

Michael Goldsmith Joins U.S. Sentencing Commission

Professor Michael Goldsmith thought he had beat all the odds when he fully recovered from a ruptured aneurysm less than a year and a half ago (see *Clark Memorandum*, fall 1994). But when his nomination to the United States Sentencing Commission was confirmed by the Senate in October 1994, he observed that perhaps he had been wrong: "Eighteen months ago I was near death, and now I'm going to be living and working in D.C.!"

The Sentencing Commission was established seven years ago as part of the Sentencing Reform Act. Its purpose is to set uniform sentences for convicted defendants. Goldsmith believes this is a great opportunity for a professor of criminal law. "It puts me at the heart of the criminal justice system during a crucial period," he said.

Goldsmith applied for the position upon the suggestion of several ABA members. However, he soon heard that the panel had already been selected. Upon the suggestion of Judge Dee Benson, Goldsmith decided to follow up anyway. "I figured I didn't have anything to lose. It would at least let them know of my interest for future selections," he said.

In a twist of fate, the entire first slate fell through. New names needed to be selected. Enter Senator Orrin Hatch from Utah. "Although we have had public differences, Senator Hatch went to bat for me,"

Goldsmith said. "He didn't take our philosophical differences personally." With added support from Senator Patrick Leahy of Virginia, Goldsmith clearly had good bipartisan backing.

The final step of the appointment process was a "lengthy" interview with Attorney General Janet Reno. During that interview, Reno reassured Goldsmith that she knew he had good credentials and stressed to him the importance of having a commission whose members could work together collegially. "Terrific," Goldsmith quipped. "If I don't get the job this means that she thinks I'm an anti-social jerk!"

Goldsmith looks forward to this exceptional opportunity. He hopes that his experience in both prosecution and defense, combined with his current work as a law professor, gives him a more objective view of criminal law, something important for this position.

Los Angeles Chapter Still Moving—and Shaking

Though southern California still shakes with aftershocks from the Northridge quake, the Los Angeles Chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society continues moving in its commitment to excellence in law and chapter activities.

Nancy Van Slooten, a member of the national J. Reuben Clark Law Society Committee and leader of the LA Chapter, reports the LA Chapter is very active in pro bono work and successful in hosting an annual dinner. Chapter members are now also emphasizing

additional activities.

"We aren't the strongest in the nation on activities, so we'll be working on that," Nancy told the *Clark Memorandum*. The chapter recently switched to the committee system, which will encourage increased chapter activities, including educational endeavors and projects for placing law students and graduates.

The chapter's great success with pro bono work stems from two sources: an excellent pro bono chair and a meaningful area for pro bono service. Canthi Lange, an immigration law specialist with the firm of Fragomen Del Rey & Bernsen in Los Angeles, is the committee chair. Lange is also an adjunct professor of immigration law at Southwestern Law School.

Lange notes that immigration law is ideal for pro bono activity. Generally, there are quick resolutions and few ethical dilemmas. "The mix of immigrants and attorneys is also unique," she said. "Most of the people we work with have been in the United States for years. Often they are joining the LDS Church and want to get their papers in order."

"We also work with those newly immigrated and have some very interesting asylum cases," Lange said.

She feels the chapter has excelled at question triage and responding to those questions. "We can put people in the right direction and come up with immigration strategies," she said. "We do, though, fall short at times in having sufficient lawyer power to implement those strategies." To support its pro bono work, the chap-

ter offers training in immigration law, which includes CLE credit.

Outgoing chapter Chair Don Pearson noted that having a dynamic speaker is a big key to a successful annual dinner. "It is also good to avoid conflicts with stake conferences," he said. "At the dinners we have also honored some very outstanding attorneys." The chapter recently named its Outstanding Lawyer Award in honor of Howard W. Hunter. The Outstanding Young Lawyer Award is also presented at the annual dinner.

As part of the chapter's new emphasis on increased activities, Elder Lance B. Wickman, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy and partner of Latham & Watkins in San Diego, spoke at a well-attended October fireside.

"We want to be the best chapter in the nation," Van Slooten said. Beyond the current activities, the chapter plans to develop several new areas this year, and membership, education, placement and recruiting, and fund-raising committees have been formed.

—Miriam A. Smith

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