



Robin K. Carlson '04

Student

With one more year to go in Washburn University School of Law, Robin Carlson can see the light at the end of the tunnel. The journey hasn't been easy. She has juggled school, work, and a busy home life, obviously with great success. She ranks in the top of her class of 133 students.

Ms. Carlson came to Washburn Law from a career in public education. A graduate of Hastings College in Nebraska, she has a master's degree in psychology and a specialist in education in school psychology from Pittsburg State University in Kansas. From 1990-2001, she was a school psychologist for Topeka Public Schools.

Those experiences prepared her for the rigors of law school. "I received a solid, well-rounded undergraduate education...that provided an excellent foundation for new learning," Ms. Carlson said. "And my professional experiences gave me a good frame of reference. The 'real world' experience taught me to juggle multiple activities simultaneously and to work with a variety of people with differing needs. Further, years of work experience taught me the value of preparation and hard work, both of which have paid off in law school."

With her background in education, Ms. Carlson said she initially thought she wanted to practice education law. Now she's not so sure. "Each semester I find that my interests expand as we are exposed to additional areas of law. I have particularly enjoyed tort law, criminal law, and constitutional law," she said. "Some days I feel somewhat like a kid in a candy store where so many of the offerings are so attractive that it is hard to choose. I am possibly interested in a judicial clerkship after law school, but I may also seek an associate position with a law firm."

In addition to her class work, Ms. Carlson is involved in a number of activities and is working while attending law school. During her first year, she was a law clerk for the Topeka firm of Glenn, Cornish, Hanson & Kams. That work involved legal research regarding insurance defense and subrogation, the writing of memoranda and pleadings, and the drafting of letters to clients.

"I chose to work during my first year of law school (despite all of the contrary advice!) and found the mentoring provided by my employer was helpful in making the connection between learning and the practical application of the law," Ms. Carlson said.

For the past year, she has been research assistant to Dean Honabach. She has been researching legislative changes regarding corporate director/officer liability for an upcoming publication.

She also is Editor-in-Chief of the Law Journal. "I chose to become involved with the Board of Editors because I believe that the Journal plays a significant role in putting out a permanent product that displays the academic scholarship of Washburn Law students," she said.

Her other activities include Women's Legal Forum, Phi Alpha Delta, and a women's investment club.

Along with her many responsibilities, Ms. Carlson makes a concerted effort to maintain a good balance in her life. "Several months before law school started, a judge told me to make sure to not give up doing things that I loved while attending law school," she recalled. "I make a point to have lunch regularly with two close friends with whom I previously worked. The weekly lunch helps me to still feel connected with the community while regularly reminding me that even the hardest day in law school is sometimes easier than working in public education."

Ms. Carlson believes her decision to attend Washburn Law was a good one. "Washburn provides a quality legal education at a reasonable price and it offers many 'hands on' opportunities for students. The faculty is always accessible. I've yet to have a professor refuse to take time to talk with me," she said. "There is a collegial atmosphere among students and faculty."

While the focus of her career is still uncertain, Ms. Carlson does have some general hopes and goals. "At the end of my career, I hope to be able to look back and know that I've contributed in some meaningful fashion, whether it be to the legal profession as a whole or simply to improve the lives of clients. I want to enjoy the work that I do and the individuals with whom I work, and I want to do work that I believe makes a positive difference for others," she said.