

- In this issue, we focus on the AALS Annual Meeting, held this year in Atlanta, Georgia, from January 2-6, 2004. Our Section is sponsoring a program on the ADA and informally co-sponsoring a program on Occupational Segregation in the legal academy. *Page 3*
- This issue also picks up the discussion from the 2003 conference on the impact of international students on legal writing teaching. *Page 7*

AALS Meeting Features LWRR Program on ADA

Can We Be Too Accommodating? Probing the Outer Limits of the ADA

*By Suzanne Rowe,
AALS Program Chair*

Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, law schools have encountered an increasing number of students with disabilities, in particular, students with learning disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). A number of LRW professors have written about how we can best teach students with LD. By incorporating their ideas into our classes, we have improved the effectiveness of our teaching to students with and without LD.

Some faculty still feel un-

comfortable providing certain accommodations, and some students have become aggressive in their requests for accommodations. The issue of reasonable accommodations raises difficult questions for all teachers, but particularly professors teaching courses that require research and writing. When a course is designed to teach essential lawyering skills like time management and organization in addition to research, writing, and analysis, the questions become even more difficult.

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Richard Ludwick, University of Florida, will address the Legal Writing Section at the AALS program session.

AALS Meeting Highlights

Friday January 2, at 6 p.m.:

- 6 p.m. ALWD Board Meeting

Saturday, January 3

- 7:30 a.m. LWI Board Meeting
- 8:45 a.m. Workshop on Technology and Pedagogy
- 6:30 p.m. Golden Pen Award & Blackwell Award Reception

Sunday, January 4:

- Breakfast for Beginning Law Teachers
- Breakfast for Women in Legal Education
- 8:30 a.m. Section on Women in Legal Education—Occupational Segregation by Sex in the Legal Academy
- 10:30 a.m. LWRR Section Panel; Can We Be Too Accommodating? Business Meeting (follows program)

Monday, January, 5

- 12:15 p.m. LWRR Section Luncheon
- 1:30 p.m. Section on Teaching Methods

Tuesday, January 6

- 9 a.m. Women in Legal Ed—Social Justice and Gender

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Jeanne Kincaid will speak at the Section Program on January 4th.

Message from the AALS Section Chair: Dan Barnett

By Dan Barnett,
Section Chair, Boston
College

Fall 2003

Over the years, the Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning and Research has worked to support our membership and to educate the legal academy about our discipline and its place in legal education. I am pleased to report that we have made important progress on both fronts this year.

To help provide support to the newest members of the legal writing community, the Section and AALS organized the "Workshop on Teaching Legal Writing" as part of the AALS program for new law teachers in Washington D.C. in June.

With Over 80 participants from 35 different law schools, the success of the day-long workshop far exceeded our expectations. Debra Green

(Florida Coastal) and Susan Kosse (Louisville) started off the workshop with an entertaining and lively program on the "Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Legal Writing." Steve Johansen (Lewis and Clark) and Robin Wellford (Chapman) presented "Conducting Effective Office Conferences," complete with video-taped conferences, which provided the participants an opportunity to view and provide commentary on mock conferences.

After lunch, Joan Blum (Boston College) and I led a workshop on written critique that allowed the participants to break into small groups to critique student samples after a discussion of critique strategies.

Due to the positive feedback received from the participants, AALS is interested in running the workshop again in

2005 and possibly every summer when the Legal Writing Institute does not hold a conference.

Special thanks to the committee who began planning this workshop in 2001: Susan Kosse, Chair, (Louisville), Joan Blum (Boston College), David BultleRitchie (Appalachian), Steve Johansen (Lewis and Clark), Carol Grumback (Cornell), Hether Macfarlane (McGeorge), Nancy Soonpaa (Texas Tech) and Mark Wojcik (John Marshall).

The Section's program at the AALS Annual Meeting will deal with an issue that should have wide appeal to legal academics. Suzanne Rowe (Oregon), chair of the Section Program Committee,



Dan Barnett, the Chair of the AALS Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning and Research

has planned, "Can We be Too Accommodating? Probing the Outer Limits of the ADA." You'll see in the announcement for the program that she has an interesting panel lined up that promises a dynamic discussion about this important topic. This program should give our mem-

(Continued on page 8)

Nominations for AALS Section Secretary by December 4; Proposals for 2005 AALS LWRR Program by December 9

The AALS Section on Legal Research and Writing seeks nominations for Secretary for 2005. The Secretary prepares the AALS section newsletter, which is published twice annually.

The AALS Section on Legal Writing is also soliciting proposals for the 2005 AALS Legal Writing Section Program, which will be presented at the AALS Annual Meeting in January 2005. Generally, the individual chosen as Program Chair is elected in the following year as Secretary of the Section.

Nominations for Secretary should be sent by *Wednesday, December 4, 2003*, and proposals for 2005 AALS LR&W program should be sent by *Monday, December 9, 2003*, to Jo Anne Durako, Secretary, AALS Section on Legal Research and Writing, Georgetown University Law Center, 600 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001 or e-mail: durako@law.georgetown.

Editor's Note: In this issue we highlight our Section's program at the AALS meeting, representing our out-reach to other sections and AALS members, a step we should consider as a regular part of our mission at AALS. Our main program continues the tradition of bringing distinguished speakers for our section meetings. We also continue to work with other sections, this year through our informal support of the Section on Women in Legal Education and its Occupational Segregation panel.

Last issue we continued the conversation on two of the 2003 conference panels— *Better Writing, Better Thinking and Op-Eds and Talking Head*. In this issue we pick up the conversation about international students and their impact on legal writing. We also explore some of the many reasons LRW professors should go to the AALS conference.

And finally, we provide the back story for the Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg Legal Writing Award. A great story!

-Jo Anne Durako, Section Secretary & Newsletter Editor

Why Do Legal Writing Professors Go to AALS?

By Sue Liemer,
Southern Illinois

I often hear legal writing professors say they are not going to the AALS annual meeting because they feel it does not offer them what a national or regional legal writing conference offers. AALS does provide a different type of programming than a legal writing conference does, and that is exactly the reason legal writing professors should attend AALS. At legal writing conferences, those of us in the field speak to and learn from each other. At the AALS annual meeting, we have an opportunity to speak to and learn from the rest of the legal academy.

At this year's annual meeting, the Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning, and Research will present a session on *Can We Be Too Accommodating? Probing the Outer Limits of the ADA*, on January 4th at 10:30 a.m. This session will allow us to share ideas on this important topic with law professors who teach in many other areas. It is legal writing's annual opportunity to show off to the rest of the academy. It is our opportunity to show how vital our field is and how substantial the work we are doing is.

People do notice when our section's session is held in a very large room with standing room only. That scene translates to professors in other fields understanding the huge interest there is in legal writing as an academic field.

In addition, of course, those legal writing colleagues who are speaking really appreciate the show of support from the legal writing community and the friendly faces in the audience. It goes without saying that our legal writing col-

leagues routinely do an excellent job of representing the substance of their topic.

In addition to the impact of our section's session, there are many other section's sessions where legal writing professionals can both learn and lead.

To name just a few examples, it is important for legal writing professors to be part of the conversation when sessions are held by the Section on Teaching Methods, the Section on Clinical Legal Education,

People do notice when our section's session is held in a very large room with standing room only.

the Section on Scholarship, and the Section on Academic Support. This year those sections will be discussing, respectively:

(Continued on page 4)

Occupational Segregation by Sex in the Legal Academy—Return of the Pink Ghetto

By Sue Liemer

On Sunday, January 4, 2004, at the AALS annual meeting, the AALS Section on Women in Legal Education will present a panel discussion on "Occupational Segregation by Sex in the Legal Academy." Legal writing professionals have been instrumental in organizing this presentation and will serve on the panel. We hope many legal writing professors will attend. This presentation is conveniently scheduled from 8:30 to 10:15 a.m., just before the presentation of the Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning, and Research.

Occupational segregation by sex affects women and men on the tenure track, in clinical positions, and in legal writing programs. In 1996, the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession referred to the field of legal writing as a "pink ghetto." When compared to our colleagues who teach doctrinal courses, legal writing professors and many clinical professors continue to receive lower status, lower pay, and limited opportunities to participate in faculty governance. Women continue to hold the vast majority of these positions -- in stark contrast to their underrepresentation in the higher status academic positions, the vast majority of which continue to be held by men. The panelists will highlight the empirical evidence of this sex segregation in courses, tasks, economic and social treatment, and political rights. They will also explore the scholarship of integration, as well as pragmatic political solutions.

This important topic has never before been so extensively explored at the AALS annual meeting. Please plan to join us, to lend your voice, and to show your support. The panelists will be Jo Anne Durako (Georgetown), Cunyon Gordon (Eimer Stahl Klevorn & Solberg in Chicago), Nancy Levit (UMKC), Richard Neumann (Hofstra), and Kathy Stanchi (Temp le). Sue Liemer (Southern Illinois) will moderate.

Why Go to AALS?

(Continued from page 3)

- *Classroom Incivilities II: A Play in Four Acts*;
- *Theory Meets Praxis: The Impact of Critical Legal Theory on Lawyering Strategies and Experiential Learning*;
- *Why We Write: Motivations for Legal Scholarship*; and
- *Exploring the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.

Legal writing professors have solid experience and important perspectives to offer our colleagues elsewhere in the academy who are examining these topics. As the legal writing field continues to define itself and touch many areas of the academy, we have similar opportunities to be active members in the discussions of other sections, too.

If the topics above are not enough to convince you to attend the AALS annual meeting, this year the Section on Women in Legal Education is presenting a session on *Occupational Segregation by Sex in the Legal Academy*. Remember the first time you walked into a legal writing conference and saw all these women in the room? The WLE Section will be addressing this phenomenon head on, January 4th at 8:30 a.m., in the time slot right before our legal writing section's session. Among the speakers will be legal writing professionals Jo Anne Durako from Georgetown, Richard Neumann from Hofstra, and Kathy Stanchi from Temple.

Of course there is also time within the AALS annual meeting to catch up with legal writing colleagues. Our Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning, and Research will have its annual luncheon on January 5th.

(LWI) will award the Golden Pen Award at a free reception – to which you are all invited – on January 3rd at 6:30 p.m. This award ceremony is a major outreach effort for LWI, another opportunity to show others what is happening in the world of legal writing. This year the Golden Pen Award honors Judge Keeton, and several federal judges will be attending the reception.

The Association of Legal Writing Directors and LWI also present the Tom Blackwell Memorial Award during the Golden Pen Award reception. This award helps us to remember our slain colleague and to honor one of our own dedicated colleagues. This year's deserving recipient is Professor Pam Lysaght from Detroit-Mercy.

The AALS annual meeting is a time to branch out in our learning, to network, to support each other, and to make sure the field of legal writing is on the radar screen of as many other people involved in legal education as possible. I hope to see you there.

Other Sessions at AALS

- *Classroom Incivilities II: A Play in Four Acts*
- *Theory Meets Praxis: The Impact of Critical Legal Theory on Lawyering Strategies and Experiential Learning*
- *Why We Write: Motivations for Legal Scholarship*
- *Exploring the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

New England Legal Writing Consortium—December 12

The New England Legal Writing Consortium's next meeting will take place on Friday, December 12, at Harvard Law School. It will run from approximately 10:00 to 3:30. Those from schools outside the New England area are welcome to attend.

The subject of this meeting will be “Teaching and Technology.” There will be three panels consisting of short presentations followed by open discussion. Presentations can be quite brief, and should be no longer than 30 minutes to involve as many voices as possible. Ten to fifteen minutes is a good target for length.

Three panes are planned: Panel 1: Using Classroom Presentation Technologies; Panel 2: Using Technology in Feedback and Assessment; and Panel 3: Potpourri-- Whatever catches your fancy. A detailed agenda will be distributed to registered participants in the first week of December, along with other logistical information.

If you would like to attend, please contact Shaun Spencer at sspencer@law.harvard.edu (or at 617-496-3673) by December 1.



Hosted by Harvard Law School

2004 Thomas Blackwell Award Recipient: Pamela Lysaght, Detroit Mercy



Pam Lysaght, Blackwell Recipient

By Lou Sirico, Villanova

At the January meeting of the Association of American Law Schools in Atlanta, the Thomas F. Blackwell Memorial Award will be presented to Professor Pamela Lysaght of University of Detroit Mercy Law School. At Detroit Mercy, Pam is Director of the Applied Legal Theory and Analysis Program. The award recognizes a person who has made an outstanding contribution to improve the field of Legal Writing.

The award is named after Appalachian School of Law Professor Thomas Blackwell who was killed by a disturbed law student in January 2002. Tom was active in the Legal Writing Institute and the Association of Legal Writing Directors, serving as its webmaster. Last year, the first Blackwell Award went to Professor Richard Neumann of the Hofstra University School of Law.

Pam was a founding member of ALWD and served as its President in 2000-2001. During her presidency, ALWD hosted a pathbreaking conference entitled "Erasing Lines: Integrating the Law School Curriculum." The conference was perhaps the first national gathering to discuss merging doctrine and skills courses as part of an effort to chart the future of legal education. It also was the first ALWD conference to bring together Legal Writing professors, other law professors, deans, and judges to talk to one another about their common interests in improving the legal profession.

The conference also sparked the first issue of the Journal of the Association of Legal Writing Directors, which was devoted to the conference proceedings. In that issue, which Pam

helped edit, she offered her vision of the task of legal educators: "to transmit the great and noble traditions of the practice of law to coming generations of lawyers who must be equipped to knowledgeably, skillfully, and ethically fulfill their roles as practitioners and administrators of the law."

Pam has been active in both ALWD and the Legal Writing Institute where she has chaired the Plagiarism Committee. She has often made presentations at the conferences of both groups. She also serves on the Plain English Committee of the State Bar of Michigan and on the Communication Skills Committee of the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. With Brad Cleary, she is the author of "Successful Legal Analysis and Writing: The Fundamentals" (Thompson West).

At Detroit Mercy Pam took the lead in creating the Applied Legal Theory and Analysis course, which integrates legal theory, legal doctrine, and legal skills. She was also instrumental in developing the law school's Writing Across the Curriculum program.

In selecting the recipient of the Blackwell Award, the Award Committee looks to three criteria (*see box left*), all of which Pam exemplifies. All of us who have worked with Pam know how well she satisfies these criteria. If a task needs doing, Pam will see to it that it is done well and done efficiently. Perhaps just as importantly, when she works with us, she always shows her professionalism, generosity, and grace.

* * *

The Blackwell Award Criteria

- 1. The ability to nurture and motivate students to excellence;**
- 2. The willingness to help other Legal Writing educators improve their teaching skills or their Legal Writing programs; and**
- 3. The ability to create and integrate new ideas for teaching and motivating Legal Writing educators and students.**

AALS Meeting, Programs, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

How can law schools best accommodate students with learning disabilities? What are the limits on how much accommodation is "reasonable"? How does that answer vary in LRW settings? Are there times when a law student should be denied a requested accommodation? How can a professor influence accommodations decisions that may not be appropriate for a particular class? How might law schools' decisions affect students with disabilities as they take the bar exam and begin to practice law? Drawing on professional and personal experience as well as existing scholarship, this panel will explore how far law schools can and should push the ADA envelope.

The panelists include attorneys, professors, and law school administrators.

Paul D. Grossman is an adjunct professor at Hastings College of Law and works with the Office of Civil Rights in the Department of Education. He is also an attorney with a learning disability. Jeanne M. Kincaid leads Advanced Educational Solutions, an educational consulting division of Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer & Nelson in Portland, Maine. She represents schools and universities on issues concerning both students and employees with disabilities. Richard C. Ludwick is Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the University of Florida School of Law. An attorney with visual disabilities, he was in private practice for eight years. He holds a masters degree in Higher Education Administration from Columbia University. The panel will be moderated by Suzanne Rowe, University of Oregon Law School.



LWRR Panel moderator,
Suzanne Rowe, Oregon

How can law schools best accommodate students with learning disabilities? What are the limits on how much accommodation is "reasonable"?

International Programs and the Legal Writing Professor

by Jill Ramsfield Georgetown

Despite efforts to slow down immigration and tighten our borders, international students are still coming to law schools. Most are spending one year or so gaining their LL.M. degrees; others have figured out that, to get a job in the United States, a J.D. is necessary. Applications from foreign students for J.D. programs are likely to increase, so we are likely to see more international students in our classrooms.

As usual, nowhere are their visits to law schools more evident than in legal writing programs. Students for whom English is not the first language face tougher obstacles in law schools, and legal writing professors find themselves running to the rescue, reacting to enthusiastic admissions programs. As we know, many deans have discovered that the stream of LL.M. students can increase revenue and keep J.D. class sizes low. Those deans and their admissions directors have thus admitted many stu-

dents according to a formula that may or may not test reading and writing ability.

Many programs use the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores almost like the LSATs, forgetting that the test does not measure the kinds of abilities needed in the law classroom. So, after the fact, they turn to legal writing professors, who are probably already overloaded, but naturally concerned about these students. And generous with their time and talents, besides.

For many legal writing professors, these students may number only a handful, and some one-to-one tutoring may be both helpful to the students and enjoyable to the professor. It expands horizons. It contrasts our system with those of other countries. It shows up some of the silliness of our system and humbles us. It also reveals the honor

that many students hold for their teachers elsewhere, and that's a good feeling. When the number of students begins to increase, however, and the group begins to look like a class, a number of other serious questions arise. What does my syllabus look like? What are the categories for teaching? The same or different from my J.D. classes? What do I emphasize? How do I know I am doing the right thing when I do not have an applied linguistics degree or any training in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL)? A general sense of purpose clashes with a strong realization of lack of formal training in working with these special students.

That clash is a good thing. It, too, is humbling, and it should send professors right to their linguistics and EFL departments. Not only is it good to set up a cross-campus exchange, but our colleagues really do know what they are doing. They tell us that many categories need attention, such as reading comprehension, behavioral constructs and rhetorical preferences.

These experts offer valuable advice
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International Programs, cont.

about teaching in each of these categories. In reading comprehension, they have developed constructs, they have explored culture shock in our problem-solving classrooms, where individuality and analytical abilities are openly tested. In rhetorical preferences, they can suggest ways in which to discover the thought patterns prevalent in other cultures and the distances between those patterns and ours.

They cannot, however, address the particular manifestations of these areas in the law classroom. How do students read cases? How do they participate effectively in class? How do they research and write? In all of these categories, students need guidance on a journey to and through the U.S. legal culture. Some are travelers, and some are immigrants; both groups need explanations of this legal culture, best done through comparison and contrast with their own.

Those contrasts are mostly in the last category: rhetorical preferences. There lies the difference between our brand of federalism and the systems used elsewhere. Here, the constitution spreads power around, giving some issues to states, some to the federal government, which can be very confusing to visitors. Here the common law has produced quite a bit of inductive thinking and writing, though the predominance of statutes produces deductive analytical patterns; most classes are taught inductively, while exams are often written deductively.

Here, our "logic" includes a wealth of analytical patterns beyond the traditional inductive and deductive thinking, such as balancing tests, empirical proof, narrative, and postmodernism, all available to the students through their cases and their class discussions. Our rhetorical preferences are complex and, frankly, weird to many visitors, who will often cling to their own patterns as soon as pen hits paper.

A contrastive approach exposes rhetorical differences and allows the students to honor their own legal cultures and observe, perhaps even enjoy, the peculiarities of ours. As with a journey to any other country, the traveler is delighted and shocked, curious and tired, homesick and thrilled. It's up and down the whole time. The difference, though, is that these students cannot just visit in leave, at least in most programs. They must perform in our culture on exams and papers, take notes, respond to legal questions. To do so, they need targeted teaching. Some tips for targeting teaching to these students:

1. Get advice from experts on teaching non-native speakers (NNS). You will find them and their resources in your linguistics or EFL programs.
2. Develop from the reading they recommend specific teaching techniques appropriate to your students. These might include sessions on reading and briefing cases, exercises in listening in class, practice in speaking about legal questions.
3. Ask students to write one assignment as they would write it at home. This reveals the rhetorical contrasts.
4. Hold conferences early in the semester, perhaps on those first papers or on a neutral topic such as writing practice. Start a contrastive conversation, and keep it going.
5. Learn about the contrasts from the students. Encourage discussion in and out of class about the strange differences, not unlike language or food.
6. Apologize for the confusion. Let the students know that we, too, find this system a bit complex and crazy, but we carry on.
7. Encourage students to speak in class by setting up well-defined assignment parameters and roles.
8. Offer guidelines for reading and writing. Create a vocabulary that you will use to evaluate them so that they can practice in all of those categories, e.g., content, analytical organization, Legal precision, general language use, and mechanics. Have students read

Have students read each others' papers by using the same written guidelines.

9. Be aware of how you are speaking: avoid too many idioms, speak slowly, repeat concepts, and ask if students need clarification.
10. Give students many annotated models for papers and exams; use those models to discuss the rhetorical patterns and contrasts.

Any good legal writing professor will intuitively handle these students with respect and care. What most of us need, however, is some professional assistance in deciding what teaching techniques to emphasize and how to construct specific exercises for this special group of students. In the end, the students will be grateful for the carefully constructed course; we will be grateful for what we learn from the students. We want to make sure the law school is grateful for what we have done, so negotiate carefully for appropriate compensation in credits or salary before you dive into this very absorbing, specialized, and challenging endeavor.



Jill Ramsfield, Georgetown University Law Center

For more tips on teaching international students, see Jill J. Ramsfield, *Is "Logic" Culturally Based? A Contrastive, International Approach to the American Law Classroom*, 47 *J. Legal Ed.* 157 (1997); JILL J. RAMSFIELD, *CULTURE TO CULTURE: A GUIDE TO U.S. LEGAL WRITING* (forthcoming 2004); and attend the January AALS meeting, where a panel will discuss effective approaches to teaching international students.

Nominations Sought for Section's Legal Writing Award

The AALS Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning & Research asks for nominations for the Legal Writing Section Award. The award goes to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field of legal research and writing. Laurel Oates, Seattle University, was this year's recipient.

Past recipients include Helene Shapo, Ralph Brill, Mary Lawrence, and Marjorie Rombauer.

Nominations should be sent by Wednesday, December 4, 2003, to Jo Anne Durako, Secretary, AALS Section on Legal Writing, Reasoning, and Research, Georgetown Univ. Law Center, 600 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001 by e-mail: durako@law.georgetown.edu

"To ensure the continued success of the Section, we urge you to stay involved. There are a variety of legal writing events planned at the Annual

at UNLV in Las Vegas

Message from the Chair, Dan Barnett,

(Continued from page 2)

bership the opportunity to share our expertise as the teachers who face this issue most directly in the legal writing course.

In addition, the Section has helped organize another panel that addresses an important issue facing the legal academy today. Sue Liemer (Southern Illinois), a member of the Section Program Committee, has worked with Barbara Cox (Cal. Western) of the Section on Women in Legal Education on the panel, "Occupational Segregation by Sex in the Legal Academy." We had hoped to co-sponsor this program, but due to AALS policies on co-sponsoring programs, if the legal writing section had been an official co-sponsor, the panel would have been given the worst time slot at the conference. Because of the importance of the topic, we decided that the Section on Women in Legal Education should be the sole sponsor to ensure the best day and time possible. As an unofficial sponsor, we hope all members of the legal writing section will attend.

To ensure the continued success of the Section, we urge you to stay involved. There are a variety of legal writing events planned at the Annual Meeting, including the Section Luncheon that has been organized by Tom McDonnell (Pace), Chair-Elect. Please see the announcement section of this edition of the newsletter for the other legal-writing events in Atlanta.

In addition, you can get involved with the Section by submitting a proposal for the Section program at the 2005 Annual Meeting (see the announcement in this newsletter). We encourage proposals on topics that will appeal to your legal writing colleagues and have relevance to the larger community of law professors.

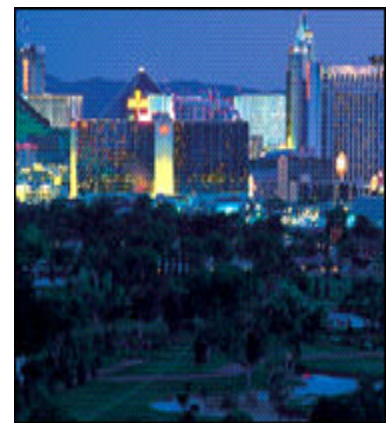
I hope to see you all in Atlanta! Until then, enjoy the rest of the fall semester.

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4th Annual Rocky Mountain Legal Writing Conference

The fourth annual Rocky Mountain Legal Writing Conference will be held March 5-6 at the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Terry Pollman is the conference chair. Suzanne Rowe and Terry Phelps are the plenary speakers. The conference theme is "Telling the Story in the Modern Age." Program co-chairs, Suzanne Rabe and Kevin Oates, invite proposals for conference presentations. Presentations may be on any subject of interest to those teaching legal writing. Presenters have three options for time: 20- 35- and 50-minute presentations.

Those interested in presenting should send a brief description of the presentation, including its title and proposed time frame. Please also include your name, school, address, phone, fax, and e-mail. The deadline for proposals is Monday, December 15, 2003. Send your proposal by e-mail to Suzanne Rabe [and](mailto:rabe@law.arizona.edu) Kevin Oates: rabe@law.arizona.edu & Kevin.Oates@ccmail.Nevada.edu.



Las Vegas

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg "Pursuit of Justice" Legal Writing Award

By Diane Penneys Edelman

Villanova

Have you ever hoped for an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of Legal Writing *outside* of your law school? Have you ever thought that a prominent person's support for our field would help to boost respect for Legal Writing?

If you have thought about these issues, you were correct in doing so. I write this essay as one who had the opportunity to publicly celebrate the importance of our field very recently, and recommend that you try to do the same.

On October 23, 2003, I had the incredible honor of co-presenting the first Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg "Pursuit of Justice" Legal Writing Competition award before an audience of more than a thousand attorneys, judges and law professors at the Philadelphia Bar Association's fall Quarterly Meeting. My involvement with the inauguration of this prestigious competition was in large part a matter of luck and timing. In spring 2002, I was asked by Audrey Talley, then the Chancellor-Elect of the Association, whether I would be interested in co-chairing this new competition, along with Kathleen Wilkinson, Esq. (coincidentally a Villanova alum), a member of a large Philadelphia firm. Amidst the usual hectic juggling of teaching, grading, supervising students and a moot court team, I was happy to take on a responsibility for a new and important constituency – the practicing bar.

At the time that we were invited to participate, the Association had au-



Diane Edelman (Villanova), Audrey Talley (Chancellor Phila. Bar Assn.), Justice Ginsburg, Kathleen Wilkinson, Esq., and Kimberly Bartman (Temple Law 03)

thorized a generous \$2500 first prize award and a decision that the Competition, but Kathleen and I were given full rein to set up and administer the Competition for the 2002-03 academic year. Our only guideline was that eligible students must attend one of the five Philadelphia area law schools (Penn, Rutgers-Camden, Temple, Villanova, Widener-Harrisburg) and that each student must submit a "law review quality submission on any topic relating to rights, privileges and responsibilities under Federal law."

Our first tasks were to determine the structure of the Competition, draft rules, and obtain judges. To give form to the Competition and draft its rules, we reviewed the rules of some fifty-plus legal writing competitions sponsored by law schools, public agencies, trade and private organizations – all of which were available on-line. We culled the rules we preferred and drafted the Competition rules, and by fall 2002, the Association began what would become its widespread marketing of the competition (for press releases, search for the Competition at www.philabar.org).

Being involved from the start from the legal writing teaching perspective gave me a unique opportunity to help shape the character of the Competition. For example, the title of the Competition was changed from "Essay Competition" to "Legal Writing Competition." In addition, the Rules permit ALWD citation or Bluebook citation – not just the latter. Obtaining judges was relatively easy as well – to obtain most of the judges, I contacted Legal Writing faculty at each of the area law schools to get names of professors who would be

willing and able. In other words, Legal Writing networking came in very handy. As an active practitioner and member of the Association's Board of Governors, Kathleen was also well-positioned to supervise relations with the Association, and deal with publicity and related issues.

We were also careful to structure the Competition so that entries would be due at the end of April 2003, which would allow students more time to perfect their submissions, and would coincide with the end of the semester – thereby giving our judges the summer months to evaluate the submissions. In its first year, the Competition received eight submissions which did, in fact, represent all five area law schools. The highlight of the Competition, of course, was the luncheon, at which we, the co-chairs, had the opportunity to speak with Justice Ginsburg (and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, in whose name another Bar award is annually given), and to watch the students' faces glow as they had the chance to speak with the Justices and join them on the dais.

The Competition and Award were widely publicized, and the winning submission, "Not What Congress Intended" by Kimberly Bartman, Temple Law '03, was published in full both in the fall 2003 issue of *The Philadelphia Lawyer*, at on the Association's web site. Not only was this an exciting day for Kimberly, but it was so for Kathleen and me and for those of us who teach Legal Writing as well.