



# 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. But we 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.

### Renaissance Man from Main Street, U.S.A.



**JAKE CARPENTER**  
By Allison Ortlieb

Oregon, Illinois, is a small town closer in geography and character to its western neighbor, Iowa, than its more distant eastern neighbor, Chicago. Oregon styles itself as “a gateway to the outdoors, a place with the arts thrive.” What it doesn’t boast, though, is that it could be known as the Mecca of legal writing. In the late 90’s, a single graduating class of 70 produced three legal writing professors: Todd Haugh, and identical-twin brothers Ben and Jake Carpenter. Ben and Todd have *(continued on page 2)*

### Finding Peace Between the Pages



**ROSEMARY QUEENAN**  
By Nancy Soonpaa

Rosemary Queenan’s voice brightens as she talks about one of her favorite pastimes: reading. A voracious reader and bibliophile whose busy and work-filled life temporarily led her away from reading for pleasure, she recently reconnected and fell in love with reading all over again.

As for her preferred book genre, “I like to mix it up,” and so she does, as her recent choices include Wuthering Heights (“everyone should read it!”); Go Set a Watchman (preceded by a re-read of To Kill a Mockingbird), and The Nightingale: A Novel, “a wonderful *(continued on page 4)*

### Sometimes You Have To Ask “So What?”



**MEREDITH STANGE**  
By Jody Marcucci

Meredith Stange has been teaching legal writing at Northern Illinois University for thirteen years, and she has been the director of NIU’s legal writing program for the last two. Read more to learn about this self-described “Harry Potter Geek’s” secrets to classroom success, including her ability to “embrace her inner goofiness,” her professionalism prowess, and her love of the question “So what?” *(continued on page 5)*

**Contributors to this issue**

- Maureen Collins
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## Jake Carpenter, continued

moved on to other pursuits, but a decade after first entering the profession, Jake has settled into a career he truly loves. This Associate Professor of Legal Writing at Marquette University's Law School, is more than just a fantastic teacher. He is a modern renaissance man whose talents stretch far beyond law and the classroom.

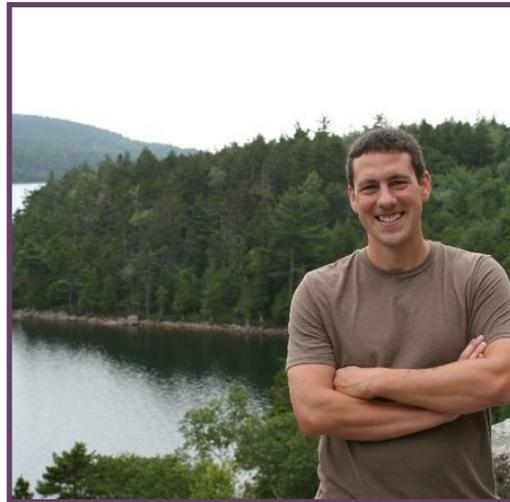
Jake and his brother were cross-country and track team standouts in high school. Jake was a bronze and 2-time silver medalist in the Illinois high school track championships, earning all-state awards five times. Jake continued his athletic success at the collegiate level while at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. As a freshman, he set a conference record in the 1500m that stood for 10 years. He still holds the school record: 3:50.26. In his senior year, Jake earned All-American honors. One of his favorite college memories was running against his brother in a meet at Notre Dame, where Ben attended college.

Though Jake and Ben went separate directions for college, the two would join up again after college to take on law school. The brothers both attended Mercer University School of Law in Macon, Georgia, where they both received the George W. Woodruff Scholarship, the most prestigious merit award for incoming law students at the college. An interesting, unverified benefit to attending law school with an identical twin might include not being called on in some classes because the professor had already called on your twin.

While at Mercer, Jake was privileged to study under some of the preeminent professors in legal writing. His first legal writing professor was Adam Milani, noted disability rights activist and



Jake and his family in the North Woods



Jake in Acadia

namesake of the annual Milani Writing Competition. He also studied under Michael Smith and Linda Edwards. Jake credits these professors, and the Mercer faculty in general, with showing him the critical importance of writing in the legal profession. While many students may go through law school believing that writing and skills are less-than or beneath courses focused on doctrine, Jake never had that experience. He experienced legal writing as a core component of legal education, equal in importance and status as any other subject.

Just as Jake had experienced great success in his undergraduate academic endeavors, he was likewise a standout student at Mercer. That success garnered him several lucrative offers from prestigious firms in Georgia. But his Midwestern roots were calling him. Jake packed up his wife, Robin, his law degree, and a new-found love of great BBQ and moved back to Oregon, so that they would be closer to their Midwestern families.

Jake began his legal career as an associate with Williams McCarthy, LLP in Rockford, Illinois. His practice was primarily focused on litigation, but he also handled some estate planning and real estate matters. He particularly enjoyed working on matters that required significant amounts of research and writing. After four years in litigation, Jake was looking for opportunities to shift his career toward practice areas with a greater emphasis on writing. He contemplated shifting his practice toward transactional work, which he felt would be a better fit for his interests. That path would soon change with an ad in the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin seeking legal writing instructors to join the faculty at DePaul University College of Law.

## Jake Carpenter, conclusion



In fall 2006, Jake made the jump from practice to academia, joining the DePaul College of Law's Legal Analysis, Research, and Communication faculty. His decision to pursue teaching was not unexpected. In fact, he thought it was possible that he would eventually teach. It runs in his family. A great number of his immediate and extended family members are teachers or professors. Jake's grandfather was a professor at Northern Illinois University. He remembers his grandfather always being excited and happy with his career in academia. In Jake's mind, it "looked like a really great way to make a living."

Jake also notes that it was a jump he would not have been able to make were it not for the financial security of his Woodruff Scholarship and support, encouragement, and inspiration of his Mercer professors. Because he was able to complete law school debt-free, it allowed him to pursue his teaching aspirations sooner than had he graduated with the debt that often plagues our current students.

Jake describes himself as an introvert by nature, which might be why he didn't particularly enjoy being a litigator. Teaching is different for him, though. He loves being on a college campus surrounded by the energy of students and faculty who are engaged in their areas of study and expertise. He has loved his legal writing colleagues at both law schools he's taught at. He feels blessed to work with others who share enthusiasm for legal writing and for helping students succeed as they tackle the challenge of becoming lawyers. He feels fortunate every time he walks across campus or into the law school's building.

Jake's teaching has extended beyond the law school classroom. He has taught CLE classes for a variety of organizations in Illinois and Wisconsin. He also teaches NITA classes on legal writing three times a year. He has found that teaching law students and practicing attorneys is surprisingly similar. For example, when he first started working with NITA, one of the topics in his two-day seminar was CREAC organization: organizing writing around rules, not facts or cases. He thought that this topic would be too elementary for practicing attorneys, who surely already knew this skill. To his surprise, not only were the conference attendees open to the topic, the topic has been one of the highlights that attendees mention in their course reviews.

In fall 2012, Jake and his family moved once more, this time to Wisconsin after he was offered an appointment to Marquette University's legal writing faculty. It's a move that brought them closer to one of their favorite places: his grandfather's cabin in the North Woods. The family tries to get to the cabin as often as they can.

Jake is grateful for all of the opportunities that teaching has given him, including the freedom and ability to travel around the country. In addition to traveling to Washington, D.C., Chicago, Boulder, and Los Angeles to teach with NITA, Jake has enjoyed traveling to LWI national and regional conferences around the country. He and his wife hope to visit every National Park and to visit as many as possible with their three children. For this summer, they've planned a two-week trip to the Badlands, Yellowstone, and Grand Tetons.

Outside of teaching and traveling, Jake's interests and talents are diverse. He enjoys all forms of art. His dad was a cartoonist for a while when Jake was young, and one of Jake's favorite childhood memories is sitting in his dad's art studio drawing at a desk next to his dad's drawing table while he worked on his cartoons, listening to the Golden Oldies on the radio. Jake's dad gave up cartooning but is an excellent watercolor painter now. Jake's uncle is a talented painter and sculptor in Maine, with sculptures in several galleries out east. Jake started trying to paint after law school and really enjoyed it, but he had a child soon after and has never set the time aside to pick it back up. Jake's goal this year is to set time aside to start painting again to see if he was lucky enough to inherit those genes!

Jake enjoys writing creatively when he has the opportunity, but says that he doesn't make the time nearly enough anymore. While in law school, he set aside time to write after completing his homework. His efforts and talents were rewarded with having some of his work published. One of his published works, "Top of the Ninth," allowed him to blend two passions, writing and the Cubs, into one project.

In the story, an old man reflects on how the Cubs had killed his family: every tragic Cubs loss had been accompanied by a tragic loss in his own family. The old man is listening to the Cubs play in game 7 of the World Series, when the Cubs seem to be losing it all in the top of the ninth. He is left to contemplate what this loss will mean. Luckily for both Jake and the Cubs, "Top of the Ninth" is pure fiction, not a prophetic vision. Jake has been a life-long Cubs fan. To him, the Cubs' win was surreal and the source of lots of his own personal reflection. He was elated to be able to enjoy the victory with his own children, but that elation was accompanied with the bittersweet realization of how many never got the chance to see that win.

Jake's advice to anyone considering teaching legal writing full time is to do it. It's a great career that lets you surround yourself with students who have goals that they're excited about.

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## Rosemary Queenan, continued

book, heart wrenching, beautifully written” that tells the story of two sisters in WWII-era France.

Rosemary’s family (husband John and children Jack and Maya) recognized her rekindled affair with reading and bought her a special Christmas present: a Yogibo to snuggle in as she reads. Now she faithfully puts in at least 15 minutes a night as a nice balance (along with yoga) to her busy daytime life as a wife, soccer/hockey mother, and law professor/student affairs dean at Albany Law School.

Prior to joining Albany Law School in 2007, Professor Rosemary Queenan spent almost 15 years practicing law in New York City. She graduated from New York Law School in 1994 and began practicing as an Assistant Attorney General in the Litigation and Civil Rights Bureaus of the New York Attorney General’s Office, where she defended various state agencies in state and federal court actions and investigated potential claims of discrimination. She was also an associate in two private litigation firms, where she represented clients in commercial, products liability, and general negligence actions; she then served as Assistant General Counsel for the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association of the City of New York, Inc., where she represented the Union in various court actions and arbitrations and advised the Board of Trustees on issues involving the Union’s affiliated Health and Welfare Funds. She began teaching in 1999 as an adjunct faculty member at New York Law School.

Rosemary credits her drive and work ethic to her Italian immigrant parents, neither of whom went to college. Her father in particular instilled in her the importance of hard work in whatever she does, which she calls a guiding force in her legal career.

Her impressive resume during her years in New York City led to the opportunity to teach at Albany when she and Albany-alum John moved to the Capital Region as a more family-friendly location. She began teaching in the Lawyering Program, then added courses including Appellate Practice and New York Practice. “I love teaching and its challenges,” she says simply. But even more, she sought challenge of combining teaching and administration.

Hence, when former Lawyering professor Alicia Ouellette (now Albany’s Dean) moved on from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs position, Rosemary took on the new administrative position and made it her own.

She finds her varied law career to be particularly helpful in counseling students about their career options, although she says that they already have a good appreciation of the many ways that one can lawyer and prosper with a JD, due in part

to Albany’s graduation requirement of a clinic or field placement. Budgetary decisions are an ongoing challenge, but par for the course. The most recent and ongoing challenge has been renewed interest in diversity and inclusion programming, including recognition of inclusion across the political spectrum.

As a new associate dean, Rosemary found the steepest learning curve to be the counseling aspect. Having a reputation as a caring and effective teacher did not fully prepare her for dealing with mental health issues, so she developed resources and tapped into a referral service through the law school’s relationship with the University at Albany.

One of her biggest lessons came in realizing that she couldn’t make all students happy—and sometimes, for the better. She recalls a student who came to her in a panic a few days before a final and asked to be allowed to drop the course because she feared that she would fail the exam. After a few quick questions, she determined that the student had attended class and prepared throughout the semester and had four days—with no intervening exams—until the feared final. Rosemary encouraged the student to work hard and reassured her that she would be fine—and she was. Much later, the student came to her and thanked her for encouraging her to face the challenge, and succeed. The ethic of hard work and its rewards paid off.

Recognizing the stressful business of being a law student, she has also worked to develop programming to address stress management. Albany celebrates National Mental Health Day with patable puppies and massage chairs, and a student has been offering yoga classes, while Albany’s ASP professional has been offering meditation workshops.

Helping others to cope with their challenges has been a welcome growth experience for Rosemary, who openly acknowledges that she has grown a lot from her experiences as dean. For example, after working with members of Albany Law’s OUTlaw group, she now views her classroom teaching through a new lens, including whether her choice of pronouns is appropriate and inclusive.

As she neatly sums up, “I am a people person. I enjoy people. I care about the students, and I’m engaged.” That dedicated engagement shows through her recently being elected to the AALS Section on Student Services Executive Committee and being honored with Albany Law School’s Faculty Award for Excellence in Service.

Rosemary Queenan—who found fun in the fast-paced, litigation-heavy variety that her law practice offered, delights in the students whom she teaches, learns daily from the variety and challenges of law school administration, and finds respite in the books that she loves—lives her dad’s best lesson for her: work hard, and do well.

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## Meredith Stange, continued

### **Embracing her “Inner Goofiness” to Create a Strong Classroom Community**

One of Meredith’s secrets to classroom success is building a sense of community. Meredith understands that students need to feel included in the classroom to succeed. To achieve a community feel and connect with students, Meredith learned to embrace her own “inner goofiness” and take risks in the classroom.

So what risks has Meredith taken? One example Meredith points to is sharing her love of Harry Potter with her students. Another is her use of pumpkin-shaped flashlights during a classroom exercise. Regarding the second point, Meredith remembers a particularly quiet class that seemed disengaged. To shake things up, she tried a new strategy: she had the students orally argue the elements relevant to the memo they were writing. But to speak, they were required to hold a pumpkin-shaped flashlight. Her goals were two-fold: (1) to get the students to actually speak about the law and to each other, and (2) to help the students overcome their insecurities. As she explains, it was important to make the students feel silly holding the pumpkin flashlights. Then perhaps they would not feel so silly discussing the law, and making mistakes while they did so. Through the exercise, most students realized they were not the only ones who did not fully understand the material. They were also able to see how much of the material they did understand. The classroom dynamic changed for the better from that point on.

### **Professionalism**

It is no secret that one of Meredith’s favorite topics to write and present about is students and professionalism, especially in the context of email etiquette. She finds the ever-increasing prevalence of technology in today’s students’ lives provides for more opportunities to discuss etiquette. And she thinks many students do try their best to be professional. For example, she understands that if a student addresses an email to her as “Ms. Stange,” rather than “Professor Stange,” the student may be trying his or her best to be professional, as “Ms.” is an appropriate title in the business context. Thus, instructors have the important task of helping students navigate these issues.

So what effect does Meredith think the current president’s love of tweeting will have on students’ concepts of professionalism? Not much. In her view, both sides of the political spectrum understand that many of his twitter messages are poorly executed, and that this communication style is not one to emulate.

### **Teaching Students to tell her “So What?,” to learn to “Embrace their Client’s Inner Scumbag,” and to “Trust Her”**

Another secret Meredith has is to challenge her students to produce their best work. Meredith teaches students to tell her “So what?” “So what?,” one of Meredith’s feedback go-tos, is her short-hand way to tell a student that he or she needs to deepen his or her legal analysis. She likes that it is short, to the point, and easy for students to remember. One student has found the phrase so easy to remember that he credits Meredith with his success on an exam. As he explained, all he could hear during the test period was her voice saying “so what?,” “so what?,” “so what?” over and over again.

Meredith also brings the real world into the classroom. Meredith instructs students to learn to “embrace their client’s inner scumbag.” She draws from her own experience as a litigator to encourage students to learn that no client or case is perfect. For example, students must learn that to successfully litigate a fourth amendment search and seizure case, an attorney must acknowledge and accept that the client was in possession of drugs or other contraband. Her point is that every case and every client has a downside. Students need to embrace these negatives and account for them. To do so is empowering.

So what is one secret Meredith wishes she could convey to her students from day one? To “trust her.” Here too she draws from her own experience, this time as a law student. Like many students, Meredith came to law school confident in her writing abilities. “Writing is what I do,” “I am good at this,” and “the professor just doesn’t know who I am,” are all thoughts Meredith remembers having during her first-year legal writing class. She shares this experience with her students and encourages them to trust that she knows what she is doing. She knows how a legal audience will want a legal analysis organized. She knows what a legal audience will expect a document to say. She knows her job, and it is no secret that she is good at it.

And that is so what!

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LegalWriting  
institute

## UPCOMING LEGAL WRITING EVENTS

### March 15-17, 2017

XII Global Legal Skills Conference  
Monterey, Mexico

### May 23-25, 2017

5th Annual AASE National Conference  
Texas A&M School of Law  
Ft. Worth, TX

### July 11-13, 2017

Sixth Biennial Conference on Applied  
Legal Storytelling  
American University  
Washington College of Law  
Washington, DC

### September 15-16, 2017

Central States Regional Legal Writing  
Conference  
Indiana University  
McKinney School of Law  
Indianapolis, IN

### July 11-14, 2018

18th Biennial LWI Conference  
Marquette University  
Milwaukee, WI

Check out these websites for more  
information on what's happening!

<http://www.aals.org/aals-events/>  
<http://www.lwionline.org/>  
<http://www.alwd.org/>

The **Faces of LWI** Committee exists to allow us to learn about the interesting lives of our colleagues. If you know of someone who we should interview, please email any committee member. Please include a short note explaining why you think the individual should be profiled.

**Selection and Presentation Process:** We believe it is important for LWI members to know our process for creating the newsletter. The Committee is organized into three teams, and each team is responsible for 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 keep a master list of all the profiles, so that we can ensure a wide range of coverage over time. If you think WI Lives should feature

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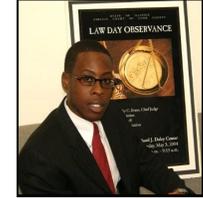
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