



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

Vol. 11, No. 5
Friday, November 10, 2017

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

Concerned about the cost of law school? Learn how to manage graduate school expenses at the AccessLex session on Tuesday, November 28.

Financing Your Graduate Education Session

Location: Maryland 110

Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2017

Time: 12:00-1:00pm

Description: Kim Siwarski, AFC, Manager, Education and Pre-Law Services at AccessLex will discuss how to finance your law school, medical or other health professions school education.

Registration required: <https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/vkb5m10/10>

Happy (early) Thanksgiving!

2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

Jaschik, Scott. "ETS Validity Study on GRE for Law Schools Admissions." *Inside Higher Ed*. Web. 31 Oct. 17. <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/10/31/ets-validity-study-gre-law-school-admissions> -- reports that "the Educational Testing Service is today releasing a study that it says shows that the Graduate Record Examination, not just the traditionally required Law School Admission Test, has validity for law school admissions."

Ward, Stephanie Francis. "ABA Legal Ed council revisits admissions test requirement, tables bar exam standard." *ABA Journal*. Web. 6 Nov. 17. http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/aba_legal_ed_council_bar_pass_rate_standards_admissions_test/ -- reports that the Council of the ABA's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar has accepted a recommendation to do away with the standard that requires a standardized admissions test.

Weiss, Debra Cassens. "This generational group is the largest in BigLaw." *ABA Journal*. Web. 08 Nov. 17.

http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/this_generational_group_is_the_largest_in_biglaw/ -- reports that data collected by ALM Intelligence show that millennials now outnumber lawyers from GenX and baby boomers in Big Law, making up 43 percent of lawyers at nearly 400 of the top firms.

3. OPPORTUNITY: SUMMER 2018 COMMUNITY IMPACT INTERNSHIPS PROGRAM (CIIP)

Join other Hopkins students this summer in Baltimore working alongside community members to make a difference. The CIIP is a competitive, paid summer internship program that selects 50 JHU undergraduate students to be paired with nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and government agencies throughout Baltimore City, and offers an intensive, cohort-based learning environment. Internships focus on community-identified projects and are selected for each student based on their skills and interests, providing a unique and individualized experience. In addition to interning in the community, the program includes an extensive orientation program and weekly reflection sessions with presentations to familiarize interns with Baltimore's past and present.

Interns will work 35 hours a week for 8 weeks and earn a \$4,000 salary. The dates for this year's program are June 4 – August 4, 2018. CIIP is available to current JHU Freshman through Juniors.

The application for the 2018 Community Impact Internships Program (CIIP) is available at <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/socialconcern/programs/ciip/interns/>

The deadline for application submissions is December 22, 2017.

The goal of this program is two-fold; to give JHU undergraduates an opportunity to be directly involved in a community in Baltimore City, and to support the important work being done by nonprofits and government agencies. The CIIP is housed within the Center for Social Concern at the Johns Hopkins University, and is made possible through a generous gift of \$2.25 million from a private donor.

*For more information about the Community Impact Internships Program contact: Eli Lopatin, Assistant Director Neighborhood and Community Programs, Phone: 410.516.4777
Email: elilopatin@jhu.edu*

4. INTERVIEW: LISA SPARKS, CONSTRUCTION LAW ATTORNEY

Lisa Sparks is a lifelong resident of Baltimore. She fast-tracked college and law school, beginning at CCBC while still in high school, graduating the University of Baltimore with a B.A. in Jurisprudence in 2005 and the University of Baltimore School of Law with a J.D. in 2007. She holds the distinction of being the class commencement speaker at both UB graduations. While in law school, Lisa was a law scholar (similar to a TA), research assistant to Judge Frederic N. Smalkin, and on the trial team. Following law school, she clerked for the Honorable Deborah S. Eyler on the Maryland Court of Special Appeals.

After her clerkship, Lisa became an associate at Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, LLP in the construction and surety group. She also practiced with Bowie & Jensen, LLC in Towson before re-joining several of her Whiteford colleagues at the Baltimore firm of Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP where she transitioned from associate to of counsel in 2015. Lisa has been named a Super Lawyer in several successive years by her peers and receives positive press for her Baltimore City

youth outreach work in a program called “Rosie the Lawyer” which seeks to introduce young women to careers in the law. The Daily Record named her a Leading Woman in 2014.

During her clerkship year, Lisa began teaching as an adjunct in the paralegal program in the CCBC School of Justice. In 2010, the University of Baltimore School of Law invited her to teach commercial law in the evening as an adjunct. Picking up additional courses in sales and construction law over the succeeding years, Lisa expanded her teaching to a full-time load and ultimately joined the full-time faculty in 2015 in the role of Practitioner in Residence. She also serves as the special assistant to the dean for bar readiness. Lisa has received a number of teaching awards at UB: Outstanding Teaching by an Adjunct, James May Faculty Mentoring, and Saul Ewing Award for Transactional Teaching.

When neither teaching nor practicing law, Lisa practices yoga, dog sits, and reads on the beach in Ocean City.

Describe a day in the life of a Construction Law Attorney.

If I couldn’t practice in the area of construction, I probably wouldn’t want to be a lawyer anymore. When your practice is defined by serving an industry rather than just a type of law, it gives you a lot of opportunity to do different things. Some days, I review and revise contracts or provide general business advice. Other days, I work on litigation matters. Note, however, that I rarely go to trial. The time, expense, and risk of trial is rarely a good business decision for my clients, so we usually seek negotiated outcomes in the context of disputes. The best days are when I get to visit my clients on their projects – active construction sites. I love to learn about the different projects which often includes engineering, design, and construction means and methods.

I’ve been very fortunate to have lots of memorable days, ranging from exceptional outcomes for my clients to the strange and unexpected. Perhaps the most memorable, though, was my first solo fact witness deposition. I was representing a subcontractor who had sued the prime contractor for non-payment. The prime contractor was a one-man operation. He was a very skilled craftsman, but terrible at paperwork. The deposition lasted two days. I wasn’t mean at all, matter-of-fact if anything, but he cried through most of the first day. On the second day, he was more collected, but unexpectedly pulled a paper from his pocket and handed it to me, without his attorney’s prior knowledge or permission. I looked it over, asked a few more questions, and resolved the case with a consent judgment in my client’s favor shortly thereafter. Now, I wonder what I’m doing wrong when the witnesses don’t cry. And, I swear I’m not mean.

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

Quite candidly, I fell into my first attorney position, in the construction and surety group at Whiteford, Taylor & Preston here in Baltimore, by virtue of happenstance. I graduated into the recession and entry-level attorney positions were few and far between, so I was lucky in a lot of ways. I tried to avoid criminal practice, but otherwise kept an open mind as to practice area. A few months in, I thought about it and realized that construction was the perfect area for me and I had never really thought about it. Realistically, no one goes to law school seeking to be a construction lawyer unless their dad is a contractor. For me, the chance to learn so many new things every day is incredible. I love getting to know my clients’ businesses and being able to read plans and speak the lingo. Casual dress, with boots and a hard hat, is a nice perk for me also.

How would you compare the reality of your profession to the picture you had of it before entering and while in law school? Are there downsides to your field?

The one big component of the practice of law that no one really talks about, especially in law school, is that private practitioners have to be salespeople and bring in clients. In most other industries, professionals hire marketing people to go out and solicit business. Ethically and realistically, we can't do that, so we spend a lot of time, often on nights and weekends, networking and building relationships to generate business. Young associates are now expected to do that from the very beginning in addition to meeting productivity benchmarks and partnership is dependent upon having a significant and reliable book of business. This is not necessarily a bad thing – I have to come enjoy attending events within the construction industry and made lots of friends there – but it is an obligation to be accounted for.

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

I would encourage anyone planning to attend law school to think about industries or practice areas that might interest them and try to gain experience, through externships or paid employment, on the “client side.” In a competitive job market, having business experience, a valuable network, or demonstrated experience will go a long way in differentiating themselves.

Contact Information:

Lisa Sparks is happy to answer questions and can be reached by email at: lsparks@ubalt.edu. Lisa can also arrange class sit-ins and tours at UB Law for those interested.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Financing Your Graduate Education Session

Location: Maryland 110

Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2017

Time: 12:00-1:00pm

Description: Kim Siwarski, AFC, Manager, Education and Pre-Law Services at AccessLex will discuss how to finance your law school, medical or other health professions school education.

Registration required: <https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/vkb5m10/10>

Upcoming LSAT Administration

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

Date: December 2, 2017 / February 10, 2018

Time: Report at no later than 8:30 am for the December exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

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

- Kelli R. Johnson, J.D., Director
- Ana L. Droscoski, J.D., Associate Director
- Ellen Snyderman, M.S., Assistant Director
- Shannon Jensen, M.A., Assistant Director

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.

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

Please visit our website <http://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/preprofadvising/> for additional information.

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