New Strides In The Intramural Advocacy Program

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Of the 42 people indicating that they were not legally employed, 19 had passed the Bar. Eleven made over $25,000 per year and noted that any legal position acceptable would have to pay comparably. Only 2 people of the total of 8 remaining indicated they were earnestly seeking legal employment.

New Strides In The Intramural Advocacy Program

by Anthony J. Agnone

An integral and significant portion of the skills training curriculum offered at the University of Baltimore School of Law is a multi-faceted moot court advocacy program for its law students. Among such programs are intramural competitions in client counseling, trial advocacy, labor law, international law, patents and copyrights, national moot court and appellate advocacy. Held under the auspices of the Moot Court Board, a select student group, these competitions are designed to give the students an opportunity to nurture the skills necessary for the practice of law. Each program results in the selection of a team of students that is directed by a faculty advisor to represent the Law School in inter-school competitions.

So as to promote the highest possible quality of oral and written advocacy in these competitions, the Moot Court Board was founded some six years ago. Under the guidance of Professor Howard E. Wallin, the Board's role is to offer assistance to all professors serving as faculty coaches/advisors to any of the intramural competitions. It likewise assists in the design and administration of the intramural competitions, including scheduling the competitive rounds, arranging for the courtrooms, and contacting practicing attorneys and sitting judges to judge oral arguments. New members of the Board are selected annually on the basis of demonstrated interest and expertise in oral and written advocacy. In the course of this year's school year, the Board was involved in administering seven intramural competitions. Three dealt specifically with the skill of oral advocacy while the other four dealt with a combination of both the oral and written skills. Board members are similarly involved in developing some second semester Legal Skills problems, arranging for judges, and judging ensuing competitions.

In a moot court format, students form two-person teams that may brief a hypothetical appellate case and argue that case before a court composed of attorneys and judges. Teams compete in a single elimination process with the winning teams determined in each round based upon the particular skill being tested.

In the intramural competitions our alumni play a crucial role. Practicing attorneys are called upon to evaluate the research and writing done by students in the preparation of appellate briefs. In addition the attorneys, acting as judges, listen to oral arguments and critique the students on their ability to speak persuasively and respond effectively to questions.

Both the trial advocacy and appellate advocacy competitions provide students with a format to exhibit their skills of oral advocacy. In two of the four appellate competitions, National Moot Court and Appellate Advocacy, the student is asked to address any area of law while the Patent Law team and International Moot Court teams deal with highly specialized areas.

In the appellate intramural competition, the student/lawyer argues a case before a practicing attorney in a three judge panel. A winner is selected on the intramural level exclusively on demonstrated oral skills as well as ability to deal effectively with the issues presented.

During the trial advocacy competition, law students are given the opportunity to examine witnesses, learn the practical application of the rules of evidence and deal with a jury in a simulated courtroom setting. Here again the practicing attorney plays an integral role in the competitions—acting as the judge, he rules on motions, objections and the final outcome of the competition. He or she then critiques the participants and advises them as to which areas they can improve.

The Client Counseling Competition, which is the newest of the national competitions, is held in a team format. Two law students working as a law firm must elicit from the client "operative facts" as opposed to extraneous information and counsel the client as to the attorney's role in the case and his fee structure. In doing so, the student lawyer gets exposure to a "real client." It also gives students a chance to hone their skill in the proper techniques of for-
mulating questions, determining the validity of information provided by the client and learn how to provide counseling without committing oneself to a position before all the facts are available. Once again, attorney/judges evaluate and critique student efforts. In this way students are judged on their practical approach to the problem as well as the skills they exhibit.

Recognizing the significance of these intramural competitions in developing the requisite skills so necessary for practicing law and in the further hope of attracting even more student participation, the Maryland Bar Foundation has offered prize money for competition winners. The results have been extremely encouraging. Over one hundred and seventy students have participated in and over sixty members of the Bar and judiciary have donated their services to these competitions.

Students who have successfully competed in intramural competitions have represented the University in several national and regional competitions. The Law School has, in fact, won several regional titles. Last year, for example, the Client Counseling team won the Mid Atlantic regional competition. This year the Trial Advocacy team also received that distinction. In addition, the University hosted the appellate advocacy competition and one of its teams was selected to compete later this year at its national competition in San Francisco.

Without the cooperation of our alumni, the Moot Court Board and the faculty advisors, these programs would be wholly inadequate. It is our hope that this cooperation will continue in the future and the intramural/intramural programs will continue to give the students a chance to improve and test the practical skills of an attorney.

The joke in the legal profession used to be that new law school graduates could not find their way to the courthouse. During the last decade, with increased critical examination of the level of lawyer competency and the role of law schools in that process, the joke has ceased to be amusing.

In 1973, the University of Baltimore School of Law instituted the Internship Program with a handful of students and a few interested attorneys and judges. Originally a project of the Student Bar Association, the Internship Program has grown to the point of placing approximately 200 students annually among the approximately 1,000 attorneys and judges registered with the program. Since 1978, the Internship Program has been under the direction of Assistant Professor of Law, Byron L. Warnken.

The Internship Program is one component of an overall curriculum that recognizes the value of affording law students the opportunity to gain much needed practical experience prior to graduation. The program has worked to the advantage of the law student body, as well as the practicing legal community. On the one hand, students are able to earn non-graded pass/fail academic credits toward graduation, while gaining valuable practical experience; on the other hand, attorneys and judges are able to receive the services of second, third or fourth year law students. Every effort is made to place students according to their areas of interest and provide attorneys and judges talent commensurate with their needs.

The Internship Program operates three semesters a year: fall, spring and summer. Students review the Internship Request Forms filed by attorneys and judges, which are catalogued according to "Private Sector"; "Public Sector—Executive Branch"; "Public Sector—Legislative Branch" and "Public Sector—Judicial Branch." Students may select from among those catalog entries for which they meet the qualifications. Students may register for two credits in the private sector, two or three credits in the executive or legislative branch, or two to four credits in the judicial branch; but in no event may they earn more than six Internship Program credits toward graduation. About half of the placements are made in the private sector, the other half is almost equally divided between the executive and judicial branches, with a few legislative internships. Since 1978 placements have been made in fourteen Maryland subdivisions, plus twelve other states and the District of Columbia. Counselling is provided to assist students in selecting the best possible internship for them in terms of general category of placement—experience value (both as to areas of the law to which they are exposed and the types of task assignments encountered), jurisdiction selection—resume value and employment opportunities resulting from the internship. By attempting to match as closely as possible the interests of the students with the needs of attorneys and judges, the quality of the internship experience is usually enhanced, as is the chance for an offer of paid employment at the conclusion of the internship. Approximately one-quarter of all interns are hired at the conclusion of their internships.

For each internship credit, students must work sixty hours 'in the field' and attend three hours of classroom instruction. The Internship Program Classroom Component contains three parts. Students attend, for each credit one ninety minute class in a series titled, "Transition from the Study of Law to the Practice of Law" and one ninety minute class in a series titled "Practice Pointers in Selected Areas