

Alumni Profile: Dana McWay, HIM '82, LAW '88

1. Why did you choose SLU for your education?

I primarily was interested in Catholic universities to attend after high school. At the time, I was undecided about my major and SLU offered a wide variety of majors to choose from. I had used the University Library (Pius) as a student for some honors classes at my high school, and liked the atmosphere of the campus and the feel of the students. On top of it all, they offered me a partial academic scholarship, which was quite helpful as I was paying for college myself.

2. What is your favorite memory from your days as a SLU student?

Several memories come to mind: (1) going to the soccer games, although at that time they were held off campus instead of the great Hermann stadium of today; (2) some great professors who I felt genuinely cared about my progress as a student. I kept in touch with some of them and even exchange Christmas cards with one to this day (more than 20 years later); (3) Mu Rho Sigma, which was the HIM student group on campus; (4) the general store/eating area in the base of Walsh hall where everyone would gather throughout the day on north campus; (5) Humphreys and Clarks (Clarks is now gone but was across the street from Humphreys - I think there is grass and a sculpture there now).

3. What is your professional role today as an attorney?

My title is Clerk of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. The role is responsible for all nonjudicial functions of the court - operations, automation, personnel, finance, administrative, etc. In the context of running the court, the Board of Judges of our Court serve a similar role as a Board of Directors for an organization. My role is analogous to a CEO of an organization.

4. Many of our students and alumni have used your textbooks in the classroom. Can you please tell us about them?

My first book, *Legal Aspects of Health Information Management*, is in its second edition and is published by Delmar Publishers, a subsidiary of Thomson Corporation (a large publishing conglomerate out of Canada). The Legal Book is used at SLU and many other colleges/universities in the US. I am completing a second book to be titled, *Delmar/Thomson's Comprehensive Textbook on Health Information Management*. It should be available in 2007.

An interesting point is the way I got into publishing. I had written some journal articles and a former SLU professor read them. She served on an editorial board of Delmar and knew that they were looking at developing a new series of textbooks. She contacted me about whether I would be interested. From there, I submitted a proposal with curriculum vitae, which was both peer reviewed and examined by Delmar. A contract resulted out of this process, which is where my first book came from.

That was a success from the perspective of the publisher (in number of sales) so they contacted me about my second book. And here I am almost finished with it.

4. You've been very generous to the University, particularly to the College of Health Sciences, with your time, financial contributions, ideas, guest lectures and willingness to hire a SLU intern. What has motivated you to do so?

As a general philosophy in life, I do believe that you should give back. The SLU motto of service to others is compatible with that philosophy and you might say reinforces it. I was fortunate to be helped by many educators at SLU, both during my time as a student and post-schooling.

Also, there were moments when schooling was tough or a struggle. You can look at that and either say: (1) that later students should have to undergo the same thing I did; or (2) later students shouldn't have to go through it like I did. I chose the latter, because I didn't think it wouldn't be right for later students to struggle through the same thing. For example, I am a big believer in experiential learning. It sometimes is hard to understand legal concepts only from textbook reading or lecture. That is why I organized and conducted the mini mock trials for the students on 2/9/06 that they could go through this experience (albeit mock experience) as a way to improve understanding. The alternative of letting them struggle through understanding the legal concepts just didn't seem like the way to go.

5. Is there anything you would like to say to fellow SLU alumni? Students?

For students, I would say that once they reflect upon how SLU has helped them, they will want to consider helping out SLU once they become alumni. This help could take many forms. Whether that takes the form of being active in the alumni association, spreading the word about SLU to others, talking to a potential future student about going to SLU, or giving money, there are many things they can do.

For fellow alumni, I would say they need to visit campus if they haven't been here lately. They will be blown away with the many physical changes the university has undertaken over the years and the plans for the future. They might be interested in all of the plans developed for the newly created College of Health Sciences.