



The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

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Friday, March 4, 2011 – Thursday, March 17, 2011

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

By now, current applicants should have received several law school admission decisions and are likely deciding whether and where to place seat deposits in the upcoming weeks.

When making this decision, keep the following LSAC guidelines in mind:

- If you have been admitted to a law school, submitted your financial aid application in a timely manner, but have not yet received your award notice yet, contact the law school to determine whether you can delay posting a non-refundable deposit upon receipt of your financial award notice.
- After April 1, except under binding early decision plans, every accepted applicant should be free to accept a new offer from a law school even though a scholarship has been accepted, a deposit has been paid, or a commitment has been made to another school.
- On May 15, law schools that participate in the Commitment Overlap Service will be provided with information concerning all enrollment commitments to any law school made by those applicants who have indicated an intention to enroll in that school's entering class.

If you do not already know them, contact the law schools you are considering to determine their policies on multiple enrollment commitments. And, remember, eventually you will need to make a decision. It is advisable to have only one seat deposit down if you are waiting to hear from or are on the waitlist of another school(s) of greater interest. The sooner -- and more -- you can narrow your options down, the better!

2. WHAT PREDICTS A SUCCESSFUL LEGAL CAREER?

Richard H. Sander of UCLA School of Law and Jane Yakowitz of Brooklyn Law School have drafted a paper which challenges the assumption that attending a top law school is the golden ticket to big firm law jobs and eventual partnership. Their paper, "The Secret of my Success: How Status, Prestige and School Performance Shape Legal Careers," argues that one's grades in law school impacts one's long term-financial success most, both immediately following graduation and throughout one's career -- including promotion to partner.

While considering a series of data to assess the differences law school prestige, law school grades and social status play in predicting one's legal career success, Sander and Yakowitz concluded that while going to a more elite law school (Harvard, Stanford, Yale, etc.) can create the basis of a successful career, "the positive effect of higher grades (and the negative effect of lower grades) is much stronger."

The lesson for the prospective law student?

When considering law schools, do not place an unwarranted emphasis on the eliteness of the law school as the dominant criterion when deciding where to matriculate. By itself, the eliteness of one's law school means little without high performance while a student there.

To read the abstract and link to the complete paper, visit:
http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1640058

3. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: CASA (COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES) OF BALTIMORE

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Baltimore is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization committed to serving abused and neglected children by representing their voices in the Baltimore City court system and advocating for their best interests in the judicial, educational, medical, and social service communities.

Over 150 active volunteers provide critical advocacy and support for child victims of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

To become a volunteer, one must:

- 1) register for and attend a 1.5 hour information session to learn more about the CASA program and other volunteer opportunities within the program;
- 2) attend an information session about becoming a court appointed advocate volunteer; and
- 3) attend a CASA Volunteer Pre-Service Training, offered several times each year to prepare one for the volunteer experience.

To commence the above process, complete the Inquiry Form found at the following link:
<http://www.casabalt.org/civicrm/profile/create?gid=12>

For more information about CASA of Baltimore, Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, visit:
<http://www.casabalt.org/become-child-advocate>

4. INTERVIEW: BETHANY DURAND, MARYLAND ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY, HOMICIDE DIVISION

Bethany Durand is a prosecutor with the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. She has worked with the office since January 2002 and has been in the homicide unit since February 2009.

Before being assigned to the homicide unit, Ms. Durand worked her way through the juvenile, misdemeanor, general trial, narcotics and firearms units. Prior to joining the State's Attorney's Office, she worked for the U.S. Social Security Administration in the Administration Answer Unit.

Ms. Durand graduated with a JD from American University, Washington College of Law in 2000. While in law school, Ms. Durand served on the Moot Court Executive Board, the ATLA Trial Advocacy Competition Team, and the Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition Board. Her work experiences while in law school included serving as a Screening Unit Intern at the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and working in the Emergency Domestic Violence Clinic, serving as a law clerk for a solo practitioner in civil litigation and personal claim matters, and serving as a law clerk for circuit court attorneys and the Silver Spring Community Prosecution Team of the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office.

Ms. Durand received her BA in Government, with a minor in Spanish and a concentration in Ethics & Public Policy from Clark University in 1997. While an undergraduate, she was on the executive board of the International Student's Association, served as a Resident Advisor and a Peer Advisor, and was a member of the Moot Court Competition Team.

Ms. Durand is licensed to practice law in Maryland and in Massachusetts.

Questions

1) Describe a day in the life of a Homicide Prosecutor.

Every day is a little different in this profession.

On days when I am not in court, I meet with detectives at the police headquarters building or interview witnesses and officers at my office. Some days, I go out with detectives to see crime scene locations in pending trials or attempt to locate witnesses for those cases. Out-of-court days also require time in the office, to complete paperwork, file motions, and send out materials to defense attorneys. There are times when witnesses are obtained by the police at odd hours, such as in the middle of the night. When this happens, I get up and head to the police department in order to interview them.

On days when I have cases in court, I am normally in the courthouse by 7:30am speaking with witnesses and family members before court starts. I might not leave the office until late in the evening and then continue working at home, especially if a case is sent to trial. In addition to trial work; I handle sentencing hearings, post conviction matters, and on occasion, probation violations.

2) What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law and the legal profession?

I knew when I entered law school that I was interested in working as a prosecutor. I had a friend in high school that was caught up in court proceedings because of an abusive relationship, and I was fascinated by the court process. I don't know that I understood at that time what a lawyer was because I didn't know any, but I knew that I wanted to be the person who stood up for the victim.

When I was in my first year of law school, I interned at the State's Attorney's Office in Montgomery County, MD and worked at a domestic violence clinic in Washington, DC. My time at both places solidified my desire to become a prosecutor. While at the State's Attorney's Office, I was struck by the level of camaraderie shared by members of the office and by the dedication that they showed. While there, someone told me (and I've since heard it echoed) that a prosecutor is tasked with ensuring that the rights of all people in the community are maintained; rights to live safely and be treated fairly. That community consists of all people, victims and suspects. I tried out other areas of law as well, working at the Social Security Administration and also for a solo practitioner, but my interest in working as a prosecutor remained.

As a prosecutor I have presented cases that show peoples' best and worst moments. There was a case from 2005 where a man was beaten by 3 others for his social security money. That man lost his legs and both hands for only a couple hundred dollars. His attackers are in jail for the next 40 years. He is confined to a wheel chair, but doing his best to live his life. There was a case in 2006 where a young girl became a witness to a stabbing when her mechanic was attacked inside of her car. The suspect knew who she was and told her not to talk to the police. She stumbled as she entered the courtroom and saw him sitting there but, did not hesitate in telling the jury what he had done. There was a case in 2009 where a man was killed by his own family member. The family became polarized over it. One loved one is dead and the other is in jail, but the family found strength in each other and are moving forward together. There are countless other stories, the good and the bad.

3) What are some of the downsides of this area of law? How would you compare the reality of your profession to the picture you had of it while in school?

There is no hiding from the horrible things that people can do to each other when you enter this profession. Part of the job involves reviewing crime scene evidence, autopsy photographs and reports, and convincing (sometimes forcing) reluctant witnesses to come forward. These can weigh heavily on you if you let them.

It can be difficult working for any government agency especially when resources are tight. Government agencies often have their budgets cut and resources limited. Sometimes you find that you have to do more with less.

Because the image of this area of law that I developed came from interning in a State's Attorney's Office, I believe that I knew what I was getting into. I really enjoy the fact that I can collaborate with other attorney's in my office during case preparation in order to get the best view of any situation. There is a level of support from co-workers that I don't see with my friends at large firms; prosecutors don't have to generate clients or "rain-make" for the office, so we tend to work together rather than compete with one another.

4) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing this body of law and the legal profession?

If you think you might be interested in working as a prosecutor, try it first. Offices are always looking for student interns and law clerks to help out. Experience it first hand, if possible, because things are not really like how they make them appear on TV. Try out different areas of law to make sure that it is what you are interested in. You might find out that you like tax law or immigration, or even that you don't like the legal profession at all. Criminal Prosecution is not a career to enter for the money, but it is rewarding in its own right. No matter what the outcome in court, a prosecutor who has done their best to seek justice can sleep well at night.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a prosecutor in Baltimore or have additional questions for Ms. Durand, you may reach her via email at: Bethjd@verizon.net

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2011

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 6, 2011).

Date: Monday, June 6, 2011

Time: Registration begins at 11:30am for the June exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

DC-Metro Area Law School Admissions Panel

Location: Mattin 162

Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Description: Admissions representatives from George Washington University Law School, Georgetown University Law Center, University of Baltimore School of Law, University of Maryland School of Law and American University, Washington College of Law will be discuss their law school and application strategies.

The Insiders Scoop: JHU Alums/Current Law School Students & First Year Associates

Location: Sherwood Room (Levering)

Date: Thursday, April 14, 2011

Time: 5:30pm to 6:30pm

Description: JHU alumni will discuss what it is like to be a law student at their respective school, summer experiences while in law school and what it is like to be a first year associate at a large firm.

Interim Year Panel

Location: TBD

Date: Thursday, April 21, 2011

Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Description: Representatives from the Urban Teacher Program, Healthcorps, and more are expected to be on hand to discuss interim year options for those interested in delaying law school matriculation for a year or two.

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**STAFF IN THE OFFICE OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADVISING**

Ana L. Droskoski, J.D., Assistant Director, Pre-Law Advisor & Pre-Dental Advisor

David Verrier, Ph.D., Director, Pre-Health Advisor

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The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:

Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, [ckrause@jhu.edu](mailto:ckrause@jhu.edu) 410-516-6744

For students whose last name begins with A-L, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, [ladytee@jhu.edu](mailto:ladytee@jhu.edu) 410-516-4140

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Please feel free to use the resource library between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. every day or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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