



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

\*Best viewed in HTML\*

**Vol. 9, No. 5**

Friday, November 6, 2015

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**1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.**

*For those of you that are Pennsylvania residents, consider entering the following contest:*

The Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA), after a successful first enterprise, is launching its second, annual essay and video documentary contest for Pennsylvania college students on the importance of state and local policies to the protection of civil and equal rights. The contest is open to all Pennsylvania residents who attend college, and monetary prizes as well as in-kind prizes will be awarded in both the essay and video documentary categories.

**ABOUT THE CONTEST**

Eligible college students will submit an essay or short video documentary analyzing a Pennsylvania state/local law or lawyer/judge implicating civil rights. Examples of topics include a biography or oral history of a trailblazing individual in the law such as a county’s first African-American judge, or an examination of a law, such as a history of the PA ERA law or a current local housing ordinance disproportionately affecting people of color.

The top entrants will receive monetary prizes and will have their winning entries posted on the PBA website. They also will present their submissions at a future PBA meeting.

## IMPORTANT DATES

The deadline for essay and video submissions is March 15, 2016. Winners will be announced on April 15, 2016. Contest rules and format requirements can be found at: [www.pabar.org/public/committees/CIVO1/essaycontest.asp](http://www.pabar.org/public/committees/CIVO1/essaycontest.asp).

## 2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

Gershman, Jacob. “**Harvard Law Students Want School’s Link to Slaveholder Scrubbed from Official Seal.**” *The Wall Street Journal: Law Blog*. Web. 3 Nov. 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2015/11/03/harvard-law-students-want-schools-link-to-slave-owner-scrubbed-from-official-seal/> -- “Some students at Harvard Law School are demanding that the institution’s official seal be scrubbed of references to the slaveholder credited with its founding.”

Olson, Elizabeth. “**Graying Firms Wrestle With Making Room for Younger Lawyers.**” *The New York Times: DealBook*. Web. 4 Nov. 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/05/business/dealbook/graying-firms-wrestle-with-making-room-for-younger-lawyers.html?src=me&r=0>. -- A look at the rising class of millennial associates who are pushing up against current law firm leaders "who are almost uniformly older men intent on staying for a few more years to top off very successful careers."

Gershman, Jacob. “**Love Your Lawyer Day’ Greeted With Affection and Objections.**” *The Wall Street Journal: Law Blog*. Web. 6 Nov. 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2015/11/06/love-your-lawyer-day-greeted-with-affection-and-objections/?mod=newsreel> -- last month, the American Bar Association’s Law Practice Division unanimously passed a resolution declaring November 6 national “Love Your Lawyer Day,” and it’s trending...

## 3. OPPORTUNITY: FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW’S 2016 SUMMER FOR UNDERGRADUATES PROGRAM

Since 1992, Florida State University College of Law has hosted their Summer for Undergraduates Program on its campus in Tallahassee, FL. The Summer for Undergraduates Program undergraduate students from throughout the country for a month-long immersion into legal study. The largest and oldest of its kind, the primary goal of the program is to acquaint students with the study of law and to assist them in acquiring skills that will benefit their undergraduate and future law school studies.

### Overview

The 2016 Summer for Undergraduates Program will take place **May 16 through June 9, 2016**. During the four-week program, students are engaged in activities covering three primary areas:

**Classroom Experience** — Daily classes are taught by [law school professors and writing instructors](#). Lectures simulate first-year law classes and familiarize students

with the functions of the American legal system. Writing workshops help students to develop their writing and communication skills.

***Law School Admissions Process***— Students are given the opportunity to talk to the [admissions staff](#) and committee regarding the important aspects of the law school application process. This includes practical workshops on completing the application, writing personal statements, LSAT preparation, writing resumes and cover letters, financing law school, and individualized career planning.

***Careers in the Law*** — While the program is academic in nature, there are a number of exciting and enjoyable activities that take place outside of the classroom, such as: visits to the Florida Supreme Court and local law firms, moot court oral arguments, and visits from prominent attorneys in a variety of practice areas.

**DEADLINE TO APPLY: Friday, March 25, 2016**

**For more information and to apply, visit:**  
<http://law.fsu.edu/academics/summer-for-undergraduates>

#### **4. INTERVIEW: KATARIINA MATTILA (JHU '15), LEGAL ASSISTANT, STOMBAUGH, SMITH AND COMPANY, LLC**

Katariina Mattila is Legal Assistant with Stombaugh, Smith and Company, a law firm in Towson, MD. She started the position immediately upon graduation in May 2015 and has been working there full-time ever since.

Katariina graduated from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in May 2015 with a BA in Public Health Studies. She studied abroad the Spring of her junior year in Cape Town, South Africa. The summer between her junior and senior year, she held 2 internships at the University of Cape Town's Gender, Health and Justice Research Center: 1) researching regional organizations in Southern Africa working on HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and 2) researching the female populations in South African prisons and violence against women in South Sudan.

While at JHU, Katariina was a personal trainer and spinning instructor at the Rec Center. She also interned and conducted cancer research at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center in Philadelphia and JHU's Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center in Baltimore. Finally, from her sophomore thru her senior year, Katariina volunteered in the Children's Unit at the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

#### **Questions**

##### **Describe a day in the life of a Legal Assistant.**

I work as a legal assistant in a small, start-up litigation law firm here in Baltimore. The firm being small and new, I have had a chance to do quite a lot of things as a fresh out of college legal assistant. However, mostly my responsibilities fall under the umbrella of

keeping my two bosses organized, and handling any administrative aspects that go into running the firm and doing cases. Usually my day starts with a compiling a to-do list for the day. These lists have really become crucial and usually consist of tasks from following up on emails to other paralegals; mailing out documents relating to an upcoming trial to drafting memos for my bosses. The firm also has a research component to it in addition to trying cases, and this means we host research conferences for other attorneys. So a big part of my job has been to put those seminars together, meaning I spend time organizing the location, sending out information to the attendees and organizing the logistics. These seminars have been quite exciting, as we host them in California, and I have gotten the chance to go along as an assistant to them, although, the four days of the conference are quite work intensive, it is nice to see the West Coast sun! Other than the seminar practicalities, the day also involves calendaring events for my bosses and reminding/getting them to do various tasks. For example, last week, I had to sit my boss down to go over a stack of documents with me that we were to send out to an expert witness. So I think the name “task-master”, as my bosses have jokingly nicknamed me suits my job well. My job in essence is to make sure they get the necessary things done when needed. Then usually some part of the day involves reading through case documents and following a paper trail to understand a certain aspect of a case, and then presenting that information to my bosses. Like I already mentioned, the firm is small, so it has been very exciting to really feel part of the team and feel like my role is helping to keep everything on track.

### **What made you choose this particular position and has it met your expectations?**

When I was looking for a job as a legal assistant, my primary expectation was to get as much exposure to the legal field as possible, and this job has definitely given me that. Before going to law school, I wanted to make sure that law really is something I would like to pursue and that desire was not just based on some idea I had of it from the outside. Getting to work with my bosses and seeing what their daily work involves has allowed me to observe what a career in law would possibly look like for me. This observational aspect of my work has solidified that law school is something I would like to pursue. So definitely, this position has met my expectation of seeing what an attorney’s job is like. But I would like to point out that I think I am getting this good observational experience due to the fact that I am working in a small law firm and getting the chance to work closely with the partners. Similarly, I recognize that my understanding of the job of the attorney stems from this relatively small firm and big corporate law will drastically differ.

### **Did you pursue anything else during your interim years before beginning law school? How did you go about researching each of these opportunities?**

This has been the only thing I have done now before law school and very much worth it! My approach to applying to jobs divided into two aspects, one was that I sent applications to law firms with legal assistant/paralegal position openings through Hopkins JHU-connect. The other approach was heavy networking, and learning about job opportunities through friends and family.

**What do you think you have gained from the experiences and from taking time off before law school? Given the choice, would you do it again?**

When I was considering whether to take some time off before graduate school, most of the advice I received was to take some time off and get some work experience. At first, I was skeptical of the idea, but now, having followed their advice, I am really glad I did. Being in school studying versus working full time are very different. And I think having had the chance to do a full-time job has given me completely honest perspective as to what are some of the skills you really need in work life, skills that do not necessarily become apparent in school. A big part of this experience has been that it has given me a realistic understanding of what the job of an attorney is, and has solidified my decision to pursue law school afterwards. I always thought there was such a hurry to get graduate school done, but now I am realizing that as long as I am doing something purposeful and learning, time is not wasted and there is no rush. I have spent my whole life studying, and know very well what it takes to do well in school, to echo some of the advice I received from my mentors my senior year: it really has been great to get my feet wet in a completely different environment and take a bit of a break from the library!

**What types of undergraduate opportunities did you pursue that led to your decision to apply to law school? Were there any other experiences that you felt were particularly helpful in strengthening your application to law school?**

I took some classes related to law such as American Constitutional law, which really inspired me to study law as a field further. I also took the intersession course ["The Practice of Law"] -- that was very useful to get an introduction to the legal field and gain the understanding that there are so many things you can do with a law degree. As a public health major, I also got to take classes such as Human Rights Law and Public Health and the Law at Bloomberg. These classes really showed me how much of a difference one can do through law, and the challenging thinking that goes into the legal field. But now, reflecting on these classes and being at work, it really has been great to see both the academic side as well as the practical application aspect of the legal field.

**Contact Information**

If you would like to learn more about being a Legal Assistant, Stombaugh, Smith and Company, LLC, or have additional questions for Katariina Mattila, you may reach her via email at [katarinamattila16@gmail.com](mailto:katarinamattila16@gmail.com).

**5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Law School Admission Game: Pre-Law Event**

***Co-Sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Black Law Students Association (MBLSA) and The University of Baltimore BLSA***

**Location: The University of Baltimore School of Law**

**Date: Saturday, November 7, 2015**

**Time: 9:30 am to 5:00 pm**

**Description: The Law School Admission Game is a dynamic program for pre-law students. This FREE program will include sessions on building a better application, diversity in the classroom, LSAT strategies, and more. Lunch will be served. To RSVP, email: [mablsa.prelaw@nblsa.org](mailto:mablsa.prelaw@nblsa.org).**

**The University of Maryland, Baltimore Open House: Carey School of Law**

**Location: University of Maryland, Baltimore**

**Date: Saturday, November 7, 2015**

**Time: 8am to 3:30 pm**

**Description: The University of Maryland, Baltimore will be having a campus wide open house on Saturday, November 7, 2015. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual event that promises to give great information about the campus community as a whole, as well as Maryland's law program, including: Faculty and Student Discussion Panels, Campus Tours, Table Talk Sessions, and Lunch. For registration and event details, visit:**

**<http://www.umaryland.edu/OpenHouse/>. Registration Deadline: Oct. 23rd.**

**Upcoming LSAT Administration**

**Location: Visit <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/testing-locations> for testing location information.**

**Date: December 5, 2015 / February 6, 2016**

**Time: Registration begins at 8:30 am for the October exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.**

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The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:  
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Please visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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