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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 the LWI and its members. We have in common the commitment to being the best legal writing professors that we can be and 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.

**Looking Back on an Amazing Career**



**By Karin Mika**

At Minnesota, the end of an era is approaching. Brad Clary (Clinical Professor of Law and Director of Applied Legal Instruction) has been an institution at Minnesota for over 15 years. On June 30, 2017, at nearly 67, he'll hang up his hat and turn over the reins. Brad graduated from Carleton College with a degree in history and then attended the University of Minnesota Law School. Prior to becoming a full-time

**For more on Brad, see page 2.**

**Teaching Writing and Modeling Professionalism**



**By Danielle Weatherby**

Melissa Henke is the first full-time Director of Legal Research and Writing at the University of Kentucky College of Law. After spending much of her childhood in Kentucky, Melissa attended college at University of Kentucky, where she earned a bachelor of arts, *summa cum laude*, in political science (she also minored in women's studies). The summer before her senior year, Melissa interned in Washington,

**For more on Melissa, see page 4.**

**Soccer, Sunshine, and Mentoring Students**



**By Sha-Shana Crichton**

Shakira Pleasant is fulfilling her passion as an Associate Professor of Law at Savannah Law School. She teaches Legal Writing, Research and Analysis (LWRA) and Pretrial Advocacy. Prior to joining the faculty at Savannah Law School,

**For more on Shakira, see page 6.**



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## Brad Clary, continued



teacher at the University of Minnesota in 1999, Brad was a practitioner and partner at Oppenheimer, Wolff & Donnelly. While practicing with the firm, Brad was very involved with the Minnesota Bar and the American Bar Association. He was also an adjunct professor for both William Mitchell College of Law, and the University of Minnesota Law School, and, through the years, has developed a versatile repertoire of classes including Legal Writing, Appellate Advocacy, Trial Practice, Civil Procedure, and Evidence. His numerous publications include books on Complex Litigation, Trial Tactics, and Appellate Advocacy.

Brad has been quietly omnipresent in Legal Writing and in the law. He has remained extensively involved in state bar committee work as well as participating on ABA, ALWD, and LWI committees dedicated to enhancing nearly every aspect of the integrity of the law, as well as the status and security of Legal Writing professionals. He is one of the resident experts regarding ABA Standards and the Standards Review Process, and is often found witnessing hours upon

hours of debate and deliberation whenever the Standards Review Committee meets. We asked Brad a few questions and here is what he said:

### **What do you remember about your first year LRW class?**

I took first-year legal writing in 1972-73 here at Minnesota, where I now teach. At the time, my instructor was a third-year law student assigned to assist the professor in my small section of civil procedure. We did a treasure hunt search to find one directly-on-point case from the U.S. District Court in Vermont, on a personal jurisdiction issue. Then we wrote a draft appellate brief on a class action issue and gave an oral argument. Very different from the current program.

### **What professional accomplishments are you most proud of?**

Working my way up from clerk in the mail room to partner and head of litigation at my old law firm (where I remain of counsel), redesigning the Minnesota legal writing program that has a solid base and has now produced many award-winning

### **What is something we don't know about you?**

I have a first degree brown belt in Tae Kwon Do.



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## Brad Clary, continued

writers (Burton prizes, moot court briefs, law journal articles), serving on the Minnesota Supreme Court Civil Justice Reform Task Force, serving as ALWD president, hosting the "Erasing Lines" conference in 2001, being elected to membership in ALI and the American Bar Foundation, and managing to remain calm during most (but not necessarily all) faculty meetings.

### **Do you foresee positive changes in legal education?**

I wish I were more optimistic, but the same battles continue on and on. There is more emphasis now on practical training for would-be lawyers. That's good because it is not now and never has been good enough for law schools to say that their mission is merely to teach students how to think like a lawyer. That is not the real mission. Yes, students need to be taught something about how to "think like" a lawyer, but they also need to be taught something about how to "be" a lawyer. And that is different. And it cannot be simply off-loaded to employers.

But amidst all the talk, I want to see more walk. Unfortunately, for example, there are still a lot of players in legal education who don't see or choose not to see the disconnect between, on the one hand, espousing curriculum reform, output assessment, skills training, and the like, and, on the other hand, denying a front-row seat at the table to the very persons who know the most about those subjects -- the legal writing professionals and the clinicians. That's a problem. I see incremental change, but there is a long way to go.

### **What would you do with a week off with no emails or other things to worry about?**

I would spend a week in the Caribbean

– sailing by day and then eating seafood, drinking rum (in moderation of course) and dancing to a steel-drum band by night.

### **What is something we don't know about you?**

I have a first degree brown belt in Tae Kwon Do (Korean Karate).

### **What is your greatest personal accomplishment?**

Building a marriage of 32-years with my wife Mary-Louise, and helping to launch two fine sons who are making their way in the world. [Aside from this,] resuming karate at age 55 as a father-son activity (after doing some karate back in college) and somehow still standing upright so far. [I've also managed] to remain calm during most (but not necessarily all) town-house association meetings.

### **Do you have any final words of wisdom for those starting out their careers teaching Legal Writing or on life in general?**

There are some things in life, in law, and in legal writing for which there are clear right and wrong answers. Great, we should figure out the right ones and act on them. There are also many things in life, in law, and in legal writing for which there are simply judgment calls to make in the face of ambiguity. Okay, then we should do the best we can with what we have to work with at the time, make the calls, and live with them.

[T]here are still a lot of players in legal education who don't see or choose not to see the disconnect between, on the one hand, espousing curriculum reform, output assessment, skills training, and the like, and, on the other hand, denying a front-row seat at the table to the very persons who know the most about those subjects -- the legal writing professionals and the clinicians.

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## Melissa Henke, continued

D.C., and it was this exposure to law and government that inspired her to apply to law school in the D.C. area. She attended George Washington University Law School, from which she graduated first in her class in 2001. After graduating, Melissa moved to Los Angeles to clerk for a federal judge in the Central District of California. During her clerkship, Melissa “caught the litigation bug” and moved back to D.C. a year later to join the commercial litigation group at Hogan & Hartson (now Hogan Lovells).

While at Hogan, Melissa further developed a special appreciation for and commitment to pro bono work. Melissa had the unique opportunity to work with a team of lawyers from four different law firms (including Hogan) on the well known “Norfolk 4” Innocence case, aimed at exonerating four men from Norfolk, Virginia who were wrongfully convicted of rape and/or murder. Melissa and her teammates successfully obtained gubernatorial pardons for the three men who were then serving dual life sentences without the possibility of parole (the fourth man had served his

sentence and been released). Melissa and the Hogan lawyers worked diligently on behalf of their client, Derek Tice, even after the pardon and ultimately prevailed on federal habeas and had Derek’s conviction overturned. Lawyers for the other three men continue to fight for full exonerations of their clients. Melissa has stayed in touch with the Norfolk 4 families. At the time of this interview, Melissa was looking forward to a trip to Washington D.C. during which she would be joining the team of “Norfolk 4” lawyers for dinner. She even attended Derek Tice’s wedding a few years ago and has stayed in touch with him and his family over Facebook.

Working on the Norfolk 4 case was a life-changing experience for Melissa. She was profoundly impacted by her clients’ and their families’ perseverance and faith in the legal system. This experience and others like it led Melissa to include in her academic career local pro bono advocacy work, and she tries to incorporate an understanding of and appreciation for pro bono

work into her classroom.

While at Hogan, Melissa served as an adjunct professor at George Washington Law School teaching Legal Research & Writing. In 2009, she left private practice to accept a full-time teaching position at Georgetown University School of Law. Melissa remembers her Georgetown colleagues with fondness: “my Georgetown colleagues brought an energy to their work – always thinking about different ways to teach students effectively even though they had been doing it for a long time.” Melissa describes her work at Georgetown as “inspiring” and considers Georgetown veterans like Diana Donahoe and Kris Tiscione to be some of her mentors.

During her second year at Georgetown, she saw a posting for the Director of the Legal Research and Writing program at University of Kentucky in Lexington. With her parents and little sister in Lexington and her older sister and family just an hour away in Louisville, Melissa jumped at the opportunity to



Melissa, with former innocence client, Norfolk 4 Defendant Derek Tice at Tice’s wedding.

Melissa works hard to instill in students what she believes is “an obligation on the part of the bar to make [pro bono work] part of your practice.”

## Melissa Henke, continued



With her parents and little sister in Lexington and her older sister and family just an hour away in Louisville, Melissa jumped at the opportunity to move back to Kentucky.

move back to Kentucky. “It was great decision for me both personally and professionally [and my] colleagues at Georgetown were so supportive.”

With almost a decade of LRW teaching under her belt, Melissa’s classroom approach is much more interactive than it was when she first started out. She is a “lot more comfortable ceding [the] classroom to students” and realizes that “students get a lot out of it.” She builds opportunities for students to become engaged in her class, including presentations to a supervising attorney and peer review sessions.

Because pro bono is so important to her, Melissa tries to impress upon students the importance of public service by referencing the cases she is currently working on or showing them briefs from her prior advocacy work. Melissa works hard to instill in students what she believes is “an obligation on the part of the bar to make [pro bono work] part of your practice.”

Melissa is currently representing an inmate in his appeal of an inmate disciplinary proceeding in a Kentucky prison. She believes that exposing students to her advocacy work makes them think more deeply about the practice of law. “It’s not about what [the prisoner] did or did not do to become incarcerated – it’s about making them aware of [a prisoner’s] right to some semblance of due proc-

ess.”

In Melissa’s spare time, she is training for the Annapolis half-marathon. Her 12-week training schedule coincides with the beginning of the school year, and she is hopeful that the long runs will inspire good ideas for innovative ways to teach her students.

When asked how she sees the Legal Writing Institute changing over the next thirty years, Melissa first spoke passionately about what she hopes will stay the same. “As legal writing teachers, we are fortunate to have such a collaborative, supportive community, either through the listserv or going to conferences. It has meant so much to me. Everyone is so willing to share things that worked for them or didn’t work. I hope our community continues to be this way for the next thirty years.” Melissa also hopes that the next thirty years will bring even more integration into the legal academy for legal writing professors. We should be “as valued and recognized as the doctrinal professors – we’ve seen a lot of progress and I hope that continues, even more so.”

Melissa is incredibly grateful for her wonderfully supportive colleagues and Dean at the University of Kentucky College of Law. She looks forward to a long and prosperous career in what she calls “the best job ever.”

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## Shakira Pleasant, continued



Professor Pleasant taught Lawyering Process at the University of the District of Columbia, David A. Clarke School of Law and served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. Professor Pleasant enjoys teaching LRWA. She believes that a lawyer's success in the profession is largely based on his or her ability to analyze, research, and write well. Professor Pleasant draws from her wealth of experience as an Assistant Attorney General and as a professor of Lawyering Process as she teaches her students to prepare cogent documents, cite properly, research carefully, and edit. Professor Pleasant invests the time in getting to know how different students learn and then she teaches to the different learning styles. She attributes her love for teaching to several people including her former legal writing professor, Professor Burke; a career law clerk who had very high expectations for her students.

According to Professor Pleasant, "the most rewarding aspect of teaching LRWA is watching the students grasp the concepts and articulate them in a stellar, reasoned document." Several of her students have sent her notes to thank her for her patience in teaching them lawyering process skills. One of the best compliments she received from a student, thanked her for teaching the class the importance of using the correct citation form. The student had been asked to fix a brief where the previous attorney had misquoted the cases and had used the incorrect citation.

Professor Pleasant is an avid soccer player. She has played soccer since she was in high school. She plays forward and defender. She also loves to travel. Her favorite place to visit is Spain, largely because of the siesta and the excellent food! Egypt is on her bucket list and she plans to visit very soon. Growing up in California, Professor Pleasant has an inborn love for the sun and Mexican food. She is an excellent cook and is known to whip up tasty enchiladas and guacamole



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## Shakira Pleasant, continued



especially for Cinco de Mayo feasts. When she is not cooking, playing soccer or travelling, she can be found in front of her television trying to solve the puzzles in Grey's Anatomy and Scandal. You bet – she is always on target.

Mentoring is very important to Professor Pleasant. She is a mentor and has benefited from having mentors in her career. She noted that it is “important to have someone you trust that has navigated your territory or a similar territory and will advocate on your behalf.” Professor Pleasant is very thankful for the guidance and mentorship of the members of the LWI. She believes that the focus on experiential learning will cause law schools to continue to highlight the importance of legal writing and support legal writing programs. Professor Pleasant congratulates the LWI on its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and hopes that the LWI will continue to support and advocate on the behalf of legal writing professors for another 30 years.



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She noted that it is “important to have someone you trust that has navigated your territory or a similar territory and will advocate on your behalf.” Professor Pleasant is very thankful for the guidance and mentorship of the members of the LWI.

**Selection and Presentation Process:** We believe it 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 profiles in the newsletter are listed in alphabetical order.

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 e-mail addresses below. If you could include a note on why you think the individual would make particularly interesting profile, that will help us in developing priorities.

**In *LWI Lives* next month look for profiles of:**



**Ian Gallacher**  
Syracuse



**Pam Jenoff**  
Rutgers-Camden

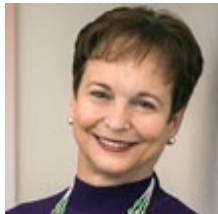


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