



LWI LIVES

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LWI Lives is a regular electronic publication of the “Faces of LWI” Committee, which explores and communicates the emerging identity of LWI and its members. We have in common the commitment to being the best legal writing professors that we can be. But we are multi-dimensional people with different strengths, interests, curiosities, and gifts. By profiling individuals in our community, we hope to expand and develop our understanding of who we are and what we aspire to be.



Jennifer Cooper: The Performer

By Whitney Heard

From the stage to the courtroom to the classroom, passion and perseverance have fueled each of Jennifer Cooper’s professional performances. Born and raised in Louisiana, Jennifer grew up surrounded by family who encouraged her love of the theatre. At the age of 7, she began performing in plays, eventually leading her to Louisiana State University, where she majored in Theatre and served as the Entertainment Editor and Writer for *The Daily Reveille*.

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Amanda Foster: Capturing the Best of Life through Writing, Photography, and Travel

By Elizabeth Berenguer

For Amanda Foster, leaving the practice of law was a difficult decision. She and her husband were both successful attorneys who loved their careers. But Amanda always knew that her passion

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Working 9 to 5 and 5 to 9: Meet Legal Writing’s Stage Manager, Jeanna Hunter

By Allison Ortlieb

The world of legal writing has seen enormous changes since the early 1990s, and our profilee, Jeanna Hunter, has had a front seat for them all.

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Contributors to this Edition:

- Elizabeth Berenguer
- Whitney Heard
- Grace Hum
- Allison Ortlieb

Feel free to reach out to any one of us if you have questions about this issue.

Jennifer Cooper

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After college, Jennifer journeyed west to pursue her acting career in Seattle. While determined in her pursuit, Jennifer was also practical. Aware that a career in acting was risky and hard, Jennifer prepared a contingency plan. Drawn to the academic side of acting while in college, Jennifer knew that she loved to research, write, and think. Embracing her “inner nerd,” Jennifer settled upon law school as her contingency plan.

Exit stage left for Seattle University School of Law. After her first year of law school and a summer observing criminal trials, Jennifer knew she belonged in the courtroom. Criminal defense offered her that opportunity to perform while making a difference in people’s lives. Thrown into the courtroom as a criminal defense attorney, Jennifer felt right at home in front of a judge and jury arguing on behalf of her clients. Equal parts fulfilling and exhausting, criminal defense work reminded Jennifer more and more of acting. The vulnerability. The disappointment. The hard work. And the low pay. While Jennifer was tough enough to handle these challenges as an actor and as a criminal defense attorney, she started to wonder where her passion for performing would take her next.

As fate would have it, Jennifer would be moving from the courtroom to the classroom: an opportunity that she had been quietly pursuing while in practice. Jennifer assumed a full-time role as Associate Director of the Academic Success Program at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, entering a vastly different world with vastly different challenges. Despite being eager and energized, her students were struggling in their classes. While Jennifer had not personally experienced academic struggles, she understood on a visceral level the vulnerability and disappointment that comes with struggling to perform. And she wanted to help these students. This desire to help fueled her scholarly interest in the intersection of cognitive science and legal education: an interest that she took with her when she left Thomas Jefferson for her jubilant return to Seattle U.



Jennifer snapped a quick selfie at Red Rocks Park in Colorado while exploring this natural amphitheatre cut into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains: she enjoys balancing her time inside the classroom with time outside in nature.

As a student, Jennifer was not fully aware of how much she had benefitted from Seattle U.’s rigorous legal writing program. However, years of practice proved that the analytical and writing skills she developed were invaluable. So, with a newfound appreciation for the legal education she had received as a student, Jennifer was committed to paying it forward as a professor. Opportunely, Jennifer’s time at Thomas Jefferson had prepared her to hit the ground running as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Lawyering Skills at Seattle U. Her insights into learning and confidence when teaching endeared her to the students. Empowered by her time as both a student and professor

Jennifer Cooper

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at Seattle U., Jennifer recently transitioned into her new position as an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Law at the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law.

Jennifer was particularly attracted to Denver Law because of the university's teacher-scholar model. In 2018, her co-authored article *Smarter Law Study Habits: An Empirical Analysis of Law Learning Strategies and Relationship with Law GPA* was published in the St. Louis University Law Journal. This article was the culmination of years of work creating and administering intake surveys on the study habits of law students alongside her co-author (an educational psychologist at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay). Unable to resist the opportunity, I asked Jennifer for some helpful tips to pass along to law students based on her review of the data collected. She kindly obliged. To relieve stress, she encourages students to reverse plan their entire semester including classes, major projects, and exams, and then break those tasks down into smaller chunks to avoid both panic and procrastination. To build mastery, she recommends students replace passive strategies like reading, rereading, and briefing cases with more active strategies like creating practice questions and answering practice questions. She also reminds students that learning is not linear: it happens in fits and bursts. As someone who exemplifies a love of learning, Jennifer looks forward to continuing her research at Denver Law with the hope of writing a book for law students based on her research-based approach to study habits.

Jennifer balances her time inside the classroom with time outside in nature. Along with her family of outdoor enthusiasts, Jennifer enjoys getting off the grid in their Airstream trailer. Together, they travel to the middle of nowhere to unplug in search of wilderness adventures. Most recently, Jennifer road-tripped with her husband and son to Glacier National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Yellowstone National Park. These national parks offered plentiful paths for the family to hike and explore. This summer, they will be heading home to New Orleans with their Airstream; thankfully, it comes equipped with air conditioning.

Jennifer Cooper's impact on audiences, clients, and students is directly attributable to the passion and determination with which she has embraced each professional performance as an actor, attorney, and professor. I, personally, can't wait to see what she does next!

To get in touch with Jennifer, you can email her at jcooper@law.du.edu.



Jennifer's home away from home, an Airstream Trailer, has taken her family on many wilderness adventures, including Glacier National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Yellowstone National Park.

Amanda Foster

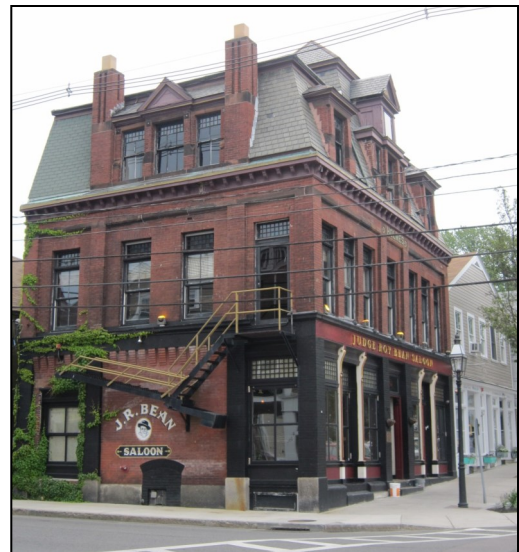
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was to teach. So, when an opportunity opened up several states away, she wrapped up her practice and convinced her husband to telecommute from Florida to New Jersey so she could follow her dream. The privilege to be part of “my students’ legal-career journeys is so amazing and satisfying,” Amanda says; “leaving practice was absolutely worth it.”

But of course, this labor of love is only part of who Amanda is. She is a wife, a mother, a writer, a photographer, a traveler, and so much more. Recently, Amanda started blogging for Twiniversity, a national organization. As a mom of twins, she has tons of advice to share, and she enjoys writing articles about fun topics, tips, and tricks. Her most recent articles include advice on preparing for summer camp, Disney cruising with twins, and preparing Twinadoes for a Hurricane.

Her mentor, Olympia Duhart (who blogs for the Huffington Post), suggested she find this type of non-traditional outlet to keep her engaged in writing in between major research projects. (Not to mention, writing for a blog is a *fantastic* way to procrastinate grading.) Blogging helps her stay active with her research projects and law review articles because it allows her to maintain a steady rhythm of writing. Instead of binging like so many of us, she manages to steadily move projects along by the inertia of constantly writing something.

In addition to writing, Amanda loves photography. She has captured some of her most precious experiences on film. For example, hanging in her dining room is a photo she captured of the Judge Roy Bean Saloon, a historic bar where she met her husband at a 1L mixer their first year in law school. Her favorite photograph hangs in her office. It is a picture she took in France of Sacré-Cœur, a remarkable church on a hill that she discovered while traveling on a high school exchange program. Later, in law school, she took her husband with her to Paris to visit this church.



Amanda Foster

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She bought some rosary beads made from roses as a souvenir of her visit to the Sacré-Cœur, and she carried this rosary at her wedding. This church, which was special to her individually, is now also a sacred symbol of her marriage. Having this picture in her office provides a daily gateway to the peace she felt the first time she visited the church and is a daily reminder of the special bond she and her husband share.

France is not the only trip Amanda and her husband have taken together—they love traveling. Amanda’s favorite is a recent trip she and her husband took with their twins to Cuba in November 2018. Before going, she did not know what to expect because Cuba is so isolated from the United States. With the only children on the tour bus, the Foster family set out on a unique adventure—enjoying the sights, sounds, and cuisine of Havana! As an experiment, she decided to send herself a postcard just to see if it would arrive. She mailed it on November 22, and it finally arrived...on February 7! She will never forget walking through the beautiful streets of Old Havana, watching her children take it all in. “A new generation of little travelers,” she thought as she watched her six-year-old twins negotiate, on their own, to buy bracelets at the Almacenes San Jose market.

Another trip she recalls fondly is her study abroad time as a 20-year-old in Australia. She faced Uluru, also known as Ayers Rock—and she conquered it. Ayers Rock, in the middle of the Outback, is huge, and climbing it is physically and mentally challenging. There were times she did not think she would be able to make it to the top. With determination, though, she reached the summit where she could gaze out for miles all around. Overwhelmed by the majesty, it dawned on her that this was the hardest thing she had ever done up until that point in her life.

Reaching the peak of Ayers Rock gave Amanda a new level of confidence that she brings to everything she does, especially teaching. Twenty years later, in the face of any challenge, she still thinks back to how she felt that day on top of Ayers Rock: “If I could do that, I can do anything.”

To get in touch with Amanda, you can email her at amanda.foster@nova.edu.



LegalWriting
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Jeanna Hunter

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**If you can read Jeanna's shirt,
thank the Phoenicians.**

Jeanna Hunter is the Director of the Academic Success Program and coordinator of the Legal Writing Program at Northern Illinois University, where she has spent her entire career as an academic.

After graduating from Southern Illinois University with a B.A. in journalism, Jeanna went to work as a reporter in central Illinois. After spending six years as a journalist, she returned to Southern Illinois for law school. The intellectual challenge and luxury of the academic calendar made law school truly enjoyable for her. Law school gives a person “time to think about things.” Unlike the constant deadlines found in most jobs, law school gave her the time to “stick to a project or intellectual pursuit until it was done really well.” She loved law school so much that it should be no surprise that she accepted a teaching position at NIU just a few years after graduation.

In 1993, Jeanna joined the faculty at NIU as a legal writing instructor. After that first year of teaching, Jeanna had the option to take a job as a staff attorney for an appellate court, but she stayed at NIU. She always knew that she wanted to teach legal writing—“it’s where you get to tell the client’s story and get the client’s voice heard”—and she joined the profession at the right place, at the right time. At the time, legal writing jobs at NIU, like most law schools, were “temporary, one-year jobs that they sometimes let people stick around in for a second year.” But things were beginning to change across the legal academy. Schools were beginning to see the value of creating a professional cadre of legal writing professors who weren’t temporary workers or fungible, and Jeanna was at NIU when it was ready to make the change to a more permanent staffing model.

The challenges she faced at the start of her career were the same challenges felt throughout the legal writing world: lower faculty status, skepticism from tenure-line faculty regarding the need for academic support, and classification of legal writing classes and programs as “add-ons” to the law school curriculum rather than as critical components in a lawyer’s training. Jeanna notes that new writing faculty face challenges today that are similar: finding one’s place in the law school, building respect from tenure-line faculty colleagues, and continuing to grow as a professional. But, she noted that new faculty no longer have to work so hard to have the legitimacy of their discipline recognized.

Jeanna has had the opportunity to teach several generations—she’s now teaching the children of some of her first students—so she’s also witness to the generational shifts in the skills students bring to the classroom. The greatest shift she has seen is in the students who now

Jeanna Hunter

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fill our classrooms. The shift started in the 2000s—a shift away from the core fundamental skills and abilities students had in the 1980s and 90s. She has observed that today's students are used to just-in-time knowledge: the ability to look up items as needed, rather than memorizing large quantities of information.

Unfortunately, today's students still need to prepare for a bar examination that requires those old skills, but this is simply one of the new challenges that keeps Jeanna engaged and growing as a teacher. She believes in knowing what skills her students have, meeting them at their level, and working with them to attain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful students and effective attorneys.

In her free time, Jeanna enjoys theater—not just watching theater, but making performances happen. It's a hobby that she developed almost accidentally. When Jeanna's eldest daughter, Allison, was 7, Allison announced that she wanted to audition for a local theater production of the *Wizard of Oz*. Allison was cast as a Munchkin, and Jeanna began to spend her hours sitting in the theater, grading papers, preparing class materials, and waiting for her daughter to finish rehearsal. Two weeks before the curtain was to go up on the production, a member of the production staff approached Jeanna with three words that would change Jeanna's free time for the foreseeable future: "Do you sew?" The person who was supposed to sew the Munchkins' costumes had not completed the job and had dropped off the raw materials; none of the costumes were complete. With just a few days left before opening night, Jeanna joined the production team in the basement of the theater, sewing costumes for the cast.



Jeanna and family at the Happiest Place on Earth.

Allison has gone on to focus more on creating sound effects, and Jeanna has gone on to do much more than sew costumes for the Stagecoach Theater Company, in DeKalb, Illinois. She has done costume design, prop design, and other technical work for numerous productions. This year alone, she is scheduled to work on three productions, and it's not unusual for her to go straight from NIU to the theater.

Her favorite role in the theater is stage manager. It's a role that allows her to do a bit of all the behind-the-scenes work: scenic design, costume design, sound and lighting design, and other production design. The stage manager works with both the technical crew and the actors to make every production go off without a hitch.

Jeanna is content to work backstage and has no desire to appear on stage as an actor. Her one acting credit is as the corpse rolled on stage during *9 to 5: The Musical*. It was her idea to put various production staff in that role to get reactions from the actors on stage. Naturally, the staff insisted Jeanna take the role one night.

Beyond that one role, Jeanna leaves the on-stage performances to her daughters Allison and Rachel. Allison has not pursued acting, but she did pursue musical performance. She has a Bachelor of Music degree in clarinet performance and a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education from Bradley University in Peoria, IL. Rachel is currently studying vocal performance at Northern Illinois University. Needless to say, Jeanna and her husband Bob enjoy watching their daughters' many performances. They also enjoy watching other live concerts and performances whenever possible.

Jeanna has enjoyed her adventures in academia and theater. She feels fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time and wouldn't trade either experience away for another path.

To get in touch with Jeanna, you can contact her at jeannah@niu.edu.



UPCOMING LEGAL WRITING

May 2, 2019

New England Conference
Maine School of Law

May 17, 2019

Empire State Legal Writing
New York Law School

May 17, 2019

Carolinas Legal Research &
Writing Colloquium
University of South Carolina

May 21-23, 2019

Associate of Academic
Support Educators
Seattle Univ. School of Law

May 29-31, 2019

ALWD Biennial Conference
Suffolk University Law School

June 3-5, 2019

Institute for Law
Teaching & Learning
Washburn University

July 9-11, 2019

Seventh Applied Legal
Storytelling Conference
University of Colorado

September 13-14, 2019

Central States Legal Writing
UIC John Marshall School of Law

Check out these websites for more
information on what's happening!

<http://www.lwionline.org/>
<http://www.alwd.org/>
<http://www.aals.org/aals-events/>



Selection and Presentation Process

We believe it is important for LWI members to know our process for creating the newsletter. The Committee is organized into three teams, and each team is responsible for selecting, proposing, and writing the three profiles for a particular issue of the newsletter. To ensure a diverse newsletter, the teams propose the names of the selected individuals to the Co-Chairs to ensure that there is a breadth of coverage for each issue. Additionally, the Co-Chairs keep a master list of all the profiles, so that we can ensure a wide range of coverage over time.

If you have someone in mind who we should interview for a future newsletter, feel free to email any of the committee members listed below. If you could include a note explaining why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

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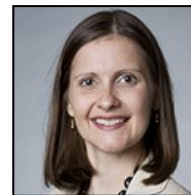
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