

## I Want to Be Like Steve

Steve Averett's smile is contagious. Last fall his smiling face was seen silk-screened onto numerous T-shirts along with the popular slogan "I want to be like Steve." Steve himself smiles as he talks about his gratitude for the law students' T-shirt campaign. But he is visibly embarrassed when he encounters students wearing "his" T-shirts. Trying to prevent the conversation turning toward him, he quickly changes the subject from himself to the students by pointing out their accomplishments. However, Steve's proficiencies in the professions of teaching, law, and librarianship set an example of excellence for all the students and faculty at the J. Reuben Clark Law School. Indeed, he personifies to many the slogan "I want to be like Steve."

Growing up in Price and Springville, Utah, Steve saw examples that taught him the virtue of serving others in all aspects of life. His mother served people in her profession as a librarian, and his father helped others as a life insurance salesman. His father's deep concern for others even carried over into the proper care of the family's animals. One year spring was late, and they didn't want an expectant sow's piglets to freeze. Steve and his Dad cleared out part of the basement to make room for them. "We were the only family in town with pigs living downstairs," Steve chuckles. "My father was very generous, to the point of being tenacious in his giving. I owe a great deal to my father's example." Another role model in Price was Steve's Church leader, Bishop Don Keller, a practicing attorney. He was kind and caring and took a genuine interest in others, including young Steve, who now says, "When I think of good lawyers, I think of Bishop Keller. He is my example of the kind of lawyer I'd like to be someday."

Steve singles out his Springville High School debate teacher as another major influence on "a painfully shy and intro-

verted young man." She spent hours with him, had him practice "being mean" in the mirror, and taught him to present himself and his ideas in a persuasive manner. "I want to help students the way she reached out and helped me," he says. While Steve served as an LDS missionary in Taiwan, his desire to become a good teacher increased. Later he studied education in college for four years, then taught in the Nebo School District in Springville for seven years. Steve continued to perfect his teaching skills, not knowing that his future would bring him many more occupational opportunities.

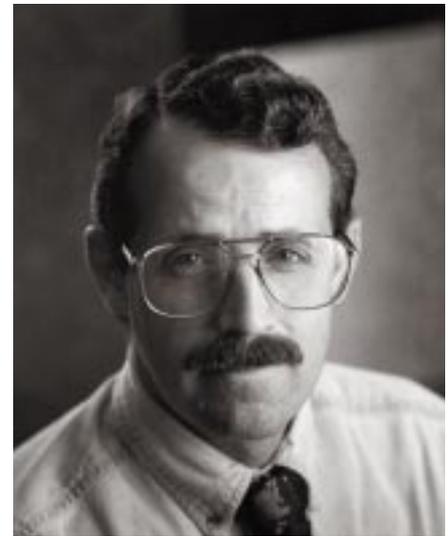
Change came as Steve considered further training. He and his wife, Susan, had three of their seven children while he attended graduate school. In 1985, while teaching in Springville, Steve received his master of library science degree with an emphasis in school librarianship—completing

*"I want to be like Steve." Steve himself smiles as he talks about his gratitude for the law students' T-shirt campaign. But he is visibly embarrassed when he encounters students wearing "his" T-shirts.*

his master's thesis on ways teachers motivate students to read. He worked as a librarian in Springville for awhile, yet he felt unsettled—something was missing. Then he remembered his high school interest surveys suggesting an aptitude for law, teaching, and writing. He decided to pursue a legal education and enrolled in the J. Reuben Clark Law School, where he became fascinated with the ability of the law to help people resolve their problems. During this time Steve clerked briefly for BYU's Office of General Counsel, participated in divorce mediation cases, and was case note edi-

tor for the law school's *Education and Law Perspectives* journal.

Steve spent the next few years developing his skills as a teacher, lawyer, and librarian. He clerked for Judge B. Lynn Winmill in Idaho for a year, then returned to Utah, where he taught school for another year. He taught legal bibliography classes to the graduate students at the BYU library school and served as judge pro tem for the Fourth Circuit Court in Utah Valley. He also spent two years handling domestic relations and public bene-



fit cases as a staff attorney at Utah Legal Services in Provo.

"I can't say enough good things about Steve's work as a public service lawyer," says Susan Griffith, the managing attorney of Utah Legal Services when Steve worked there. "He was the most prepared attorney I ever saw in court. He spent the extra time preparing because he cared so deeply for his clients. He'd get excellent results by hard work, not by yelling the loudest."

Steve's service to others continued in early 1993 when he moved to Oxford, Mississippi. He served as public services

librarian, assistant director, and then acting director of the University of Mississippi Law School Library. In 1994 he was named outstanding law school staff member of the year, and in 1995, outstanding law professor of the law school.

A chance to move closer to home brought Steve and his family to Boise, Idaho, where he helped automate the Idaho Supreme Court Law Library as its director. Two years later he was offered a position at BYU. Steve smiles as he says, "When the BYU law school/law library position came open, I felt I was coming home." Susan Griffith, now assistant director of BYU's law school externship programs, shares her gratitude for Steve's return: "When we heard he was coming, we screamed, danced for joy, and then we cried. I knew how good he was, and what a difference he'd make in whatever he did at BYU. The law students have a true friend in Steve Averett."

Other Law School staff echo similar praise. Curt Conklin, the law library's head of technical services, comments, "Most law librarians focus either on being lawyers or on being librarians. Steve is the first one here to be professionally trained as a teacher and then as a lawyer and librarian. That's why he cares so deeply and so well for the students." Gary Hill, the law library's associate director adds, "Steve is extremely thorough in all he does—his classes, his reference work, and his genuine relationships with others. His willingness to help all types of people is contagious, and just being with him makes me want to be a better person."

Steve smiles as he expresses similar sentiments about the Law School: "The quality of the students, staff, faculty, and librarians at this law school is tremendous. I'm humbled to work with the people here, to see what they are accomplishing, and to be a small part of their work. This is one of the greatest law schools in the country because of the dedicated and strong people here."

Truly, Steve's dedication and strength as a teacher, lawyer, and librarian motivate others to want to be like him, many of whom proudly wear the words "I want to be like Steve."

## LeGrande Fletcher: One of a Kind

BYU's last JD/MLIS graduate has returned. G. LeGrande Fletcher joined the Howard W. Hunter Law Library staff in November 1997, four years after earning the last dual law and library-science degree given out at BYU. Other J. Reuben Clark law graduates attended library school, but he was one of a select handful to do both simultaneously. With the close of the BYU library school in 1993, his education and training became even more unique. Now that he is here, LeGrande feels very fortunate to have attended BYU and have the opportunity to



*"Law librarianship is a people profession, and my own background shows how important other people are to what I do now."*

work here. He is anxious to use his background and experience to help other members of the BYU Law School community.

LeGrande is no stranger to libraries, particularly those associated with higher education. He was a librarian for the LDS Institute of Religion in Huntington Beach, California, before he graduated from Goldenwest Community College with an associate degree in communications. The Harold B. Lee Library hired him to organize materials in its archives part-time for two years while he finished his bachelor's degree in history (with a Spanish minor). He also did a short internship in the archives and spent a great deal of time in the library doing historical research.

Later, during his second year of law school, LeGrande began to look at librarianship as a career and not solely a means of getting through school. He reminisces, "I was working part-time at the BYU history/religion reference desk as a second-year law student and realized I enjoyed law and librarianship. I felt like a fish swimming every day between two different, enjoyable places, and I wanted to bring them together." He talked to other librarians and began looking for ways to combine his interests.

The opportunity to do more with librarianship and law came sooner than LeGrande expected. At the end of his second year of law school, he was hired to work full-time as a catalog paraprofessional for the BYU Harold B. Lee Library. This was more than a summer job; he eventually worked four years as a library paraprofessional full-time while he finished law school part-time. LeGrande comments, "I was fortunate to get very practical, hands-on training in library technical services during my years at the Lee Library. Many people there took the time to teach me to help library users by doing the behind-the-scenes work well. At first some of them did not understand why a law student would be working in a nonlaw library, but they were patient with me anyway."

LeGrande's library experience helped him in law school, too. His research abilities assisted him as a member of the Law School's Jessup International Law Moot Court team, as executive editor and lead articles editor of the Law School's *International and Comparative Law Annual*, and in compiling a legal research guide for Cole Durham's eastern European seminar.

## Kristin Gerdy: Able to Balance

“LeGrande Fletcher’s broad library experience helped many other students when he worked with ICLA,” says Professor Durham. “He was a ‘bluebook whiz’ as well and always willing to help others improve their legal research and writing skills.”

When the BYU library school announced it would be closing, LeGrande was admitted to its last class. He hammered out a dual-degree program, which allowed him to finish his law and library-science degrees together in August 1993. “I had permission from the university, the Law School, and the library school—and my wife—not to sleep for about six months,” says LeGrande.

His first professional law library position came shortly thereafter, when he was hired as the technical services librarian for the Washoe County Law Library in Reno, Nevada, in April 1994. His wife and four daughters moved to northern Nevada, where LeGrande learned about computers and people in law libraries. He planned and carried out a conversion of the law library’s paper files to computer files, set up the library’s Internet access, and created a Web page. Bruce Beesley, chair of the board of trustees of the Washoe County Law Library, noted that LeGrande’s efforts resulted in technological advancements well ahead of when otherwise expected. LeGrande’s other emphasis in Reno was helping people directly. He helped attorneys, judges, and the public find library materials daily, and he worked to improve relations between his library and others in the state. Sally Kinsey, 1997 president of the Nevada Library Association, adds, “LeGrande has a good mind and an understanding spirit and has been a very positive influence for Nevada libraries. He is truly an ambassador for good in all he does.”

LeGrande points out the good influence other librarians, lawyers, and law professors have had on him, especially as he returns to BYU: “I am very grateful to the many people who took the time to help me learn better how to serve others. Law librarianship is a people profession, and my own background shows how important other people are to what I do now.” Hired as government documents and microforms librarian, LeGrande hopes to contribute his unique talents to helping the law students, faculty, and others at BYU.

Kristin Gerdy has spent more time than many balancing legal and religious studies. While attending law school she worked for Religious Education on campus, including the Department of Church History and Doctrine. Her advanced legal writing paper was on “Incorporating the Laws of God into the Practice of Law.” Since graduating cum laude from law school in 1995, she has continued in her desire to better integrate the study of law and religion.

As one of the newest members of the Howard W. Hunter Law Library staff, Kristin says she feels an even stronger need to emulate the life of President Howard W. Hunter and to help law students learn how he balanced his religious devotions and legal practice. “It is not easy,” says Kristin, “but we can try to better balance the study and practice of religion and law. I do not claim to have all the answers nor even to know all the questions, but I have spent some time looking for them.”

Kristin’s time studying religion began in earnest when she joined the LDS Church at age 12 in Colorado with her parents and two younger sisters. She put a great deal of effort into discovering all she could about Mormonism. Kristin comments, “I missed all the Primary-aged classes for young Mormon children and felt like I needed to catch up somehow.” As a teenager in high school, Kristin was so motivated to learn about her new religion that she never missed a day of seminary in four years. Her interest continued when she applied to attend Brigham Young University.

As a journalism major at BYU with a minor in English, Kristin acquired another strong interest—law. She was intrigued by the many facets of law she encountered in her journalism courses. Her communications law class with Dallas Burnett sparked an intense desire to study law; she received the highest grade in Burnett’s course and wanted to know more. Kristin’s writing skills and interest in law led to her

invitation to present a paper at the Western Journalism Historians Conference at UC Berkeley. As one of only two undergraduates invited to speak at the conference, she talked about politics and the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Kristin graduated from college in April 1992 and spent the summer working as a business reporter for the *Daily Camera* newspaper in Boulder, Colorado. Her interest in legal issues also led to her application and acceptance to the J. Reuben Clark Law School.

Kristin began law school in August 1992 and “loved everything” about it. Getting to know the faculty was a highlight for her, as were the friendships she made running the first-year moot court competition. She enjoyed observing how religious law students and law professors live their lives and studied how religion and law interact and what LDS Church leaders teach about the relationship between the two. She worked as a legal-writing teaching assistant and as a research assistant for Religious Education.

During her first law school summer, Kristin analyzed religious issues from a different perspective, reporting for the *Daily Camera* on Pope John Paul II’s visit to Denver for the Eighth World Youth Day in August. Her second law school summer, she compiled all of President Howard W. Hunter’s speeches and writings for the Religious Education area. While doing so she looked closely at President Hunter’s twin commitments to law and religion, how his legal training helped his Church work, and how his Christian values influenced his legal practice. During her last year of law school, Kristin taught religion classes and compiled copies of articles and talks discussing the relationship between religion and law. She wanted to help herself and others be “better able to balance” responsibilities to one’s profession and one’s creed.

Kristin’s study of law and religion motivated her to reach out and share with others what she had learned. After finishing

law school in 1995, she tried to help college and high school students learn more about religion. Continuing to teach part-time for the BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, she began teaching LDS seminary classes to students attending Oquirrh Hills Middle School in Riverton, Utah. When a part-time position as a reference librarian and legal research instructor came open at the Howard W. Hunter Law Library, she hoped she could teach law students some of what she had learned. She worked part-time for Religious Education



*"It is not easy, but we can try to better balance the study and practice of religion and law. I do not claim to have all the answers nor even to know all the questions, but I have spent some time looking for them."*

as well as the Law School until her law library position became full-time in the summer of 1996. In the meantime she published articles and made conference presentations on legal research issues to members of the legal community and law library profession.

As a full-time faculty librarian, Kristin says she encourages law students to address the issues involved in integrating religious and legal demands. Pointing to the examples of BYU law professors, the

many graduates of the Law School, and other LDS attorneys and Church leaders, she hopes to help students recognize potential conflicts, solutions, and consequences before they begin legal practice. Howard W. Hunter and J. Reuben Clark, Jr., are her models of those who have excelled in law and religious devotion and in coordinating the demands of both. "Law takes time. Religion takes time," Kristin says. "And balancing them takes time."

---

Glenn V. Bird

## Lorena P. Riffo: Living Life *con Ganas!*

In the Latino culture, there is an expression that embodies the remarkable life of Lorena Riffo. When one does something with enthusiasm, determination, and great vitality, she or he is said to be doing so *con ganas!* Lorena has lived her life *con ganas* since she and her parents left Chile as political refugees in 1980. She has also filled each moment of her life with activity and action. She laughingly admits to having been a hyperactive child and suggests this as an explanation for her great energy.

Lorena's father was the head of Chile's Association of Artists. In 1973 a successful coup overthrew the regime in power. The leaders of the new government tortured Lorena's father, trying to persuade him to modify his beliefs. So as soon as he could, he and his family left his homeland and settled in Salt Lake City. This was a move that would prove to be traumatic, especially for the children, but it was necessary in order to survive.

Lorena has always approached life with a sense of adventure and optimism,

which has aided her in her struggles and setbacks along the road to success. Memories of her sister bravely climbing back into bed during the Chilean coup, refusing to lie on the floor one more minute to avoid the machine gun fire, also inspired her to greatness.

Without knowing a word of English, the 13-year-old Lorena was placed in the Salt Lake City public school system. After years of struggle and determination, she graduated from Highland High School in 1985. Now, with just a hint of an accent in her voice, she looks back on her experiences with a sense of pride. She also acknowledges how difficult it was to learn a new language and to adapt to a foreign culture.

According to a recent article about Lorena published in the *Deseret News*, from the time she was very young she has been guided by her mother's words: "If you want change, you have to make the change." As a child, she witnessed her parents "practicing what they preached." Following that example, Lorena continues to work for positive change for herself and those around her.

Typical of Lorena's energy and character, she entered the University of Utah after graduating from high school, driven to gain as much diverse knowledge as possible. That's why, in 1989, she was awarded a bachelor's degree in sociology—and a certificate in criminology and a minor in French. Her success displayed a great aptitude for academics.

Lorena next set her sights on a law degree. She enrolled in the J. Reuben Clark Law School and graduated in 1993. While still at BYU she worked for Senator Orrin Hatch and former Senator Jake Garn. She also clerked for Federal District Court Judge David Sam. Rubbing shoulders with important people was nothing new to Lorena. Her home in Chile was constantly visited by high-profile guests.

The year following her graduation, Utah Governor Michael Leavitt appointed Lorena director of the State Office of Hispanic Affairs. Before this appointment she worked as a juvenile justice project-and-programs specialist for Utah's Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice. She was also an important contributor to the Governor's Hispanic Advisory Council,

and her participation in the Utah Hispanic Women's Leadership Institute was considered vital to the program's success. On the national level, she was a resourceful member of the United States Senate Committee on Hispanic Affairs. Although Lorena underplays the significance of her achievements, the excellence of her performance has always spoken loudly.

There have been career disappointments, but they have not deterred her. One example is her nomination by Governor Leavitt to be the staff director of the Committee for Consumer Services. Her nomination was not confirmed, because critics felt she lacked the necessary background and her legal training was not directed toward utilities law. The governor expressed his complete confidence in Lorena and said he did not regret the nomination in the least. He was her biggest supporter throughout the confirmation process.

As director of the Utah State Office of Hispanic Affairs, Lorena was characterized by some as a "ball of fire." Coworkers marveled that her job was essentially a 24-hour-per-day job, because she was always on call. She spent much time in

can help all people to see each other as individuals, not just as members of a group." Her grandmother would undoubtedly praise Lorena for this attitude and for her enthusiasm.

Lorena had her staff working on several diverse projects, one of which involved Wendover, Utah—a target community because of its large Hispanic population. Not long ago, Governor Leavitt's wife, Jackie, drove there to deliver a 45-minute speech for a conference on Hispanic rela-



*"Our biggest challenge as a state is understanding that we are a diverse community made up of taxpayers. I think Utah is an incredible place."*

the office, but she also tried to attend as many cultural events as possible that affected the Hispanic community.

Conscientious in her duties with Hispanic Affairs, Lorena was responsible for three staff people and two shared secretaries. As she told the *Deseret News*, "Our biggest challenge as a state is understanding that we are a diverse community made up of taxpayers. I think Utah is an incredible place. I always tell my friends that my family left a life of wealth in Chile for a life of freedom in America. Utah is a place of immigrants, a safe haven for people who have not been accepted in other places. My hope is that our office

assessments. Another part of the program was a well-received short performance by Ballet West. Lorena believes the warmth and generosity of the Wendover Hispanic community could well serve as a model for other areas. "Parents tell me their children feel safe there," she says. She also recognizes "a feeling of sharing," which she would like everyone in Utah to feel.

Assessment visits were completed in St. George, Ogden, Logan, and Park City. While visiting St. George, Lorena resolved to instigate a statewide program to help Driver's License Division officers better understand the needs of the Latino community. Working with Bart Blackstock,

head of the Driver's License Division, a program of diversity training was initiated that is in effect today.

Programs for Hispanic Affairs also included coordinating efforts with other ethnic groups. In addition, several important celebrations, like the Cinco de Mayo Festival and the Hispanic Festival in August, have become cultural showcases.

Lorena's overall strategy for improving conditions for the Hispanic residents of Utah was breaking down walls and building foundations through the arts, religion, politics, business, and the education system. She helped accomplish her goals by being approachable. "My door is always open," she continues to say, promising that "when you phone I may not be in, but I'll get back to you."

Continuing her educational quest, Lorena was awarded a master's degree in public health by the University of Utah in June 1997.

New challenges came Lorena's way when she became the assistant director of the Utah State National Business Development Office. A part of the Department of Community and Economic Development, this office is generally charged with recruiting new businesses to the state. Lorena was instrumental in bringing the Malt-O-Meal corporation to Tremonton. This \$300-million-dollar-per-year investment will be a real boon to northern Utah.

Lorena is currently director of the Division of Corporations and Commercial Code. Her office registers all businesses in Utah each year. They also commission notary publics, monitor limited liability partnerships, and regulate bonding collection agencies. She has given herself one year to implement a plan of allowing businesses to do filing and submit annual reports through electronic mail.

Lorena is married to Ken Jenson of Price, Utah. They dated four years and have a happy and successful marriage. She credits her supportive husband for much of her success. For his part, Ken realizes what a find he has in Lorena. And he knows she will live each day *con ganas!*

*Glenn V. Bird is a freelance writer from Springville, Utah.*