

Profiles of the 2000 Winners of the WLAM Foundation Outstanding Woman Law Student Award

Ann Marie Byers, Michigan State University Detroit College of Law



A long-term commitment to domestic violence issues led Ann Marie Byers to MSU-DCL, where she is completing her first year of study. Following her graduation in 1996 from the University of Wisconsin, Ms. Byers spent three years as Legal Advocacy Program Coordinator for the Underground Railroad, in Saginaw, Michigan. There, she designed, developed and managed all aspects of a program that provided support and advocacy to domestic violence victims. She hired, trained and supervised both paid and volunteer staff, implementing one grant and obtaining others. Ms. Byers attended court, acted as a liaison with prosecutors, participated in the county's coordinated community group, published a domestic violence handbook for survivors in Saginaw County, and developed a twenty-four-hour domestic crisis response team, working with local police agencies. Trained volunteers are now on-call at all times to assist survivors immediately after an assault, and beyond as they need support services. Ms. Byers is herself certified to train police on domestic violence issues. She received a Merit Scholarship at the law school, and participates in Moot Court Competitions. At MSU-DCL, she belongs to the Women's Law Caucus, Family Law Society, Public Interest Law Society, ACLU and National Organization of Women.

Sarah DeYoung, University of Michigan Law School



Sarah DeYoung's dream of operating a Children's Law Center began years ago during her volunteer work at "For Love of Children," a Washington, DC, group which provides homeless families with transitional housing and life skills workshops. Her interaction with children in that setting sparked a concern which followed her to the University of Michigan Law School, where she is a second-year student. She volunteers at the Family Law Project, a clinical law program in which she has helped domestic violence victims obtain personal protection orders against their abusers. Last summer, she was a Bergstrom University of Michigan Fellow, working at the Children's Law Center in Grand Rapids. There, she tried eleven guardianships in court, and accompanied the Center's social worker on home visits to learn how to determine what is in a child's "best interests." These experiences and her deep commitment to children will lead her to start her legal career in prosecution, where she hopes to reach children before they "turn one mistake into a lifetime of heartbreak." Ms. DeYoung is active in mentoring activities at the Law School, where she

mentors a first-year student, leads orientation sessions, and chairs the Public Interest Group's Admissions Committee. Her previous law-related experiences include serving as a coordinator at the American Council of the Blind, and an intern in Representative Patricia Schroeder's Washington office.

Paula Gentius-Harris, Howard & Howard Award at University of Detroit Mercy Law School

Ms. Gentius-Harris is a third-year student at University of Detroit Mercy Law School who has served for two years as Editor-In-Chief of In Brief, the Law School's newspaper, and one year as a Senior Member of the Law Review. Her graduation in May, 2000, will cap years of both leadership and extensive writing activities. Ms. Gentius-Harris received the Honorable Beverley Ann Jasper Endowed Scholarship Award in 1999, the Virgin Islands Academic & Cultural Award in 1998-99, and the Terrence A. Toddman Legal Scholarship in 1997-99. Among her publications are two articles published in Black College Today, research and writing credits on two labor law manuals published by the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, including a supplement on workplace violence, and work as copy editor for Michigan Practice: Criminal Law. Ms. Gentius-Harris gained valuable working experience with Detroit law firms, including Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, and Nemeth Burwell, PC, where she researched and prepared memoranda on labor and employment issues. While serving as an intern in the Office of Congressman John Conyers, Jr., she researched and prepared a memorandum on shareholder rights. Ms. Gentius-Harris holds a Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations and Advertising from Hampton University, and a Master of Education Degree in Higher Education Administration from Ohio University. In December of 1999, Ms. Gentius-Harris was appointed by Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer as the Cable Communications Commission's new Telecommunications Contract & Compliance Manager.



Sarah Pring, Wayne State University Law School

Sarah Pring is in her second year at Wayne State University Law School, and will complete this year her M.S. degree in Union Leadership and Administration at the University of Massachusetts. She is Editor in Chief of the Wayne Law Review, winner of the Best Appellate Brief Award and Rothman Award for best brief in Legal Research and Writing, and recipient of the Lederle Scholarship in recognition of academic potential and the Davis Putter Scholarship for work in advancement of social justice. Her commitment to advancing the role of women in the workplace springs from field organizing in the nursing home industry, where she strove to develop leadership skills among women and to enforce collective bargaining agreements. She feels that many



jobs in the industry are undervalued, particularly those occupied by women who are often the sole support for their families. Within the labor movement, Ms. Pring rose from an entry-level organizer to the Organizing Director of a local in less than five years; during that time she trained dozens of women as volunteer and staff organizers, and assumed an active mentoring role. She works part-time at a Southfield labor law firm, and is a member of the Southeast Michigan Jobs with Justice, a coalition dedicated to improving the lives of working people. She is pursuing a law degree so that she can take on a more advanced leadership role in advancing the economic position of women in society.

Angela K. Sherigan, Thomas M. Cooley Law School



Angela Sherigan will complete her second year at Cooley Law School this May, where she has posted solid academic accomplishments while demonstrating her skills at organizing student groups. She is the President of the Women's Law Alliance, and has succeeded in raising the profile and impact of that organization. She started a newsletter for the Alliance, expanded fundraising activities and added recipients, and has undertaken a campaign of educating other women law students on the financial aid and awards available to them. Ms. Sherigan also organized and helped to found Cooley's Native American Law Students Association, after noticing a significant number of potential members during her first year. She prepared all paperwork, successfully obtained recognition of the group this year, and serves as Council President. A graduate of the University of Michigan with a major in Psychology, Ms. Sherigan worked with Dr. Robert Hymes, convincing him to include Native American issues in a book he is writing on prejudice. Her volunteer work includes fundraising for the Council Against Domestic Assault, and the Lansing Area Aids Network.