

*It is not enough to do good; it must be done well. - St. Vincent dePaul*



# WHAT WOULD VINCENT DO? LRAP Becomes a Reality at DePaul Law

## A Long Initiative Comes to an End

For more than ten years, DePaul University College of Law students, alums, faculty and administration have planned to start a Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) at the school. Motivated by the school's Vincentian mission and their own commitment to social justice, these advocates met, strategized, drafted proposals, and began to raise money and awareness. After a decade of false starts, the DePaul LRAP is about to become a reality.

## Overcoming Financial Woes

Not surprisingly, the largest hurdle has been a financial one. In order for LRAP to be viable, enough money must be raised to create a fund endowment. This continues to be an uphill battle, as many donors are not familiar with LRAPs, where others are more comfortable giving to established funds like scholarships.

Potential donors have to be educated about the LRAP.

College of Law Dean Glen Weissenberger has single-handedly gotten the LRAP off to an excellent start by earmarking his personal \$25,000 contribution to the law school for the LRAP fund. With other contributions, the fund has now reached endowed fund status. Development Director Trish Richardson Roth has also been instrumental in the program's success and continues to cultivate and educate potential LRAP donors.

## Educating Donors and Others

In simple terms, the LRAP is a scholarship that works in reverse, and does not have the tax

consequences of a scholarship. Consider a first-year law student who declares a commitment to public interest; the school may grant this student a public-interest scholarship, but there is nothing holding that student to pursuing a public-interest career upon graduation. This problem is especially troubling in light of the low salaries earned by public-interest attorneys and the debt burden experienced by most law students.

The report *Financing the Future: Equal Justice Works 2004 Report on Law* notes that from 1992 to 2002, the average cost of tuition for a J.D. degree almost doubled across the board (public and private).<sup>1</sup> While educational costs soar, public sector salaries have failed to keep pace. To make matters worse, the percentage of people living in poverty in the U.S. has also continued to rise, heightening the need for legal aid services.<sup>2</sup>

LRAP funds will be annually awarded to graduates who work in the public-sector,

meeting the needs of the disadvantaged and the unserved. LRAPs ensure that the money donated goes to those working in the public-interest field.

## A New Beginning

Seven committed and enthusiastic individuals have formed the College of Law LRAP Committee. Consisting of two faculty, two alums, two students and a Dean's Representative, the Committee has published its 2006 LRAP application materials on the College of Law website and encourages graduates (Classes of '99-'05) working in public interest to apply between now and April 21; applications are available online at the DePaul College of Law website. One LRAP award recipient will be notified of their award by this June.

## SBA Student Initiative

In conjunction with the LRAP implementation, the Student Bar Association and several student orgs will sponsor a ref. on the spring ballot for SBA elections. The referendum will ask law students to vote on an additional \$10/semester fee to be dedicated solely to the LRAP fund. Such a referendum was passed last year by the law students at the University of Illinois.

## You Can Help

This Spring, DePaul will join the list of schools offering LRAP awards to its graduates who work in public-interest law, but this is just a start. We need your help to make the DePaul LRAP viable.

Please show your support for an LRAP! Earmark your contribution to the College of Law LRAP Fund. Contact College of Law Dean Glen Weissenberger (ph. 312.362.8088, email: [gweissen@depaul.edu](mailto:gweissen@depaul.edu)) and the Development Department at ph. 312.362.8000.

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/finance/index.php?view=detail&id=1210>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/finance/index.php?view=detail&id=1210>

**2006 DePaul College of Law LRAP applications are now available!**

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# FACULTY FOCUS

NAME: **Audra Wilson**

TITLE: **Adjunct Faculty at DePaul College of Law**

CLASS: **Poverty Law**

JD: **Valparaiso School of Law '99**

Q: *Did you go to law school directly after your undergraduate studies? If not, what did you do before you went to law school?*

I took one year off between college and law school. During that time, I moved to Washington, D.C. and worked as a litigation clerk at a large intellectual property firm while studying for the LSAT and applying to law school.

Q: *Why did you decide to go to law school?*

I decided in 7<sup>th</sup> grade that I would become an attorney, and I never deviated from that path. I was a part of what I call the "L.A. Law" generation of lawyers, lawyers inspired by a popular television show that portrayed the practice of law as sexy and exciting, and courtrooms full of unrelenting drama. At one point in time, I actually wanted to become a high-profile divorce lawyer! I have to admit after first year of law school, I was ever so slightly disappointed the law was not nearly as salacious as I thought it would be. Fortunately, I have loved my experience working in the public interest realm, and find it most rewarding.

Q: *Where do you currently work and what do you like and dislike about your job?*

I am currently working with the Ounce of Prevention Fund as a Senior Policy Associate. I enjoy doing more policy-oriented work and legislative advocacy, which is what I have done both at the Ounce and at the Shriver Center. But I do miss working directly with clients. I believe that I cannot be the best advocate for the underserved without maintaining contact with clients. Without seeking input and guidance from those for whom policies are being created, we run the risk of disempowering individuals.

Q: *Why have you chosen a career in public interest law?*

Simply put, it frustrates me to no end that those who need the help of the system the most are the ones with the least access to the courts. It is this gross inequity that made me decide to use my legal expertise to help those who would benefit most from our judicial system.

Q: *What do you see in DePaul's Public Interest Law Program that makes it stand out from other law schools?*

I am very impressed by DePaul's comprehensive public interest law curriculum, and its public interest law concentration. Although I graduated a relatively short time ago, I did not have the benefit of such a concentrated curriculum. But I am most impressed by the commitment of the DePaul students, who have been aggressive in ensuring that the law school continues to support those students who choose to practice in the public interest.

Q: *What advice would you give to students interested in a public interest career?*

Public interest work has become quite competitive. Thus, the more experience than you can garner before graduation, the more viable a candidate you will be. But I do encourage students to seek public interest internships whether or not they pay. Some of the most rewarding internships I had in law school were unpaid. If you are able to take advantage of such an opportunity, you should do so.

Q: *What tips would you give to graduating students in finding a public-interest law job?*

Public interest organizations want to see individuals with a true commitment to serving underserved populations. Students should try to obtain as much experience as possible in the public interest sector, even if it is simply through volunteering or school externships. I would also encourage students to be as persistent as possible. Public interest organizations must often struggle for funds, which impedes their ability to hire as many attorneys as they would like. But when funds do become available, hiring happens very quickly. So, even if a particular organization is not hiring at that time, always be sure to follow up periodically.

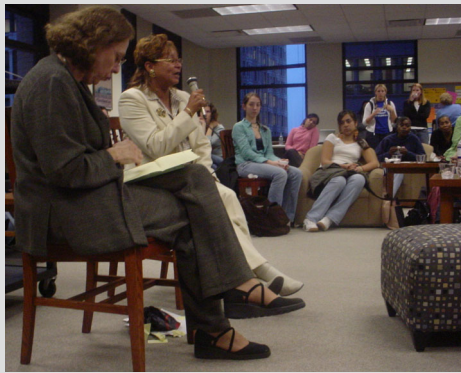
Q: *On the days when the pay doesn't seem worth it, what do you tell yourself?*

On the days when I grow envious of my counterparts making twice my salary, I remember why I chose to do this in the first place. I think about the clients of mine who are raising entire families on my meager salary, without complaint. I think about wonderful people, who, but for some unfortunate circumstances beyond their control, could have led a more privileged life. I think about those who have far fewer material possessions and less economic security than I, and remind myself that without lawyers and other advocates committed to doing public interest work, the voice of these individuals would never be heard. I also remember the countless occasions in which my clients hug me, bring me food and send me cards, not only to show their profound appreciation of my resolving their legal issue, but for the simple fact that unlike many others, I treated them with the respect and dignity to which we are all entitled. Without meaning to sound cliché, there is no better feeling for me.

## LISTENING TO OLIVIA: VIOLENCE, POVERTY, AND PROSTITUTION

On November 10, 2005, several public-interest and student organizations co-hosted a unique event to the College of Law. "Listening to Olivia" featured a conversation between Jody Raphael, author of the recently published book *Listening to Olivia* and a DePaul Family Law Center Research Fellow, and Olivia Howard, the woman whose life story is told in the book *Listening to Olivia*. The audience listened to Olivia's story, beginning with her decline at a young age, into prostitution and substance abuse, becoming the victim of violence and then, eventually, climbing out of that situation to full recovery.

*From the November 10 event, "Listening to Olivia", featured speakers Jody Raphael and Olivia Howard talk to a diverse and enthralled crowd in the 7th Floor Lounge.*



# STUDENTFILE

# OTHERNEWS

**NAME:** Teri L. Ross  
**YEAR:** 3L, DePaul College of Law  
**EX-CIR:** Public Interest Law Association Board, the Louise Project for Social Justice Coordinator, Public Interest Law Program Committee, Law Career Services Public Service Coordinator, Community Development Clinic  
**BORN:** Waterloo, IA

**Q:** *Where did you receive your undergraduate degree and what was your major?*

I graduated from Northwestern University with a B.S. in Communication Studies and honors in Creative Writing.

**Q:** *Why did you choose DePaul?*

Well, DePaul chose me in many respects; it admitted me. I knew I wanted to go into Public Interest Law, and DePaul's clinics, programs and centers impressed me.

**Q:** *What did you do prior to law school?*

I am a non-traditional student; law is my second career. I left a career as a graphic designer and editor to attend law school.

**Q:** *How did you become interested in public interest law?*

Growing up, I loved listening to Nina Totenberg, National Public Radio's Supreme Court correspondent, discuss the latest cases, but I didn't consider a legal career until several years ago. Two events occurred in my life that sparked me to reevaluate my goals and life decisions. The more I looked into a law degree, the more I saw it as a powerful tool that I could use to affect positive change in the community.

**Q:** *What motivates you to pursue a career that doesn't pay well and is potentially fraught with frustration?*

I feel called to use my time and talent in ways that benefit humanity, even if only in small ways. Sometimes people just need to be heard - they simply need someone to listen to their stories. So often, someone's small act of kindness towards me makes such a difference in my day. If I can do that for someone else, I know that has an impact.

**Q:** *What did you do last summer?*

I interned at the Legal Assistance Foundation's Evanston Office. I received a 711 license which allowed me to appear in court on behalf of LAF clients. I had an excellent supervising attorney at the Evanston office - William Kolen - who devoted much of his time to educating and mentoring me.

**Q:** *What advice would you give to law students wanting to pursue a public-interest career?*

Get as involved as you can in whatever area that interests you. The more exposure you have to the people and topic, the more doors will be opened to you. As law students, we have two great resources available to us - our professors and our alums. The public-interest faculty at this school are wonderful; they are willing to help in many ways, all you have to do is ask them. And there are DePaul alums everywhere; in my experience they are happy to share their experiences and knowledge.

**Q:** *What is the last non-law book you read?*

Over winter break, I read Wole Soyinka's memoir *Ake*. Currently, I am also sifting through C.S. Lewis' *The Problem of Pain*.

**Q:** *What is something surprising that people may not know about you?*

Public speaking makes me extremely anxious. But, like almost everything, the more I practice, the more comfortable I become with it.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE INITIATIVE (CSI) GENERATES GREAT INTEREST IN ITS FIRST SEMESTER

In the fall of 2005, the Public Interest Law Program introduced the Community Service Initiative (CSI). CSI aims to connect law students with rewarding legal and non-legal volunteer opportunities at local organizations. Through service, students gain valuable experience, insights, and skills, while creating stronger communities and helping to remedy social problems and injustice.

In its first semester, roughly 50 students participated in a CSI volunteer opportunity. Students participated in various ways, ranging from assisting with expungements to teaching 5th graders about the Constitution. Partnering organizations included the Louise Project, Constitutional Rights Foundation, LaSalle Language Academy, West Suburban PADS, Centro Romero, The Employment Project, SAFER Foundation, First Defense Legal Aid, and Cabrini Green Legal Aid.



*From the Public Interest Law Program's September CSI event, featured speakers L to R: Prof. Leonard Cavise, Director of the Public Interest Law Program; Teri Ross, Louise Project Coordinator; Perla Tirado, Coordinator of Cabrini Green Legal Aid's Expungement Help Desk; Jessica Chethik, Constitutional Rights Foundation; Christy Beighe-Byrne, SAFER Foundation Youth Empowerment Program Director; Phyllis Barker, SAFER Foundation Manager of Agency-Wide Volunteer Services; Gerri Brauneis, West Suburban PADS Legal Clinic Attorney; Carmelita Tiu, PILP Community Service Initiative Coordinator*

# IN PUBLIC SERVICE

## POST-KATRINA SERVICE TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

Thirty College of Law students traveled to New Orleans for a week over Winter Break to provide service and advocacy to victims of Hurricane Katrina. The trip was organized by 3L Emily Miller and College of Law Chaplain Tom Judge and partnered with, among others, Catholic Charities of New Orleans. It combined physical labor, activism and education not only to aid those most devastated by the natural disaster but also to immerse the visiting students in a city that is now shrunk to less than a third of its pre-Katrina population and is still struggling to provide basic housing and utilities to many of those who remain or wish to return.

The students worked all week gutting two flood-ravaged homes in the Gentilly and New Orleans East neighborhoods. A smaller group canvassed the downtown area interviewing laborers, who had come to New Orleans seeking employment, in order to gain information about their working and living conditions. DePaul students also provided support to the grassroots organization Commonground and attended sometimes raucous civic meetings focusing on plans to rebuild the community. In the evenings, the group heard presentations given by civic leaders about the underlying political, sociological and legal issues confronting New Orleans post-Katrina. Free time was spent touring the uninhabitable Lower Ninth Ward and enjoying the charming, but somewhat subdued, French Quarter. "Intense" and "powerful" were words used to describe the entire week and many of the students left with a desire to continue their assistance to the city and an increased awareness of the daunting challenges facing those members of our society who are most pushed to the margins.

THE DEPAUL PUBLIC INTEREST LAW ASSOCIATION PRESENTS...

## THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PILA AUCTION!

Through its annual auction, the DePaul Public Interest Law Association raises money for summer public interest stipends. The summer stipend allows a public-interest law student to gain experience in a legal aid setting while still paying rent.

PILA relies upon donations from alums, faculty, staff and other individuals, local businesses and organizations to make its auction a success. To donate, volunteer, or receive our "preview booklet," please contact Eleni at PILA\_Auction@yahoo.com

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual PILA Auction will take place on Friday, March 3, from 6-9 p.m. on the 7th Floor of the Lewis Building (25 E. Jackson). This year's titillating offerings include...

- ◆ Four VIP tickets to the Jerry Springer show w/backstage passes
- ◆ Chef's 6-course dinner for two at Oceanique
- ◆ A night's stay at the Belden-Stratford Hotel
- ◆ Two tickets to any performance of the American Theater Company
- ◆ Two tickets to the Joffrey Ballet



See you on **March 3!** See you on **March 3!** See you on **March 3!** See you on **March 3!**

## By the Numbers ...

- 65** ..... Number of DePaul Law students who attended this semester's Community Service Initiative (CSI) meeting
- 42** ..... Number of DePaul Law students who signed up to participate in the CSI program last semester
- 32** ..... Number of DePaul Law students who participated in the service trip to New Orleans, Jan. 8-13, 2006
- 400+** ..... Number of admitted DePaul Law applicants interested in the new Public Interest Legal Writing sections
- 40** ..... Number of seats available in the Public Interest Legal Writing sections
- \$28,666** ..... Yearly tuition for first-year, full-time DePaul Law students (class of 2008)
- \$37,000** ..... Starting salary for a new attorney at Chicago Legal Clinic  
*(Source: Ed Grossman)*
- \$150,000** ..... One public-interest law grad's total law school debt upon graduation *(Source: anonymous, DePaul Law Class of 2005)*
- \$910+** ..... Above public-interest law grad's monthly payment, partially consolidated at 3%, over a 30-year term *(Source: anonymous, DePaul Law Class of 2005)*

# ALUMPROFILE

NAME: **Michelle Wetzel**  
TITLE: **Staff Attorney, Legal Assistance Foundation, HIV/AIDS Project**  
ED: **DePaul College of Law '99, Aquinas College '94**

Q: *What associations or groups were you involved with while at DePaul Law?*

I was active in the Public Interest Law Association (PILA) (of course); the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Law Association (I think it has the much catchier name "Outlaws" now); the ACLU and Lawyers Guild student groups; the Women's Law Caucus; and I was a member of the Dean's Advisory Committee.

Q: *What is your current position/employer?*

I am a staff attorney at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAFMC) in the HIV/ AIDS Project. I was a law student here from May 1997 - May 1999 also with the HIV/ AIDS Project. Then I worked at Prairie State Legal Services in their Waukegan office for about a year and a half before returning to LAFMC and the HIV/AIDS Project.

Q: *What made you choose a career in public interest law?*

In 1991 a very close friend of mine died of AIDS. After his death I moved to Holland, Michigan. I wanted to continue volunteering with people living with AIDS. But, when I called the local hospital and the Catholic Diocese in Grand Rapids I was told "there are no people with AIDS here". I searched for some way to help people with HIV/ AIDS in West Michigan. I connected with a few like-minded, dedicated folks at the First United Methodist Church and we began the AIDS Pastoral Care Network (APCN) of the West Michigan Lakeshore, modeled after the APCN in Chicago. We started a "buddy" program; collected and distributed food; provided transportation; worked with other community groups; and did HIV/AIDS 101 presentations. However, the only legal advocacy available was by phone with a group located halfway across the state. I decided that I wanted to be able to provide advocacy to people with HIV/AIDS myself. I decided the best way to do that was to go to law school.

Q: *Why did you choose DePaul?*

Since I knew I wanted to go to law school to advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS, I investigated every law school that held itself out as strong in public interest and looked for schools that offered at least one course in AIDS. Initially, I wasn't even considering DePaul. After attending a "law day" at several other law schools, I attended a DePaul "law day." There was no comparison. After meeting and talking with DePaul students and faculty, I knew I was home. DePaul had the right mix of legal education and a commitment to public service stemming from the Vincentian Mission. I was not disappointed in my choice.

Q: *What advice would you give to students interested in a public interest career?*

Surprisingly, public interest positions are highly competitive. There are far more people willing to do really hard work for very low pay than you would imagine. It is not uncommon for LAFMC to get several hundred applications for a handful of openings. If you really want to work for a public interest agency you have to be persistent. Many LAF staff attorneys applied right out of law school and, because of the limited hiring, worked somewhere else for a year or two while continuing to apply at LAF. Such persistence usually pays off. Don't give up!

Q: *What motivates you to continue doing what you do?*

I got into this work because I wanted to advocate for people living with HIV / AIDS who are among the most vulnerable in our society. I also believe

that the protections of our laws are meant for everyone without regard to wealth or standing. This is a calling more than a career for me. I get to do this work beside extremely bright, creative, courageous, caring individuals doing the same kind of work. I continue doing this work because there is still work to be done. If my clients, who are unimaginably poor and disabled and largely forgotten by society, keep fighting, the least I can do is keep doing my part to help them. They are my motivation and my inspiration.

Q: *What should new attorneys expect from a public interest law career?*

Feeling overwhelmed. Most public interest attorneys are generalists and thus practice in many areas of civil litigation including family law, consumer law, housing, employment, health and disability law, among others. But the feeling of knowing that you are providing much needed concrete help to those who most need it is definitely worth the initial fear and frustration.

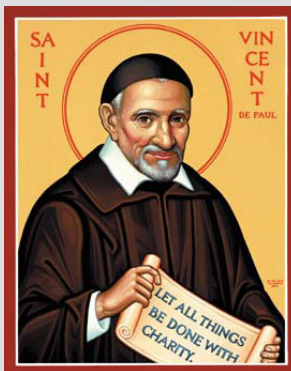
Q: *What is a favorite thing you do to reduce stress and forget the office?*

My real passion (beside my partner Dot) is playing music. I play the trombone in a LGBT (lesbian-gay-bi-trans) community band called Lakeside Pride. Music feeds my soul.

Q: *What book are you currently reading?*

The Spiritual Revitalization of the Legal Profession: A Search for Sacred Rivers by David Hall - Professor of Law at Northeastern University School of Law. A must read!

## Upcoming Conference: **SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE VINCENTIAN MISSION**



September TBA, 2006 • 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

DePaul University College of Law

*The conference will focus on the future of Public Interest Law as it relates to issues of funding, scope of services and creative and effective models of serving the underserved.*

All practitioners, students, and alums are invited!

## Calendar ...

PILA Annual Auction, 7th Floor Lounge, 6-9pm .....	Mar. 3
Diversity Week Speaker Alex Kotlowitz, 8th Floor Conf. Center, 4-6pm .....	Mar. 8
Trenches and Trials of the Iraq War, Lewis 805, 12:20 .....	March 28
Interested in Public Interest Law? 12:20, Room TBA .....	March 29
Zoning Out on Homeless Shelters - the Lincoln Park Experience, 12:20 TBA ..	Apr. 11
DePaul LRAP Applications deadline .....	Apr. 21
Public Interest Law Wine & Cheese Reception .....	Apr. 21
Spring 2006 Exams Begin .....	May 4
2006 DePaul College of Law Commencement .....	May 21

## DEFINING PUBLIC INTEREST

Public interest law serves individuals, groups and social interests that are traditionally subordinated or underserved by our law and government. DePaul's Public Interest Law Program seeks to educate, nurture and inspire those law students who wish to devote themselves to eradicating systemic injustice.

public interest

*DePaul University*

LAW PROGRAM

DePaul College of Law  
25 E. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 723  
Chicago, IL 60604

## WHO WE ARE

### DePaul's 2005-06 Public Interest Law Program Committee Members

#### FACULTY:

Leonard L. Cavise, Director	Andrea Lyon
Allison Ortlieb	Jeffrey Shaman
Mark Weber	

#### STAFF/ALUM:

Tom Judge, Chaplain	Michelle Wetzel ('99)
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#### STUDENTS:

Susan Geller, 3L	Shari Howard, 3L
Rebecca Howey, 3L	Wynter Jackson, 3L
Shaye Loughlin, 3L	Patty Pizzaro, 2L
Teri Ross, 3L	Carmelita Tiu, 2L
Crawfie Ward, 1L	Rocio Armendariz, 1L
James Benjamin, 1L	Katie Diggins, 1L
Sarah Gelsomino, 1L	Jarrett Knox, 1L
Evelyn Laycock, 2L	Kelly Razzouk, 1L
Meredith Schmitt, 1L	

For more information about PILP, or if you are a civic-minded professional wishing to join our Advisory Board, please contact Professor Leonard Cavise at 312-362-6841 or at [lcavise@depaul.edu](mailto:lcavise@depaul.edu).