By Ian Silverthorne

Courier Staff

In the latest issue of U.S. News’ Top 100 Law Schools, Chapman leapt into the Second Tier of Law Schools, landing comfortably at #93. This is the second major achievement in the rankings for the school in two years, having jumped to the Third Tier in 2008. This was not an easy accomplishment for a law school that began in 1995 and was not eligible for ranking until its full ABA approval in 2002. This incredible jump in status has huge ramifications for Chapman Law School. Making the Top 100 will significantly increase awareness of Chapman amongst students from all across the nation when they consider and select law schools.

“This is an extraordinary achievement for our School of Law, moving up in the rankings this quickly in just over ten years since its founding,” said Chapman University President Jim Doti. “It is a tribute to the dedication and hard work of our past deans, John Eastman and Parham Williams, and to our outstanding law faculty who have always reflected such credit upon Chapman University.”

I sat down with Jayne Kacer, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, to get her perspective on Chapman Law School’s success. She recognized the incredible dedication and efforts of the faculty, alumni and students. “This is a result of a partnership between all the people involved with Chapman Law. The Faculty teaching the students, the alumni in the workplace, and the students learning here have all worked together to lift us up.” Dean Kacer mentioned the contributions of past students, in particular, having put their faith and trust in attending the school before it was ranked, and even before it was ABA accredited. These students have contributed to the success and foundation of Chapman Law. Dean Kacer also recognized the positive contributions the faculty members have made to the law school’s peer and legal profession reputation.
The Courier has also made a huge leap forward this year. We transformed what was just a little-read electronic periodical with few contributors into an active, dynamic and professional hard-copy periodical that our entire law school community can be very proud of. It has been my great pleasure and privilege to work with a group of talented and creative students who have continuously surprised me with their dedication and enthusiasm about the paper. Though I will greatly miss working with my Courier team, I am confident and excited about the paper’s future.

Last month, the Courier board sought applications from its members for the various positions available for the next academic year. The response was overwhelming. Selecting next year’s board from the pool of applicants has truly been a challenge. Nonetheless, I feel strongly that we have selected a qualified, engaged, and ambitious team of students to lead the Courier to even bigger and better things. It is my great pleasure to announce that Amber Hurley has been appointed Chief Editor. Amber will be assisted by Managing Editor Blythe Harris, VP of Finance Jessica Yim, and VP of Sales and Senior Editor Ian Silverthorne. The Courier’s design and layout team will be lead by VP of Design and Layout Julie Anne Ines. Finally, the Courier will be supported by an extremely talented team of Senior Editors consisting of Will Hadikusumo, Joanne Lembo, Jon Mason, Melissa Mielke and Melissa Newman. Congratulations to all of you. I leave the Courier with my mind at ease knowing that the paper will be in the hands of very capable custodians.

My sincere gratitude to the entire Courier staff for their continued efforts and devotion throughout the year. It has truly been an honor to work with you, and I wish you all continued success in your future endeavors. Finally, a note of thanks to you, our reader, for giving us a moment of your time, for engaging with us, and for coming back for more. The Courier exists for and because of you. I hope you have enjoyed reading the Courier this year as much I have enjoyed being a part of it. Remember: This is your paper and your voice. I leave you with the words of Benjamin Disraeli, a former British Prime Minister, who once said: “News is that which comes from the North, East, West and South, and if it comes from only one point on the compass, then it is a class publication and not news.” I, too, encourage you to make yourselves heard.
O.C. Equality Coalition honors Chapman Law professor

By Mary Liu

It’s amazing what our law professors do for the community both inside and outside of the classroom! Just this past month, Chapman Law Professor Katherine Darmer was the honored recipient of the Bridge Award, which was presented at the Fundraiser and Award Show of Men Alive, Orange County’s Gay Men’s Chorus. The Bridge Award is held in high regard by the Orange County community, and Professor Darmer’s groundbreaking work in helping start the Orange County Equality Coalition (OCEC) was central to her selection as the award recipient.

In terms of Darmer’s own legal career, besides serving as an advocate for OCEC, Darmer was also a former litigation associate for the famous New York City law firm, Davis Polk & Wardwell. While there, she was a member of the trial team representing the winning party, Delta Airlines, in a $2.5 billion dollar suit against Pan Am.

Based on her experiences, Darmer advises that while in law school, class selection is crucial to becoming a prosecutor. She notes that, “if you want to be a prosecutor, take every class at Chapman that includes trial work.” Darmer also mentioned the importance of pre-trial preparation, as “you need a firm grasp on hearsay evidence, so as much as you can do to learn the rules beforehand, the better.” In other words, working on making a good impression on the court and on clients is a necessary ingredient to success, because “guarding your professional reputation as your most valuable asset is very important.”

When asked how she first found her passion for litigation, Darmer mentioned her active involvement as the director of the Harlan Fiske Stone Moot Court Honor Competition while attending Columbia Law, and stressed that her number one piece of advice to her students today is to “find what you are passionate about and get involved.” For Professor Darmer, her passion has been a rewarding career in litigation and fighting for equal rights as an OCEC founder of the OCEC.

Although the OCEC is still a young organization that was founded in Fall 2008 as a response to the passage of Proposition 8, the organization is already well-known and respected as an organized team of attorneys and volunteers who advocate for equal rights in all realms, including marriage equality. Among

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Chapman Law School’s Alternative Dispute Resolution, Mock Trial, and Appellate Moot Court boards brought top honors to Chapman in the past Fall and current Spring semesters.

In the fall, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Board took first place at the United Kingdom’s first National Mediation Competition, competing against 12 other teams. They also took first place at the International Law School Mediation Tournament in Chicago, Ill., this spring.

Moot Court Trial team members in the fall were named Regional Champions at the International Moot Court Competition here in Orange, and members of the Mock Trial Board were named semifinalists at the CACJ National Criminal Advocacy Competition.

Congratulations to the following individuals and teams for their excellent performances:

**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION BOARD**

**Fall 2009:**


*3rd Place Individual Mediator*, United Kingdom National Mediation Competition -- Liverpool, England: Aaron Goben

**Spring 2010:**


**APPELLATE MOOT COURT BOARD**

**Fall 2009:**

*Regional Champions*, Thomas Tang International Moot Court Competition -- Orange, California: Ruby Banipal and John Bishop.

*Regional 2nd Top Oralist*, Thomas Tang International Moot Court Competition -- Orange, California: Elya Zarra.

*Regional 2nd Best Brief*, Thomas Tang International Moot Court Competition -- Orange, California: Ruby Banipal and John Bishop.

*International 3rd Top Oralist*, Thomas Tang International Moot Court Competition -- Boston, Massachusetts: Ruby Banipal.

*International 6th Place Team*, Thomas Tang International Moot Court Competition -- Boston, Massachusetts: Ruby Banipal and John Bishop.

*5th Place Team*, ALA Moot Court Competition -- Chicago, Illinois: Sam Kohler and Ruben Escobedo.

**Mock Trial Board**

**Fall 2009:**

*Semifinalist*, CACJ National Criminal Advocacy Competition -- San Francisco, CA: Amy Sakowski, Matt Kellond, and Joe Cavanaugh
Chapman students receive a complimentary soft drink or lemonade with their purchase!
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SBA Can Make A Difference: Does anyone care?

Ian Silverthorne & Jonathan Mason
Staff Writers

I recently submitted my personal statement of interest in running for a Student Bar Association (SBA) position. Here’s my platform: SBA should take a major role in alumni relations in order to create a strong connection between current students and alumni, leading to better job prospects for current Chapman students and a better reputation for Chapman. However, I was surprised to find out that instead of running for office, I was simply appointed. Apparently, there were not enough students running for SBA positions to justify holding formal elections, so everyone who applied was just appointed. This made the office of an SBA representative a little more daunting for me. I assumed that this was a highly coveted position, but given the lack of general interest in running for SBA, it was obviously something that most students either did not value or believed was a waste of their time.

The role of any student organization should be to facilitate the practice of law for its members. No matter what club or group it is, the main point of its existence should be to advance the interests of the students involved and help them to either segue into a career related to those interests or provide them with a venue for developing a personal interest in a particular field of law.

The problem here seems to be one of perception: Students do not see how SBA benefits them in their personal development, do not see it as a venue to advance their careers, and do not see any significance in what SBA does for the student body. After I found out that I was appointed, I assumed that this was a highly coveted position, but given the lack of general interest in running for SBA, it was obviously something that most students either did not value or believed was a waste of their time.

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DATING: Law students move from dating game, to ‘hire me’ game

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spoke of the need for more interest in his firm’s major practice area and Sam capitalized on the opportunity. He told the professor he wanted to discuss job opportunities immediately, but that he had other offers on the table. Sam showed the professor he had other opportunities and was not simply begging for a job.

Mike Grassi, 3L, and Nick Fortino, 1L, used their peers to find jobs. Mike followed up with a email from a student stating that she was leaving her current job and the firm wanted to find a replacement from Chapman. After his interview, Mike asked the firm when they would be making their decision, telling them he was very interested but had other offers waiting for his reply. Again, he displayed his desire to work at that particular firm.

Nick capitalized on fellow 1L Ian Silverthorne’s contacts. He showed that it is not necessarily about who you know, but may also be about who your friends know. Ian passed Nick’s resume along to his former boss and mentor, which lead to a job interview and a research assistant position at the firm. This was more effective than simply sending his resume cold because the attorney knew Ian and trusted his judgment in picking a match for the firm.

No special contacts? No worries. Mark Kogan, a 1L at American University, found a job simply by being memorable. And not in the creepy, “I live in my mother’s basement and she still brings me meatloaf” way, but the “I cracked a simple joke to break the ice” way. An attorney remembered him months later after a meet-and-mingle event because of his easy going demeanor and confidence in his ability to help in the law office. His confidence did not teeter towards smug, but rested gracefully in self-assurance.

All of these examples are admittedly rare, but not impossible. Your resume does not have to be the best of the best to get noticed, just as your outfit does not have to be the prettiest to stand out in the crowd. Not only are you trying to find a match for yourself, the boss is trying to find a match for his office. Be yourself. You can make a lasting connection in those first five minutes. Just remember that there are always other fish in the sea and to be confident in what you have to offer. Eventually you will find marital bliss with the job of your dreams. After that, just hope your boss doesn’t call you into his office for a divorce.
Woah! It’s May? Can someone please explain to me where my 1L year went? I feel like orientation was just yesterday, but, somehow, I’m about to take spring finals (and I know finals are near because that boding sense of doom has taken residence in the pit of my stomach again). Does every year go by this fast? If so, how will I be ready for graduation? Well, for the love of all things good, I’ll be ready to never take another final, but will I be ready to succeed in my career? If I have only two more whirlwind years to figure this out, how will I know which career is right for me?

Currently, I’m a law clerk at a mass tort litigation firm, Robinson, Calcagnie, and Robinson, and I love it. Every Tuesday I get to play dress up and wear grown up clothes, do important lawyerly things, and bug the young lawyer that oversees me, Wesley Polischuk, with far too many questions on career advice. He and his wife, Camden, met at California Western during law school in 2007 and were married this summer. He chose to work for a private firm, while she works as a Juvenile Defender in Orange County. They’re young and hip (like myself) and fairly new to the legal game, making them easy to relate to and their advice extra pertinent. They were kind enough to let me pick their brains for a little Q&A session to give us all the unedited down-low on life as a young lawyer.

Q: What, to you, is the main difference between private and public practice?

Wes: The main differences that we see between private and public practice is the pay and the hours. Cammie, in public practice, has more of a regular schedule, whereas I work longer hours, especially when we’re busy. Also, for young lawyers, public practice affords you the ability to get more courtroom experience at a much earlier time.

Q: If a law student knows they want to go into private or public practice, what is something you’d recommend they do in law school to make sure that they can have a good chance of getting into that practice area?

Wes: If someone wants to go into either private or public practice they should try to do internships in that area of the law or take elective courses in that area. If you’re unsure about what you want to do, you should intern in as many areas or take classes in as many areas of the law as you can so that when you show up to an interview, you can legitimately express interest...
Why Law School Sucks: One Year Down, Two More to Go!

By Blythe Harris

With finals approaching and the academic year coming to a close, many 1Ls will be relieved that their first year of law school is finally over. The question now becomes, “What happens next?” Law school is expensive, both in time and money. That’s why it is critical to make the most out of the entire law school experience. The following are a few opportunities to help make the next two years more satisfying and pass quickly.

Class Registrations and Study Abroad Opportunities

During the second and third year, students are able to choose their own classes, but this is both a blessing and a curse in disguise. There are just so many courses to choose from! Besides the maze of ABA required courses, bar prep courses, and other law school requirements, students get to explore their interests by taking courses geared towards their future practice areas of choice. Jayne Kacer, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, recommends that students plan their courses over the next couple years with their career goals in mind. Among the most important considerations are courses that are geared towards bar prep and courses that fall into an area of interest for the student as a potential area of legal practice. “The time of day of a class should be a minor consideration, if one at all,” states Dean Kacer. Dean Kacer also recommends that students consider whether a course is offered in the spring or fall because many courses are not offered all year.

Choosing classes builds excitement for a new semester, but it may also be down right maddening! You might find a schedule that works during the semester, but gives you a final on the same day as another final. Or you may realize you have a conflict with another commitment, perhaps a job or an externship. Maybe you finally have a good schedule going, but you don’t get into the classes because you have a bad registration time. Suddenly the process starts all over again, except this time you are under pressure to register for courses before the few remaining slots are filled! So, take the time to plan your classes for the next two years, prepare yourself for a frustrating night of registration, and always keep your ultimate career goals in mind!

Study Abroad Opportunities

Students may also consider studying abroad to satisfy units towards graduation. Overseas study is a wonderful way to travel and experience new ideas, all while studying and networking with a diverse group of people. There are many study abroad programs to choose from, ranging in areas of legal study and regions of the world, so you are sure to find one that fits your interests.

Many Chapman students have studied abroad. 2L Jeff Woods went to Prague last summer in a program offered by the University of San Francisco. He studied European legal structures, comparative anti-trust law, and comparative land use, with foreign professors.

Additionally, 2L Kellyanne Gold studied at Tel Aviv University during the summer of 2009 in a program offered through Whittier Law School, in conjunction with Pepperdine Law School. “The program was comprised of students from all over the United States as well as Israeli students,” explained Gold Kellyanne. Her classes included Holocaust, Genocide, and the Law, Jewish, Christian and Islamic Legal Traditions and the Law, Cyberspace and the Law. “It was truly an amazing experience to be able to spend the summer in Israel while learning American law as well as being able to explore the Israeli legal system.”

2L Taryn Taddeo studied International Environmental Law in Nairobi, Kenya, last summer. She found the program through Widener University School of Law, which allowed her to study with Kenyan law students. Taryn also had the opportunity to go on safari almost every weekend!

Although going abroad is an excellent opportunity, Dean Kacer advises that students choose to study abroad only once, preferably in their first summer. “Students in their second summer have more opportunities for employment. If they miss those then they are missing out on some practical experience that future employers look for.”

Grades and Goals

Your first year grades will open a lot of opportunities, such as invitations to join a journal. During the summer, some students will be contacted by Law Review, Nexus Journal, and the Criminal Law Journal. Some students will have “graded” on and will have earned an automatic invitation. Other students will be offered the chance to “write” on. “Don’t

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appointed, I started to ask around about what exactly SBA is known for at Chapman. “They plan Law Prom,” is what I heard. “They have 3-hour meetings,” I heard from someone else. “I don’t know exactly, but I heard it was a waste of time,” is something I heard from a few people. As a first-year student, I started to think about these statements and my own initial impressions of SBA. I remember the Law Prom announcements and the recent movement to raise the median grade point average at our school to make it comparable with other schools in the area. But other than that, I did not have much knowledge about what SBA does.

I believe that SBA can take a specific and necessary role in moving Chapman up in law school rankings. SBA needs to take on a major role in managing and promoting the alumni network. By doing this, not only will it serve the school by better organizing the network and increasing the donor pool, but it will also serve to connect current students directly to alumni who can provide job offers and other opportunities. Chapman has been churning out graduates since 1998, and the time has come to create, develop, and maintain an alumni network that is beneficial to both alumni and current students.

Jayne Kacer, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at Chapman, has been instrumental in creating and maintaining the alumni network. She, with others in the faculty and administration, have worked to create alumni newsletters, annual mixers, get-togethers with Chapman professors, and free Continuing Legal Education courses. Chapman also maintains a SOLO list-serve as a resource for Chapman alumni who are solo practitioners or who work in small firms and need advice and referrals. Dean Kacer also mentioned that each graduating class appoints two members to the Alumni Advisory Board. That board meets quarterly to discuss increasing participation, donations, and how to make a stronger alumni network.

While these activities are important, the administration has recognized a need to strengthen the alumni network and, to that end, they are creating a professional networking platform for alumni. David Finley, Director of Law School Communications at Chapman, says that the law school will host this networking site which will allow alumni to provide detailed profile information, post resumes and job opportunities, refer cases to each other, and find volunteer opportunities at the school. “Alumni will be able to post their practice area, their current firm and position, the activities they participated in while in law school, and even just information about their families and other interests.”

Dean Kacer added that “This network will even include a Classifieds section where alumni can do everything from selling items to advertising office space available for rent.” This professional networking site is a step in the right direction that will help strengthen the alumni network.

The limitation with all of this is that there is still very little interaction between current students and alumni. When I asked about finding Chapman alumni, Career Services pointed me to Martindale-Hubbel and showed me how to search for Chapman graduates. That was fine, but it did not provide me with much information on how willing they are, individually, to speak with current students.

When asked about how the alumni currently interact with law students, Dean Kacer pointed out that “the alumni are always invited to En Bancs, Chapman Dialogues, graduation and bi-annual swearing-in ceremonies, as well as to participate in the mentor and mock interview programs.”

The value to alumni in having more SBA involvement in the alumni network cannot be understated. Increasing organized networking and business referrals amongst alumni will facilitate career and practice advancement. Plus, law students are a great source of motivated labor that is often cheaper than the cost of hiring a lateral.

The benefit to the students of having an organized and maintained alumni network would be enormous. Opportunities for summer employment as well as internship and externship opportunities would all increase by going directly to Chapman alumni. The contacts with the alumni need to be maintained, organized and readily available to current students. Students should be given direct access to alumni, with their consent. I believe that the aforementioned professional networking site is a great step, but students should be given access to it in a way that allows them to easily find alumni and contact them. By increasing the number of personal contacts between students and alumni, SBA can take an active role in the advancement of student careers.

While I only have a few ideas about the ways the SBA can develop and maintain an alumni network, I know that it has to be more than an annual golf tournament. SBA needs to organize and maintain this alumni network. This could be a laborious task, but it is also one that will benefit individual SBA members and provide incentives, making SBA positions highly coveted. After all, SBA representatives would be in a position to benefit the most from maintaining the alumni network, as working with alumni gives them more exposure to alumni.

Chapman Law School stands to benefit greatly from a strong alumni network as maintained by its SBA. While the Career Services office represents the school formally to employers generally, if the SBA were to take on the specific role of working with alumni to find job opportunities for students, Career Services could focus even more on going after the opportunities for Chapman students outside of Chapman’s alumni network. It could focus more on building connections with high-profile employers both here in Orange County and around the country.

Our alumni represent the school in the work force, and Chapman’s reputation is growing as it climbs the ranks. Alumni donate money and hire other alumni. They refer cases to each other and facilitate opportunities in the “real world.” But these opportunities typically go beyond the school’s name or reputation; instead, they come about due to alumni who have attended Chapman and can relate to current students. With SBA in an ideal position to take on the role as an organizer and communicator with our growing alumni network, we’ll hopefully see an improved alumni network at Chapman in the near future.
scores, specifically their qualifications, their scholarship, and their participation as panelists and speakers at conferences and symposia. Dean Kacer also characterized the recent ranking as not being a final accomplishment, but a reminder “to be grateful, but mindful of the work that needs to be done to secure our position and propel us further up the rankings.”

Tracy Simmons, Assistant Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, along with the rest of the admissions office, including Professor Henry Noyes, the past chair of the Admissions Committee, and the faculty Admissions Committee, have worked diligently to recruit and admit the quality students who attend Chapman Law School. These individuals are responsible for recruiting and admitting the most recent classes whose entering statistics have had a positive effect on the law school’s ranking. Dean Eastman and Dean Emeritus Parham H. Williams, Jr., along with the entire Dean Suite including Professors Howe, Canova, Redding and McConville have run the school in such a way to keep us moving up the rankings. Professor Tom Bell “decoded” the rankings system, so that the school could more effectively plot its course.

Chapman University has especially contributed to the law school by providing the funding that has enabled us to have the seventh lowest student-to-faculty ratio of any law school in the nation.

As a first-year student, I continue to be amazed at the experience I have had here thus far. I am being taught by professors who are at the top of their careers with a genuine passion for teaching that elevates the classroom experience above and beyond that of a typical instructor. I sit in class with fellow students who are brilliant and contribute to my legal education almost as much as the professors themselves. And the administrators seem to continuously go out of their way to make me feel, as a student, that they really do care about my experience here. This latest jump in the rankings confirms that my choice to attend Chapman Law School was a wise decision and that it will continue to pay off long after graduation.

OCEC’s many accomplishments, particularly noteworthy is the group’s role in reviving the Pride Festival in Orange County, which Chapman Law student and Outlaw President Tiffany Chang was active in organizing. As Professor Darmer proudly noted, “after several hundred people showed up at Pride last year, we are expecting several thousand this year.” For those interested in attending, this year’s Pride Festival is Saturday, August 14 from 12-10 p.m. in Hidden Valley.

In addition to Chang and Chapman Outlaw’s collaboration with OCEC, Breanna Kenyon, a recent Chapman graduate is another member of the Chapman community who has been recognized for her work at OCEC. A recent graduate of Chapman Law and current OCEC member of the month, Kenyon was honored for her work as an attorney for the OCEC, as well as for her graphic design contributions to the organization. Besides Kenyon, OCEC employs four other attorneys. However, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved starting at the student level, such as working with the OCEC as a Chapman Outlaw member. Our school is also in the process of creating an exciting externship initiative with OCEC, so look out for the forthcoming details if you are interested in an externship and future career with OCEC.
in that particular area of the law. Another thing you can do is attend local bar association meetings of different practice groups, and talk to people in those areas to see how they like it and what they may recommend to get experience.

Q: Which of your personality traits benefit you most in your particular practice area?

Cammie: I value the ability to separate work from my personal feelings about different situations. Also, the ability to make people feel comfortable opening up to me really comes in handy in my area of law. For the both of us, our drive to succeed and make a difference helps out a lot too.

Wes: Previous internships on the resume helped out with interviews, along with contacts made during law school. Networking is one of the most helpful ways to land a job.

Q: What are the best and worst things about each of your jobs?

Cammie: The best thing about public practice is being able to be in an extremely specialized field so that you can get very good at a certain area.

Wes: The best thing about my job is being able to work on noteworthy litigation and being able to see the results of the firm’s effort first-hand. Also, I get to work under some of the best trial attorneys and legal minds in the nation. Even though they do have such pre-eminence, their number one goal and concern is making sure that the client is happy. One of the tough jobs about working as a young attorney is dealing with age issues and not letting that affect your ability to work with others.

Q: What is one word of advice you would give to the “newbie” lawyer?

Cammie: Some advice that we would give law students is to work in as many internships and network as much as possible while in law school.

One of the key aspects of landing a job after the bar exam is who you know. For young lawyers, the best advice we can give is to not be afraid to jump into your work. Some of the material and situations may be a bit daunting, but the only way to learn is to try new things.

Q: What is one thing you figured out in your first year or two practicing that you didn’t expect?

Both: It’s not like on TV.
Latest Tweets:

The Chapman community celebrated the law school’s entry into U.S. News’ top 100 at a special reception on 4/20.
8:06 AM Apr 21st via web

Chapman Law has been ranked in the Top 100 (2nd Tier) of the US News and World Reports 2011 rankings.
2:46 PM Apr 16th via web

OC Metro Magazine has named Chapman University as one of Orange County’s 10 Most Trusted Brands.
2:04 PM Apr 12th via web

Chapman professor John Eastman has filed to run for CA Attorney General, with an Assistant AG ballot designation.
2:33 PM Mar 17th via web

Chapman Law will co-host an international conference on climate change, “Beyond Copenhagen” on April 21-23.
10:06 AM Mar 15th via web
1Ls: Have many options with which to fill their last two years of law school

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throw the write on opportunity away,” urges Dean Kacer. Dean Kacer considers participating in a journal a valuable experience, which allows students to work together, and offers an opportunity to be published. It is hard work, but journal participation can be extremely rewarding and a great thing for employers to see on a resume.

“Some students blossom in their second year,” Dean Kacer stated when asked about students who have a hard time in their first year. “Students have a better expectation of what is asked of them. They are more efficient. There is always room for improvement.” Even if you are not at the top of the class, there are many opportunities that are still open for students who wish to participate. Students who complete their substantial writing requirement can get their papers published, if they wish to. Students may also participate in student groups, seek leadership roles in student organizations, join a competition team, and participate in clinics, joint degree, or certificate programs. Competition teams allow students to get “real world” experience, while working with a coach who will help develop important and necessary legal skills. Certificate programs offer the student an opportunity to show an interest in a specialized area of the law, whether it is Advocacy and Dispute Resolution, Tax Law, Entertainment Law, International Law, or Land Use and Environmental Law. The most important thing to remember is to keep your career objectives in mind and to try to find an opportunity that fits your needs and interests.

Workload: Balancing Work, School, and Everything Else!

One of the most challenging things about law school is learning to multitask. During their first year, students are confined to one “track,” they usually can’t participate in competitions, and often don’t take on leadership roles in student organizations. All of a sudden, during the second year students are expected to participate in, well, everything!

During the second year students usually begin to work a part-time job or participate in an externship. They may also take on a leadership role in a student organization or participate in a competition team. All of these are very fun and challenging endeavors. However, balancing all of them at once can be challenging. Some of the best advice is to stay focused on your individual goals. Participate in the organizations or competition teams that will help you in your career. Not only will you stay engaged because you are doing something you are interested in, you are also going to narrow down which opportunities you choose to take.

Bar Prep and Beyond!

It’s also never too early to think about the bar. Students graduating this semester are probably already sick of it, second year students are probably avoiding thinking about it, and first year students think it is too far away. But, it will be here before you know it! (Truly an aspect that really does suck about law school!) Second year students should be focusing on taking the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) and thinking about which bar prep courses they will take over the next year. Chapman Law offers a Legal Analysis Workshop that is geared towards the performance examination sections portion of the bar, in addition to a Select Topics in American Law course that reviews bar tested subjects through mock examinations. Supplemental classes are also offered on Saturdays throughout the year for those who want extra bar exam practice.

Further, second year students might look into the Moral Character Application this fall. “Students should not put off completing the Moral Character Application, especially if they have something to disclose. I usually recommend most students work on completing the application in the fall of their third year,” recommends Dean Kacer. Among the most common disclosures are any sort of convictions, bankruptcy, debt collection, substance abuse, mental illness, and whether the student has been fired from a previous job. Even if a student does not have any disclosures, the application takes a certain amount of research to complete so it is best to start early. There are so many aspects a law student must consider, but with the right amount of planning and preparation, students will find themselves with a full, but rewarding and well-planned schedule that is geared toward their future career objectives. In my experience, this second year has been challenging but also a lot of fun. You are busy, but you are also learning a lot. Dean Kacer recommends that students stay engaged and make the most of their time here. (It does go by quickly!) Maintain focus on your goals and you will be on that graduation stage before you know it!
We’re not gonna protest!

By Mike Grassi
Sr. News and Features Editor

Here’s the thing about protests: they’re stupid. I get it: You’re really into the cause-of-the-moment and you want people to know how passionate you are about it. But what good can actually come out of it? The people on your side don’t need any convincing, and the people against you will only become more entrenched in their own beliefs after listening to your angry rant. Protestors may argue that it takes assertiveness to foster change. However, there are better ways to get your point across. And then there is the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) way.

On March 10, 2006, the Topeka-based WBC picketed outside the funeral of Marine Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder, who died while serving his country in Iraq. The protestors held signs reading, “Thank God for Dead Soldiers” and other messages praising Snyder’s death. The reason? WBC, led by Pastor Fred Phelps, believes that soldiers should die in Iraq and Afghanistan as revenge for America’s acceptance of homosexuality. Yeah, that wasn’t a misprint.

Al Snyder, Matthew’s father, fought back, suing WBC for invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and defamation. WBC challenged the claims on the grounds that finding in favor of Snyder would violate the church’s First Amendment rights. The District Court in Maryland found for Snyder and awarded him and his family five million dollars in damages. On appeal, the Fourth Circuit reversed, finding that the picketing was protected speech under the First Amendment. Although the Supreme Court granted certiorari to hear the case next fall, it did not stop the appellate court from ordering Snyder to pay WBC’s court costs. The costs total over $16,000 in fees which Snyder must now pay because a radical group decided to use his son’s funeral as its venue to condemn homosexuality. WBC plans to use the money to fund more protests.

Snyder has a difficult case. We all know that just because speech is disrespectful doesn’t mean it can be prohibited. However, the District Court did the sensible thing by finding in favor of Snyder. It noted that vulgar and offensive speech could be prohibited, citing the “fighting words” doctrine from Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire. 315 U.S. 568 (1942). If there ever was an insult likely to cause a person to react violently, it would be protesting at his son’s funeral. If them ain’t fightin’ words, I don’t know what is.

No amount of money can bring Matthew back to his father. Al Snyder was denied the opportunity to properly honor his son because WBC exploited Matthew’s death for its own selfish and misguided purposes. The group chose to protest in order to further its anti-gay message, disregarding the sanctity of Matthew Snyder’s funeral. But, if the Supreme Court follows Chaplinsky and rules WBC’s actions impermissible, Al Snyder and his family will be able to rest easy knowing Matthew has the support of the country for which he gave his life.

Nonetheless, WBC’s protest may have actually accomplished something worthwhile: It shed light on the despicable actions of a radical church group. Although Snyder has no plans to pay WBC’s court costs, many, including Fox’s Bill O’Reilly, have offered to help Snyder pay them anyway. And because of Snyder’s persistence in fighting back the right way, the Supreme Court will weigh in on the issue next fall, hopefully putting an end to WBC’s protests once and for all.
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