



LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO

Spring 1994

Loyola Law

Magazine

**Collaborating
for Kids' Sake**



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Spring 1994
Volume 8, No. 2

Loyola Law Magazine

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Loyola Law (ISSN 1054-7622) is published twice per year by Loyola University Chicago. Questions, comments, and letters may be addressed to Loyola Law, Department of Public Relations, Loyola University Chicago, 820 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611; Telephone (312) 915-6154.

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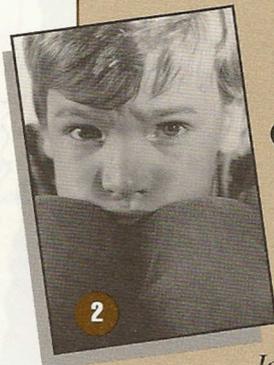
Printed in the U.S.A. on recycled paper with soy ink.

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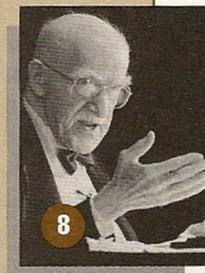
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Collaborating

By Monica M. Walk

At what age can a child be a credible witness?

What factors signal an unsuitable home environment?

How do child welfare workers decide when to remove a child from a home?

Until recently, finding the answers to these and other child-related questions has been an on-the-job exercise for lawyers who work with children.

That's changing, however, with a unique, new program at Loyola that allows law students to integrate key information about children from the fields of psychology, social work, education, medicine, criminal justice, and political science into their traditional law curriculum. Combined with their commitment to serve America's most underrepresented group of citizens—children—graduates of Loyola's Civitas ChildLaw Program (first introduced to alumni in "The Case for Kids," pp. 20-24, *Loyola Magazine*, Winter 1994) can enter a variety of child advocacy fields with a broader knowledge of the forces that affect today's children.

Building bridges

"Law school is about learning to think like a lawyer, and our core goal is unchanged by this program," asserts Civitas Faculty Director and Professor Diane Geraghty, J.D. "In addition to educating our students to be good



Loyola's School of Law launches a one-of-a-kind multidisciplinary program to educate child advocates

lawyers, we also are offering them the opportunity to draw from other disciplines to train them to function as effectively as possible in their chosen area of law."

Using a multidisciplinary approach in a subject area—child advocacy—not traditionally emphasized in legal education is, she says, what makes the Civitas program "doubly unusual." Geraghty cites Civitas as a paradigm of a larger movement in education: building bridges between subjects and showing the relatedness of knowledge.

"The way we learn is being rethought," she says, culling from recent experience on a high-school strategic planning committee. "Education experts have been showing positive results from collaborative learning for quite some time; American schools are trying to put less stress on teachers being the conveyors of information and more on the interconnectedness of learning, both in subject matter and among students."

Removing walls

Removing some of the typical disciplinary walls in a university not only enriches learning, Geraghty believes, but also enhances student-teacher relationships. "We can learn together," she says. "I know I can learn a lot in a team-teaching situation—about another subject and about teaching methods used by other teachers. And by varying the role of the expert, teachers become students and vice versa. That's very much in keeping with the Socratic method we apply in law studies."

Exposing students to the effects of poverty and alcohol and drug abuse will show that, while our society needs change, there are no easy solutions to its ills, believes Dean and Professor Nina S. Appel, J.D. "The problems faced by abused and neglected children cannot be resolved within a single discipline. Lawyers need to understand these problems in their full

for Kids' Sake

complexity and context," she notes. "We hope our graduates retain this information and serve as catalysts wherever they go—be it in the wide field of child advocacy or in pro bono work they do for children while practicing in another area of law."

The 11 Civitas scholars, the first Loyola students to participate in the new program, place a high value on this multidisciplinary view. The Civitas program, they say, allows them to learn more, as well as integrate past studies and experiences.

Scholar Kate Terry, for instance, following more than a year's work on the mayor of Boston's youth campaign, decided to combine her undergraduate work in developmental psychology with policy-making skills in order to better children's lives. "Obviously, I came to

Loyola because I want to be trained to think like a lawyer, but knowing psychology and social work and other related fields will come in handy. If I go to work in the office of the guardian ad litem [court-appointed attorney for a child], I need to know the developmental stages of a three-year-old and what this means when making the decision to take a child from a home. I need to know if a family can be made whole again or if there is no chance. Social workers, psychologists, and police officers deal with these situations first-hand and can advise lawyers. I also need to know nuances about children

to make and implement policy regarding their welfare."

Student Helen Kim is eager to apply what she learned in her social work studies: Everything is linked. "I look forward to working with professionals from other fields. We need to comprehend the viewpoints of oth-

The Civitas program allows them to learn more and to integrate past experience say the Civitas Scholars:

Deborah Glaser, Helen Kim, Karen Schaefer, Ilene Bloom, Nancy Austin (front row from left), Angela Alford, Kate Terry, Soyounng Kwon, Nicholas Brazeau, Leecia Welch (back row from left), and Allison Ellis (missing from photo).



Experts serve as the Civitas Initiative Board of Counselors



Jeffrey D. Jacobs, J.D.



Oprah Winfrey



Bruce D. Perry, M.D.



Andrew Vachss, J.D.



Dan K. Webb, J.D.

A top group of experts on children and the law is in place to support and guide Loyola's Civitas ChildLaw Center, part of the Civitas Initiative. They include:

- Jeffrey D. Jacobs (J.D. '74), who developed and funded Civitas. He is president and general counsel of Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Studios in Chicago, and has been Winfrey's personal attorney since 1984. He also serves on the board of directors for the Better Boys Foundation and Athletes Against Drugs.

- Oprah Winfrey, talk show host and producer, is a staunch advocate for children's rights. She and Jacobs suc-

cessfully worked with Congress and concerned citizens to enact the National Child Protection Act, which enables child-care organizations to request national criminal background checks on current and prospective child-care workers and volunteers.

- Bruce D. Perry, M.D., holds posts as the Thomas S. Trammell Research Professor of Child Psychiatry and vice-chair for research in the psychiatry and behavioral sciences department at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX, and as an associate professor of pediatrics and pharmacology and the chief of psychiatry at Texas Children's Hospital. His clinical

research and practice focus on traumatized children; last year, he counseled the children released from the David Koresh compound in Waco, TX.

- Andrew Vachss, J.D., a lawyer who has worked as a federal investigator and social caseworker, limits his practice to representing children.

- Dan K. Webb (J.D. '70) is a partner in the law firm of Winston & Strawn, where he chairs the litigation department. Previously, Webb was U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois and director of the Illinois Department of Law Enforcement.

ers working with children, because we need to work together to help children have better lives." Progress is possible only if we can work together to understand and respect the differences in our fields, she says.

Sharing resources

Drawing on the child-related research of other Loyolans and outside experts will enable law students to learn about the most recent trends and developments. Though Civitas scholars won't leave Loyola able to practice pediatric medicine or teach elementary school, they will know enough about these fields to work more effectively with other professionals in the best interests of children.

The shared-learning experience will be a two-way street: Civitas

classes, or a specific portion of them, will be open to Loyola students from other disciplines. As law students gain knowledge of other fields from professionals in those fields, Loyola's law faculty also will share legal expertise with students from other disciplines. Some classes may be taught by a team of varied experts, others may be one-time seminars directed at more narrowly defined skills or subjects.

"We will have some intense, focused programs, if not semester-long courses, that other Loyola students can attend," says Geraghty. "Many people may be called as witnesses in child abuse cases in the course of their professional lives—for instance, teachers and child development experts. They may not have an understanding of how the legal system works, or what they can and can't say.

A course in the Civitas program certainly could bridge this gap."

In other cases, she says, Loyola social work, nursing, or education students might benefit from role play in the law school's trial practice course. "Everyone with potential to be a witness in a court case involving children could get a taste of the experience, while our law students learn what to do as prosecutors and defenders," Geraghty explains.

Appel also sees opportunity to nurture pro bono work in professionals in other fields. "The legal profession often is criticized unjustly, even though one of the goals of the organized bar is to encourage lawyers to give free legal service," she notes. "As far as I know, other professions don't have a formal pro bono code,

although many individuals volunteer services on a regular basis. I believe that, through Civitas, we can organize a team of professionals who will work together to help abused and neglected children. For example, we could facilitate team approaches, such as a lawyer and a pediatrician meeting to help an abused child."

Building a model

As Civitas courses develop, the law school's curriculum committee is paying special attention to expanding multidisciplinary opportunities while creating a path-breaking model curriculum.

No other law school in the nation offers a series of classes aimed at educating child advocates. A handful have clinical programs, but none have undertaken the comprehensive course of study that Loyola is creating. "At most, other law schools offer a family law class and a juvenile court class," says Geraghty. "We are the only school to offer a number of courses in sequence."

Because Civitas scholars must complete a full law school curriculum and graduate with the ability to be competent lawyers in any field, a number of required classes will focus on child advocacy issues. Many Civitas classes are open to all Loyola law students, but Civitas scholars are guaranteed a place in the child advocacy courses they select each semester.

During the scholars' first semester, along with the usual courses in civil procedure, contracts, criminal law, property, and torts, their legal writing course focuses on issues in child abuse.

Student Soyoung Kwan recalls that the course made her even more aware of troubling family situations. "Our instructor Anne MacArthur provided a realistic viewpoint," adds Karen Schaeffer. "We learned the practical skills necessary to deal with 4,000 cases on our dockets."

Program Director Rich Cozzola ('80), who handles the daily opera-



The scholars meet weekly with directors Diane Geraghty, J.D. (center), and Rich Cozzola, J.D., at the Civitas office at 1 E. Delaware Place, a block north of the law school.

tions of the center, is leading a second-semester research seminar, which includes an overview of the child protective system, with input from a clinical child psychologist.

Future courses are likely to include: child abuse and the law; legislation and children; appellate advocacy with a child law focus; an integrative seminar with professionals from other fields; international rights of children (possibly at Loyola's Rome Center Campus); and a career-focused capstone course tying everything together in the last semester. Two internships are required in the curriculum.

Because the program is so new, the first group of Civitas scholars has the unique opportunity to help shape the future of students who follow them. At a year-end retreat, they will offer their comments on what to do for the 1994 first-year class.

Beyond the classroom

Meanwhile, extracurricular sessions give scholars the chance for input. During weekly meetings with Cozzola and Geraghty, they suggest topics for guest lecturers and sites they would like to visit. First-semester speakers included board member and lawyer Andrew Vachss,

Civitas ChildLaw Center: Fast Facts

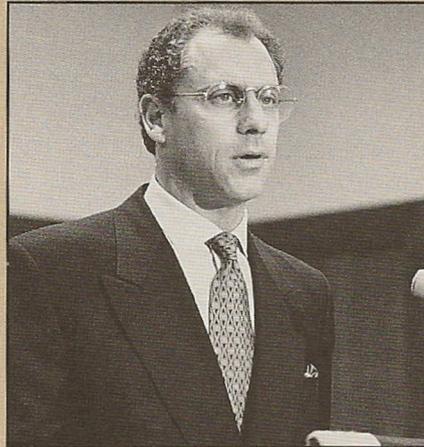
- Takes its name from the Latin word "civitas," which means "service to the community."
- Aims to educate and train law students as litigators and advocates for abused and neglected children.
- Stands as the first of its kind at any American law school.
- Welcomed 11 first-year students as the initial group of Civitas scholars.
- Integrates traditional law curriculum with specialized three-year course of study.
- Offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that includes medicine, psychology, social work, and other relevant fields.
- Invites national and local experts to participate along with Loyola faculty.
- Founded by alumnus Jeffrey D. Jacobs (J.D. '74), who funded the formation of the center, as well as scholarships and internships.

Civitas founder issues challenge to other law alumni and business leaders: Get involved

Loyola's Civitas ChildLaw Center is part of 1974 alumnus and founder Jeffrey Jacob's bigger vision for helping children.

"I want to create a consortium of trained professionals to work together for abused and neglected children," he says of the Civitas Initiative, the non-profit foundation he created. In addition to the law program at Loyola, the foundation also sponsors the Civitas ChildTrauma Program at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX. Jacobs continues to look for visionaries in the fields of nursing, social work, education, and law enforcement to support the initiative.

"These are the first formal, didactic programs for lawyers and child psychiatrists," Jacobs notes, "and we want to spread the hands-on, clinical training characteristic of Civitas to other professions that interface with abused and neglected children. These people work together, and need common language and goals."



Jeffrey D. Jacobs (J.D. '74)

Jacobs expects the programs developed through the initiative to be replicated in colleges and universities across the country. Students in the interdisciplinary programs will collaborate in joint education ventures and learn from each other, as well as from the professionals directing the programs.

Continuing the Civitas Initiative offers an opportunity for Loyola alums and business leaders to make a

difference in the world, Jacobs believes.

"I challenge anyone who makes a living on goods and services for children to step up and get involved in this initiative," he says. "It's not just about writing a check to fund the programs; it's about establishing partnerships and seeing where the money is going. That may mean holding meetings at corporate headquarters, involving employees in programs with children, or a variety of other things."

Jacobs sees the Civitas effort as an opportunity for Loyola graduates to "involve themselves in the social good of our country. It is the abused and neglected children of the world who clog our jails and take our tax dollars when they grow up. We can do something about the drugs and violence, and make a difference in our world."

For more information about joining the Civitas Initiative, contact Jacobs at (312) 633-1050.

who described his courtroom battles on behalf of children, and psychiatrist Bruce D. Perry, also a board member, who discussed his cutting-edge research on chemical changes in the brains of abused children. The group also visited juvenile court and the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse; this semester, they expect to accompany Department of Children and Family Services workers as they check on reported abuse cases, and visit shelters where children live temporarily after they are removed from their parents' custody pending investigation of abuse or neglect.

"We use the city as a laboratory," notes the dean. "There are many resources here, including our well-qualified part-time faculty of judges and practitioners—some who have

dedicated 30 years to teaching at Loyola." Chicago also is a national center for child advocacy, says Appel. The nation's first juvenile court was founded here in 1899 by Jane Addams and other reformers who wanted to create a legal system that cares for and responds to the needs of children. It now is the largest juvenile court system in the nation.

Because the plight of children is a national problem, Civitas scholars will seek summer internships across the country, where they can learn firsthand the practical aspects of working on behalf of children. Many hope to work with Civitas board members and in Washington, DC. Along with Cozzola, they are researching options offered by national agencies that contact the center to express interest in collabora-

tion. The scholars will embark on their first internships this summer, complete with stipends, thanks to the generosity of Civitas founder and alumnus Jeffrey D. Jacobs ('74).

"We've had wonderful receptivity across the country," Geraghty says. "This first internship should give the scholars exposure to the depth of the child-law field. They could observe how policy is made, work with a courtroom litigator, or even develop a relationship with a medical institution."

The second required internship is unpaid; students are encouraged to use this opportunity to expand their skills and focus on their career work.

Lawyers and advocates

The Civitas program supplements, but does not replace, the traditional

law school curriculum. As Geraghty points out, the American Bar Association does not allow specialization at the J.D. level. Appel affirms that the Civitas courses are too few in number to be considered a specialized track.

"This is not part of a trend toward specialization, but a way to open up a previously underserved area of law," Appel says. "The Jesuit tradition of our law school teaches that law is a service profession. We want our students to do both well and good."

In fact, Appel explains, most students don't know what type of job they want when they enter law school. For those who do want to work with children, Civitas will provide essential background, unavailable at other schools. For others, it will introduce them to a new area of law. Above all, says the dean, "We want to train all our students to be well-rounded lawyers, and to have them all pass the bar and be equipped to practice in any area. If they elect to work in another area, we do hope they apply their skills toward children in the pro bono arena. We believe Loyola-educated lawyers can make a difference on a national level."

Terry enrolled at Loyola certain about her plan to work on policy issues for children even before the child-law program was announced. When she received a letter inviting her application to Civitas, "I felt like it was written for me."

Echoes Kim, who is pursuing a dual degree in social work and law, in addition to participating in Civitas: "I prayed a lot about what I should do with my life as I was applying to social work graduate programs and law schools, and when I got the letter about Civitas, I thought 'This is for me.' When I was accepted, I knew that God was telling me I should work with children. I'm going to put my heart into it."

Because only one man, Nick Brazeau, now is in the program, Schaeffer fears people will discredit

Alumnus guides day-to-day Civitas operations

Alumnus Rich Cozzola ('80) emerged as program director for the Civitas ChildLaw Center after a national search to fill the new post.

Although applicants with "incredible credentials" from across the country approached Loyola about the position, says Faculty Director and Professor Diane Geraghty, J.D., "it was gratifying to see that a Loyola law school alumnus led the pack, both in experience and ability."

Cozzola spent the past three-and-a-half years at Chicago's Office of the Public Guardian, working in the courts, and training and hiring lawyers. He developed the first and most complete training program for people who represent children, enabling experts to hone their trial skills and their knowledge about children outside of the courtroom. As a result, he knows many other child-law experts and advocates.

Cozzola's entire career has been devoted to public interest law, including a six-year stint at the Cabrini-Green Legal Aid Clinic and several years in housing law in legal services programs in Flint and Saginaw, MI.



Rich Cozzola (J.D. '80)

As a law student, he worked for the Illinois Department of Public Aid and the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney, in one of the nation's first special child abuse units. Before law school, in the mid-70s, he taught grade school.

"Each of the 6,810 foster placements made each year is as painful as a divorce," Cozzola says. "Can you imagine that? The kids never know if they will be in the same house tomorrow, so it's no wonder they don't form attachments. Every child needs a safe, permanent home. Period."

When he interviewed for the post with Geraghty and Jacobs, Cozzola recalls saying that "if the purpose of the program was just to say that child abuse is horrible, then it's not worth it. We need to address what we can do to fix it. We know that kids in severe trauma need treatment, but they aren't getting it. We know that 4,000 cases in one courtroom are too many. We know that six out of 700 Cook County judges hearing abuse and neglect cases are not enough. Let's get on with it. Civitas is about fixing the problem in a major way: We want our students to change the system."

the importance of the program or label it a naive choice for "nurturers." She bristles: "We made a conscious choice to join this program because it's about time we reform the system. That the field is not respected now is a reflection of the sorry state of our society. And where else can we start reform except with young lawyers coming in?"

Ilene Bloom agrees, "It's hard to believe there was no program like

this before—and yet lawyers are representing children in court."

Although the first Civitas scholars have different post-graduation plans, all say their common interest in children has forged strong personal bonds.

"We all saw an area that needs to be addressed," says Kim. "And because of our training, we already have a network. I think we will be linked for life." ■