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Tamara Herrera; and
Bob Brain

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.

Programs, Pedagogy, and Photography: She Does It All



By Dede Hill

The tag line on Leslie Culver's smartphone message perfectly captures the stage she is in in her family life, along with her sense of humor, and her awesome ability to juggle so much, so skillfully. It reads: "[t]yped from my . . . smartphone while chasing a toddler - grace for errors . . .

For more on Leslie, see page 2

Fresh Air + Fresh Program = Contentment in Boise



By Tamara Herrera

Some people are born to be leaders and fearlessly forge their own paths through life. Tenielle Fordyce-Ruff is one these people, as evidenced by her 2015 Leader in Law award from the Idaho Business Review.

For more on Tenielle, see page 4

Dedication (and Dreads) in South Texas



By Olympia Duhart

Even Andrew Solomon's faculty profile offers a glimpse of his passion for sports. Instead of Cardozo or Marshall, the legal writing professor at South Texas College of Law in Houston offers a nod to Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach. The quote reads: "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

For more on Andrew, see page 6

Leslie Culver, continued

The week Leslie and I were scheduled to talk was a particularly hectic one for her. Her nanny was away for the week, so she was juggling work and caring for her 21 month-old. To complicate matters, she is teaching an overload this semester at California Western School of Law, where she is a Professor of Legal Writing, while also carrying out her duties as Director of the school's pipeline program, A.I.M. for Law (more on that soon). And, have I mentioned that she is 30 weeks pregnant with her second child? Remarkably, Leslie seemed completely unfazed by the week's challenges. If anything, she seemed even more energetic than when I first met her six years ago at the San Marco session of the LWI Writers' Workshop, where Leslie inspired even the most reserved among us to play beach volleyball, and run the Biennial 5K. (Characteristically, when not on the beach, Leslie was quietly and efficiently finishing the law review article she was workshopping, and which was published soon after the Biennial.)

I caught up with Leslie one day just after she had put her beautiful daughter, Faith Elizabeth, down for a nap. After we commiserated briefly about the fashion challenges one faces when 30 weeks pregnant, our conversation turned to Leslie's work as Director of the A.I.M. for Law program at California Western. A.I.M. for Law (Achieve, Inspire, Motivate), is a diversity pipeline program that prepares undergraduate students, principally from underrepresented groups, to pursue a law school education. Early in the program's existence, Leslie was tapped to serve on the exploration committee, and prepared the legal writing curriculum as well as volunteered as a guest lecturer. During these early years, the program was housed at both San Diego State University and California Western. Later, when the former A.I.M. Director was unable to continue in that capacity, California Western began exploring offering the program solely on its campus, and Leslie was asked to direct the program. As Director, Leslie has focused on reaching students from a wide range of undergraduate institutions, including community colleges. This focus is indicative of Leslie's boundless passion for opening up the legal profession to groups historically underrepresented in its ranks. This passion is apparent in her mantra – repeated often to her A.I.M. students: "I don't care where you go to law school, what is important is that you join our profession." Last year, Leslie founded Prepare to A.I.M. for Law, a summer symposium for at-risk high school students designed to reengage them in academics, and to inspire them to one day pursue a career in law. Already she has plans to expand this program through the academic year.

Leslie's path to becoming a law professor was not direct. After graduating from St. Louis University School of Law (SLU), she clerked for Judge Lawrence G. Crahan on the Missouri Court of Appeals. She then joined a prominent St. Louis litigation firm where she litigated a broad range of civil matters, and also carried a heavy pro bono caseload. While things were going just fine at the firm, about four years in, Leslie realized that she needed a change. The firm's specialty was litigation, yet she is, by her account, conflict averse. Her plan: to pursue



Faith Elizabeth at 9 Days Old

one of her other passions – photography – by taking an internship at the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis. She also put in a call to the dean of her alma mater, SLU, and let him know she was contemplating a shift in her career. Since graduating, she had been an active alumnus at St. Louis, often giving writing workshops for the Black Law Student Association students, and for the law school's Women's Law Student Association. She had excelled in her legal writing class, and loved giving these workshops. Within a month of quitting her big law job, Leslie was offered a job as a legal writing professor at SLU. Luckily, the schedule also allowed her to complete her photography internship at the botanical gardens, and to grow her wedding photography business (which she had started some four years earlier, at the same time she started as a litigation associate in St. Louis.)

Yes, you read that last sentence correctly: Leslie began her own wedding photography business while working the long and erratic hours of an associate at a litigation firm, and has continued and expanded her business while working the long and erratic hours of a legal writing professor! Leslie discovered her passion and talent for photography while visiting a friend who dabbled in amateur photography in the weeks just before she began her job as a litigation associate. While studying some of her friend's photographs, Leslie was struck by the realization that she could do that. Leslie immediately bought herself a camera, and from that moment on, Leslie stopped snapping pictures and started "capturing moments." Back home in St. Louis, Leslie found some local photographers whom she admired, and they became her mentors. In 2007,

Leslie Culver, conclusion



Leslie, relaxing with husband Carl

she started assisting her mentors with weddings. Before long, she opened her own wedding photography business, which quickly thrived. When she moved to San Diego in 2009, her transition to a new market was smooth; today, she has more than enough business to keep her busy. However, just last month, Leslie decided to take a break from shooting weddings. Her plan for the near future is to focus on lifestyle shoots and maternity. Her favorite moment to photograph of late is of families in the days immediately after they have come home with a newborn— capturing the sleepy images of nesting and adjustment that mark that time.

There is so much more to tell about Leslie, like her unalloyed love of teaching. Last year she taught Women and the Law in addition to the first year legal writing and upper level clinical internship classes that she typically teaches, and was invigorated by the change. She looks forward to more opportunities to teach different subjects and to grow as a teacher. Also, Leslie is actively engaged in research and scholarship about juvenile justice issues. She has published one law review article on the topic, and has plans for more.

For now, I'm wishing Leslie some nesting time with her growing family, although I cannot wait to see what she'll accomplish next. One thing is certain, our LWI community is richer and more vibrant with Leslie among its ranks.

Leslie Culver: lculver@cwsf.edu

Luckily, the schedule also allowed her to complete her photography internship at the botanical gardens, and to grow her wedding photography business (which she had started some four years earlier, at the same time she started as a litigation associate in St. Louis.)



Leslie, with Charles Calleros, David Austin, Mark Wojick, and Ruth Hargrove

At the San Marcos Biennial with Michelle Falkoff, Dede Hill, and Cathren Koehlert





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Tenielle Fordyce-Ruff, continued

Tenielle's aptitude to lead was evident when she was just a young girl. "This might be odd, but I wanted to be independent and self-sufficient. My mother was raised in a really traditional household and had a horrible first marriage that took way too long for her to escape from because she was raised to be dependent. I never wanted to have to depend on another person that way (a value my mother took great care to instill in me), so I worked tremendously hard on my education. I knew I would need scholarships to go to college, so that's what I did." Tenielle attended the University of Wyoming for her undergraduate studies in Russian area studies and eventually found her way to the University of Oregon School of Law. "I choose to go to Oregon because my husband didn't want to go east of the Mississippi and I wanted to go to a large town/small city. Once we visited the campus it just felt right."

Tenielle's love of research and writing (an important reason why she decided to go to law school) "just felt right" too. While in law school, Tenielle was a writing tutor. After law school, Tenielle kept in touch with her writing professor, Suzanne Rowe. "I moved to Boise after law school and worked for the Idaho Supreme Court. Suzanne Rowe remembered from when I tutored LRW in law school that I had an interest in teaching LRW. She approached me about writing the Idaho book in Carolina Academic Press' state research series. While I was working on that a two-year visitor position opened at Oregon. The timing was right, so we moved back to Eugene for two years, and I taught while my husband worked on his Masters. We then came back to Boise and I spent two years doing general business litigation with a partner before moving into my current



position."

And her current position is one that a true leader would tackle! Tenielle built the legal writing program at Concordia University School of Law from scratch in 2012. "As I was teaching at Oregon, Concordia announced that it was going to build a law school in Boise. I immediately wrote to the Dean expressing my interest in directing the LRW program. Eventually I met the Dean, the Provost, and the Associate Dean of Academics. They offered me a position, although I'm not sure we ever had a formal interview."

As the inaugural director of the school's legal writing program, Tenielle directs both the first-year program and the advanced writing program. For the first two years of the law school, she was the only full-time writing professor, which meant she had to do it all: from "hiring and supervising 1L teachers and then growing the advanced writing program and hiring and supervising the adjuncts for those courses." The school now has an assistant director, but Tenielle is still ultimately responsible for all the writing courses at Concordia—from curriculum to hiring. "I love that I built something from scratch. I had a lot of help and guidance from other directors around the country, and I couldn't have done it without the mentorship that we provide to new directors. I also love that I can be so creative in expanding my program. I have great support from the administration and the students understand the importance of the skills they learn in the writing classes. I almost can't keep up with demand for more writing classes!"

So what career path does Tenielle hope to trek next? "I would love to still be here at the end of my career. I might like to try my hand at moving up into administration. I feel like I have a talent for that. But I love Boise and I really like Concordia, so I'm not planning on moving."

One huge reason that Tenielle loves Boise so much is her love of the outdoors. "I was raised in Wyoming, so I need a certain amount of open space and a view of the mountains to be truly happy." Specifically, she enjoys hiking, camping, and snowshoeing. "I also love spontaneous trips, and there is so much of Idaho left for me to explore that I could easily spend my next several summers in the mountains here." Tenielle and her husband also rescue dogs ("so I get to come home every night to a house full of love—hairy love balls that need fed and walked"), and it should come as no surprise that one of her favorite hobbies is leading – by teaching yoga. "I teach yoga, so I do a lot of yoga to stay on top of that." When she is not teaching, she enjoys winding down by going on wine tastings and having dinners with friends. Boise has a "good farm to fork food scene and the USA's newest wine region [is] here in Boise."



Tenielle Enjoying the Outdoors

Speaking of wine and toasts, when you accept your Leader in Law award this fall, Tenielle, remember that your LWI family is cheering you on. Way to go!

Here is a glimpse at some of Tenielle's other favorites, in her own words:

Favorite type of music?

I listen to a lot of different kinds of music. I most frequently listen to adult alternative or yoga music. My husband would say it's "anything not country," which is pretty accurate. He loves country music, so we have to negotiate the music every time we take a road-trip.

Favorite band?

I love DJ Drez for yoga music. I love Death Cab for Cutie and Scars on 45. I saw Alabama Shakes this summer and they were amazing live, so I've been listening to a lot of them lately.

Favorite song?

That depends on the day and my mood. My favorite songs are usually tied to a memory. My grandmother played piano, so certain old songs will remind me of her. I had a crazy camping trip with my cousins in high school where we forgot to pack any cassettes (yes, those) other than the one in the boombox and had only the Beastie Boys to listen to for a week—I still can't hear a song from *License to Ill* without smiling!

Favorite dream vacation?

I love to travel. I would love to see Eastern Europe (my BA is in Russian area studies, but I didn't have a chance to visit because of the political climate when I was studying). I would also

love to be able to do a great yoga retreat each year in some amazing location.

Favorite movie?

I love *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. It reminds me so much of marrying into a big, crazy Italian family. I also love how hard

Nia Vardalos worked on her dream of making that movie.

What are the last three books you read, and what do they mean to you?

This question isn't fair coming off of summer. I've been hauling around "beach reads" during camping trips, so my last three reads were pretty fluffy!

The Wednesday Sisters by Meg Waite Clayton. A fun story about five women in the late sixties and early seventies who find the strength in each other to pursue their dreams and break free from the constraints of being a woman during that time. It was a great reminder of how different my life is from my mother's, and how far we as a society still need to go (but it was still a fun, easy read!).

I also reread the Harry Potter series. They are just perfect for cool evenings in the mountains around the campfire. I've just started reading *Light on the Yoga Sutras* by BKS Iyengar. Not fluffy, but I do try to read at least one or two yoga books a year to keep my yoga teaching fresh.

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Andrew Solomon, continued

This is an adage that Solomon, a professor at South Texas since 1998, has put into practice both in the classroom and beyond. His commitment to excellence is something that motivates him to put in long hours with the students in his legal writing courses each semester. But it also propels him to put in long hours on the baseball field. For the past eight years, Solomon has coached Pearland Little League regular season and tournament teams. His dedication paid off this past summer when his Pearland Little League team finished third in the world at the Little League World Series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. No small feat -- especially since 7,000 teams worldwide competed for the sixteen coveted spots in the Little League World Series. Solomon said he was honored and humbled to be the leader of a coaching staff that led a team -- composed of 12-13 year olds -- through such a remarkable enterprise. The team played in games in Houston, Tyler, and Waco Texas, and then in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, with the last ten games being televised on the Longhorn Network, ESPN, or ABC. Solomon, who spent about two years in general litigation before taking his first teaching job at Indiana School of Law --

Indianapolis, says he was amazed by the progress made by the players in such a short time. In this interview, Solomon shares his love of little league, teaching, dreadlocks, and his passion for community service.

How did you get involved in Little League?

I have two children. My daughter [Samantha] is 15 and my son [Alex] is 13. Eight years ago, Alex wanted to play baseball and I made the decision to get involved and coach his team. For the past eight seasons, every spring, I have managed his Little League team.

What is special about your Little League?

Every Little League is a little different. Pearland Little League is very, very, very competitive. From a very young age, the games are competitive and the kids are taught and expected to play at a high level. It's certainly not a perfect fit for all kids or parents; some people understandably want a more recreational youth sports experience. But, if the goal is to play competitive baseball from a young age, then Pearland Little League is a great place. When our son Alex, who

was seemingly a pretty good athlete and a competitor, wanted to start playing baseball, my wife and I, who are also both pretty good athletes and competitive, decided to sign him up at Pearland Little League. We quickly learned about the competitiveness and the high level of play. At the end of Alex's second season, Pearland Little League qualified for the Little League World Series for the first time. Now, after sending teams to the Little League World Series in 2010, 2014, and 2015, we're probably known as the best Little League in the country. The competition breeds a very high level of play from a very young age and every player in the league dreams of playing in the Little League World Series. Although Pearland has made it look somewhat easy, it's really, really hard to get to the Little League World Series. There are 7,000 Little League teams worldwide and only 16 teams qualify for Williamsport.

How often does your team practice? How many games a week?

During the regular season, most Pearland Little League teams practice or play games four times per week. Dur-



Andrew and ESPN's
Tim Kurkjian on
Baseball Tonight



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Andrew Solomon conclusion



Andrew With the Dreads Dyed in Team Colors at the World Series

ing the All-Star season, most teams practice every day. During this past summer, starting on June 10th, our team practiced twice each day. They would hit in a batting cage facility every morning and would have a field practice each night. It's important to understand that most of the players on this year's World Series team have played together during the fall for about six years. During the fall, they would practice two times each week and play tournaments nearly every weekend for about six months. During the spring, they returned to Little League and played the Little League tournament during the summer.

What has this team taught you about drive?

The three Pearland Little League teams that have now qualified for the World Series have taught everyone in Pearland that something that seems unrealistic can be achieved with hard work and dedication. Pearland Little League has made it look easy, but it is very, very unlikely for a single league to be this successful.

The experience is amazing and surreal. People love Little League. We started the summer playing games in front of family and friends with some local media coverage and ended the summer playing before 46,000 people in the US championship game with the games being broadcast worldwide by ESPN and ABC. It's pretty surreal for 12 year old kids to meet ESPN broadcast teams and play in front of crowds of

that size. Over the course of the summer, I watched my players go from not being able to put together a sentence for a local reporter to doing interviews for national TV programs.

How do you find time to coach and grade your student memos?

To be quite honest, it is hard. The amount of time that we put into these boys and to that team is demanding. In addition to teaching and coaching baseball, I actually do other stuff in the community. In 2009 and 2012, I was elected to the Pearland ISD school board and spent six years improving our schools which are now ranked as the second best in the Houston-area and 17th best in Texas.

Do your LRW students know about your life as a coach?

It's hard not to. You come into my office and I have banners hanging on my walls and now most have seen me on television.

How have legal writing courses changed since you were in school?

They have changed dramatically. Twenty years ago, the people who taught it were doing the best they could under not the best of circumstances. The commitment from the schools to the course was very different. One important change is having people who are fully committed to teaching the course as their career. This makes for dramatic changes across the board.

What do baseball and LRW have in common for you?

If you want to be successful in anything, you need to be passionate about it and you need to work hard. I try to instill that passion and commitment to hard work to both my students and players. It's relatively easy because I'm passionate about the law, legal writing, youth sports, and baseball. I'm also a big believer in the importance of hard work and the dedication needed to excel in any endeavor.

And what is the story about your hair?

A lot of people knew our team and now know me because of my hair. It is admittedly unusual for a 50 year old white guy to have dreadlocks. But, I have always liked dreadlocks and six years ago I started growing out my hair and then dreaded it. During the Little League World Series, the dreadlocks had their own Twitter account -- Coach Andrew's Dreads. The sad part was that my Dreads had way more followers than myself. After the Little League World Series, the person who made the account stopped posting and I subsequently learned that it was someone from Pearland who was having some fun.

Do you think your dreadlocks have now become a lucky charm?

I feel like the dreads have brought me and my team good luck. They're also a little different and unique, and that probably best captures my personality. The dreadlocks help me convey that easily.

What do your players think of your hair?

They always talk about cutting it off and I made a deal with them. If they could get to the Little League World Series, then I would let them dye my hair. Then, if they won the Little League World Series, they could cut off the dreads. When we got to Williamsport, I dyed the last six or eight inches of the dreads, purple and silver, our team colors in the Little League World Series. We came close to winning and me leaving Williamsport as a bald man, but it didn't work out that way so the dreads have remained for now.

Why is community service so important to you?

My job is my professional life and my students are very, very important to me. But, I'm really passionate about other things as well. I am really passionate about education and youth sports. And the nexus between both of those is my family, my kids. I saw things in both the schools and youth sports that didn't make me thrilled and I wanted to try to get change and contribute my ideas and my expertise.

Andrew Solomon: asolomon@stcl.edu



The Pearland All-Stars Celebrate

“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.”

Vince Lombardi quote in Andrew’s office



**@Coach Andrew’s Dreads
On Twitter**



UPCOMING LEGAL WRITING EVENTS

2015 One-Day LWI Workshops

December 4

Creighton, Concordia, Florida A & M, Florida International, Northern Illinois, Tulane, USC Gould, Wash.

U. St. Louis, Widener Harrisburg

December 5

Denver Law

December 11

Chicago Kent, Ohio State

January 6, 2016

Scholars & Scholarship Workshop on Feminist Jurisprudence, sponsored by LWI, ALWD, LWRR Section of AALS, and Fordham Law School Fordham's Skadden Center, NY

January 6-10, 2016

AALS Annual Meeting
New York, New York

January 22-23, 2016

2016 Southeastern Legal Writing Conference
University of Miami School of Law

March 11-12, 2016

Sixth Annual Capital Area Legal Writing Conference
University of Maryland

March 18-19, 2016

Rocky Mountain Legal Writing Conference
University of Arizona

July 10-13, 2016

2016 LWI Biennial Conference
Portland Hilton and Executive Tower

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

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

Next month in *LWI Lives*, read about:



Jesse Bawa
Howard



Molly Lien
A Memorial



Brian Glassman
Cleveland-Marshall

Selection and Presentation Process: We believe it is important for the members of LWI to know our process for creating the newsletter. The Committee is organized into three teams, and each 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 are keeping a master list of all the profiles, so that we can ensure a wide range of coverage over time.

The Faces of the LWI Committee exists to allow us to learn about the interesting lives of our colleagues. For that to happen, we want and need a diverse selection of legal writing professors to profile. If you have someone in mind that we should put on the list for a future newsletter, please feel free to contact any of our members at the email addresses below. If you could include a note on why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

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