In Brief

Advocacy Skills Training

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Law is More than a Profession.
It’s a Calling.
From her downtown office, Lauren McCay Byrne, a 2003 graduate of Regent Law School, handles one case after another as an assistant commonwealth attorney for the City of Norfolk, Virginia.

Byrne, a Tennessee native, originally planned to use her History and Political Science degree to teach government classes in high school. But her plans changed when she visited Regent in 2000.

“After that visit, I knew Regent was the place for me and I didn’t even apply to any other schools,” Byrne said.

When she started law school, she knew she wanted to become a litigator. So, it would seem like an obvious choice for her to become a part of the Moot Court Board, the student organization that sends Regent Law School students to appellate advocacy competitions all over the country. But for students to be eligible for the board or competitions, they must compete in an intramural tournament during their first year of law school. Bob Byrne, the board chairman at that time, encouraged her to give it a try.

She more than gave moot court a try; in her third year of law school she was the Moot Court Board chairwoman. Lauren won a number of individual and team awards at various competitions. Her team finished among the top four teams in the 2002 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition (out of over 120 teams.) They won the award for the Best Brief (written argument) in the nation. Lauren also was the third Best Oralist in the tournament.

Bob and Lauren married after law school and recently celebrated their first anniversary.

Looking back, she said the two years of moot court opportunities were a great learning experience.

“I am so confident because I am so prepared,” she said. The moot court experience improved her confidence in speaking in front of people and helped her establish connections with members of the community.

Byrne currently handles misdemeanor cases. But she would like to rise in the ranks at the Commonwealth Attorney’s office and work on more felony cases.

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**REGENT LAW HIGHLIGHTS**

- Established in 1986 as a full-time, three-year law program.
- Today, approximately 500 students attend the school.
- Gained full ABA accreditation in 1996.
- Students come from 44 states, over 230 colleges and universities, and numerous foreign countries.
- Students regularly earn top honors at regional and national moot court and negotiation competitions.
- Regent University is prominently located in Virginia Beach, Virginia; the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean skirt the city with 28 miles of public beaches.
- Alumni practice in 47 states, the District of Columbia and several foreign countries as elected government officials, associates and partners in private practice and legal organizations.

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**LAW IS MORE THAN A PROFESSION. IT’S A CALLING.**

www.regent.edu/regentlaw
In 2002, Regent Law School’s Moot Court Board began hosting its own National Constitutional Moot Court Competition. This tournament brings students from law schools around the country, including Duke, Villanova, William & Mary, the University of California at Davis, among others, to the Virginia Beach Campus.

“We competed and did well in the earlier years and so it was natural to want a showcase event to illustrate the caliber of the law school experience at Regent,” said Robert Stenzhorn, the board’s business affairs coordinator.

The competition problem is written by Regent alumni, members of the Moot Court Board and Regent professors. Since Regent students host the tournament and are not permitted to compete, they have plenty of time to organize. The board even has a position specifically dedicated to organizing this competition. Each board member has a role and areas of responsibilities before, during and after the competition to ensure the event’s success.

“I hope that our national tournament will continue to grow and thrive,” said Stephen McPherson, assistant dean and current board advisor. “Judges and law students alike are thrilled with the quality of our facilities and our student leadership. We hope to continue to build on the relationships we’ve already established and to add to them in the future.”

The students from other schools have praised the board and Regent Law School for the quality of the tournament.

“We are different from many competitions in that we focus on the competitors from start to finish,” Stenzhorn said. “We attempt to always have a contact person assigned to each team, study and practice rooms for all competitors and provide fellowship and relaxation time for all competitors.”

At the focus of the compliments are the outstanding facilities at Regent Law School and the friendly and professional approach that the Regent Moot Court Board members, students and staff take with competitors. The concerted effort to welcome all participants has not gone unnoticed.

“We make sure that they enjoy the competition and are able to focus on doing their best possible performance,” Stenzhorn said. “Many come to Regent with a preconceived idea of what a Christian law school must be like and leave with an impression of what a top-notch law school is.”
A number of Regent moot court teams have successfully demonstrated excellence in their awards from national competitions. In 2002, a Regent Law moot court team won the Best Brief award in the ABA’s National Appellate Advocacy Competition. The same team advanced to the national semi-finals, which placed them among the top four teams in the nation. In 2003, Regent moot court teams won William and Mary’s prestigious William B. Spong, Jr. Moot Court Tournament and the Federal Bar Association’s Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Tournament. In 2004, a Regent team won the Washington, D.C. Regional round of the ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition, which placed them among the top sixteen teams in the country.

Regent Law School’s Moot Court Board, which was created during the 1993-94 school year, is a law school organization that focuses on the development of advocacy skills in law students, specifically, advocacy skills in the appellate court context.

“What began as a very small program—a few teams sent to a few competitions, with a very small intramural competition—has blossomed over the years into one of the top moot court programs in the country,” said Professor Michael Hernandez, who is a former faculty advisor for the Moot Court Board.

Training in moot court begins in the first year when students write an appellate brief and compete in an intramural moot court tournament. Students then have the option of advancing their advocacy skills by competing in our Regent Cup Tournament in their second or third years, taking a four credit hour course in Appellate Advocacy and competing with other law schools on an interscholastic moot court team.

Doug Stockenberg, a third year student and chairman of the Moot Court Board, believes law students can benefit from the moot court experience no matter what area of law they wish to pursue.

“It is excellent preparation for everyday practice of law in the courtroom,” Stockenberg said. The skills are similar in any other type of trial work, even though the context is different.

Students who are interested in advancing Regent’s advocacy programs can apply for the Moot Court Board in the fall of their second year. Moot Court Board members plan and run on campus tournaments including the intramural tournament for first year students, the Regent Cup intramural tournament for second and third year students and Regent Law School’s National Constitutional Moot Court Competition. Board members also assist Regent Law School teams in their tournament preparations.

Students involved in moot court can improve three important advocacy skills, said Robert P. Stenzhorn, a third year law student and business affairs coordinator for the Moot Court Board. They improve their research, writing and oral advocacy skills. The arguing phase of the competition is especially helpful because “the judges treat you as an attorney,” Stenzhorn said.

Over the years, Regent Law School students have traveled to more and more tournaments. They now have eight teams compete in four tournaments each year.

Regent Law School will host two conferences next spring: The Constitutional Litigation Conference and the Christian Pre-Law Conference of 2005. The Constitutional Litigation Conference will take place on March 18-19 and is co-sponsored by the American Center for Law & Justice and Regent Law School. This year’s conference will focus on Frontiers and Challenges of Religious Liberty. For information about the conference, please visit www.regent.edu/conlit.

The fourth annual Christian Pre-Law Conference will take place between February 24–27 at The Founders Inn & Conference Center in Virginia Beach, Va. Prospective students, pre-law advisors and university administrators are welcome to attend. Please contact Nancy George at Dove Conference & Travel Planners at 330.854.5761 or visit the conference website at www.regent.edu/prelaw for additional information.
The writing program at Regent University School of Law works to ensure that every student has the analytical and communication skills necessary to pass the bar examination and be successful in the practice of law. The program begins with a six credit-hour course in Legal Analysis, Research and Writing during the first year of law school. During the second and third years, each student must select a skills course that features writing and must complete an independent rigorous writing work.

The first year course emphasizes the process of legal analysis, helping students learn how to discern rules of law from a variety of sources and apply those rules to a particular problem. Students also learn the research skills necessary to locate appropriate legal authority and writing skills to communicate their analysis in a professional manner. Most projects are presented in a problem-oriented format, where students are given a situation presented by a mock client and expected to address the client’s legal needs. Throughout the year, students move from an objective evaluation of very simple problems to persuasive advocacy of far more complex, multi-issue situations.

We begin the year by exposing students to “legal foundations,” including an overview of the American legal system, our common law heritage, and basic tools, such as cases and codes, commonly used by lawyers. As we move into legal reasoning and analysis, students first write a brief legal analysis of a simple problem based on a single case. Later in the semester, they develop a formal office memorandum addressing a much more complex, multi-element problem using a selection of rather complex cases.

The semester ends with students working in the law library learning to use a variety of research tools and expanding citation skills that have been introduced throughout the semester.

During spring semester, students expand their skills from objective analysis to persuasive advocacy and use the research skills practiced at the end of fall semester to research all of their own projects. Students research and draft a trial brief and an appellate brief, and then end the semester by arguing the appellate case in a moot court competition.

Our goal is to help students develop the ability to evaluate a client, know how to find and recognize the necessary legal authority, and apply appropriate rules to advise and represent the client. Students who have summer clerkship positions often express satisfaction at their ability to use the skills they learned throughout the year. Regent University also has been proud of the recognition received by a number of our moot court teams in both written and oral advocacy in a variety of moot court competitions. Regent University moot court teams have won both oralist and writing awards in numerous moot court competitions in recent years.

**Recent Awards**

- 2002 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition – Best Brief in the Nation
- 2002 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition – Fifth Best Oralist in the Nation
- 2004 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition – Regional Champion Advanced to National Championship Competition
- 2003 William B. Spong, Jr. Invitational Moot Court Tournament – Champions
- 2003 Federal Bar Association Thurgood Marshall Memorial Moot Court Competition – Champions
- 2003 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition – Regional Semifinalist (two teams)
- 2002 ABA National Appellate Advocacy Competition – National Semifinalist

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**News & Events**

Harold Berman Teaches at the Christian Jurisprudence Program
Professor Harold Berman taught during the Summer Program in Christian Jurisprudence this past August. His class, The Historical Foundations of the Western Legal Tradition, considered the impact of different forms of historical Christianity on the development of law in the West. Professor Berman, Robert W. Woodruff Professor of Law at Emory School of Law, has taught for 37 years and was James Barr Ames Professor of Law at Harvard University before joining Emory in 1985.

Dean’s Corner
Dean Brauch shares his thoughts on various subject matters with Regent Law School family and friends. Please click on “Brauch’s Reflection” to read his latest insights at www.regent.edu/deanscorner.

Student Diary
Check out current Regent Law student experiences on our Student Diary webpage at www.regent.edu/lawdiary.

Joel Belz Visits Regent Law School
Joel Belz, CEO of God’s World Publishing and founder of World Magazine, visited Regent Law School on September 14, 2004. Faculty welcomed Belz with a luncheon prior to his address to students, faculty and staff in the Moot Court Room.

Dole vs. Gore Debate
Regent University hosted a debate on October 22, 2004, between former Senate majority leader and presidential candidate Bob Dole and former Vice President and presidential candidate Al Gore. The debate topic was “Election 2004: What’s in Store for America?”

Princeton Review Top Ten Rankings
Regent Law was recently ranked by Princeton Review as number two for “Quality of Life” and number nine for faculty teaching and accessibility among the “Best 117 Law Schools.”

Get the latest news by visiting the News & Events page on Regent Law School’s website at www.regent.edu/lawnews.
One of Regent Law School’s greatest strengths is our training in advocacy skills. Learning the substance of the law is important. But it is not enough. Our goal is to send out excellent lawyers who are great writers, negotiators, and advocates.

Advocacy training starts in our writing program. There is no skill more important to the lawyer than the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing. Our students devote six hours to legal writing, as much as they do to Property & Contracts and more than they do to any other first year course. Of our 30 faculty members, four teach legal research and writing full-time.

After the first year, every student takes at least one written skills course and one oral skills course. Course options include Negotiation, Mediation, Trial Practice, Appellate Advocacy, and Advanced Appellate Advocacy. Many students take several skills classes.

Our building is designed to facilitate the intensive advocacy training. We are blessed with three moot courtrooms. The largest, our beautiful wood paneled Ceremonial Moot Courtroom, is designed to host a nine-judge appellate panel.

We also have a negotiation and mediation suite. The suite consists of four sets of two rooms each. The students negotiate or mediate in one room; a professor or judge observes and evaluates behind darkened glass in the other.

Neither the curriculum nor facilities, though, are the key to our program. The key is the professors. Outstanding advocates themselves, they are passionate about their work. And they love their students. Our professors spend an enormous amount of time with budding advocates teaching, mentoring, practicing, and traveling with them to regional and national skills competitions.

The results have been phenomenal. We hear great reports about our alumni from the lawyers with whom they work and the judges before whom they appear. We have also seen tremendous success as our students have gone head to head against their colleagues from schools around the nation in skills competitions. Last year our moot court, negotiation and mediation teams all advanced to the ABA national tournament from their regional competitions. Two years ago our moot court team finished among the top four teams nationally (out of over 120 teams) in the ABA National Moot Court tournament. Most gratifying is that the team won the award for the Best Brief in the Nation that year.

I am proud of what our faculty and students have accomplished. Regent is one of the nation’s premier schools for advocacy training.