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# LWI LIVES

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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.

### [Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes](#)



By Karin Mika

One of the most colorful and outspoken members of our Legal Writing community is Terri LeClercq, who was a writing specialist at the University of Texas from 1979 to 2009. Terri's earliest aspiration was to be a professional dancer, preferably a Rockette. Fortunately for the Legal Writing community, Terri did not become a Rockette.

*For more on Terri, see page two.*

### [See what becomes of a video gamer!](#)



By Sha-Shana Cricton

A wave of warmth and a burst of energy in the midst of a blistering winter evening! This is how I felt as I interviewed Lorraine "Lori" Bannai. Lori is a Professor of Lawyering Skills and Director of the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality at Seattle University School of Law. She has taught legal writing for over thirty years, which causes me to think that she must have started teaching at the age of 10, well 15 at the latest. Lori exudes grace, kindness, and humility.

*For more on Lori, see page four.*

### [From the convent to the courtroom and beyond....](#)



By Danielle D. Weatherby

After 24 years of teaching Legal Research & Writing, self-proclaimed feminist Judy Fischer will retire at the end of June. An inspired artist, there is no question that Judy will fill her free time with creative pursuits. Painter, photographer, sewer, singer, Judy calls herself an "amateur" artist, but it is her love of language and rhetoric for which we know her best.

*For more on Judy, see page six.*



## Terri LeClercq, continued



**Full of life, and that ain't no bull!**



**Who rescued whom?**

Instead, she received her Ph.D. in American Literature from the University of Texas and ultimately found her professional home teaching legal writing at U.T.'s law school. True to her earliest dreams, however, Terri still dances at legal writing conferences, often with one of her favorite LW partners, Charles Calleros.

Terri's entire career has been characterized by energy, pizzazz, and a commitment to giving a voice to the marginalized. No one who has seen her present will ever forget it. Just ask LW veterans about Terri's "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" talk at the 1994 legal writing conference. When not talking or writing about legal writing, Terri is perpetually fighting for one cause or another, often with her husband, U.T. professor Jack Getman. Even their beloved standard poodles, Mac and Mollie, were rescued by the dynamic Getman/LeClercq duo.

Although Terri officially retired in 2009, her retirement has been anything but boring. Her main focus has been on prison reform. In 2013, Terri published a graphic novel for prisoners, a book that explains their rights in the prison system. The book, "Prison Grievances: When to Write, How to Write," was included on Amazon's top 100 editor's picks for 2014. Given this fascinating turn of events in Terri's life, I thought I'd simply let Terri tell her own story from here – naturally, in her own inimitable way.

### What inspired you to work on prison reform?

In 1989, I heard Father Roy Bourgeois describe a military training camp the United States held for Latin American military leaders in which part of the curriculum included torture techniques. Turns out, this camp--the School of the Americas in Ft. Benning, Georgia--was supported by our tax dollars. I found that repulsive--not just the money, but a school on U.S. soil to teach torture techniques.

The next Thanksgiving, my daughter and I joined Father Roy and 644 others at the gates of Ft. Benning. We marched onto the officially open Army base in silent, prayerful formation, holding white crosses. We were immediately fingerprinted and fully searched! That was shocking. But what was more shocking was when a federal judge sentenced sixteen of the marchers to six months in federal penitentiaries. These were nuns, priests, and university social workers.

Those nuns and priests went to prison and began to write about the appalling conditions they saw there. Well, I'm an academic, so I started to research. I realized that I needed to write directly to the inmates, to teach them what I'd learned about how to seek justice. I knew I'd have to write at a 4th grade level, so I decided to write a comic book!

### How long did the project take? What were the biggest challenges?

It took ten years. Every step was a new experience. I didn't even know that a comic book is now called a "graphic novel." I didn't know that book stores are filled with them. I'd never read "Maus," the genius graphic book about the start-up of WWII, or the graphic memoir "Sentences: The Life of M.S. Grimm." Wow, who knew all this was available?



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## Terri LeClercq, conclusion

I found a sympathetic soul who taught me how to write script and how story arches work. Really basic stuff, but I didn't know it. I had to hire a 'letterer' to fill in the dialogue bubbles. I hired three different graphic artists and spent thousands of dollars. When the last one quit, I hit my low point. I wasn't sure I'd ever find anyone for the graphics, and I was out of my "retirement" money.



I turned to a crowd-source funder, [indiegogo.com](http://indiegogo.com), and it worked -- I gathered \$6000! But I was awake most nights, thinking of people I could beg to donate. Horrible. Even selling Girl Scout cookies has to be easier on the conscience. I used the money to pay the final artist, and now I'm using the last of it to send the book free to inmates.

### What has happened since the book was released?

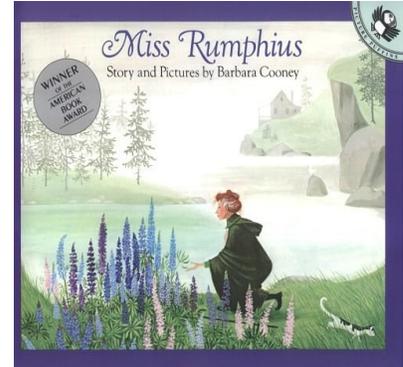
Crazy new worlds have opened for me. For instance, most Friday nights I am now a part of the cast on KPFT, a Houston-based Pacifica radio station. The Prison Show is broadcast into many U.S. prisons and around the world. On each show, I give writing tips and explain how to follow the grievance rules. Oh, what fun! All of this involves the inmates' loved ones, so they invite me to speak to their groups as well.

Another unexpected consequence is that two law schools have invited me to teach their first-year students about writing grievances, about prison conditions, about using any skill you have to make a difference in this world. I am excited at the prospect of reaching these young, enthusiastic law students. Imagine what might happen!

Because I listened to a priest describe a problem, I took the step of protesting. Because I learned of my fellow-protesters' fates in prison, I researched and wrote a graphic novel. Because the novel reaches inmates across the nation, I am asked to speak to groups. Because I travel and speak, I am learning more about our country and about our citizens than I would have ever imagined. Who could have anticipated this? It's all been so rewarding, especially the hundreds of letters I get from prisoners and their families thanking me for caring.

### Any final words of wisdom?

We have only one life, a short one at that. What can we do to make the world a better place? When I was a kid, [Miss Rumphius](#) was my favorite picture book. Probably I took her message to heart. I hope others will, too. Leave the world a better place.



Dr. Terri LeClercq  
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## Lori Bannai, continued

### Tell me one thing that many people do not know about you?

I was a video gamer. When I first started to practice law, one of my partners and I would work hard during the day, take a break about 5:00 to play video games at the local ice-cream store, and return to the office to work until we completed the projects for the day. I still watch my daughter play video games, but there're too complicated for me now!

### What relaxes you?

Going to the local Farmer's Market to shop for fresh fruits, flowers, and seasonal finds.

### What makes you laugh?

Watching young children, especially watching them observe things for the first time. They are so innocent.

### What inspires you?

I am inspired by people who work to protect civil and human rights.

### Let's talk about your work on civil rights issues, about the amazing work that you do at the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality.\*

I support the Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality's work on equality issues including teaching students how to prepare amicus briefs and litigate a wide range of civil rights issues. We are currently working on the Arizona Ethnic Studies case, challenging Arizona's anti-ethnic studies law as unconstitutional. The case will be argued before the Ninth Circuit in January 2015.

### This must be keeping you extremely busy.

Oh yes, but the students are motivated and the issues are very important.

### Let's talk about your work on bias in legal writing.

One essential skill a lawyer must have is the ability to recognize bias in legal writing, in the language, analysis, and arguments. Anne Enquist and I have worked on ways to help the students recognize bias, and to avoid bias which harms and otherwise impairs one's work.

### Thank you for your excellent article on women of color who teach legal writing (*Challenged X 3: The Stories of Women of Color Who Teach Legal Writing*, 29 Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law and Justice 275 (Summer 2014)). What do you think of the state of diversity in the teaching of legal writing today?

Diversity in the legal writing academy has improved, but we have a long way to go. There is more diversity than when I first started teaching legal writing in the 1980's, but we need a whole lot more. We teach a diverse body of students and it is only right that they see diversity in the professors that teach them. In addition, we need faculty who bring diverse perspectives to the classroom. The LWI Institute is doing more to recognize and raise issues concerning diversity, and organizations like SALT are being inclusive of Legal Writing faculty of color. More work needs to be done with regards to women of color teaching legal writing – it seems that issues affecting women of color teaching legal writing fall through the cracks.

### You do such great work! What are you most proud of?

I feel so privileged to be able to teach, especially Legal Writing. I have also felt deeply connected to my work involving the World War II Japanese-American incarceration, particularly with regard to its relevance to present day. My parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles were sent to the Manzanar concentration camp in the Mojave Desert of California during World War II. At that time, they were rounded up without any charges or hearings; it did not matter that two-thirds were American citizens, like my parents, who had never been to Japan. They were Americans. My father later joined the U.S. Army and worked for the Army as a translator, even as his family was held behind barbed wire and armed guard at Manzanar.

### Name one way the instruction of legal writing has changed over the years.

Technology is a big part of teaching legal research and writing now. There are so many online resources. But despite easy access to a wide range of technology, nothing can substitute for face-to-face contact with the students.

### \* Interviewer's note:

Fred Korematsu challenged the government's decision to remove over 110,000 Japanese Americans to concentration camps. In 1944 the Supreme Court in *Korematsu v. the United States*, sanctioned the government's decision as a wartime necessity. Forty-four years later, in 1983, Lori was on the legal team that successfully vacated Mr. Korematsu's wartime conviction based on proof that the government lied to the Supreme Court. In 1988, Congress offered each surviving internee financial redress as an attempt to apologize for the atrocities caused for the forced move to concentration camps.



## Lori Bannai, conclusion

### What is the best compliment you have received from a student?

I am most pleased when students come back to say that they used the tips and strategies that I taught them in legal writing. This may not be a compliment, but it feels good when students tell me that I am tough but fair. I feel like I am doing my job.

### What advice do you have for new legal writing professors?

You have the best job. You have an opportunity to help and inspire students and to shape the legal profession as you are teaching students to be future lawyers. It may seem daunting as it is such a high responsibility, but it is rewarding and exciting. My other advice is to reach out and look for mentors and people who will support you in your work. The legal writing community is very supportive.



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## Judy Fischer, continued

Judy's love of language began at an early age. Her grandmother loved language and poetry and passed this passion on to Judy. Judy's mother was a stickler for good grammar, and this too rubbed off on Judy. A four-year-old Judy corrected a playmate who used the word "ain't," chiding, "That's not good grammar!" The playmate innocently responded, "Whose grandma?"



Judy attended Catholic school, where the nuns introduced her to music and vocal performance. She was hooked and has been singing ever since. In fact, after graduating from college, Judy played Sister Margareta in a production of *The Sound of Music*.

After high school, Judy thought her options were limited. She remembers people discouraging the female valedictorian of her high school from pursuing law because "very few women went to college." So at the age of 17, Judy joined a convent. She describes the convent as "very rigid . . . The nuns wore traditional habits, and it was quite regimented!" The nuns read every letter Judy wrote or received. In one letter, Judy asked her parents to send her an alarm clock. She recalled one of the nuns scolding her, saying, "It is impolite to ask someone to send you something." Although she still respects the sisters there, six months into her stay, Judy knew convent life was not for her.

Judy left the convent to attend Bradley University, where she studied music, French, and English. One English professor closely scrutinized her writing. After earning a D on her first paper, Judy was determined to prove herself. She remembers that the professor advised her to avoid clichés, which she had previously thought were cute. Judy chuckled. "Nobody told me that before, and I was hungry for it!" Judy went on to earn an A in the course.

After graduation, part-time college teaching, and starting a family, Judy began to notice a shift in gender roles, with more women attending law school. She decided to take the LSAT. "If I got a score that satisfied me, I'd apply." Of course, Judy performed well, and she packed her bags for Loyola Los Angeles.

After graduation, Judy joined a large LA firm and enjoyed a general practice, but she missed teaching. She was especially motivated to teach legal writing because of her own negative experience as a student: "It was horrible! It was taught by someone who had just graduated from law school. We had no textbook. I remember him saying, 'We are going to write a memo,' and not explaining what he meant. To me, it was a little piece of paper you post on your refrigerator that says, 'buy milk.' Having such a poor teacher made me think I wanted to do this right!"

In 1991, Judy began her legal writing career at the University of Cincinnati. Although she was thrilled to return to Cincinnati, where she had family roots, the position did not pay well and was a contract position with no promise of tenure. So, a few years later, she left Cincinnati to return to Orange County to take a tenure-track position at Chapman Law School. After a 5-year stint at Chapman, Judy moved to the University of Louisville. She has been there ever since.

Judy's favorite thing about teaching legal writing for nearly a quarter of a century has been "feeling like [she is] making a difference in students' lives." Judy has noticed many positive changes in the field. "We have moved to higher status and more money, and some writing professors are on the tenure track – all for the good – we need to hire good people and respect them and pay them well." When asked how she sees the profession changing over the next 25 years, Judy responded: "I wouldn't even venture to say. I think there will be a lot more influence of computers, but in what way, I don't know."



### Fun facts about Judy:

#### Favorite Songs:

Mozart's Ave Verum;  
Make Believe (from  
Show Boat); I Will  
Survive

#### Favorite Books:

Wuthering Heights;  
1984

#### Favorite Movies:

The Wizard of Oz;  
Rain Man

#### Favorite Food:

Chocolate, of course!

## Judy Fischer, continued

The way we research will change – maybe we won't even have books in the future, though it's sad to think that."

In Judy's free time, she enjoys gardening, sewing, singing, photography, and painting. When asked about her photography, Judy remarked, "To take a good picture, you have to love your subject – I like the people I photograph. Even when I photograph a stranger, I am somehow engaged with them and at that moment I love them." Judy also enjoys photographing beautiful outdoor scenes. Her photographs have been published in the local newspaper.

When I asked Judy to describe her artwork, she told me about one of her latest projects: "In my house, there's a blank wall, and I wanted it to have a window. Rather than knock out part of a wall, I decided to paint a scene on the wall and then hang a fake window on it!" Judy's window painting is a window into her own character. She is perseverant, resilient, creative, and resourceful. When a college professor criticized her writing, Judy was determined to prove him wrong; when few women were attending law school, she did not give up; and where no window existed, she simply created one.

In her retirement, Judy looks forward to more art work and spending time with her 2 children, 4 grandchildren, and 1 great-granddaughter. And she will continue to write. "I don't know about formally, but I'll write letters. What would life be like without letters?" Likewise, what will the Legal Writing academy be without Judy?



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**LEGAL WRITING  
INSTITUTE  
UPCOMING EVENTS**

**March 6-7, 2015:** Fifth Annual Capital Area Legal Writing Conference  
[http://www.lwionline.org/regional\\_legal\\_writing\\_conferences.html](http://www.lwionline.org/regional_legal_writing_conferences.html)

**March 6-7, 2015:** Rocky Mountain Legal Writing Conference  
[http://www.lwionline.org/regional\\_legal\\_writing\\_conferences.html](http://www.lwionline.org/regional_legal_writing_conferences.html)

**MISC.**

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

**Title**

Next month in *LWI Lives*, read about:



**Joe Fore**  
University of Virginia



**Andrea Susnir Funk**  
Whittier Law School



**Joy Kanwar**  
Brooklyn Law School

**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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