



1-1977

Inmate Information Project

Deborah Brumback

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/lf>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brumback, Deborah (1977) "Inmate Information Project," *University of Baltimore Law Forum*: Vol. 7 : No. 2 , Article 10.
Available at: <http://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/lf/vol7/iss2/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@University of Baltimore School of Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Baltimore Law Forum by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@University of Baltimore School of Law. For more information, please contact snolan@ubalt.edu.

ting the amendments clearly printed. Hamilton's clerk, Ronald Kilpatrick, is in charge, and he makes mistakes, forgets things, and mixes things up. Worse yet, he fancies himself as such a writer that he can re-do everything we write. Last week he changed the phrase from the first amendment that we had written as, "the right of the people peaceably to assemble" to "the people will peaceably assemble to the right." He compounds sentences for us, changes spelling, and misconstrues ideas. However, he is such a gentleman that we can't bear to relieve him. We must be certain to read our completed document most carefully before we affix our John Hancock. We want it all to be perfectly clear to future Americans.

A funny thing happened while we were eating dinner. The maid was working so hard, and it was so hot, that she took off her outer wrap. Well, that left her arms uncovered. A few minutes later, the constable came in, took one look at her, and fined her two dollars! It seems that there's a law that says you must have your arms covered to the wrist when in a public place. Must be a carry-over from the plague era when everyone was fearful that they would become infected from another's touch.

John said that Abigail had been pestering him about the law. She claims it's only enforced against women and wants us to specifically change it in the Constitution. John had forgotten all about it until now and seemed truly concerned that Abigail wouldn't let him come back to Massachusetts until he had done something about that law.

We chided him for a while, but then agreed we'd cover that with a third amendment. After much arguing, we agreed on simple words that should be plain to everyone: "All persons shall have the right to bare arms."

Madison said wouldn't it be funny if Ronald fouled it up again and combined the second and third amendments. We got a good laugh out of that! Even Ronald wouldn't do that.

Well, time for sleep. Got to work on the fourth amendment tomorrow. Think it will be about quartering soldiers in houses.

Inmate Information Project

by Deborah Brumback

per semester, work with inmates at the Baltimore City Jail, the Reception and Diagnostic Center of the Maryland Penitentiary, and Patuxent Institution. The program is headed by a five-member board of students who formerly worked at the institutions and now either supervise students working at an institution or perform other administrative duties. Professor Royal G. Shannonhouse, III is faculty adviser to the IIP.



photo by June Chaplin

While Maryland state officials lobby for the proposed prison ship and Baltimore City law enforcement personnel look for a way to halt the overcrowding at the City Jail, the University of Baltimore School of Law Inmate Information Project pursues a goal of greater inmate accessibility to the courts. In pursuing this goal, law students provide much needed information about the law to inmates, as well as gain for themselves insight and experience beyond the textbook and clinical approach to criminal law and criminal justice administration. Thus, the Inmate Information Project (IIP), formerly the Jail Information Service, assists in both the administration of justice and the education of the law students.

Presently, University of Baltimore law students, earning one academic credit

The law student must successfully walk a fine line. The student may provide information about the law, but may not give legal advice, which may be furnished only by a licensed attorney. The law student can be a liaison between the inmate and his attorney. This is particularly important when the inmate is permitted only one telephone call per week. In addition to relaying information about the case, some students are afforded the opportunity to do research in a case and help to prepare the case for trial, appeal, or collateral proceeding, as the case may be.

A law student can provide information about detainees, trial dates, when appeals must be filed, the nature of an inmate's criminal charges, criminal procedure, and the overall process that is keeping the inmate behind bars.

Furthermore, the law student can be a link to administrative agencies and components of the criminal justice system, e.g., Pre-Trial Release, Legal Aid, the courts, and the Inmate Grievance Commission. At the Baltimore City Jail, students, at an inmate's request, may represent the inmate at a disciplinary hearing.

Some have intimated that the activities amount to nothing more than social work. This is true in the sense that the law student is performing the same type of social function as an attorney who obtains a release for his client from a mental institution or works to save a marriage rather than dissolve it in litigation. The work of the law students in the IIP is all part of the art of "lawyering" — dealing with people, applying your expertise to help solve their problems and meet their needs, and somehow make order out of disorganization.

The students meet with inmates who submit referral sheets requesting that a law student visit them. These sheets are placed in the institutions by the IIP, but in no way is there any form of solicitation to persuade them to respond. If the inmate has a private attorney, he must be contacted to obtain permission to work with his client. The Public Defender's Office does not require this prior consent and has encouraged IIP members to contact the office for assistance.

During the 1975-76 school year, law students handled more than two hundred referrals at the Baltimore City Jail. This number does not include the number of referrals that the law students channeled out to other agencies or referred to other authorities because the problem was beyond the scope of the law student's function and authority. Work is centered around quality, not quantity, and students attempt to respond to each referral completely, which sometimes may take weeks.

The work of the IIP extends beyond the institutions. Currently the group is attempting to obtain Law Enforcement Administration Assistance (LEAA) funds for the purpose of hiring an attorney as an adjunct faculty member. This indi-

vidual would teach a seminar in connection with the clinical work performed by the students and would, as a member of the state bar, accompany students to court under the Maryland rule permitting law students to appear in court if they are members of a recognized program and are sponsored by a member of the bar.

In March 1977, the IIP will sponsor, in conjunction with the University of Baltimore School of Law Continuing Legal Education Program, a day-long seminar on post-conviction assistance and recent civil rights litigation involving prisoners. Students from other law schools in neighboring states, as well as area attorneys, will be invited to participate in the seminar.

Last spring, members of the IIP traveled to the University of Virginia School of Law in Charlottesville, Virginia, to participate in a program involving prisoners' rights. This too was attended by law students from other schools involved in similar clinical programs. In August, two IIP representatives participated in a seven hour long seminar inside the Maryland Penitentiary concerning prisoner information and communication within the institution. The program was planned and conducted by approximately fifty prisoners who invited thirty-five "outsiders" to take part in their workshops.

Former Chief Justice Earl Warren said, in a speech to the World Conference on World Peace through the Rule of Law in 1963, that "justice could be achieved whenever those who were not injured by injustice were as outraged as those who had been." He was paraphrasing a Greek lawyer and poet who lived two thousand, five hundred years ago and who responded in a similar manner when asked how justice could be achieved. In a sense these words describe the underlying aim of the IIP. Its goal is not to be a radical instigator or a bleeding heart over the problems in the criminal justice system today. Its goal is to assist and facilitate the administration of criminal justice within a learning process. The administration of justice affects those on both sides of the walls.

The Maryland Commission for Women: Advocates for Change

by Lindsay Schlottman

Ms. Schlottman, after serving as a legal intern for the Maryland Commission for Women from September 1974 to May 1975, was recently named by Governor Mandel to a four-year term as a Commissioner.



The author wishes to acknowledge reliance on Decade of Progress, A Report to the Governor, a July 1976 publication of the Maryland Commission for Women, for the historical background material. All quotations, unless otherwise specified, are from that publication.

The Maryland Commission for Women is moving ahead in pursuit of a society where all men and women are equal. Economic, legal, educational, and social injustice are the culprits being attacked by the Commission. Some-