

Lex Brevis

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Students and Professors Attend Lavender Law Career Fair and Conference in San Francisco, CA

Mark E. Martin, Jr., 3L

Over September 4th through 6th, students Barra Cohen (2L) and Mark Martin (3L) along with Professors Erin Buzuvis and Taylor Flynn, took part in the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Lavender Law Career Fair and Conference in San Francisco, California.

The weekend-long event, hosted by the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association (NLGLA), an affiliate of the American Bar Association, attracted over 500 law students, more than 150 recruiting firms, advocacy organizations and corporations, as well as legal scholars, practitioners, and allied supporters from all regions of the country. "This is the only conference I've been to that includes lawyers, professors and law students. So Lavender Law really unites the LGBT legal community and allows its leaders of tomorrow to build relationships with the leaders of today," comments Buzuvis.

The night before the conference, student attendees were invited on a tour of San Francisco's Castro, the historic LGBT district. "It was great to be able to meet so many fellow LGBT students, future colleagues really, in such an amazing city," states Martin.

Day one began for Cohen and Martin with a panel on strategies for finding and evaluating gay-friendly employers in the government, non-profit, and small to large firm sectors. After the panel, Cohen and Martin were able to take part in individualized career counseling sessions before entering the Career Fair, where many of the nation's top firms, groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, as well as the United States Department of Justice and even the US Postal Service, were eager to meet and interview with

students in a table-talk format.

The first evening was capped off with a Creative Black Tie Dinner and Dance where the Dan Bradley Award, NLGLA's highest honor, was presented to Shannon Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Therese Stewart, Chief Deputy City Attorney for San Francisco. Both Minter and Stewart successfully litigated the landmark *In re Marriages*, in which the California Supreme Court held legislative and initiative prohibitions against same-sex marriage unconstitutional and that laws directed at lesbians

which LGBT rights lawyers from around the country were grappling with what it would mean if these rights are stripped away."

Days two and three of the conference were devoted to panel sessions focused on the history of the LGBT equality-rights movement, recent strides made regarding such rights, and general information sessions regarding LGBT legal issues (tax, family law, HIV/AIDS law, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act).

Professor Taylor Flynn served as moderator of the Junior Scholars Forum, a lively session aimed at encouraging "the development of the next generation of sexual orientation and gender identity scholarship." As part of the Forum, Professor Erin Buzuvis presented her recent work, "(e) Racing Jennifer Harris: Sexuality and Race, Law and Discourse in *Harris v. Portland*," discussing the intersection of race and sexual orientation discrimination in a former player's suit against Penn State's women's basketball coach.

Flynn also presented on the panel "From Massachusetts to California to Your State: Achieving Federal Recognition of Same-Sex Relationships" along with Minter from the National Center for Lesbian Rights and other advocacy lawyers from GLAD and Lambda Legal.

Overall, both Cohen and Martin characterize the experience as highly informative and practically useful as well as simply tons of fun. "I look forward to attending next year's Lavender Law in Brooklyn as a WNEC Law grad," says Martin. "Hopefully, I'll see more WNEC professors and students there."

Visit www.lavenderlaw.org for more detailed information.

(Pictured above: Barra Cohen, Prof. Buzuvis, and Mark E. Martin, Jr.)



and gays would now be subject to strict judicial scrutiny. It should be noted that Massachusetts overturned marriage bans on a rational basis review without holding sexual orientation a protected class.

Opponents of marriage equality have already successfully petitioned for a ballot initiative, Proposition 8, which will appear on the November general election ballot. "In a matter of weeks, Californians will be voting on whether to amend their state constitution to overturn the California Supreme Court's recent ruling that California's equal protection and due process clauses protect the rights of gay men and lesbians to marry," states Professor Taylor Flynn. "It's an historic moment, and the conference took place in the midst of it, one filled with exuberance and fear as many couples are rushing to marry before the vote. Two dear friends of mine, who have been together for 29 years, got married that weekend, and returned the same day to speak at conference sessions in

It's a Convocation, Not a Political Rally

Hirak Shah, 2L

We recently had our convocation where Dean Harold Koh, the Dean of Yale Law School, spoke. Now, convocation has traditionally been a place where the speaker gives advice to law students and essentially explains to law students, especially the first years, that law school is a completely different experience, that law school is exciting, it will make you think in new way, and most importantly it is a special and worthwhile experience.

Apparently this message was lost on the Dean Koh. I knew that this would not be a normal convocation speech when Dean Koh began by saying this speech is going to be non-partisan. Well apparently Dean Koh likes to say one thing, then do something else. Dean Koh proceeded to spout every Democratic Party talking point about the Bush Administration's foreign policy. This included their greatest hits including:

- The world does not respect us anymore

- Occupation of Iraq is a human rights disaster

- Terrorists should not housed in Guantanamo Bay

- These past 8 years have been tiring

- We need to restore our standing in the world etc...

If someone walked in during the speech, they would not have known it was a convocation speech; they would have thought it was some surrogate for the Obama campaign trying to lecture us about how America and President Bush are the cause of all the world's ills. I don't think convocation was meant for that, but that is just me.

After a quick Google search one would find a profile on Dean Koh from the Yale Daily Press. According to this profile not only is Dean Koh an outspoken liberal and that can be seen pretty easily because the headline of the article was "At Law School, Koh is a liberal lion." According to the article, Koh has had a "chilling effect" on conservative and libertarian thought on campus and he has actively made efforts to silence them. Peter Schuck, a Yale law professor, was quoted in the article saying, "The Law School would be a stronger institution if there were more ideological diversity." It was a bad decision to have Dean Koh speak at convocation because he makes students that don't agree with

him feel uncomfortable and alienated.

The main problem with having Dean Koh speak at convocation was he took what was supposed to be a kickoff event for the new school year and made it into a shameless political rally. Furthermore, there was no one to give a counter argument to Dean Koh's claims. I had never felt as uncomfortable in law school as I did during Dean Koh's diatribe. The WNEC law administration disappointed me in ways I can't explain they decided that in this election year they would let their views be known through the speaker they invited. After I graduate I will not donate one penny to the school and I encourage everyone else to do the same. This was not the forum for Dean Koh to give his partisan viewpoint and it was definitely not the forum for the WNEC law administration to express their views on politics either.

Mangino, Andrew, "At Law School, Koh is liberal lion." Yale Daily News. April 4, 2007
<http://www.yaledailynews.com/articles/view/20558>

Women's Law Association Presents Documentary Film Series

Sara Fawk, 2L

On October 1, 2008, the Women's Law Association presented "Senorita Extraviada," a documentary on the "femicide" occurring in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Many WNEC students were moved by the film and expressed frustration that this violent attack against women is occurring in the 21st Century. Following the film, two representatives from Safe Passage, a local organization that assists victims of domestic violence and their families, spoke about the various contributing factors to the crisis in Juarez as well as similar issues that contribute to the problem of violence against women in the United States. Safe Passage strives to create a community "where violence is not the answer."

Since 1993, over 400 women and girls have been raped and murdered in Juarez. None of the murders have been prosecuted. There is a complete lack of investigation and a break down of the judicial system with respect to these heinous crimes. The rapes and murders are particularly brutal and tortuous. There is strong evidence that the Mexican government is involved in

a cover-up and that some Mexican police are the perpetrators.

In 2007, 94 members of the U.S. House of Representatives wrote a letter to the Mexican President, Felipe Calderon, urging him to increase the efforts in fighting violence against women in Mexico and to pursue the investigations of the rapes and killings in Ciudad Juarez. The United States must continue to put pressure on the Mexican government otherwise such violence will remain status quo.

The Women's Law Association continues to promote women's issues as human issues that affect all people. Jessica Hansen (2L) said, "It was encouraging to see both men and women in attendance. The misogyny underlying these crimes cannot be eradicated without the help of both men and women and on an international scale."

Look for another film presentation in combination with the WNEC chapter of Amnesty International in the upcoming months. For more information on the situation in Juarez, please go to www.v-day.org as well as the Amnesty International and Washington Office on Latin America websites. And for more information on ways to volunteer locally, go to the Safe Passage website, www.safepass.org

A Note From Your SBA President

Dear Fellow Classmates,

I would like to take this time to update you on the Student Bar Association activities so far this semester. On September 29, 2008 we conducted our first SBA meeting of the year. On the agenda for that meeting was the swearing in of our newly elected SBA Treasurer and 1L representatives. The SBA would like to welcome our new treasurer Rachel Sposato as well as our new representatives.

In addition, the Budget Committee presented its recommendations for the 2008-2009 budget to the Council for review. At our second meeting on October 1, 2008, the SBA voted to finalize the budget.

In the upcoming month, SBA will be looking forward to a number exciting events. As you may know, SBA offers an annual Halloween Party designed for the little ones. Our charities committee has hosted a children friendly Halloween party in the fall for those students with little ones as well as faculty and staff children.

As always please forward and questions or concerns to me via my email Jbandeian@gmail.com or in person. Have a wonderful day.

A Summer Study Abroad Experience

Molly Ryan Strehorn, 3L

Americans, can learn a great deal from a small country like the Netherlands. The government protections range from maintaining a state-of-the-art levy system (60% of its population live on land below sea level) to recognizing the rights of same-sex couples in the form of marriage. The Netherlands has a history of tolerance and progressive social policies. This is why Whittier Law School selected Amsterdam as the location for its study abroad program focusing on sexual orientation law. The high caliber of professors and the insights of the students created an atmosphere of energetic learning.

One of my favorite professors was Attorney Jenny Pizer, the West Coast Legal Director of Lambda Legal. Atty. Pizer talked about the legal strategies behind LGBT advocacy and the challenges of representing an individual client when the impact on the LGBT community is also a concern. Prior to

teaching in Amsterdam, Atty. Pizer argued the Benitez case in front of the California Supreme Court and on August 18, the court held unanimously in her favor. See *North Coast Women's Care Medical Group, Inc. v. San Diego County Superior Court*, No. S142892, 2008 WL 3822791 (Cal. Aug. 18, 2008). Guadalupe "Lupita" Benitez is a lesbian who sought help with infertility. Her insurance carrier had an exclusive contract with the North Coast Women's Care Medical Group. The doctor at the clinic refused to perform the insemination based upon his religious beliefs regarding Benitez's sexual orientation. The trial court ruled in favor of Benitez, finding that the clinic cannot violate California anti-discrimination law. The clinic appealed and won. The California Supreme Court overturned that decision, disagreeing with the doctor's argument that the First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise of religion protected his actions. The California anti-discrimination law requires that the clinic treat all patients equally.

The other highlight of my study abroad was visiting the international courts in The Hague. By a strange coincidence, we toured the Interna-

tional Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia three days after the arrest of Radovan Karadzic, the former President of Serbia who is charged with genocide, persecution, inhumane acts, and the taking of hostages amongst other crimes. Late in the afternoon, we had a presentation from a lawyer who served as the court liaison to Slobodan Milošević. Five days later, I turned on the evening news to see the same lawyer reading the Karadzic indictment.

I will say that it took a great deal of time, planning, and patience to pull the whole trip together. In the end, it was worth the effort. If you have the chance to study abroad, please take advantage of it and apply for the scholarship (if offered again this year). Please take advantage of the International Law Society. The ILS provides the WNEC community with resources for thinking globally about the legal profession and our role as advocates in the international context.

International Law Society Attends Genocide Conference in Vermont

The International Law Society

Genocide is one of the most controversial and important topics in international criminal law. In the shadow of the ongoing atrocities in Darfur, the ethnic cleansing in Kenya, and mass rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is important for members of the international legal community to confront and prevent genocidal acts. The International Law Students Association (ILSA) and the International Law Society (ILS) of Vermont Law School invited students and scholars to join the discussion on what constitutes genocide at the annual ILSA Fall Conference, October 2 – 4, 2008 at Vermont Law School in South Royalton, Vermont.

The WNEC International Law Society had ten students attend. The conference, "Understanding Genocide: Prevention, Prosecution and Progress," began on Thursday evening with an ABA session on "Pathways to Careers in International Law." Friday's schedule included panel discussions such as: "The Relationship between Ecological Crisis, Conflict and Human Genocide," and "Responsibility to Protect Doctrine and the Changing Concept of Sovereignty." WNEC students particularly enjoyed

hearing Stephanie Farrior, professor at Vermont Law School, Saleem Ali, professor at the University of Vermont, and Bruce Duthu, professor at Dartmouth College.

ILS President, Hiram Shah, said about the weekend: "Overall, the conference was enjoyable and interesting. However, it was frustrating to hear from the panelists that the international community cannot agree on a universal definition of genocide, or that women are not considered a protected class. Genocide is an area of international criminal law that the world should be united in condemning."

Saturday concluded with keynote speaker, Juan Mendez, President of the International Center for Transitional Justice, and former UN Special Advisor on the prevention of Genocide, and his address, "The United Nations and the Prevention of Genocide."



Sara Fawk, Anne Dargie, Michael Kohler, Nathan Repp, and Hiram Shah at the ILSA Fall Conference

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Unsigned editorials represent the views of the newspaper. Signed editorials, columns, reviews, cartoons, and letters represent the personal opinions of the authors. Contributions from the WNEC School of Law community, the Bar, and the legal community are welcome.

Please send submissions to Jessica Gordon at: jgordn@gmail.com

SBA Budget Allocations For 2008-2009

Compiled by Rachel Sposato, SBA Treasurer

	Requested	Recommended	Allocated
COMMITTEES			
SBA Fixed Costs	\$12,300	\$11,800	\$11,800
Athletics Committee	\$10,075	\$9,600	\$9,600
Charities Committee	\$4,050	\$3,950	\$3,950
Elections Committee	\$0	\$0	\$0
Evening Students Events Committee	\$860	\$720	\$720
Graduation Committee	\$5,000	\$1,700	\$1,700
Lex Brevis	\$2,1600	\$1,400	\$1,400
Social Committee	\$10,000	\$8,700	\$8,700
Speakers Committee	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
ORGANIZATIONS			
American Association of Justice	\$1,365	\$150	\$150
American Bar Association	\$3,000	\$200	\$200
American Constitution Society	\$820	\$200	\$200
Amnesty International	\$150	\$50	\$50
Black Law Students Association	\$1,580	\$825	\$825
Equal Justice Works	\$2,050	\$350	\$350
Environmental Law Coalition	\$0	\$0	\$0
Family Law Association	\$300	\$170	\$170
Federalist Society	\$1,760	\$475	\$475
Health Law Association	\$2,000	\$680	\$680
Intellectual Property Law Association	\$2,600	\$510	\$510
Jewish Law Students Association	\$575	\$250	\$250
Multi-Cultural Law Students Association	\$1,150	\$340	\$340
OUTlaw	\$600	\$210	\$210
Phi Alpha Delta	\$2,425	\$600	\$600
Ski Club	\$2,625	\$250	\$450
Sports and Entertainment Law Society	\$620	\$425	\$425
Student Bar Association	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$800
Women's Law Association	\$730	\$440	\$440
Yoga Club	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Requested	\$73,845		
Available	\$48,402.31		
Total Recommended	\$48,395		
Balanced Budget	\$7.31		

Presidential Candidates Offer Different Judicial Philosophies

Daniel R. Labrecque, 2L

As president, Republican Senator John McCain will appoint to the Supreme Court of the United States "strict constructionists," while Democratic Senator Barack Obama will appoint justices with "empathy."

Considering that five of the current justices of the Supreme Court are aged seventy or older, it is fair to say that the next president will probably appoint at least one or two justices due to death or retirement. Despite the age of the current make-up of the Court, the media has not given much attention to whom the candidates would appoint to the Court. This year the candidates' judicial views have taken a back seat to the biggest economic crisis since the Savings and Loan Crisis of the early 1990s and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

McCain's campaign website has a page entitled "Strict Constructionist Philosophy." According to the webpage McCain believes that, "when applying the law, the role of judges is not to impose their own view as to the best policy choices for society but to faithfully and accurately determine the policy choices already made by the people and embodied in the law."

According to the webpage, McCain's judicial appointments will respect federalism and the separation of powers. The page describes federalism as the theory that "the Federal government was intended to have limited scope, and that federal courts must respect the proper role of local and state governments." Respecting the separation of powers, McCain's appointments "will understand that it is not their role to usurp the right-

ful functions and powers of the co-equal political branches."

The webpage points to McCain's opposition to "liberal judicial activists" who have overruled the policies of state legislatures concerning abortion, religion, and the definition of marriage. According to the webpage, McCain would appoint to the Supreme Court justices like current justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito.

Obama's website highlights twenty-five issues and devotes a page to each, but unlike McCain's does not have a description of his judicial philosophy. Obama's page on women's issues says he "will make preserving women's rights under *Roe v. Wade* a priority as President." The New York Times has reported that while Obama was president of Harvard Law Review and constitutional law professor at the University of Chicago Law School he did not write much on his judicial philosophy. While McCain has been promoting his philosophy in venues as varied as ABC's *The View*, Obama has remained mum.

"Obama has nothing to gain and potentially much to lose in being too specific on his criteria for a Supreme Court nominee," said Ronald Schurin, a professor of political science at the University of Connecticut. "The voters—and, more significantly, the advocacy groups—who hope for a left-of-center justice are going to support Obama regardless, and he doesn't need to cultivate them," he said.

"Swing voters," Schurin added, "particularly working class white voters, and more particularly Roman Catholics, may be motivated to support Obama on economic grounds but could still be driven away if he emphasizes the abortion issue. He needs these voters to carry Ohio, Pennsylvania, and other key states, so it might be the greater part of political wisdom to keep relatively quiet and non-specific on judicial appointees."

At a Planned Parenthood Conference in 2007 Obama suggested what he would look for

in a Justice: "We need somebody who's got the heart, the empathy to recognize what it's like to be a young teenage mom. The empathy to understand what it's like to be poor, or African-American, or gay, or disabled, or old. And that's the criteria by which I'm going to be selecting my judges."

In a 2005 press release explaining his "no" vote on John Roberts' confirmation, Obama said that he views the Court as "a means of evening the playing field between the strong and the weak" and "a check on the majoritarian impulses of the executive branch and the legislative branch." Obama said that based on Roberts' past actions, he felt that Roberts did not share those views.

In the press release Obama said that the toughest cases before the Supreme Court involve questions in which the constitution and statutes are not clear. In those cases Obama said, "Legal process alone will not lead you to a rule of decision. In those circumstances, your decisions about whether affirmative action is an appropriate response to the history of discrimination in this country or whether a general right of privacy encompasses a more specific right of women to control their reproductive decisions or whether the commerce clause empowers Congress to speak on those issues of broad national concern that may be only tangentially related to what is easily defined as interstate commerce, whether a person who is disabled has the right to be accommodated so they can work alongside those who are nondisabled -- in those difficult cases, the critical ingredient is supplied by what is in the judge's heart."

2008 Elections- Theatre of the Absurd

Lakota Denton, 1L

Sick of law school yet? Take a break, kick up your feet and catch this fall's hottest feature film! This one has it all. The prisoner of war maverick who wants to reform the establishment, the overachieving Harvard Law graduate who wants to unite the country in hope and change, and of course the gorgeous hockey-mom ice queen who wants to "shake things up" in Washington. This fall's blockbuster has been in produc-

tion for four years, and kicked off in August and September with opening night screenings in both Denver, and Minneapolis.

The film was made possible by generous corporations looking for an easy return on their investment at the box-office. Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Citigroup and the now bankrupt Merrill Lynch all contributed at least \$500,000 to the big budget film. Nearly every top pharmaceutical company and investment banking giant have contributed to the 680 million dollar price tag of the film they are calling, *The 2008 Presidential Election*. You may recall *The 2004 Election*, and

The 2000 Election, both of which were written and directed by Karl Rove. Both movies, of course, got terrible reviews. With so much hype and an insultingly large budget, could *The 2008 Election* live up to expectations? More importantly, will savvy investors turn a profit at the box-office? While we wait for answers to these questions, let's take a fair and balanced look at *The 2008 Election*.

Hollywood has spared nothing in this modern political drama about two men's

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Theatre Of The Absurd, Continued...

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competition for power and influence. Which one will save the country from imminent world war, economic bankruptcy, and the complete destruction of the constitution? One candidate is a 71 year old Arizona Senator with a war record and a reputation as a straight talker who is not afraid to reform Washington. His contender is a handsome, swashbuckling senator from Chicago who promises hope, change, and healthcare. Sadly, both candidates in The 2008 Election fail to identify with the audience.

In an effort to appeal to every demographic in the country, ultimately, they appeal to none of us. The audience can't possibly identify with the liberal, fast-talking Harvard lawyer, or with the overly simplified, overly wealthy 71 year old war veteran. However, the real problem with the candidates is that both men try way too hard to have substance and identify with the common American. Compared to these guys Will Farrell has

substance. In one scene, the candidates talk about the American flag pins on their suits for a week straight! Who are they kidding? What this film really needs is a bad guy, a boogie man the candidates can challenge, an evil that instills fear in the audience.

Enter the pretty girl. In her acting debut, the Alaskan beauty pageant mom looks to bring her folksy charm to the big screen. The Chicago Tribune writes, "She was gracious, charming and disarming. Men swooned. Pakistan's president wanted to hug her." My review is a little more cerebral: She is predictable, oversimplified and alarming. I am not swooning. Pakistan's president will laugh at her.

Like any big budget Hollywood blockbuster, The 2008 Election has all the necessary trappings; Powerful men with big egos who compete for even more power, a bad guy from a distant land who is easy to hate, and a pretty girl with a signature look who talks straight and simple. But the film suffers from the same disease of any big budget production. There is too little substance, underdeveloped characters, and a predictable story line.

I give The 2008 Election five thumbs down. This film was doomed before the first actor was hired. When investors have too much control over the content of the film, the end result is a film forced, faked, contrived, and utterly unrealistic. The characters lack substance, the bad guy is too cliché, and the pretty girl fails to impress beyond her looks.

However, the box-office profit will no doubt be record breaking. After all, the film enjoys the most genius marketing campaign of any movie ever made. They have managed to make Americans sincerely believe that watching this film will change the world, that one act of choosing between these two candidates every four years will change the world more than a million acts of civic duty in their communities.

Unfortunately for us, we have no choice but to watch this movie. It's on every night, on every channel, radio station, and newspaper, and I'm the only one giving it bad reviews.

CASA Offers Opportunity to Learn and Help Kids

Michael McKelleb, 2L

"Well, nobody better not put their hands on any of my children!" she yelled across the fence. With that comment, my foster mom drew a line between me and the other children, her natural children, making it clear that I was excluded from her protection. I needed her to speak for me and she let me down.

A few years later, when my foster mother decided that she wanted out of the foster care business, she threw me out of her house into the pouring rain, telling me to go back to where I came from.

I ended up in the lobby of the social services office where I met Patricia Nees. Miss Nees was not certain where to place me and she was taken aback by my sudden appearance there. While Miss Nees and I spoke, my foster mother walked through the door, accusing me of robbing her. Her foolish pride had brought her there. She could not bear the Department of Children and Family Services thinking that she was so callous as to toss me out in the rain.

Traveling all the way down to the social services office that morning, I had convinced myself that the years of abuse in that home were finally over, but there she stood.

How could I prove her accusations of robbery were untrue? I was desperate, so I began taking off my shoes and socks and turning my pockets inside out to show that I had nothing that belonged to her. I would have stripped right there in the lobby to prove her accusations false. But then, Miss Nees told me to put my pockets back in, tuck in my shirt, and put my socks and shoes back on my feet.

Miss Nees turned to my foster mother and said with a steady gaze, "Unless there is something else you want to say, there's no need for you to stay." Even though I had nothing in this world to call my own, not even a voice, I felt victorious and protected because, for the first time in my life, someone spoke up for me. Someone defended me and it mattered. I felt secure. I had something more than just me. With those few simple words-Miss Nees cared.

For children like Antwone Fisher, there is hope. That hope can be found in the form of a CASA volunteer. What is a CASA? CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. A CASA is a volunteer who watches out for those who have no voice in the child welfare system. When children are removed from their homes, a complex network of state and local organizations are triggered into action. From family court, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF, formally known as DSS), all the way to the criminal justice system, the process involves many people.

For instance, in an average case, each

of the following can typically be involved: a DCF caseworker, the mother's attorney, the father's attorney, a probation officer for the father and/or the mother, a therapist for the child, a probation officer for the child, an attorney for DCF, an attorney for the child, a foster parent, the adjustment counselor from the child's school, the child's school teacher, a therapist for the father and/or mother, the father, the mother, and let's not forget the judge. To be sure, not a short list. Each of these individuals have a small part to play and each have their own motives and goals. Regardless, when this many people are involved, when the voices clamor, raised to heard above the fray, there is one small voice that often goes unheard and even forgotten: that of the child. The single most important focus of the whole foray, for which the whole matter is centered, goes unheard. The question is, who among us will stand up and speak for them? Who? This same question is often asked by judges. When they wonder, they call on a CASA to speak for the best interest of the child.

We all come from varying backgrounds of poverty and privilege. Our experiences vary and shape our decision-making. However, for many of us,

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True Life: I'm In Law School, Part II

Rachel Sposato, 2L

As we grow older, a common quest we share is the quest for "love." As indicated by the quotation marks, each individual's interpretation of love is quite different. Regardless, it is within our human nature to desire companionship. Law students are no exception. In this edition of True Life, we're going to investigate the whimsical views of finding love in law school, and the actual reality of love in law school. So sit back, snuggle up with your current "love" interest, and welcome to True Life: I'm in Law School.

We have all heard the stories: your girlfriend found her current boyfriend/fiancé in undergrad; your boy fell victim to the curse of the high school sweetheart to whom he will shortly propose marriage. Half of you, hearing these stories, are filled with a sense of hope that the same could happen to you. That hope is invigorated by the knowledge that your entrance into the real world is delayed three or four more years by law school. The other half of you simply roll your eyes, deeply sigh, and emphatically brush off the horrid idea of love and, even worse, being tied down. Welcome to the classic dichotomy of love and relationships in law school.

When you, the law student, are in the market for companionship, you will notice you have the choice between an old-fashioned, exclusive relationship and a serial dater who refuses to settle. The contrasting options are not an indication of someone's level of promiscuity (though, that will often be a popular topic of gossip), but rather an indication of someone's current level of commitment and emotional capacity. The question then becomes,

is this person a monogamist or serial dater?

The Monogamist

Stable, dependable, and a great listener are just a few of the characteristics embodied within a monogamist. They prefer companionship, and relish in being able to depend on that certain someone to be their support system throughout law school. Monogamists do not fear expressing their emotions or highlighting their vulnerabilities. True monogamists support the theory of "true love," and the belief that there is someone to complete/complement everyone. Newcomers to this category will often remain a bit closeted in verbalizing their newfound views towards love, but their actions will dictate a different story.

Monogamist love taking advantage of holidays, birthdays, and "just because" days as an additional opportunity to illustrate their feelings towards their significant other. Gifts include scavenger hunts, cooking dinner, bringing coffee to a library study session without being asked, a single flower with a note, and clothing. For as much thought goes into those "happy" days, a monogamist will often put that much into a significant other's "bad" or sick day. Monogamists just can't seem to help their pulsating feelings.

Therefore, if the person is a monogamist, they will want to weather the good and the bad; they will actually sit and conduct conversations with you that consist of something more than, "Do you want to take a shot?" [and then after the shot] "How do you feel?" You'll start to notice them going out of their way to see you and/or talk to you. They won't be afraid to tell you something substantial about themselves. They will remember what you say. And if you want to dabble in monogamy, by all means, reciprocate back.

The Serial Dater

Picky, selfish, and adventurous, the serial dater refuses to settle because they tend to love

themselves more than the other person. While they enjoy companionship for a certain number of hours, they ultimately relish in their alone time, and knowing they don't have to answer/explain/be on call to anyone 24/7. Everyday presents a different opportunity, and the serial dater sees life as being too short to decline. Besides, it's all about being able to look back 50 years from now with great stories and zero regrets. Love is a nice concept, but something best reserved for a fantastic pair of shoes or a delectable 16 oz. New York Strip and glass of red wine.

The holidays are a time for drinking and being with friends and family. The serial dater enjoys making those closest to them happy, but truly enjoy not having to stress about making their significant other happy with multiple gifts. Singles Awareness Day (a.k.a. Valentine's Day) is the hardest to overcome, but a skilled serial dater will be sure to either have a date planned for that night or not recognize the holiday at all. A date for the evening is not a sign of the serial dater crossing over, but merely taking advantage of an opportunity to watch the other side in their natural environment.

Therefore, if the person is a serial dater, they will not discuss past relationships because they most likely haven't had one of a significant length. They will be a bit flighty if the conversation starts to become personal/emotionally substantial, and will be seen talking to multiple people, and not just a certain someone. Their tastes change quickly, so don't expect to have that "connection" with them for very long; a month is probably the max. Its not that the serial dater doesn't care, they just don't want to be tied down.

CASA Offers Opportunity to Learn, Cont'd...

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the minute we walked through the halLOWed front doors of the S. Prestly Blake Law Center, we recognized that from that day on we were in control of our lives. Though scared and possibly confused about the near future, we all understood that we were about to learn what was needed to put us in control of our destiny. Initiation into the solemn fraternity of the legal profession would ensure that we could stick up for the rights of ourselves and others. Most of us came to law school hoping that it would afford us the opportunity for a fulfilling career,

some looking for an avenue to help society.

If you came here hoping it would allow you help those who need it most, you should consider volunteering to be a CASA. Not only will you be able to begin giving back while still in law school, you will be working in a legal capacity that will enhance your education. For instance, recently a WNEC law student had a report due to the court prior to a permanency hearing. The importance of writing a report for the court seemed quite daunting. For the first time, it was for real. Not written for an LRW professor to mark up and return. This would be read by an actual judge for an actual proceeding. However, during his reading for family law, he came across *Hollon v. Hol-*

lon, 784 So.2d 943 (2001), in which the court discussed the many elements to consider when deciding what is in the best interest of a child. This case gave him the framework he needed to write a report that would adequately convey to the court what was in the best interest of this child who would not even be allowed in the proceeding to speak for himself.

If you have an interest in becoming a CASA, please come to the Family Law Association's CASA presentation or contact the Family Law Association for more information.

Dean Johnson and the Office of Student Affairs Are Set For Takeoff!

Anka Mason, 2L

As I hurried through the brand new lobby of the law school late one afternoon in September, I heard the familiar laughter and distinctive southern drawl of someone that I had met for the first time in February, 2006. I stopped short and thought, "but how could that be, he's gone." Dean Michael Johnson had departed for sunnier parts in November of 2007. There he was, however, seated among students, laughing and sharing stories as though he had never left. Like so many

who had had the pleasure of knowing him, I was surprised and pleased to see that he had returned. And like the editor-in-chief of Lex Brevis, I too wanted to know the details behind both his departure from and return to WNEC Law. So, on a fall afternoon in October, I sat down with Dean Johnson in his new

office to discuss, among other things, his journey to Oklahoma City, his return to our law school, and his new position as Dean of Student Affairs.

So...why Oklahoma City? "As a member of several committees on the Law School Admissions Council, I was well respected within law school admissions circles. I was approached by someone who thought I would be interested in the admissions position at the

university's law school. After a little research, I felt Oklahoma City, with a population of 1.2 million, and still growing and expanding, would be a good fit for me. It was a vibrant place to be and offered different challenges. Oklahoma City University had a similar size law school with new programs and opportunities. After being at WNEC for nearly five years, I felt it was time to expand my horizons within admissions." He shared with me the story of his own journey from law school student into the world of law school administration. "My first job out of law school was as Assistant Director of Admissions for WNEC; that was in 2003. About

a year and a half later, I was promoted to Assistant Dean of Admissions. You know, customer service was always one of my strong points (prior to beginning his career in law, Dean Johnson was a flight attendant for U.S. Airways for fifteen years), and that's part of what I brought to the table in my position within the Admissions Department." Asked if he was surprised to get an invitation to apply for the Student Affairs position upon Dean Sykes' departure just a short academic year later, "No," he replied, and

fondly recalled how he had long thought the position of Dean of Student Affairs was actually a better fit, given his customer service background and personality. "After working for fifteen years as a flight attendant, I've seen it all, and I think I serve students better by being able to help them with the things that come up for them on the journey as law students. The position presents different challenges than the position in Admissions."

What kinds of challenges will Dean Johnson face as Dean of Student Affairs? "My

primary responsibility is to the enrichment of the students' lives. What I hope to do, in this regard, is provide students a place to come when they are in need of resources to make their academic lives easier. Of course, these needs will constantly change over the years to come." To that end, he showed me the newest link on the law school homepage for the Student Affairs Office. "This link," he added, "will allow students better access to the resources made available to the general college population, resources that they may not have even been aware existed."

We talked a little about the current economic climate and how this may affect students' lives, especially with regard to financing their education. "We are already beginning to see some of the fallout from the financial meltdown and how that plays into such things as the acquisition of bar loans, for example. As part of the overall program, within the next year, the Student Affairs Office will work to bring information, programs, and services to law students that will allow them to plan well financially, plan for their transition from law school to their careers, and most important of all, bring a sense of balance to their lives."

Though law school may not be the "friendly skies," it's really something special to have in our corner someone like Dean Johnson who is willing to make a round-trip to give WNEC Law students his best efforts in furtherance of their legal careers. We are grateful for your consideration, Dean Johnson. Welcome back!



Dean Michael Johnson

Students Elect New SBA Treasurer

Hi everyone! My name is Rachel Sposato, and I am your newly elected SBA Treasurer. Upon being informed of the results, I have dived right into the responsibilities of the position. I just finished working with the Budget Committee to help recommend and allocate funds to all the student committees and organizations for the year. In addition to the annual "balancing of the budget" festivities, I continue to work with those committees and organizations through-

out the year to ensure proper use of funds allocated, reimbursement for funds expended, and disbursement of additional funds when requested and/or for emergency purposes. I am looking forward to working with everyone, and helping the committees, organizations, and participation of the student body grow. Please do not hesitate to come and talk to me, should you have any questions, concerns, and/or comments!



Pictured right: Rachel Sposato