

Washburn Law Students Receive Nation's Largest Legal Education Scholarships



Joletta Friesen '06, Roarke Gordon '06 and Eric Pauly '08 were among eight students recognized as J. L. Weigand Jr. Notre Dame Legal Education Trust scholarship recipients at an open house held at the Bradbury Thompson Alumni Center Oct. 18, 2005. Scholarships

are for the 2005-2006 school year.

Friesen is a third-year student at Washburn Law. She graduated from McPherson High School in 1998 before receiving a Bachelor of Arts in History and Spanish from Bethel College in 2002. While a student at Bethel, Friesen earned a 4.0 G.P.A., served as Student Body Senator, and was a Bethel College Dean's Scholar and a Veterans of Foreign Wars & Kansas Registrar Scholar. Despite her many successes, she lists the Weigand scholarship as one of her most meaningful accomplishments. Friesen is Editor-in-Chief for Volume 45 of the *Washburn Law Journal*.

Gordon is a third-year student at Washburn Law. He graduated from Kapaun Mt. Carmel in 1999 before receiving a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Kansas in 2003. Gordon has been a teaching assistant for Professor Lyn Goering and is a Comments Editor for Volume 45 of the *Washburn Law Journal*. He has accepted a position with the Wichita firm Fleeson, Gooing, Coulson & Kitch, L.L.C. following his graduation from Washburn Law in May, 2006.

Pauly is a first-year student at Washburn Law. He was previously a Technology Consultant at CIO, Inc., in Shawnee, Kan. He graduated from Conway Springs High School in 1999 before receiving a B.S. in Business Administration from Colorado State University in 2003. While a student at Colorado State, Pauly was a three-year starter and two-year captain on the Ram football team. He was presented with the C.S.U. Scholar Athlete Award and was named Verizon Academic All-American. He graduated *Cum Laude* and was the Fall Commencement Student Speaker for the College of Business.

The Weigand Scholarships — the largest legal education schol-

arships in the country — were established to offer assistance to law students from the state of Kansas. The scholarships provide for full tuition, fees, books, and a room and board allowance for selected students who have been legal residents of Kansas for 10 years prior to their admission to law school. The Weigand Trust was established to actively promote excellence in legal education and to encourage the most scholastically qualified Kansans to remain in or return to Kansas to practice law.

Karla Beam, Director of Admissions at Washburn Law, said the scholarships will play an important role in keeping Kansans in their home state.

"Washburn Law has a rich tradition of educating Kansas lawyers. I have no doubt that the legacy of the Weigand Scholarships will be felt for many years to come in the Kansas communities in which Washburn Weigand Scholars will live and practice law."



White House Interns

Washburn Law students Molly McMurray '07 and Matthew Holcomb '07 both interned in Washington D.C. this past summer. Their official title and capacity was Legal Intern, Office of the General Counsel, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, Summer 2005.

Both McMurray and Holcomb worked independently on projects assigned by the General Counsel; completed substantive legal research in the areas of administration law, procurement law, and appropriations law; and drafted legal memoranda for the Office of Administration as it provided direct support to components of the Executive Office of the President. Holcomb was in D.C. for nine weeks; McMurray for six.

Both students had the privilege of attending a Senate Armed Forces Committee Hearing, Judiciary Committee hearings and a Foreign Relations Committee Hearing. They attended the arrival ceremony for the Prime Minister of India on the South Lawn and took a tour the inside of the Pentagon including a brief conversation with Donald Rumsfeld. During their internship they met and worked with individuals within the Bush Administration and met and visited with state representatives and senators.

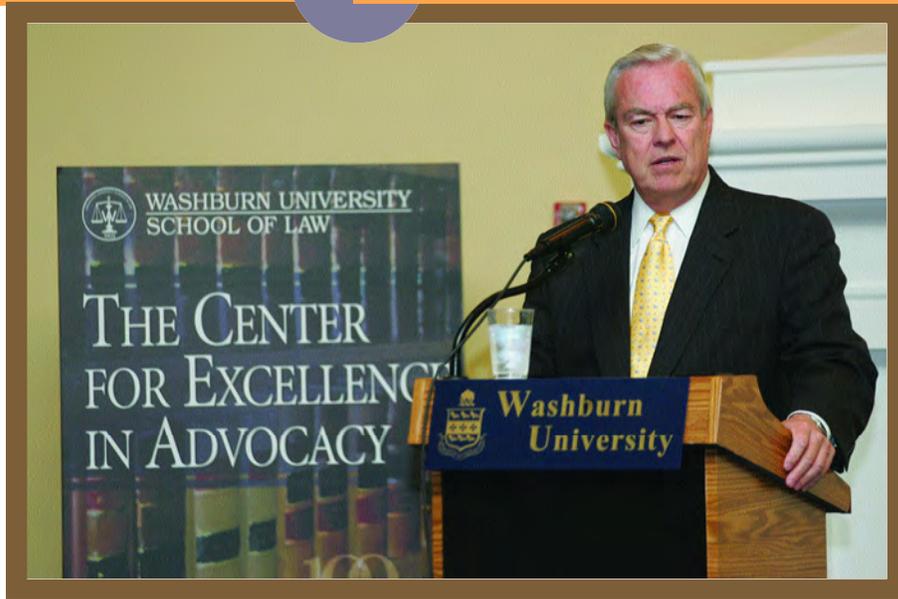


Judge Pierron, Chief Judge Rulon '71 and Judge Hill '75

Kansas Court of Appeals

The Kansas Court of Appeals held appellate arguments for the third consecutive semester in Robinson Courtroom and Bianchino Technology Center Oct. 25, 2005. The full day of hearings was accompanied by a luncheon attended by Chief Judge Rulon '71, Judges Pierron and Hill '75, and 20 law students. All first year law students attended at least one argument as a part of their Legal Research and Writing class. Many second- and third-year law students attended arguments to gain further insight into a particular area of the law.





Bill Kurtis '66

Building the Mitigation Case

The Third Annual Building the Mitigation Case seminar was held Nov. 11 to 12, 2005. The program covered recent developments in capital punishment law, both legal developments and empirical studies, and continues its annual focus on training mitigation specialists and building the

most effective mitigation case. Speakers and participants examined pending federal legislation on habeas corpus relief, strategies for effective post conviction practice, racial aspects of capital punishment law, methods of pre-



Christina Swarns

senting an effective mitigation case and legislative strategies to end capital punishment.

Bill Kurtis '66, author, death penalty opponent and host of the A&E Series *American Justice*, was the keynote speaker. Kurtis spoke on "What I have learned about the death penalty." The program hosted the following additional speakers: Ruth Friedman, Washington DC; Deborah Fleischaker, Washington, D.C.; Christina Swarns, New York; Professor John Francis, Washburn Law; Rebecca Woodman, Topeka, Kan; Cheryl Pilate, Kansas City, Mo.; Professor Jeffrey Jackson, Washburn Law; Dick Dieter, Washington, D.C.; Sean O'Brien, Kansas City, Mo.; Jenny Merrigan, Kansas City, Mo.; Jim Ellis, Albuquerque, N.M.; Pat Berrigan, Kansas City, Mo.; and Sam Gross, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Sean O'Brien, Executive Director of the non-profit Public Interest Litigation Clinic in Kansas City, Mo., and Professor Michael Kaye, Director, Center for Excellence in Advocacy at Washburn

Law, coordinated the program. More than 40 people attended the program.



Dick Dieter

The Washburn Lawyer



Rebecca Woodman, a Kansas Capital Appellate Defender and 1987 Washburn Law graduate, recently traveled to Washington, D.C., for oral argument in the United States Supreme Court. The experience was the pinnacle of her fifteen year career as an appellate attorney, but also a mixed blessing because of the grave issues at stake. Woodman noted, "For any appellate attorney, the opportunity to argue before the nation's highest court is a great honor. At the same time, it could not be overlooked in this case that the Court was going to review the Kansas Supreme Court's decision invalidating the state's death penalty law — a momentous decision that we believe should stand."

Woodman's long road to argument before the high court began in 1998, when she was appointed lead counsel in Michael Marsh's appeal from a capital murder conviction. In 2004, Woodman convinced the Kansas Supreme Court to invalidate Kansas' death penalty sentencing scheme because of a constitutional flaw identified in a previous ruling of the Court. The Court's ruling in Mr. Marsh's case temporarily invalidated the death sentences of all eight offenders sitting on Kansas' death row. But the United States Supreme Court later granted the Kansas Attorney General's petition for a writ of certiorari, setting the stage for an hour-long oral argument on the merits of the state's weighing equation in imposing death sentences, as well as issues pertaining to the Court's jurisdiction to review the case.

Neither Woodman, nor Attorney General Phil Kline, had previously appeared before the United States Supreme Court, and the endeavor was a bit intimidating. The Court generally grants review in only one percent of the cases where petitions for writs of certiorari are filed, and expects the litigants chosen for oral argument to be meticulously prepared. "The time and effort involved in preparing for the argument was unlike any argument preparation I have experienced. It was uniquely stressful as well, simply because the United States Supreme Court is the final arbiter of the law. There is no appeal from the decision," said Woodman.

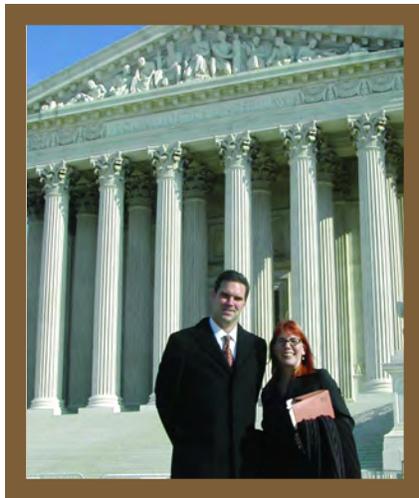


Even with her preparations for the argument reaching a fever pitch, Woodman still found time to remain active in Washburn Law activities. In November, she spoke about her impending oral argument at the third annual "Building the Mitigation Case: Advocating for Life" conference sponsored by Washburn University School of Law. She also presented a luncheon lecture to Professor Webb's Criminal Appeal Advocacy class, where she urged the student interns working on cases in Washburn's appellate practice clinic to conscientiously devote themselves to the task of ensuring their clients' constitutional rights had been honored. Will Drexler, '06, remarked that "Rebecca's comments on the appellate process were really insightful. It's not everyday that you get to question an attorney preparing to argue in the Supreme Court. I was nervous just listening to her talk about the upcoming argument."

When Woodman eventually appeared for oral argument on December 7, 2005, the nine Supreme Court justices lived up to their reputation as keenly incisive inquisitors. Woodman fielded questions on a wide range of legal issues; from Eighth Amendment cruel and unusual punishment jurisprudence to jurisdictional irregularities. According to Professor Webb, who traveled to Washington to observe the arguments, "the level of discourse between the justices

and both Woodman and Kline was quite impressive; the Court appeared to be satisfied with the presentations of both parties, and prepared to render a decision." While Woodman was pleased with the argument, she noted that it was "impossible to tell how the Court will rule based on the oral arguments." A decision is expected this spring.

*Professor Nathan Webb contributed this article after witnessing Woodman's argument to the U.S. Supreme Court.



Prof. Nathan Webb and Rebecca Woodman