

**The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising**  
**\*Best viewed in HTML\***

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Friday, March 12, 2010 – Thursday, March 25, 2010

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

It is important and rewarding to volunteer! Long term, increased responsibility positions within volunteer organizations may step up your candidacy when applying to law school. Disney recently incentivized altruistic effort, providing a free Disney Theme Park ticket in exchange for one day of volunteering at select programs listed on their website. For a description of the program, visit:

[http://disneyarks.disney.go.com/disneyarks/en\\_US/WhatWillYouCelebrate/index?name=Give-A-Day-Get-A-Disney-Day](http://disneyarks.disney.go.com/disneyarks/en_US/WhatWillYouCelebrate/index?name=Give-A-Day-Get-A-Disney-Day)

Because the website lists so many organizations to volunteer with, it can be a great place to get ideas for where to lend your time and service.

Have a fantastic Spring Break!

2. LAW SCHOOLS TO SHIFT FROM THEORY TO MORE SKILLS BASED CURRICULUM?

Concurrent with the downturn in the economy and the legal market, the American Bar Association (ABA) is taking a hard look at what factors to review when evaluating law schools. A recent article by Katherine Mangan entitled, "Law School Resist Proposal to Assess Them Based on What Students Learn" in The Chronicle of Higher Education, discusses the ABA's potential revision of accreditation standards that would require law schools to identify and measure key skills and competencies of lawyers -- as compared to their student body.

Proponents of this change argue law schools need to turn out graduates with the skills employers want, especially in such a rough legal job market. Opponents of the changes argue that this is the wrong time to implement an assessment overhaul, in the face of increased law school tuition costs and internal budget cuts.

Still in development, the proposed standards would place the burden on law schools "to define learning outcomes that are consistent with their missions and to offer curricula that will achieve these outcomes...Law schools would also be required to come up with a system to assess how well students are meeting those goals."

Time will tell whether the ABA will require the change and if there will be a curriculum shift. Law schools already seem to be making the shift naturally, as many are emphasizing and expanding clinic and externship programs and increasing skills based courses offerings.

To read the article in full, visit:

<http://chronicle.com/article/Law-Schools-Resist-Proposal-to/63494/>

3. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY, ENVIRONMENT MARYLAND

For those of you that missed the second Post-Bacc Panel yesterday, Environment Maryland was one of the organizations represented. Below is an opportunity for a current undergrad interested in environmental advocacy.

### Internships in Grassroots Organizing and Advocacy

#### Goals of Internship

1. Learn about pressing environmental issues facing Maryland and the nation.
2. Acquire the skills used by Environment Maryland and other citizens' organizations to counter special interest influence in politics and to advocate for the environment.
3. Advance Environment Maryland's environmental program at the state level.

#### Skills to Learn

Environmental advocates employ various skills to present problems, solutions, educate and mobilize the public, win important reforms, and protect existing programs.

As an intern, you would learn skills such as how to help organize a press conference to release a report or announce a coalition; submit letters to the editor and op-eds; organize a coalition of citizen groups and medical professionals concerned about public health; generate citizen letters, signatures, or phone calls in support of an environmental bill; and help organize a meeting to lobby a member of Congress or the General Assembly.

Contact: Brad Heavner, (410) 467-0439.

<http://www.environmentmaryland.org/jobs/internships>

#### 4. INTERVIEW: ELIZABETH A. RITTER (JHU '75), DIVISION CHIEF, MARYLAND STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

For nearly 15 years, Elizabeth A. Ritter has been the Division Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit for the State's Attorney's Office in Baltimore City. As Division Chief, Ms. Ritter is responsible for supervising five attorneys and three investigators. She is also responsible for investigating and prosecuting white-collar crimes and arson cases. Ms. Ritter began her tenure at the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office in 1982 as a prosecutor in the juvenile and trial division, before moving on to the economic crimes unit. Prior to joining the State's Attorney's Office, Ms. Ritter was Counsel to the Director at the Patuxent Institution, a treatment-oriented maximum-security correctional facility, where she advised on a variety of legal issues and handled grievances at the Maryland State Department of Personnel, conducted preliminary parole-revocation hearings and served as a substitute member of Patuxent's Board of Review/parole board.

Prior to her transition to the public sector, Ms. Ritter was an associate at a general practice law firm in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Ritter received her B.A. from The Johns Hopkins University, and her J.D. from Suffolk University School of Law.

Ms. Ritter is a member of the Maryland and District of Columbia Bar.

#### Questions

1) Describe a typical day as Division Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit, Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office.

I am the Division Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit for the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. I run a Unit that is made up of lawyers and investigators who investigate and prosecute large white collar crimes and arson cases. Most of these cases involve long term investigations which result in criminal charges. One of the reasons I like my job is because I never have a typical day. Some days, I spend my time engrossed in financial records trying to "follow the money" and putting pieces of a puzzle together. Some days I spend interviewing witnesses. Some days I present cases to grand juries, and then, after a

case is charged, I go to court and try the case. What I have just described are pretty typical duties for most prosecutors.

Then there are the days when someone comes to my office and alleges that he is being told he must “payoff” a city official. Within a three day period that case evolved into an undercover operation which culminated in a housing inspector taking a bribe. Or there are the days when as a result of a reporter’s question, I got involved in a case where a young woman was beaten by bounty hunters because she did not pay the premium on a bail bond. After an investigation, the “bail bondsman,” who was not licensed, was convicted and jailed. The young woman had a five year old son and no place to stay. She and her little boy came to my office everyday and stayed all day until we could find them shelter. That, too, is something that I do. I could give instance after instance of the unusual cases I have become involved in that are outside the scope of what most prosecutors do.

2) What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law?  
After my senior year at Hopkins, I worked for the summer for the Public Defenders Service in Washington, D.C. I was hooked. I started law school knowing that criminal law was my interest. As I went through law school and worked as a law clerk, it also became clear to me that I wanted to work in a job where I would be in the courtroom and not be a lawyer who negotiated contracts or who worked in estate planning.

I can honestly say that I like being a lawyer and that most days I like coming to work. It is exciting and challenging.

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?  
The downside of this job is seeing what people can do to other people. Every time you think you have seen it all something else comes up.

One of the good things about the practice of law is the wide variety of jobs that exist within it. I thrive on the quick pace, the investigations, and being in the courtroom. Other lawyers never step foot in a courtroom and spend their days reviewing contracts and putting mega deals together.

4) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in attending law school and, specifically, pursuing this body of law?  
Before you go to law school, participate in internships, get a summer job at a law firm or intern with a judge. I strongly believe that you should only go to law school if you really know you want to be a lawyer. The best way to find that out is observing first-hand what lawyers really do.

#### Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a prosecutor, criminal law, or have additional questions for Ms. Ritter, you may contact her directly via telephone at 410.396.4996 or email at [ritter@stattorney.org](mailto:ritter@stattorney.org).

#### 5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

DC Area Law School Admissions Panel

Location: Mason Hall Auditorium

Date: Tuesday, March 30, 2010

Time: 12:00 noon – 12:50 pm

Description: Admissions representatives from American University, Washington College of Law; Georgetown University Law Center; George Washington University Law School; and The University of Maryland School of Law will discuss their respective law schools and answer questions.

The Insider’s Scoop: JHU Alums in Law School

Location: TBD

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

Description: JHU alums who are current law students will discuss their law school experiences.

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2010

Location: On Campus -- Hodson 110 (tentative). Check with LSDAS for definitive and additional testing locations.

Date: Monday, June 7, 2010

Time: Registration begins at 12:30a - consult with LSDAS for all controlling details

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

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

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