work of John Witte, Jr.* (Eds. Rafael Domingo, Gary S. Hauk, and Timothy P. Jackson) (Brill Publishers, 2024), 372-394.

"Vocation as Self, Others, and a Third Thing," 38 *Touro Law Review* 1073-1082 (2023).

"Religious Liberty in the Thirteenth Colony: Dissent and Disestablishment in Colonial and Early National Georgia," in *Disestablishment and Religious Dissent: Church-State Relations in the New American States, 1776-1833* (Eds. Carl H. Esbeck and Jonathan J. Den Hartog) (University of Missouri Press, 2019), pp. 225-247.

"'Come Now Let Us Reason Together': Restoring Religious Freedom in America and Abroad," 92:1 *Notre Dame Law Review* 427-450 (2016) (with John Witte Jr.).

"National Report [for the] United States of America: Religious Law and Religious Courts as a Challenge for the State," in *Religious Law and Religious Courts as a Challenge to the State: Legal Pluralism from a Comparative Perspective*, Ed. Uwe Kischel (Verlag Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2016) (with John Witte Jr.), pp. 83-111.

(formal citation: Nichols, Joel A.; Witte, John, Jr.: Religiöses Recht und religiöse Gerichte als Herausforderung des Staates – Landesbericht USA, in: Kischel, Uwe (ed.): *Religiöses Recht und religiöse Gerichte als Herausforderung des Staates – Rechtspluralismus in vergleichender Perspektive*, Verlag Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2016)

"Religion, Family Law, and Competing Norms," in *Negotiating State and Non-State Law: The Challenges of Global and Local Legal Pluralism* (Ed. Michael Helfand) (Cambridge Univ. Press 2015), 197-214.

"Who Governs the Family? Marriage as a New Test Case of Overlapping Jurisdictions," 4 *Faulkner Law Review* 321-349 (Spring 2013) (with John Witte Jr.).

"Civil Law and Civil Disobedience: The Early Church and the Law," in *Law and the Bible: Justice, Mercy and Legal Institutions* (Eds. Robert F. Cochran Jr. & David van Drunen) (InterVarsity Press, October 2013) (with James W. McCarty III), 183-207.

"Marriage: Civil, Religious, Contractual, and More," 50 *Family Court Review* 222-227 (April 2012).

"Religion, Marriage, and Pluralism," 25 *Emory International Law Review* 967-985 (December 2011).

"When the State is Evil: Biblical Civil (Dis)Obedience in South Africa," 85 *St. John's Law Review* 593-625 (December 2011) (with James W. McCarty III).

"Misunderstanding Marriage and Missing Religion," 2011 *Michigan State University Law Review* 195-208 (November 2011).

"Introduction," in *Marriage and Divorce in a Multicultural Context: Multi-Tiered Marriage and the Boundaries of Civil Law and Religion* (Ed. Joel A. Nichols) (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1-10.

"Multi-Tiered Marriage: Reconsidering the Boundaries of Civil Law and Religion," in *Marriage and Divorce in a Multicultural Context: Multi-Tiered Marriage and the Boundaries of Civil Law and Religion* (Ed. Joel A. Nichols) (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 11-59.

"The Frontiers of Marital Pluralism: An Afterword," in *Marriage and Divorce in a Multicultural Context: Multi-Tiered Marriage and the Boundaries of Civil Law and Religion* (Ed. Joel A. Nichols) (Cambridge University Press, 2012) (with John Witte Jr.), 357-378.

"Faith-Based Family Laws in Western Democracies?" 2010 *Fides et Libertas* 119-132 (with John Witte Jr.) (also available as translated into French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Urdu, and Romanian).

"Evangelicals and Human Rights: The Continuing Ambivalence of Evangelical Christians' Support for Human Rights," 24 *Journal of Law and Religion* 629-662 (2009).

"More than a Mere Contract: Marriage as Contract and Covenant in Law and Theology," 5 *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 595-615 (2008) (with John Witte Jr.).

"Multi-Tiered Marriage: Ideas and Influences from New York and Louisiana to the International Community," 40 *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 135-196 (Jan. 2007).

"Dual Lenses: Using Theology and International Human Rights Law to Assess China's 2005 Regulations on Religion," 34 *Pepperdine Law Review* 105-121 (Dec. 2006).

"Religious Liberty in the Thirteenth Colony: Church-State Relations in Colonial and Early National Georgia," 80 *N.Y.U. Law Review* 1693-1772 (Dec. 2005).

"Introduction," in *Covenant Marriage in Comparative Perspective* (Eds. John Witte Jr. & Eliza Ellison) (Eerdman's, 2005) (with John Witte Jr.), 25 pp.

"The Right to Anonymity Under the First Amendment," 49 *Federal Lawyer* 44-48 (March/April 2002) (with David W. Ogden).

"A Man True to His Principles: John Joachim Zubly and Calvinism," 43 *Journal of Church & State* 297-317 (Spring 2001).

"Louisiana's Covenant Marriage Law: A First Step Toward a More Robust Pluralism in Marriage and Divorce Law?" 47:3 *Emory Law Journal* 929-1001 (Summer 1998).

"Mission, Evangelism, and Proselytism in Christianity: Mainline Conceptions as Reflected in Church Documents," 12:1 *Emory International Law Review* 563-650 (1998). **Reprinted, in substantial part, in *Mission and Proselytism: A Reader*, ed. John Baxter-Brown, for the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission (Wipf & Stock, 2018)

Other works

"The 2000 Election and Supreme Court Changes on Sentencing Guidelines," Judge Gerald B. Tjoflat Oral History Project (2022), available at Bolch Judicial Institute of Duke Law School. https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/tjoflat/

"Religious Law and Religious Courts as a Challenge for the State," *St. Thomas Lawyer Magazine* (Winter 2016), 4 pp.

"Early Modern Period: Common Law Countries." Entry in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law*, ed. Brent Strawn et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) (with Charles J. Reid), 17 ms. pp.

"Book Review of 'The Place of Religion in Family Law: A Comparative Search' by Jane Mair and Esin Örücü (eds.)," 29 *Journal of Law and Religion* 344-347 (Spring 2014)

"Foreword: Trade, Terrorism, and Islam," 9 *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 1-4 (2012).

"Book Review of 'Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage, and American Law' by Fay Botham," 52:4 *American Journal of Legal History* 502-504 (October 2012).

"Book Review of 'Christianity and Human Rights: An Introduction,' by John Witte, Jr. and Frank Alexander (eds.)" 1:1 *Journal of Christian Legal Thought* 42 (Spring 2011).

"Kenya Connections: Problem-Solving, Leadership, and Human Rights," *St. Thomas Lawyer Magazine* (Winter 2009), 6 pp.

"Foreword: Marriage, Religion, and the Role of the Civil State," 5 *University of St. Thomas Law Journal* 544-547 (2008).

"Torcaso v. Watkins, 367 U.S. 488 (1961)." Entry in *The Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties*, 3 vols., ed. Paul Finkelman (New York: Routledge, 2006).

"*McDaniel v. Paty*, 435 U.S. 887 (1978)." Entry in *The Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties*, 3 vols., ed. Paul Finkelman (New York: Routledge, 2006).

"How Do You Read the Law?" Book Review, *The Christian Chronicle* (April 2002) (reviewing *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought*, Michael W. McConnell, Robert F. Cochran, Jr., & Angela C. Carmella, eds., New Haven: Yale UP 2001).

The Origins of Religious Liberty in Georgia in Colonial and Early National America, Candler School of Theology, M.Div. Honors Thesis (Spring 2000), 153 ms. pp.

SELECTED LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

"Leadership: Strategic Thinking and Career Visioning," Plenary Session for Emerging Leaders, University of Alabama (April 2026)

"Disruption in Legal Education," Plenary Session at ABA Associate Deans Conference, Salt Lake City (July 2025)

"Practical Strategies for Working with General Counsel," ABA Associate Deans Conference, Salt Lake City (July 2025)

"Read Between the Lines: Law School Honor Code Violations," National Conference of Bar Examiners conference, Seattle (May 2025)

"Read Between the Lines: Law School Honor Code Violations," Plenary for National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) Bar Admissions Administrators Conference, Portland, Maine (November 2024)

"The Value of Legal Education," keynote for Midwest Conference of Prelaw Advisors, Minneapolis (Sept. 2022)

"Remembering the 2000 Election: A Conversation with Judge Gerald Bard Tjoflat" (April 2022)

"The Relationship with the Dean," Texas A&M Associate Dean Conference (May 2020) (organizer/host of panel with approximately 100 attendees)

"Leaning into Uncertainty: Ensuring Quality Legal Education During Coronavirus – Designing Curriculum and Programs in a World of Social Distancing: Sections, Schedules and Changing Circumstances," Drexel University Conference (May 2020) (organizer/host of approximately 200 attendees of deans and associate deans).

"Identity, Society, and Human Dignity," Peter Pazmany University (Budapest, Hungary) (July 2019)

Moderator and Organizer, "Essential Skills: Leadership, Project Management, Communication and Integrity," AALS Section on Associate Deans for Academic Affairs and Research, AALS Annual Convention, New Orleans (January 2019)

"Faith in Action: Religious Freedom and the Common Good," Our Lady of Lourdes Lecture, Minneapolis (January 2019)

"Religious Dissent and Disestablishment in Georgia," Religion and Politics in Early America Conference, St. Louis (March 2018)

"A 'Muslim Ban'? Presidential Power, the Constitution, and the Courts," Constitution Day lecture, St. Catherine's University, Minneapolis (September 2017)

"Legal Issues for Associate Deans" (plenary speaker), ABA Associate Deans Conference, Chicago (Summer 2017)

"Christianity, Contracts, and Consent," Nootbaar Institute 'Religious Critiques of Law Conference,' Malibu, CA (March 2017) (and participant in private book workshop)

Moderator and Organizer, "Private vs. Public in Family Law," AALS Section on Family and Juvenile Law Annual Meeting, AALS Annual Convention, New York (January 2016)

"Religious Law and Religious Courts in the United States: National Report," Invited Presentation at the Bi-Annual Conference of German Society of Comparative Law, Bayreuth, Germany (September 2015)

SELECTED LAW SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Law School: Served on and led committees at all levels of operations, including admissions, assessment, curriculum, employment, hiring, online learning, promotion & tenure,

student discipline, and more

University: Served on University-wide committees on assessment, budget, faculty nominations and elections, fringe benefits, shared governance, senior university leadership, teaching evaluations, and more

Courses taught include:

Contracts; Family Law; First Amendment: Religious Liberty; International and Comparative Family Law; International Human Rights; Introduction to Law; Introduction to Legal Reasoning (for non-JDs); Law and Morality; Leadership and Influence; LLM Mentor Externship (for non-JDs); Remedies; Professional Identity Formation courses (including a "Foundations" sequence, Moral Reasoning for Lawyers:F1; Serving Clients Well: F2; Business Basics; F3); Torts; White Collar Crime and Compliance

Current service at The University of Alabama includes:

University Leadership Development Working Group
University Steering Committee for (new) School of Leadership and Public Policy
University Task Force for (new) School of Data Sciences
Law School Appointments Committee for Legal Writing
Law School Assessment Committee
Law School Committee on Admissions Advisory and Scholarship (chair)
Law School Committee on Student Financial Need (chair)
Courses in 2026-27: Intro to Law (1L); Leadership and Influence (upper level)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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