Erwin Chemerinsky's memory is so well trained, he can lecture to a class about U.S. constitutional law without any notes.

Chemerinsky, founding dean of University of California, Irvine School of Law, started as a law professor when he was just 27, his exceptional memorization skills quickly becoming useful as his preferred style for teaching, speaking and arguing in court.

"I wanted to make it look like I knew what I was talking about, even when I didn't," said Chemerinsky, now in his 33rd year of teaching. "And one way to do that was to teach without notes."

This past May, Chemerinsky celebrated the commencement of UCI School of Law's first graduating class, a total of 58 students. Of the recent graduates, 80 percent are leaving the law school with full-time employment.

In college, Chemerinsky dreamed of becoming a high school teacher, but his plans changed quickly, and before he was 30 he was teaching at DePaul College of Law in Chicago. From there he went to USC Gould School of Law, then to Duke University School of Law. In 2007, he was approved by the Regents of the University of California as the founding dean for UCI's first public law program. The law school welcomed its inaugural class in the fall of 2009.

"I didn't expect it to happen so fast," he said. "I love teaching. I do hope I'm a much better teacher now than when I started."

Though UCI Law is just 3 years old, a Minnesota-based study by the University of St. Thomas School of Law ranked it No. 7 in scholarly impact. The study, which was calculated by the work of the law faculty's tenured members, as well as the mean and median of total law journal citations over the past five years, ranked UCI just behind Columbia University and New York University's law programs. Yale Law School made No. 1 on the list.

Chemerinsky, who oversees the law school's admissions policy and criteria, said he wants the school to be ranked in the Top 20 law schools in the nation - the sooner the better.

"Our entering class is comparable to that of a top 20 law school," he said. "The school is to be a top-20 school by every measure from the beginning."

Every student from the school's first graduating class was awarded a full scholarship, donated primarily by lawyers in Orange County. Students in what will be the second graduating class - expected to be 83 students - received 50 percent of their tuition in scholarships, and the third graduating class will have one-third of their tuition covered. After that, scholarships will be awarded based on merit.

"We are off to a great start," Chemerinsky said. "There are already wonderful law schools in Orange County, but having a public university law school and hopefully a top-20 law school will really make a difference."

- ALEXANDRA SCHWAPPACH
Katherine Porter

In March, state Attorney General Kamala D. Harris announced the appointment of Porter, a professor at UC Irvine School of Law, as the state's independent monitor responsible for overseeing the nation's five largest banks in a nationwide $25 billion mortgage settlement. The banks are seeking to provide as much as $18 billion in homeowner and borrower benefits in California.

The commitment is part of the federal-state mortgage settlement penalizing the banks' servicing and foreclosure misconduct.

"We've been laying the groundwork to make sure the banks are putting in place procedures and systems they are going to need," Porter said. "It's also important to get the word out to legal aid lawyers, advocate counselors and homeowners to make the settlement come to life."

She's been handling the duty along with her day job at the university, which Porter said taps into the same skills she needs as a monitor.

"The principle is the same," she said. "How to take a complex beast, a tangle of law, and translate it in a way that gives an audience the information they need."

The other part of the settlement she is working on is helping to change bank practices related to foreclosure procedures.

"There are a lot of moving pieces, and it's very complex," Porter said. "We're still in the growing-pain stages, but we're seeing progress."

Meanwhile, Porter has launched a consumer protection clinic at the school that incorporates what she is doing as a monitor.

"The clinic gives students the opportunity to build expertise around this," said Porter, who takes her students to events and lets them assist her.

In December, Porter's book, "Broke: How Debt Bankrupts the Middle Class," was released. It covers a variety of topics related to people's financial well-being, she said.

"I hope to see much progress for families to get out of these tough situations," Porter said. "I see a lot of families in pain and struggling about what to do."

Porter said she'll try to find the tools to help.

"It's a lot of work," she said, "but I'm not one to shy away from that."

- PAT BRODERICK
2012 Top 100 Lawyers
September 12, 2012

Anton "Tony" Natsis
Allen Matkins
Century City
Real estate
Specialties: development, leasing, purchase/sales, portfolio investment sales transactions

Janet I. Levine
Crowell & Moring LLP
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: white-collar criminal defense

Schuyler Moore
Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP
Los Angeles
Corporate transactions
Specialty: entertainment

Michael S. Ringler
Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati PC
San Francisco
Corporate
Specialty: mergers and acquisitions

Charles K. Ruck
Latham & Watkins LLP
Costa Mesa
Corporate
Specialty: mergers and acquisitions

Tara L. Borelli
Lambda Legal
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: civil rights
Bruce K. Dallas
Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP
Menlo Park
Corporate
Specialty: capital markets

Joseph L. Dunn
State Bar of California
San Francisco and Los Angeles
Regulatory
Specialty: lawyer regulation

Peter K. Huston
U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division
San Francisco
Government
Specialty: antitrust

Stephen Scharf
O'Melveny & Myers LLP
Los Angeles
Corporate
Specialty: entertainment financing

Editor's Note
This is the 15th year the Daily Journal has published a list of California's 100 leading lawyers

Joseph M. Alioto, Jr.
Alioto Law Firm
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialty: Antitrust

Ahilan T. Arulanantham
American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: immigrant rights

Bruce S. Bennett
Jones Day
Los Angeles
Corporate transactions
Specialty: restructuring, reorganization and bankruptcy

S. Ashlie Beringer
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
Palo Alto
Litigation
Specialty: technology, data privacy

Andre Birotte, Jr.
U.S. Attorney
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: law enforcement

Lawrence A. Bohm
Bohm Law Group
Sacramento
Litigation
Specialty: employment law, personal injury
Theodore J. Boutrous Jr.
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialties: civil rights, corporate defense

John Branca
Ziffren Brittenham LLP
Los Angeles
Corporate transactions
Specialty: music

Brad D. Brian
Munger Tolles & Olson LLP
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: civil and criminal, legal malpractice, internal investigations

Juanita R. Brooks
Fish & Richardson
San Diego
Litigation
Specialty: patent, Hatch-Waxman, False Claims Act/Qui Tam

Elizabeth J. Cabraser
Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialties: class-actions, mass torts

Edward J. Casey
Alston & Bird LLP
Los Angeles
Land use
Specialty: California Environmental Quality Act review/entitlements/litigation

Erwin Chemerinsky
Erwin Chemerinsky's memory is so well trained, he can lecture to a class about U.S. constitutional law without any notes. Chemerinsky, founding dean of University of California, Irvine School of Law, started as a law professor when he was

Morgan Chu
Irell & Manella LLP
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: intellectual property

Nanci L. Clarence
Clarence Dyer & Cohen LLP
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialty: white-collar criminal defense

Judy C. Clarke
Clark & Rice APC
San Diego
Litigation
Specialty: capital trials, indigent defense

Richard E. Climan
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
Silicon Valley
Corporate
Specialty: mergers and acquisitions

**Timothy T. Coates**
Greines Martin Stein & Richland LLP
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: civil rights and constitutional law

**Joseph W. Cotchett**
Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP
Burlingame, Sacramento, Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialties: antitrust, securities fraud

**Craig E. Dauchy**
Cooley LLP
Palo Alto
Corporate
Specialties: venture capital, fund formation

**Gordon K. Davidson**
Fenwick & West LLP
Mountain View
Corporate transactions
Specialty: capital markets

**Bruce Deming**
Covington & Burling LLP
San Francisco
Corporate transactions
Specialty: mergers/acquisitions

**Alan F. Denenberg**
Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP
Menlo Park
Corporate
Specialty: capital markets/mergers & acquisitions

**Karol K. Denniston**
Schiff Hardin LLP
San Francisco
Bankruptcy
Specialty: municipal restructurings

**Kelly M. Dermody**
Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialties: class-actions, employment, consumer

**Roger A. Dreyer**
Dreyer Babich Buccola Wood LLP
Sacramento
Personal injury
Specialty: catastrophic injuries, wrongful death, public entity liability, general negligence and products liability.

**Jeffrey L. Fisher**
Stanford Law School Supreme Court Litigation Clinic/ Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
Palo Alto
Litigation
Specialty: appellate litigation
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Ruth Fisher</td>
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<td>Peter M. Gilhuly</td>
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<td>Thomas V. Girardi</td>
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<td>Arthur A. Hartinger</td>
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<td>Karen P. Hewitt</td>
<td>Jones Day</td>
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<td>Mark Holscher</td>
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<td>Litigation, white-collar defense, entertainment, environment, business</td>
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<td>Andrei Iancu</td>
<td>Irell &amp; Manella LLP</td>
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<td>John W. Keker</td>
<td>Keker &amp; Van Nest LLP</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Litigation, white-collar, complex commercial and intellectual property, antitrust, securities</td>
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<td>Jennifer L. Keller</td>
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<td>Harvey L. Leiderman</td>
<td>Reed Smith LLP</td>
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<td>Marc A. Levinson</td>
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Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP
Sacramento
Litigation
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Douglas E. Lumish
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Redwood Shores
Litigation
Specialty: intellectual property

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<td>Brian J. Panish</td>
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<td>Specialty: Intellectual property</td>
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<td>Alison S. Ressler</td>
<td>Sullivan &amp; Cromwell LLP</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<td>Corporate transactions</td>
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Michael G. Rhodes
Cooley LLP
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialties: intellectual property and class actions

Gregory Roussel
Fenwick & West LLP
Mountain View
Corporate
Specialty: mergers and acquisitions

Thomas A. Saenz
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Los Angeles
Litigation
Specialty: immigrant rights

Kelli L. Sager
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Los Angeles
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Specialty: entertainment

Jeffrey D. Saper
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Specialty: capital markets

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Zelle Hofmann Voelbel & Mason LLP
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Litigation
Specialty: Antitrust

Miles D. Scully
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Specialty: consumer protection

Larry W. Sonsini
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San Francisco
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Trepel, Greenfield, Sullivan & Draa LLP
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Charles V. Thornton
Paul Hastings LLP
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Specialty: joint ventures, investment, development projects

Robert A. Van Nest
Keker & Van Nest LLP
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Specialties: complex commercial, intellectual property litigation

Hernan D. Vera
Public Counsel Law Center
Los Angeles
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Specialties: housing protection, immigrant rights

Charles K. Verhoeven
Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP
San Francisco
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Benjamin B Wagner
U.S. attorney's office, Eastern District of California
Sacramento
Litigation
Specialty: criminal and civil

Laura A. Wasser
Wasser, Cooperman & Carter PC
Los Angeles
Family law
Specialty: community property, child custody/support, same-sex relationships

Julia R. Wilson
OneJustice and Legal Aid Association of California
San Francisco
Litigation
Specialty: pro bono legal services

Frank H. Wu
UC Hastings College of the Law
San Francisco
Specialty: legal education

Thomas Wuchenich
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP
Los Angeles
Corporate
Specialty: asset management, fund formation, private equity, securities