

## Giving Back Can't Wait

*Covel knows firsthand how scholarships make a law degree possible.*

*By Annie Flachsbarth, BA '07*

Before attending Washburn University School of Law, **Julie Covel, '13**, was a teacher. Deciding to change direction and go back to school mid-career was a big decision, but even more so because she already had a family.

“It was a huge financial decision to leave work and go to school full time,” said Covel. “From the moment I was accepted at Washburn Law, they were committed to making it financially possible for me. I know Washburn Law alumni made that possible.”

Now, a graduate with a blossoming career with the National Labor Relations Board in Overland Park, Kan., Covel is doing her part to give back by taking advantage of the Dean's Circle Giving Program. Membership in the Dean's Circle requires an annual giving level of at least \$1,000. The program, however, allows recent graduates to make smaller gifts — \$100 for each year since graduation.

In Covel's eyes, it's an excellent program to get new graduates in the habit of giving back to the law school.

“It's easy to say, ‘I just graduated. I have a lot of debt. Giving back needs to wait,’” explained Covel. “Once I started giving, I realized I could give more. As you grow in your career, it becomes easier to grow your contributions to the school.”

The Dean's Circle was something Covel knew she wanted to participate in before she had graduated.

“I had the opportunity to attend the Dean's Circle dinner as a third-year student while serving as the *Washburn Law Journal* editor-in-chief,” said Covel. “I liked that it was a way to stay in touch with the school, as well as the faculty and other graduates. I decided to make it my goal to be able to give enough money every year so I could participate in the Dean's Circle events. In some ways, it's motivated me to give more.”

Giving back is very important to Covel, as she understands firsthand how the scholarships provided by alumni gifts can make a huge difference in the lives of students.



Photo by Ann Dean

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“It was a huge relief that I didn't have to worry about the financial implications of going back to school,” said Covel.

“The scholarships I received made it easier to focus on my studies and take advantage of the variety of opportunities that the law school provides — like internships, externships, and working on the *Washburn Law Journal*. Those experiences have been invaluable as I've gone into practice and work for the federal government. Every student who comes after me should have that same opportunity, and if I can play a part in that, then I will.”