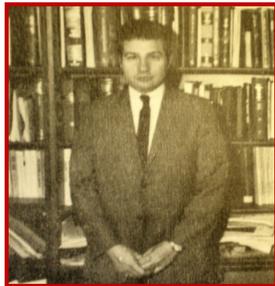


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*LWI Lives* is a regular electronic publication of the “Faces of LWI” Committee, which explores and communicates the emerging identity of LWI and its members. We have in common the commitment to being the best legal writing professors that we can be and are multi-dimensional people with different strengths, interests, curiosities, and gifts. By profiling individuals in our community, we hope to expand and develop our understanding of who we are and what we aspire to be.

**Once upon a time, in a law library long ago...**

Edited by Linda Edwards

Ralph Brill likes to make jokes about his age. Now in his 55<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, Ralph has seen it all, but people who know Ralph are happy he keeps hanging around.

*For more on Ralph, see page two.*

**I don't know but I've been told!**

By Danielle D. Weatherby

Mark Strickland, Assistant Professor of Lawyering Skills at Howard University School of Law, joined the legal writing academy seven years ago after an impressive international military career. He hasn't left military service entirely behind, though. Mark serves as an Attorney Advisor to the Military Justice Review Group.

*For more on Mark, see page four.*

**Software, NPR, and Elmo**

By Sha-Shana Crichton

Meet Gabriel “Gabe” Teninbaum. A prolific writer and a man whose passion for legal writing is absolutely contagious. Gabe teaches at the Suffolk University School of Law in Boston, and I must say, his students are fortunate to have him as a professor.

*For more on Gabe, see page six.*



## Ralph Brill, continued

Ralph helped build our field from the ground up. He started a three-year Legal Writing program at Chicago-Kent—in 1978, when law schools were not required to offer even one semester of Legal Writing. He co-authored the ABA Sourcebook on Legal Writing. He has been a leader in every ABA or AALS Legal-Writing related section. He was a founding Board member for both LWI and ALWD. He set up the first Legal Writing listserv, a life-line for our community, at the LWI conference in 1994.



Ralph and Molly Lien receiving the Courage Award.

Most in our community know Ralph as our personal champion. There is no public slight of Legal Writing that Ralph won't take on, and he has fought many individual battles, known and unknown. He helped spearhead the fight for ABA Standard 405(c) and is the author of the ABA Standard requiring a first-year writing course and an upper-level rigorous writing experience. Ralph's dedication has earned many accolades: He has received the AALS Section Award, the Blackwell Award, the Burton Award, and (with Molly Lien), the Courage Award. In 2006, Chicago-Kent named its first endowed chair after Ralph.

Ralph's many trophies (including various Teacher-of-the-Year awards) impressively fill his office, but Ralph, who is too humble to believe his own hype, is reluctant to accept praise and only begrudgingly consented to answer questions about his impressive career.

### What got you started teaching law?

It was an accident, really. After law school graduation, my interviews resulted in rejections because I was considered "too young." A firm would risk losing me because I was eligible for the draft, so I accepted a one-year appointment to teach Legal Writing at Michigan. I figured I would do that for a year and then go into the Army. That year at Michigan was life-changing: I fell in love with teaching. I was offered a second year, but instead took a tenure track offer from Chicago Kent, still figuring I would soon go into the Army. The Michigan dean advised me not to take the offer because I would "never be able to leave **that** school!" He was right—I have been at that school for 54 years.

### What was it like teaching then?

The school had Day and Evening Divisions. In the first semester, I taught Legal Writing, Property I, and Agency, in both divisions. That was 12 credit hours. In the second semester, I had a new section of Legal Writing, Property II and Legislation, again in both divisions. That was another 12 hours. I had classes every day, sometimes over 12 hours in a day. I didn't sleep. I loved teaching, hated grading, and abhorred the fact that the school was still operating as it had in 1887. One other young professor and I decided to try to modernize the school as best we could, but that would require getting rid of the dean.

### What was he like?

He was Kingsfield, an English-raised Prussian, with very strict rules and procedures. In my interview, he asked me whether I "could operate my own typewriter." (We had no secretarial help, nor did the school furnish typewriters.) He made out the students' schedules and computed GPAs by hand. He personally typed dismissal and probation letters. He physically removed students from classes if they were behind in tuition. He personally cut the locks off the lockers at the end of the year and threw out the occasional bum who wandered in off the street. He ordered the napkins removed from the student lounge because he had seen students blowing their noses with them. And he





## Ralph Brill, conclusion

Ralph and Marjorie Rombauer (right) and Mary Lawrence in a recent picture.



was not fond of women professionals.

### What did you do?

Within a few years, we were able to revamp the curriculum, establish a grading system, add electives, and hire good faculty. We also wrested administrative duties away from the dean. It was like the birth of a new law school. By 1970, we had merged with Illinois Institute of Technology, the dean had retired, and we were able to make more changes.

### How did fighting for Legal Writing become your passion?

When I started teaching, Michigan was one of the few schools with even one required course

in the subject. No readily available textbooks existed, and few people even acknowledgment the field. As late as 1980, when the AALS allowed us to put on a workshop in Louisville, the attendance was 42. A few years later, only about 15 of those attendees were still teaching that subject. Ordinarily, those who taught writing were fellows, students, or graduates with "capped" contracts. The few who taught full time were isolated, so 1980 was the first time I met people like Marjorie Rombauer and Mary Lawrence.

Yet the students I knew best and taught best were those in Legal Writing—not in the other subjects I taught, so I realized that Legal Writing and Reasoning is the most important subject in law school.

Ralph Brill  
Chicago-Kent School of Law  
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I had fought for increased emphasis on Legal Writing. The logical next step was to try to raise the stature and job security of those who teach it, especially as I knew them to be the most dedicated and innovative of teachers.

### What might people be surprised to learn about you?

Tough on the outside; soft on the inside? I have this gnawing in the pit of my stomach to fight injustice, at least as I see it. Having said that, I guess the thing that most do not know is that I really am quite shy.

### What advice do you have for our community?

Never assume that just because things are going well today they will continue to go well tomorrow. Situations can change drastically in a heartbeat. Remain vigilant, and do your best to speak up against injustice wherever you see it. Tomorrow it could be you who needs the helping hand.

Surrounded by trophies and awards, doing what he loves most!



## Mark Strickland, continued

At the time I interviewed him, Mark was working on a comprehensive Congressional report which will review the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Courts-Martial, the first review of its kind in 30 years.

Mark's non-directive teaching philosophy is unquestionably inspired by his years in military service. "Lawyers solve problems and resolve issues. When I teach, I make [the information] as clear as I can, but I try to make room for students to figure out themselves how best to produce the written legal products expected of them. I tell them what they need to accomplish, but I don't tell them what they have to write."

Mark says he was shaped by his JAG experience. After an 8-week basic training course, Mark was thrown into the field to represent real-life clients with real-life issues. He explained his approach: "I knew my clients' ultimate goals, and I had to figure out how to accomplish them." This solution-oriented approach is the way he tackles both life and teaching legal writing.

Mark knew early that he wanted to be a lawyer. His father was a state and federal prosecutor and then a general practitioner. Mark's mother is a retired college professor, so Mark had a clear path into both the legal profession and the academy.



After graduating from Cornell with a history degree and participating in Naval ROTC, Mark went into the Naval Reserve. He served on extended active duty

and then transitioned to part-time reserve duty. While at law school at Rutgers, Newark, Mark continued his reserve duties, drilling on weekends and during the summer.

Mark worked full-time during law school; it was at one of his jobs where he met the love of his life, Kimberly. Mark described the moment he met her: He was sitting in the waiting area about to start a new job, and Kimberly sat across from him. He knew immediately that he was interested. "It took several weeks for me to build up the nerve to ask her out, and the rest is history." Mark and Kimberly were married during Mark's first semester of law school, and they have been married for 28 wonderful years. They have two children together. Their 20-year old son, Cooper, studies Math and Economics at the University of Maryland in College Park. Their 17-year old daughter, Paige, attends Howard Community College and plans a medical career. Both children were home-schooled and finished high school studies early, beginning college at age 16.

Immediately after law school, Mark worked as a litigation associate at Hill, Wallack in Princeton, New Jersey, but he longed to return to the military. He joined the Air Force JAG Corps and was sent to England, where he served as a prosecutor and an advisor on military law and the law of war. Then he transferred to the Netherlands and switched to the defense side. While in the Netherlands, Kimberly and Mark lived on a little farm off-base. They knew just enough Dutch to get by and enjoyed travelling to other countries in Europe.

Mark successfully defended a female airman in one of the first "Don't-Ask, Don't-Tell" cases. She was falsely accused of engaging in sexual relations with another woman. She denied the allegations, and the administrative board believed her and voted to retain her on active duty.

After the Netherlands, Mark worked at the Pentagon, where he was peripherally involved in war planning. Although he confessed that he "can't talk too much about his involvement," he spoke about his unique and fascinating inside perspective into the Pentagon's plans for future wars.

Mark taught for a time in the Air Force JAG School, and it was this experience that inspired Mark's transition to the legal academy. First, though, he moved yet again to Robins Air Force Base in Georgia. In a supervisory role, he worked on a gruesome capital murder case surrounding a double-murder and an attempted murder. "An airman [fatally] stabbed a fellow airmen and his wife and [wounded] a



## Mark Strickland, conclusion

third person; the butchery of what happened pushed it over the edge and made it a death penalty case.” The defendant was found guilty and has been on death row since 2005.

Three years later, Mark and his family returned to Washington, where Mark served as Chief of Appellate Defense Counsel and Deputy Division Chief of the Appellate Defense Division. He retired from the military in 2008 and joined the law faculty of Howard University School of Law.

Mark is now in his seventh year of law teaching. “My magic word is clarity – I make sure that I’m as clear as I can be, and I want [my students’] writing and arguments to be as clear as they can be.”

Outside of the classroom, Mark enjoys long exercise walks, amateur photography, and driving his vintage 1967 MG Midget (with the steering wheel on the right side of the car). His faith is also a huge part of his life. He joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (the Mormons) shortly after marrying Kimberly, who was already a member. He has held leadership and teaching positions in the Church. The morning of our interview, Mark was up at 5:00 a.m., prepping for a 6:00 a.m. Seminary class for high-school aged youth.

Clearly, of all of his accomplishments, the one that holds the most meaning for Mark is his 28-year marriage. At the end of our conversation, I asked Mark what I may have missed. He spoke from the heart about his wife Kimberly: “She is very inspiring to me, my best friend, my number one supporter. We have raised children together, traveled together, and I’m looking forward to a very happy future together.”



Mark and Cooper (his son) taking a biplane ride when Cooper was little.



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LegalWriting  
institute



## Gabe Teninbaum, continued

As a former trial lawyer with one of Boston's most prestigious law firms, Gabe understands the importance of legal writing to a young lawyer's success in legal practice, and he has made it his mission to ensure that his students are well prepared to succeed. He has also taught law and legal writing in Sweden and in Hungary.

Gabe teaches by doing and shows his students how legal writing impacts all areas of legal advocacy. For example, he has helped build a legal technology program at Suffolk Law where students learn to use cutting-edge technologies, like expert systems and document automation software. One of the applications for this project has been in an advocacy project helping people who do not have legal immigration status to determine if they are eligible to remain in the United States under DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). He is exploring not just legal technology as a means of closing the nation's access to justice gap and an employment avenue for graduates, but also as a way to help teach students to become more proficient at legal analysis.



Gabe and his daughter, Annelise, ready for the paparazzi!

A movie star in his own right, Gabe has created a niche doing advocacy work for the indigent in need of representation or information about current laws. His public policy work on medical malpractice reform was the subject of a recent NPR story. He has been featured in the soon to be released documentary, "Full Disclosure: The Search for Medical Error Transparency."

After looking at Gabe's impressive list of publications, I had to ask that question. Gabe, how do you do it? Well, he gets his topics mostly from reading; and he loves to read. In fact, Gabe noted that if he could take a week off, he would spend it with his family and read. He always carries around index cards, and writes down any idea that pops into his head (law-related or not). Then, at the end of the year, he looks through the cards and chooses one topic to write on.

There is no doubt that Gabe works extremely hard, but he also leads a balanced life. He makes time for the two most important people in his world; his lovely wife, Christine, and his delightful 20-month old daughter Annelise. Dad and daughter have a play date every day, which typically involves dancing, talking about Elmo, and building with Legos.

Gabe did his undergraduate studies at Georgetown University where he was "quite possibly the worst football player in all of Division 1." He served as a White House Intern while in college and after college he worked for the Secret Service. He went to law school at night while working for the Secret Service. September 11th happened during Gabe's second week as a 1L. As a result of those difficult times, he was rarely around to attend class for the first year. Gabe returned, finished law school, became a trial lawyer for a few years, and then joined the Legal Writing academy. He has taught at Suffolk Law for the past 8 years.

What does Gabe envision for LWI at 60? He believes that legal writing professors will gain well-deserved recognition for being skilled professionals working in an important, fascinating, and challenging doctrinal area.

*Gabe Teninbaum*  
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**LEGAL WRITING  
INSTITUTE  
UPCOMING EVENTS**

**July 21-23, 2015  
Fifth Biennial Conference  
on Applied Legal  
Storytelling**

[http://www.lwionline.org/  
applied\\_storytelling\\_conferen  
ces.html](http://www.lwionline.org/applied_storytelling_conferences.html)

**July 24, 2015  
LWI Writer's Workshop**

**Seattle University  
Seattle, WA**

**July 10-13, 2016  
17th Biennial LWI  
Conference**

**Hilton Portland & Executive  
Tower  
Portland, OR**

**MISC.**

**Upcoming  
Events for AALS**  
<http://www.aals.org/aals-events/>

**Workshop for New Law  
School Teachers,  
Washington, D.C.  
June 3-5, 2015**

**Workshop for Pretenured  
People of Color  
Washington, D.C.  
June 5-6, 2015**

**Faculty Recruitment  
Conference  
Washington, D.C.  
October 15-17, 2015**

**Annual Meeting  
New York City  
January 6-10, 2016**

**LWI Lives profiles will resume  
on October 1, 2015. Have a  
wonderful summer!**



**Selection and Presentation Process:** We believe it important for the members of LWI to know our process for creating the newsletter. The Committee is organized into three teams, and each is responsible for selecting, proposing, and writing the three profiles for a particular issue of the newsletter. To ensure a diverse newsletter, the teams propose the names of the selected individuals to the Co-Chairs to ensure that there is a breadth of coverage for each issue. Additionally, the Co-Chairs are keeping a master list of all the profiles, so that we can ensure a wide range of coverage over time.

The Faces of the LWI Committee exists to allow us to learn about the interesting lives of our colleagues. For that to happen, we want and need a diverse selection of legal writing professors to profile. If you have someone in mind that we should put on the list for a future newsletter, please feel free to contact any of our members at the email addresses below. If you could include a note on why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

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