

AHRENS EARNS KANSAS ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE RAYMOND SPRING AWARD



Amy Ahrens, '12, was the Spring 2013 recipient of the Kansas Association for Justice Raymond Spring Award. This award is given to the Law Clinic intern who has demonstrated the highest commitment to providing legal services to clients in need. The Kansas Association for Justice Raymond Spring Award was established in remembrance of **Raymond Spring, '59**, former professor and dean of the law school.

While in clinic, Ahrens represented clients in a variety of domestic and criminal cases. In one case, she worked long hours on a post-conviction petition that remained pending beyond her clinic semester. Ahrens wanted to see the case through, so she volunteered her time in the clinic during the holiday break and spring semester in order to fulfill her professional responsibility to her client. Ahrens' supervising attorney, Professor Aliza Organick, remembers her as "dependable, hardworking and, overall, a terrific student." Ahrens currently represents clients through her general practice office in Tonganoxie, Kan.

SOMERS COMPLETES SECOND JURY TRIAL AS LAW STUDENT

While admitting that her last semester in law school was a marathon, recent graduate **Christi Somers, '13**, says she could not imagine searching for a job as a prosecutor without the practical experience she gained the past year through her internship with the Shawnee County District Attorney's office.

She has successfully completed her second jury trial, one that included one count of domestic battery and one count of interference with a law enforcement officer. Somers said she handled the case on her own, from *voir dire* to sentencing.

"I know what I'm doing," said Somers. "I can handle it. I'm prepared. I can step into any district attorney or county attorney's office and know how to handle a case from day one until it's over.

"I felt confident going in. I thought it was a pretty solid case although there were quite a few obstacles with it. There was an eye-witness so basically it came down to if the jury would believe the eye-witness. Going into deliberations I wasn't quite sure how they would go. I couldn't really tell throughout the trial what the jury was feeling. I was really surprised. I got the guilty on the domestic battery but not on the interference count. The domestic battery is the top charge so it was the one we were really wanting. And I offered a plea to defense prior to the trial and basically the outcome was exactly what the plea would have been. I wish I could have gotten him guilty on both counts, but it made me feel reassured that I offered a decent plea for what the case was and the evidence we had. And for the jury to return almost exactly the same verdict. That was pretty crazy.

"I really don't understand how someone can start as a prosecutor without completing an internship like this because you really learn everything that law school can't teach you: how to deal with defense counsel, how to deal with issues that may arise, how to deal with judges — things like that."

Somers has worked for the Shawnee County District Attorney's office since May 2012 after participating in the on-campus interview process at Washburn Law, coordinated by the Professional Development Office (PDO).

"The PDO is there to help you in any fashion that you need. They bring the district offices onto campus so you can interview with all of them in the same day. It makes it really convenient for the students' schedules and I think it helps the district attorneys' offices too, because they can come and just interview a bunch of people at once. They have the on-campus interview and then they do call backs in some of the offices so you have multiple opportunities to get hired someplace. They really help. And afterwards if they know you are interested in the prosecution they can help look for employers or alumni who can help connect you with potential employers," Somers said.

