SERVING PEOPLE
AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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Public Defender
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The University of the District of Columbia
David A. Clarke School of Law
Learning Law in the Spirit of Public Interest
Dear Alumni and Friends,

This issue celebrates just a few of our many alumni serving the public interest. But as we do so, we remain acutely aware that the recession is touching even our public interest/public service legal community. Jobs are scarce, even as the need increases.

Fortunately, ours is a true community, offering guidance and support. Do you need help? Can you help others?

Visit our Career Center at the new www.law.udc.edu. There alumni and students can search (and post) jobs, internships and other announcements; post and search resumes; and subscribe to receive alerts of new postings. In addition, alumni have access to the School’s subscription job databases. You’ll need your Constituent ID (recently e-mailed to you) to verify your alumni status when registering. If you don’t have yours, just drop me a note at JLibertelli@udc.edu or call 202-274-7338.

As always, Dena Bauman, our Career Services Director, can help you develop strategies for your job search. Please feel free to call her at 202-274-5722 or email at dbauman@udc.edu. Dena would also love to hear from those alumni willing to serve as mentors or to participate in panel discussions on specific practice areas.

There’s also a new on-line community on our website. Once signed in, you can create your personal profile and determine how much of it is visible to your fellow alumni or members of your groups. Connect with classmates, join or start an online special interest group, post pictures, even start a personal blog. Give it a shot; it’s new and will only get better the more alumni use it. And please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions, complaints or comments.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Joe Libertelli
Director of Alumni Relations
University of the District of Columbia
David A. Clarke School of Law

SAVE THESE DATES

2010 Reunion
April 24, 2010
Host Committees now forming for ’75, ’80, ’85/95, ’00 and ’05 classes.

Contact Joe Libertelli
JLibertelli@udc.edu / 202-274-7338.

U.S. Supreme Court Alumni Group Admission Ceremonies

April 28, 2010
“Argument Day” admission — Limited to 12 alumni

November 15, 2010
“Non-Argument Day” admission — up to 50 alumni

For more information: www.law.udc.edu/?page=Supreme
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Recent Graduates Working for the Government of the District of Columbia

Special Thanks to our Generous Alumni
Protecting children on the job and beyond

DEBORAH ST. JEAN

Director, Juvenile Protection Division
Maryland Office of the Public Defender
All this is true. But as she goes on, it's apparent her real love for this work springs from a deeper source.

“You get to help the little kid. When you sweep in and take charge and say ‘I got your back, here's my cell number. You call me if there's a problem’—there isn't any better feeling than that.”

Where does this desire to make a difference come from? She grew up in arctic terrain in Canada, and saw pervasive mistreatment of the minority French-Canadians and native Indian tribes.

“I don’t like bullies, never have. Once I get my anger up, I’m pretty much all in.”

It's one thing to take this stance, and quite another to act. Clearly, Deborah goes above and beyond in her role as public defender, as shown by recent actions she undertook on behalf of a young woman she had helped out of a detention facility and into an independent living program. Deborah first met her in an institution. The girl, then an 11 year old, had been removed from her home because her brother had been sexually abusing her.

“I would have lunch with her almost once a week. One day she tells me that she’s been ‘beat’ in. That was bad enough, but two girls from the Crips had now moved into her place.

She was “beat” in. That was bad enough, but two girls from the Crips had now moved into her place.

“Squatters. They're taking her food, forging her name. All with gang backing,” says Deborah. “She's very scared, quaking over this. I just want to get this girl out of there and away from all this. She has relatives in another state, but because she's on probation she can't leave Maryland without court approval.”

From their lunch, Deborah and the girl go right to court, tell the judge the circumstances and get permission to leave the state. Deborah then goes with the young woman to her apartment to help her pack some clothes and her prescriptions. The girls who “beat” her into the Crips are there, and promptly tell her that she can't leave because their “O G” won't let her.

This is how Deborah relates the rest of the tale:

“I say to the girl, ‘Madam’—and I'm certain no one has ever called this young woman 'madam' in her life—I say ‘Madam, I don't know from any O.G., but this is what's happening' I got this girl out.”

Four hours from the time they were in front of a judge petitioning to leave the state, the girl was on a bus and leaving the Crips behind.

So when Deborah St. Jean says that what attracted her to Antioch School of Law was that it was “rogue-like,” it's easy to believe. She is just as up-front about her love of the education she got there, with not a hint of romanticizing the physical surroundings:

“It was a castle-looking filthy little place. But it had great clinics.”

And that meant an opportunity to learn the law in a way that is special.

“I run into lawyers every day who don’t know how to put things into evidence,” says Deborah. “You can read all you want, but there’s value in the experience of having something ‘go left on you’ in a courtroom. You learn how to deal with it.”

Today Deborah is Director of the Juvenile Protection Division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender. But she didn't always think she would be practicing as a public defender. Her first year at Antioch, she still thought she would go on to become a corporation counsel.

“That was before John Copacino [now the Director of Georgetown Law's Criminal Justice Clinic and E. Barrett Prettyman Program] got hold of me,” says Deborah. “He didn't try to talk me into being a public defender. He simply asked me to spend a week at the Oak Hill Youth Center, a D.C. juvenile detention facility.

“He's a very smart man. He knew what I would find there and how much it would bother me.”
“You learn things you can’t learn from a book, like how to cross-examine a police officer who may feel the ends justify the means.”

The first thing she saw when she got out of her car was a twelve-year-old boy unable to walk, his feet bound with towels.

“Who does that to a kid?” she thought.

That’s all it took for her to choose a career as a defense lawyer. Before she finished law school, she had handled a parole revocation hearing (as part of her internship with the Public Defender Service for D.C.) and, working with current Dean Shelley Broderick (then Director of the Misdemeanor Clinic), took part in what she believes was the longest suppression hearing in D.C. Superior Court history.

“That’s what happens when you have a whole team of rosy-cheeked young people investigating the hell out of a case. They investigate the scene personally, look up policies in other states, and what is normally a 20-minute to half-hour proceeding went on for a week. But with good reason—our client won. My kid never saw the inside of the courtroom.”

Deborah believes the skill sets for civil and criminal law are very different.

“You learn things you can’t learn from a book, like how to cross-examine a police officer who may feel the ends justify the means.”

After graduation, she went into private practice knowing she would eventually seek a position at the Montgomery County Office of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender. At the law firm of Coale, Cooley, Lietz, McInerny & Broados, she was part of a huge class-action suit on behalf of 890 male juveniles who were subjected to physical and mental abuse at three state-run boot camps in Western Maryland.

“These kids were isolated—not allowed to see their probation officers—and were beaten. One child was beaten so severely he suffered permanent damage to his knee; another was forced to eat his own vomit.”

It turned out to be the largest class-action case on behalf of juveniles who received a monetary settlement—$4.5 million—and the first class-action civil rights lawsuit to correct abuse of juveniles in military-style boot camps. The settlement included the creation of a fund for children who went on to complete either vocational training or a college education.

“The first group to complete their education are about to get their money—and I’m going to hand out the checks to some of these young men personally,” says Deborah. “That will be a very good day. And that will carry me over through the myriad bad days.”

One of the worst of those myriad days turned into a decisive victory—the closing of the Bowling Brook Juvenile Detention Center. Its story is now well known, but Bowling Brook was just one of 140 residential treatment, detention and therapeutic centers under the purview of the Juvenile Protection Division.

“Our job is to make sure the facilities are giving them what they’re supposed to be given.”

“We monitor the conditions of confinement and raise the standard of
Deborah finds monitoring the conditions portion is relatively easy, but working to make a facility a place where juveniles can acquire resources that help them get out of the system permanently is harder. She finds many are not getting the representation to which they are entitled.

For instance, at the Thomas J.S. Waxter Children’s Center, a secure facility for girls, her office discovered that girls were being kept in seclusion for days. “This is totally illegal,” says Deborah, “so we ask to see their seclusion logs. They didn’t have any. So the first step is simply the job of getting required actions, as set out in the Code of Maryland Regulations.”

Sometimes simply being there to show them the regulations or sending a letter noting the statute is enough. Other times, the office will go to court.

“We fixed the abuse of seclusion at Waxter. We are out making these systemic changes throughout the state.” Deborah cites the work of UDC-DCSL Professor Joe Tulman, whose juvenile clinic she worked in as a student, as the model for this kind of systemic change.

“He literally wrote the book on this,” says Deborah, referring to the manual Special Education Advocacy Under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for Children in the Juvenile Delinquency System, which he edited and co-authored with then-fellow Professor Mary Hynes.

Just two weeks after joining the Juvenile Protection Division, all her experience was put to use in the case of the Bowling Brook Juvenile Detention Center. The choking death of a 17 year-old resulted in an overhaul of the security policies and elimination of the use of 4-point restraints on children. Details of the case are heinous. A boy was choked to death while being restrained by several officers. The officers taunted the boy, calling him a little actor, despite the fact that he was foaming at the mouth. Other children in the center were made to stand and watch him die.

Yet, the case alone was not enough to close the facility, at least not quickly enough for the Juvenile Protection Division.

“These kids were scared to death. But there was an economic interest in keeping the facility open: the state had underwritten the bond for the property. The 180 kids inside were generating income. And frankly, the abuse was so bad we had a hard time getting people to believe it.

“Sure we wanted to fix the systemic problem, but that’s not what those boys and young men cared about. They wanted out to somewhere safer. So that’s what we did. We simply, as their representatives, had every one of them pulled out and sent elsewhere.”

Deborah goes on to say, “You can only do what you can do. As long as I’ve given my best to an issue or cause, I can live with the results, even if they’re less than perfect.

“These kids aren’t evil. They just get caught up in nonsense. They’re kids, they’re gullible. They believe stuff. They don’t know there is another way to live, to be. Some of these 18 and 19 year-olds have never been out of East Baltimore.”

While this passion for public service comes naturally for her, she hopes UDC-DCSL will provide even more lawyers for Public Defender offices around the country.

“My flaw is I take on more than I can do. We need more good lawyers. So keep graduating them,” says Deborah. “[Dean] Shelley [Broderick] helped create this monster I am today; I pay her forward.”
For the government, for the people

LUIS RUMBAUT
Luis Rumbaut expected to return to St. Louis—where he had grown up, attended college and been involved in community work—after graduating from law school.

“I had an interview, and as the interview proceeded, I realized that both my views and my ethnicity were not really welcomed,” he recalls. “It was made clear to me, though of course not explicitly, that I would likely find greener pastures elsewhere.”

That was quite a different experience from his three years as a member of the Antioch School of Law’s very first graduating class, the class of ’75. It was not a difficult decision to remain in D.C. and he has been in Washington ever since. “As a Latin American, it has been much more interesting.”

He was attracted to Antioch because it looked to him like the most progressive law school in the U.S. and because it had an extensive, required, three-year clinical program. Antioch was the only law school to which Luis applied.

Jean and Edgar Cahn had attracted and admitted activists first and foremost, and the diversity of that first class was remarkable even today, and certainly for its time.

“That class had people from all kinds of different communities, ethnic groups and economic strata,” says Luis. “Feminists, children of Appalachian coal miners, farm workers from California, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans—it was an odd mosaic. But we all came there with a particular interest, and a very real disposition to push for what we wanted and to push now. We couldn’t wait to get out of law school and do something. The dialectic between all these different groups influenced us all.”

“We eventually discovered the world was a lot more complicated. By the third year... we had gained hands-on experience that we could put to real use.”

Luis remembers that the class was small; they could have a full meeting in the hall supplied by the All Souls Church. The W arder-T otten House on 16th Street, a one-time mansion, reinforced that first year feeling of being “in our own compressed little world, with all our classes taking place in such close proximity.”

Besides the Cahns, Luis was particularly influenced by his Constitutional Law professor, Dewey Jones, who led a group of students in handling a large class-action case for discrimination against a federal agency.

While Luis spent a very long time working in the D.C. government, he did not start there. Immediately after graduation and passing the bar, he joined a small community law office for a year until he moved on to a position with Ayuda Legal Services, where he had worked during part of his Antioch Clinical Program. After one year, he became its Director.

In 1979, he left AYUDA to work as Deputy Chief of the D.C. Bureau of Paternity and Child Support Enforcement, at the time a much smaller agency than now exists. Five years later he moved on to the Office of the Corporation Counsel, which later became the Office of the Attorney General of the District of Columbia, where he worked in various capacities involving administrative and civil cases in consumer and regulatory affairs, professional licenses,
permits, administrative appeals, and other areas. He moved from line attorney to unit chief to section chief to Acting Deputy Corporation Counsel for the Enforcement Division and ultimately to Senior Counsel to the Attorney General.

One of the units he supervised, and for which he handled some cases himself, pursued third-party recovery of hundreds of thousands of dollars for the District government. The District stood in surrogation to recover from private insurers funds it had immediately issued to firemen and police who had been injured on the job.

He also supervised the prosecution of cases in which the government confiscated property dealing with prostitution or drugs; proceeds from the sale of the assets were divided between the federal and District governments.

His last nearly four years at the A.G.'s office were spent in a return to the Paternity and Child Support division. Formerly a bureau in the Department of Human Services, it had become a division of the Office of the Attorney General. When the division chief left to work in another state, a national search began for a replacement. In the meantime, it had become clear to the managers that someone already in the A.G.'s office had extensive experience with the work of paternity and child support—Luis.

He returned as Acting Director, only this time it was staffed by 180 people and had a $26-plus million budget. The department was highly dependent on Information Technology in every way, from the complex main system used to manage the cases to the many automated interfaces used to locate parents, track interstate cases, exchange information with the courts, and collect debts through cooperative programs with the federal and District tax offices and other agencies. After a year as Acting Chief, and once a permanent incumbent was recruited, Luis moved on to head the Division's Information Technology unit.

In 2002, he was awarded the Beatrice Rosenberg Award for Excellence in Government Service by the D.C. Bar. It is awarded annually to D.C. Bar members in recognition of career accomplishments providing “outstanding counsel to a government agency, exceptional service to the legal profession or the community, and unselfish contributions to advance the careers of colleagues.”

Luis was only the second D.C. government employee so honored in a field of candidates until then dominated by the federal agencies.

At the same time, Luis had become a single parent, and the responsibilities of those last four years were great. When has was able to take an early retirement with his son still only 10 years old, he did so.

His view of being a government lawyer remains one of respect. “The essence of the public lawyer is that while you represent the people, you often do so within constrained circumstances,” he says. “If you have 8 people in a section or division and your work increases in a year by 15%, too bad. You don’t get 15% more money or resources; you just have to find a way to get it done until you can get a budget increase.

“Yet, at the same time, you are still appearing before judges—you are a licensed professional subject to Bar Counsel action. The residents of D.C. deserve your best work.”

And while he characterized his work as a government lawyer as that of consumer protection, of “being on the right side,” he says being outside of the “ideological superstructure of the legal system” today frees him to pursue other issues—yet his legal training remains invaluable.

An example is his work with a solidarity group in support of profound changes taking place in Bolivia. After negotiations with a fierce opposition that had nearly taken the country to civil war, the government has proposed a modified new constitution to be voted upon by referendum.

“This process affects all of South America, and ultimately the U.S. as well,” says Luis. “Our group will hold meetings with Bolivians in the D.C. area to review the constitution and debate the pros and cons of the proposal.”

Luis’ experience helps him to compare the constitutional process in Bolivia to processes in other countries, and in particular to the creation of our own U.S. constitution.

“It is tremendously helpful to have a practical understanding of how the new Bolivian constitution will require additional legislation and rulemaking. I am used to reading legal clauses and proposed amendments whose consequences are not always self-evident.

“As lawyers taking part in judicial processes, we can open new spaces, tweak the system, achieve significant victories, but we cannot expect the existing judicial and legal system to change the larger system that it embodies,” says Luis. “The process in Bolivia is a reminder that sometimes that larger system itself has to be changed through political action and mass mobilization. Still, any new system needs the structure of a constitution and laws, and lawyers have an essential role in making that happen in a way that reflects the people’s embrace of radical change.”

“We couldn’t wait to get out of law school and do something.”
Giving kids a way out

SABRINA BAZEMORE
The incident will sound familiar to thousands. It is not particularly remarkable in its details, nor, sadly, is it unique. Yet, it was a turning point for Sabrina Bazemore. Because unlike most who simply relate the story as proof of endemic injustice, Sabrina decided to do something—namely, speed up her career path to law school.

A friend was driving her to a mall in suburban Maryland. Going the other direction was a police cruiser that quickly made a U-turn and began following their Jeep. Sure enough, the lights went on atop the black-and-white and a young officer motioned for them to turn into a 7/11 parking lot.

"Next thing you know, my friend is spread-eagled against the wall, a crowd is gathering, and I keep asking 'Why did you stop us?'

She knew from her paralegal training that they were entitled to an answer, but no answer came. Sabrina's friend, a male, was getting the worst of the treatment, and tensions were mounting.

Fortunately, when backup finally arrived, a more experienced officer took one look and understood that the situation was close to getting out of hand—and for no reason.

"He was willing to actually talk. When I asked why my friend was pulled over and being treated this way, I was told that a lady just called in that her Jeep was stolen."

At that, Sabrina said, "Why didn't you run the tags?"

The more experienced officer replied, "I just did. You're free."

And that was it. In one sense, nothing happened. In another, everything did.

"What makes all this worth it is when you see your client able to make changes...that get them out of the criminal justice system."

A native of D.C., Sabrina had graduated from NYU ("I wanted to live in the City, and the dorm was on Fifth Avenue—who wouldn't want to leave home for that experience?") and was working as a paralegal when that traffic stop accelerated the next chapter in her life.

Today, she is a Public Defender in the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, Civil Legal Services Division, dealing with special education matters. As such, her clients are mostly juveniles in the delinquency system and young adults. Like her classmate and fellow '96 graduate Rochanda Hill-Hugh-Thomas (profiled in last quarter's alumni magazine), she cites as an inspiration the work of her Civil Procedure and Constitutional Law professor Frank Parker, both for his teaching and his dedication to achieving voting rights for the residents of Mississippi. (His 1990 book on passage of the Voting Rights Act, "Black Votes Count: Political Empowerment in Mississippi After 1965," remains in print today.)

"He showed me the link between the legal profession and plain folk," says Sabrina. "And he stressed the importance of knowing civil procedure, that you have to 'know it like the back of your hand' because to really make a difference, you have to be effective."

Sabrina says his early passing was a big loss, as was that of another law school mentor, Mary Hynes, under whom she worked at the Juvenile and Special Education Clinic.

"It would be nice to call and talk to them," something she does occasionally with Professor Suji Sutler, who recently retired. In fact, since it is the responsibility of the DCPDS to provide training and certification on special education issues to
lawyers seeking appointment to the Juvenile Panel, Sabrina called on Professor Sutler to help with recent training sessions.

Other early influences include D.C. Superior Court Magistrate Judge (and long-time Adjunct Professor) Tony Lee, who encouraged her to apply for an internship with the D.C. Public Defenders Service (DCPDS) in the spring of ’96, and Professor Louise Howells, for whom she was a teaching assistant in the Negotiable Instruments course.

But Sabrina wants to make it clear that she has found inspiration and guidance not only in school but over the course of her career, particularly citing Miriam Holmes at the District of Columbia Public Schools and her current supervisor Paula Scott, the Chief of the DCPDS Civil Legal Services Division.

Sabrina received a baptism by fire at her first job out of law school as a staff attorney with the District of Columbia Public Schools. That first week there were nearly thirty cases to prepare for due process hearings. Ms. Holmes took Sabrina and a colleague, Bernadette Bullock, under her wing stressing that though the workload was daunting they had to take their unofficial mission—“it’s about the child”—very seriously.

“It was very challenging, but it prepared me for my work today,” says Sabrina. “Representing children in the DCPDS, I’ve come full circle.”

And the lessons on procedure were not lost on her. “It was critical to know the procedures in the forum I was working in; to be able to make arguments intelligently in your client’s favor based on process.”

In her current position, Sabrina sees the same dedication to principles and practice on the part of Paula Scott.

“She style of oversight has made it very easy for me to stay in one position for this long,” says Sabrina, referring to the fact that this is the longest-held position of her career. “It is very rewarding.”

Of course, the greatest reward is in her own fulfillment of the ideals and best practices learned from all those she cited.

“What makes all this worth it is when you see a child, your client, get the appropriate services they’re entitled to, and then see them be able to make changes in their lives that get them out of the criminal justice system. Out in a way that lets them stay out.”

Client privacy makes it difficult to talk about the specific cases that bring such satisfaction, but one person immediately comes to mind for Sabrina.

At play were learning disabilities severe enough that this child’s needs were beyond the abilities of any public school, for help beyond the normal full school day was required—yet the child had been denied a residential placement. Residential placement means admission to a live-in facility that can offer full-time oversight combining both special education needs and medical needs.

Sabrina helped him get his residential placement using a compensatory education award from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. While there, he applied, and was accepted into a culinary arts school. Today, he is working in the restaurant business, in the kitchen prepping meals, awaiting the financial aid to attend the school and pursue his long-term career. She recently surprised him by dropping in for lunch.

“It changed his life. He has not been back in the system,” says Sabrina. “He was just one of a whole population of children with no guarantee that they’ll reach adulthood. Some are turning their lives around because they see how important education is.

“We’re fortunate DCPDS recognized the link between education and delinquency and invested in these kids by establishing a civil legal services division with special education attorneys in-house.”

“Alyssa Patzoldt ’08
Alyssa had just started at the Children’s Law Center when her fellow alumni were profiled in our first issue. We asked about her first six months on the job.

“While more challenging than I thought, I was ready because of the clinical program,” Alyssa says. “Professor Tulman’s Juvenile and Special Education Clinic was great substantive preparation, as many of my cases involve special ed.

“But all the clinics, with their emphasis on client interaction and managing both casework and coursework, gave me solid time management skills. Although I specialize as a guardian ad litem, so many things besides abuse and neglect laws go into the cases—it’s challenging.”

She cites Professors Fraidin and Tulman as mentors. “I still go to them for help, not just about work, but bigger questions about life and career, too.”
Finding the best solutions for children

PAUL KRATCHMAN
Paul Kratchman thought he would be a social worker. He had a role model in his uncle. His undergraduate studies were completed so he thought about getting a masters in Social Work to work with disenfranchised children to improve the quality of their lives. But that same uncle thought two social workers in the family was one too many.

“I work with attorneys in court, they work with children,” said the uncle. “Why don’t you do that?”

It made sense. He could practice law with a commitment to service, representing children in the abuse and neglect system as well as those in delinquency court. What also made sense was to attend a law school with a public service focus. He chose Antioch. His concentration in juvenile law began with his law school clinics: Family Law as a 1L, followed by the Abuse and Neglect Clinic with Professor Donna Wulkan and the Juvenile Delinquency Clinic with Professor John Copacino (now Director of Georgetown Law’s Criminal Justice Clinic and E. Barrett Prettyman Program). Then Professor, now Dean, Shelley Broderick and then-as-now Professor Joe Tulman were always there for him, as were the other clinicians for consultation and general support in the difficult role of representing the disenfranchised. Paul says, “Looking back, my training for my career could not have been any better.”

Today, he is Assistant General Counsel at the District of Columbia’s Child and Family Services Agency within the Office of the Attorney General where he offers advice and counsel to the Director and Executive Staff on individual cases and policies which will touch the lives of children and their families for years to come.

His first job after law school was with the Public Defender Service in Cook County, Illinois. As he was being interviewed for the job, the most renowned death penalty public defender in Chicago made a point of noting he was the first Antioch graduate to apply to their PDS: “Chicago is a big city, why haven’t we seen one of you before?” Clearly, there was already a cachet to graduating from the Antioch program among the public service community.

“When I started as a Public Defender in Chicago, there was very little training offered,” says Paul. “But because of my clinical experience, I was ready to go.”

For one year he represented parents in the abuse and neglect court and for the next two years he defended alleged juvenile delinquents for the PDS. He then returned to Washington to be a court-appointed representative of juveniles in abuse and neglect cases for the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect Office. He soon became an Assistant Corporation Counsel, in what is now the Attorney General’s office here in D.C., prosecuting abuse and neglect cases. In 1997, he became the Director of Court Services for the Child and Family Services Agency, advising the General Receiver and then the Directors of the Agency.
“Having worked in public interest law in the child welfare arena makes me a better prosecutor and government attorney,” says Paul. “I’m always looking for the solutions that are best for the children in the cases.”

He cites a recent case where the parents in a pre-adoptive home for two children weren’t finalizing the adoption because they felt they were entitled to more funding. Paul could have taken a harder line; many attorneys viewing the case solely in terms of their own record would have. But he felt the children needed to feel the home they were in was stable and the director agreed. Their adoption was finalized; they are now in a permanent home.

“It’s how I maintain my humanity,” says Paul. He also credits the leadership of CFSA General Receiver Ernestine Jones, who taught him to “put the child on the table” during any discussion about children and their families. Subsequent CFSA Directors have been receptive to this concept.

As privacy issues make it hard to discuss individual cases, Paul turns to a change in the way his agency treats the events surrounding the high school graduation of juveniles under its protection. Formerly, each child’s guardian ad litem or social worker would determine an amount that could be used toward the normal activities of graduation—proms, class rings, class trips and other senior events—and seek a court order for that amount. A “good” GAL or social worker would request money, others would not.

“Graduation is a huge accomplishment for many of these kids. They need to be recognized and deserve to have the same experience others have, but there’s clearly not an unlimited supply of money to put toward this.”

A much better solution was found when the agency created a standard, reasonable amount that each child could put toward the event, allowing the child to choose the activities in which he or she could take part.

After more than two decades of practicing law, Paul remains proud of his Antioch roots. “Here in D.C., attorneys don’t talk about where they went to law school. Yet there is a great sense of accomplishment in seeing so many alumni working as prosecutors and judges, as attorneys for parents and children in neglect cases, all attempting to make the lives of residents better.”

He is also encouraged by the tradition of a clinical law program at UDC-DCSL. “It’s good to see that the commitment to public service/public interest law is undiminished,” says Paul. “Because the need has, unfortunately, remained constant—and with the economy in the state it is in, the need will only become greater.”

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“Graduation is a huge accomplishment for many of these kids. They need to be recognized and deserve to have the same experience others have, but there’s clearly not an unlimited supply of money to put toward this.”

A much better solution was found when the agency created a standard, reasonable amount that each child could put toward the event, allowing the child to choose the activities in which he or she could take part.

After more than two decades of practicing law, Paul remains proud of his Antioch roots. “Here in D.C., attorneys don’t talk about where they went to law school. Yet there is a great sense of accomplishment in seeing so many alumni working as prosecutors and judges, as attorneys for parents and children in neglect cases, all attempting to make the lives of residents better.”

He is also encouraged by the tradition of a clinical law program at UDC-DCSL. “It’s good to see that the commitment to public service/public interest law is undiminished,” says Paul. “Because the need has, unfortunately, remained constant—and with the economy in the state it is in, the need will only become greater.”
Recent Graduates Working for the Government of the District of Columbia

Blair Miles '06

Blair Miles was very reserved prior to law school. "Things like student government weren't for me," he says. Yet at UDC-DCSL he became a Class Senator in '04, Vice President in '05 and Student Body President of his graduating class of '06. Today, he works in D.C. government as a Special Assistant in the Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, supporting D.C.'s 37 Commissions and 286 Commissioners. He came to the job after serving on the Committee on Workforce Development and Government Operations as part of former Councilmember Carol Schwartz's office.

What changed? For one thing, he met Dean Broderick. "She impressed me from my very first meeting. Her commitment to the School is second to none, and her example and enthusiasm inspire me to give back to the community as much as I can." Of course, Blair was ripe for this conversion. After all, he had been drawn to UDC-DCSL as a lifelong Washington, D.C. resident. "I knew of the law school, and my Dad suggested I look into it, too," says Blair. "The clinical program was both intimidating and exciting. The hands-on, out-of-the-classroom-and-into-the-community aspect, where I could serve neighbors and family, was very attractive."

He keeps in contact with Dean Broderick, and cites Professor Edward Allen's Housing Clinic and the classes of Professor Tom Mack as high points in his law school experience.

Today he is liaison to the public and conducts legal research for the Commissions. For example, one commissioner wanted to sponsor neighborhood kids to summer camp, yet commissioners can't give out money for "personal sustenance." Does camp qualify as personal sustenance? "I'll go to the code, find the case law to make a recommendation."

In his first D.C. government job he was part of a staff of five overseeing 42 agencies, the lion's share of work coming from Employment Services, Human Resources and the Office of Contracting and Procurement. "I especially enjoyed working behind the scenes of government. If I talk to someone at another agency and solve a problem for a citizen, I hear a thank you from that citizen—it's really big."

He also likes seeing other fruits of his labors. "It's cool to read laws right there in black and white that you helped write."

Blair was the primary staff person working on the "Paid Sick and Safe Days" bill that helps victims of domestic violence and those who are ill to seek help without losing their jobs or pay. Many low-income people in those situations don't get the help they need simply because they can't afford the time off work to get it. The bill made Washington, D.C. the second jurisdiction to mandate (the first to do so legislatively) that employees are entitled to a minimum amount of paid sick leave. "If you employ someone in the District, even part-time and at minimum wage," says Blair, "that person is still entitled to three days of paid sick leave."

"It took over a year to pass legislation that was not too hard on small businesses but was still meaningful for workers. We had to show employers it was to their benefit as well— for example, when sick people stay home rather than infect the rest of their staff, employers save money. Although controversial at its introduction, it passed 13 to zero."

His attraction to government may have bled into his personal life—Blair is married to fellow former UDC-DCSL SBA President Erin McFarland, whose work at Neighborhood Legal Services was profiled in our first issue.

Justin Constantino '07

Justin Constantino works in the Council of the District of Columbia's Office of the Budget Director. A resource for all Council members and committees, the office advises on budgets and financial plans, reviews contracts, and reports on the fiscal impact of legislation.

While in the UDC-DCSL Legislation Clinic, he worked closely with Councilmember Jack Evans' committee clerk, Eric Goulet. Eric eventually became budget director and asked the newly-graduated Constantino to join his staff.

"The clinical program couldn't have prepared me more for this position," says Justin. "All the drafting exercises we did, all the knowledge of the D.C. Code I acquired in the clinic— I use it on a daily basis."

A native of upstate New York, he did his undergraduate work at Ithaca College in political science and originally looked at UDC-DCSL because it fit his criteria of being "somewhere not upstate."
"I was actually on the fence about law school. I thought if I didn’t like it, I could work in politics. My cousin, a lawyer in family court in upstate New York, floated the idea that while the pay may be good in a big law firm, it might not be what I wanted. At the other D.C. law schools that accepted me, I didn’t hear much about working for people and the needy. Then I met the people at UDC-DCSL and loved what they said about public interest law.

It was the promise of hands-on experience that sold him. “While it sounded scary—you have responsibility over a serious situation—you can never beat life experience. It turned out to be a great choice.”

Yancey Burns ’08
To counteract a probable brain drain caused by upcoming boomer retirements, the D.C. Mayor’s office created the Capital City Fellowships. These two-year fellowships with District of Columbia Government offer six-month postings at up to four different city government agencies, letting Fellows make a more informed career choice at the end of that time. Seven to ten are awarded each year, and historically about 90% of them seek jobs in D.C. government.

“You get a feel for how municipal government really works,” says Yancey Burns, a recent UDC-DCSL graduate currently working as a Capital City Fellow in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. In this, his second six-month rotation, he staffs the Deputy Mayor’s meetings and is working on the relocation of UDC-DCSL to a downtown location.

“Getting a chance to shadow the Deputy Mayor and see how the city develops and nurtures its neighborhoods first hand was too great an opportunity to pass up,” says Yancey. His first six-month stint was in the Office of Property Management, drafting license agreements between the city and the city’s homeless shelters.

“Twenty one shelters are operated by the city, and there were no owner/occupant agreements,” says Yancey. “It was something that needed to get done.”

What drew him to that first rotation was the chance to work directly with the General Counsel, Camille Sabbakhan. As his first supervisor out of law school, she became a mentor to him. His mentors at UDC-DCSL included Professor Ed Allen, Director of the Housing Clinic during Yancey’s second clinical rotation.

“He taught me what being a real lawyer is all about—research, research, research,” says Yancey. “I saw its importance even more in civil procedures—if you don’t do the research, you won’t be successful.

“Professor Robert Burgdorf got me re-enthused about legislation, what a profound effect ‘feel-good’ legislation can have.” Yancey cites the Omnibus Domestic Partnership Property Rights Bill as legislation that was easy to get into law (virtually no one opposed it) and yet can effect enormous change.

And he couldn’t finish the highlights of his law school experience without citing Dean Broderick—“Especially for getting us to New Orleans for the first Katrina course.”

As committed as he is today to public service, law was not his first choice as a career. He came to UDC-DCSL having already been a journalist.

“I thought journalism could effect change,” he says. “But one needs a law degree to really change things for people. UDC-DCSL was the way that could help me help them.”
Our Special Thanks to all Our Generous Alumni

We deeply appreciate alumni support in all its many forms—volunteering for panel discussions, serving as mentors, hosting internships, hiring students and alumni, passing along job information and alumni news, assisting with fundraising, purchasing or donating at the annual summer public interest fellowship auction and more.

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