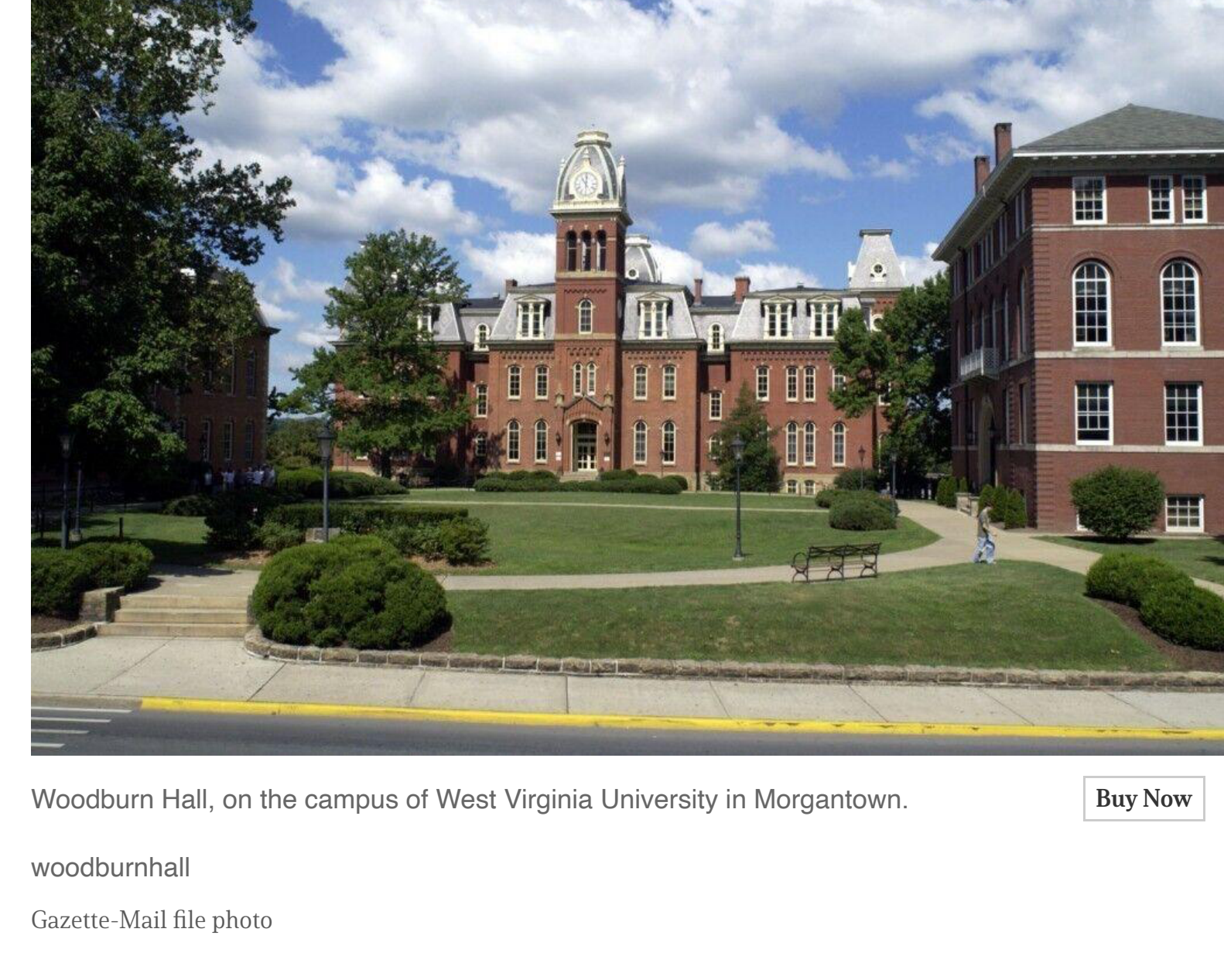




Cody Corliss: WVU law school headed in positive direction (Opinion)

By Cody Corliss 6 hrs ago 2 min to read



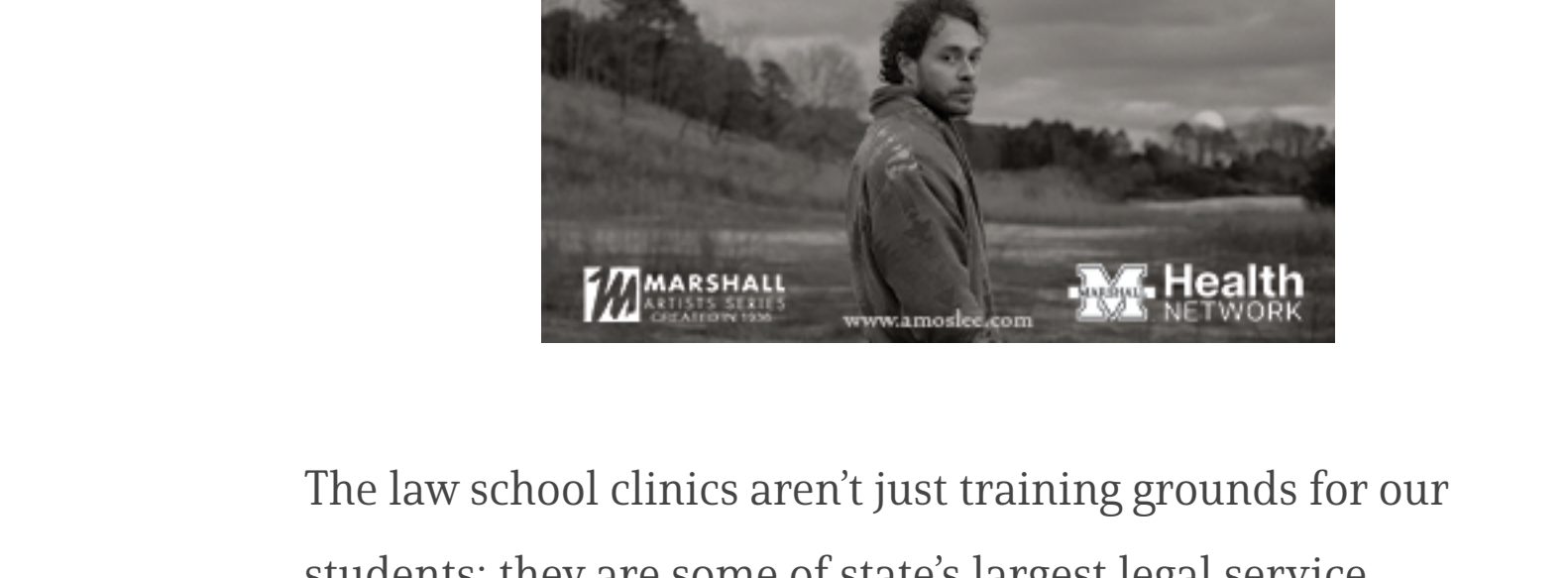
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Just over two years ago, I faced a significant professional decision. I had been offered an opportunity to join the faculty of the West Virginia University College of Law.

At the time, I was an international prosecutor for the United Nations in The Hague, where I investigated and prosecuted some of the world's most heinous war crimes. It was a profound responsibility. I was immensely proud of my role and considered myself lucky to work with colleagues committed to international justice and accountability.

Still, I made the decision to come to WVU Law.

I grew up in Wetzel County. Although I didn't attend WVU for my law degree, I was familiar with the school's work. Living in West Virginia, I think it's hard not to be. The value of WVU Law to this state courses through every courthouse and community. The majority of our state's lawyers and judges were educated here.



The law school clinics aren't just training grounds for our students; they are some of state's largest legal service providers. WVU Law's faculty comprises outstanding champions for this state and its citizens, exemplified by Patrick McGinley and Suzanne Weise, whose relentless advocacy exposed the enormity of the opioid crisis.

Coming back to West Virginia meant collaborating with some of our state's best leaders and working to transform our future.

West Virginia University and WVU Law have been in the news a lot lately, and the news hasn't always been positive. Certainly, most faculty haven't supported the recent changes, and some have decided to leave the school. These are significant losses for our university, our law school and our state.

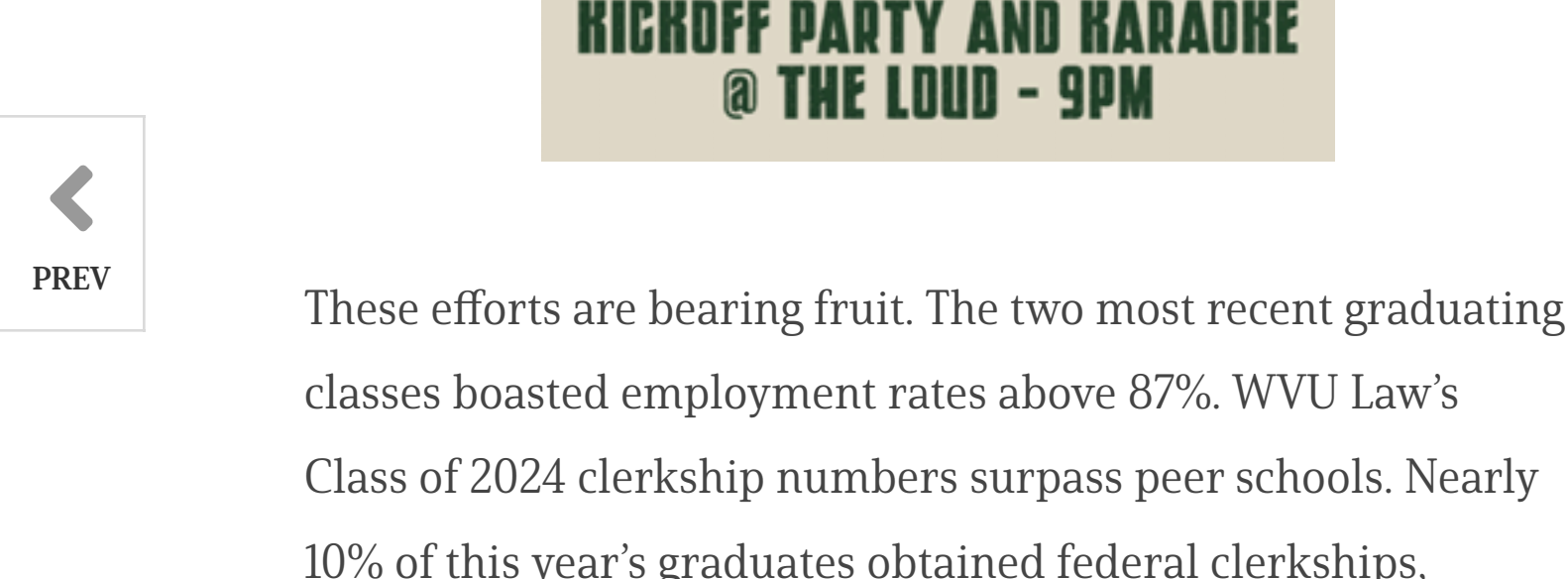
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But the losses haven't occurred in a vacuum, even as the law school adapts to the greater university's financial pressures. WVU Law Dean Amelia Rinehart has charged us to think about how we can continue to serve our state and students.

This year, we welcomed three new faculty members whose work closely aligns with our mission. One professor is an expert on rural development. Another directs our Innocence Project clinic, working with law students to exonerate wrongly convicted West Virginians. The third, in addition to teaching legal writing, has led the effort to place our graduates in prestigious clerkships.

The school continues to innovate, showcased by my colleague Alison Peck's recent creation of an entrepreneurship class, to emphasize the practice-ready skills essential to the state's business community. In addition, the law school intends to hire more faculty for the fall.

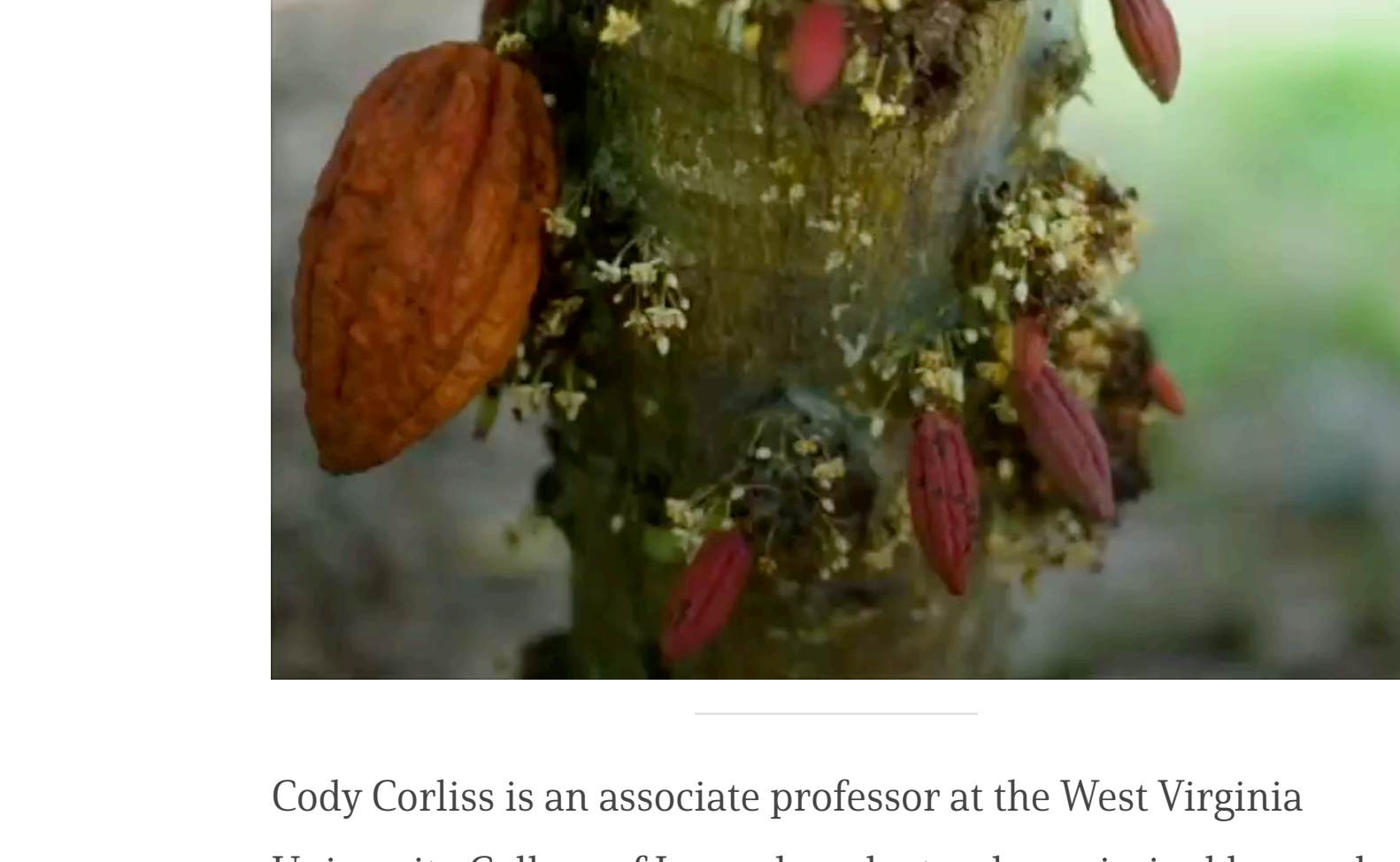


These efforts are bearing fruit. The two most recent graduating classes boasted employment rates above 87%. WVU Law's Class of 2024 clerkship numbers surpass peer schools. Nearly 10% of this year's graduates obtained federal clerkships, including three in the U.S. Court of Appeals. For perspective, only 3% of law students nationwide clerk for a federal judge, putting WVU Law among the elites in clerkship placements.

The changes at the law school have been hard, but WVU Law has risen to the challenge.

Great things continue to happen here. Earlier this month, WVU Law again welcomed the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals to campus. The court sat at the law school and heard arguments in four cases. Between classes, our students had a firsthand opportunity to observe the state's highest court. Few students in the country have such a privilege.

Two years ago, I joined WVU Law because I recognized the law school's outsized role in shaping West Virginia. I still believe in the law school's bright future. I would make that same decision to join WVU Law today.



Cody Corliss is an associate professor at the West Virginia University College of Law, where he teaches criminal law and international law.

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