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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.

Candace Centeno: Teaching, Directing, Dean-ing, Volunteering, and Zooming in Pennsylvania!



By Jody Marcucci

Dean Candace Centeno and I met for this profile in a very “April 2020” way. Over Zoom. She in her closet. (A very nice closet—with a window! And fabulous shoes!)

Candace had converted the closet into her workspace to make room for her work-from-home colleagues: her husband Joe and their three college-aged sons, who were unexpectedly finishing the spring semester with them. Joe, also an attorney, was working from the bedroom. One of the sons had set up shop in the dining room. So, Candace was making it

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Susan DeJarnatt: The Accidental Jurist



By Brooke Ellinwood McDonough

When reflecting on her legal career—from law school to present—Susan DeJarnatt describes her path as somewhat of an “accident.” What Susan sees as an “accidental” path, however, was undoubtedly serendipitous for the many colleagues and students who have had the honor of working with and learning from her throughout her years in academia.

Susan grew up in Longview, Washington, a mill town in the Pacific Northwest. For a long time, the town’s claim to fame was that it housed the world’s largest pulp mill—a mill that left an indelible print on most residents of the town. Boys were expected to graduate from high school and work at the mill. Girls were expected to graduate from high school and marry

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Contributors to this edition:

Brooke Ellinwood
McDonough
Jody Marcucci
Joan Malmud Rocklin

Candace Centeno (continued from page 1)

work from her closet.

Candace discussed how the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting shut-down had come about at Villanova University School of Law, where she has been a full-time faculty member since 2006. It happened quickly, and during her first year as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She feels fortunate to be healthy and to have the ability to spend more time with her family. She feels concern for the students who are not as fortunate, whether they are struggling with finding a quiet space to study, struggling with mental health issues, struggling with uncertainty about the future, or struggling with their own or with their family members' physical health issues. She credits the pandemic with allowing her to rethink her priorities, and she is considering adopting a dog.

Candace's journey to Villanova started in the Midwest. She was born in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and grew up in Nebraska. She moved to Pennsylvania to attend Muhlenberg College. Her father was a Lutheran minister, and the school seemed like the right fit. She has remained on the East Coast ever since.

After finishing law school at Boston College, where she met Joe, she began a successful career as a litigator, defending multi-million-dollar medical malpractice cases. But a life in litigation took its toll, and thirteen years later, Candace was ready for something new. So, she joined the Villanova law school faculty. Later, she became the director of the school's legal writing program.

Candace credits her background in litigation for much of her success as a legal writing professor and program director. She believes her background gives her credibility when she discusses what makes an effective courtroom advocate. She continues to practice on a pro bono basis and currently

serves as guardian ad litem in child abuse and neglect cases. She finds it important to keep her license active and her litigation skills sharp.

Thirteen years after joining the Villanova faculty (the "thirteen-year itch," she calls it) Candace added the role of Associate Dean to her teaching and directing (and volunteering!) responsibilities. She credits her legal writing and other faculty colleagues with easing the transition. When she began her deanship, her biggest fear was that a blizzard would wreak havoc on campus life for a day or two. Certainly, the Covid-19 pandemic has produced challenges far greater than snow. But, again, Candace looks to the bright side. Though she acknowledges some "bumps" in the shift to online learning, she is "fascinated" by how she and her colleagues have adapted to remote teaching, developed new teaching skills, and added new teaching tools to their tool boxes that will benefit students for years to come.

Candace, like many of us, is uncertain about what the future will bring. She expects to spend her summer planning for various contingencies. She won't be traveling (which she loves to do). Hopefully, if golf courses reopen, she will be out golfing (which she also loves to do). She is saddened that the LWI Biennial Conference has been cancelled. Candace, like many of us, credits LWI as being instrumental in her success as a professor. She will miss connecting with many friends and colleagues from around the country. With a history of planning conferences, she knows the hard work that had gone into this summer's conference and is heartbroken for that loss. But she is confident that LWI, hopefully like all of us, will grow from this experience and become stronger. And maybe she will adopt that dog: a Goldendoodle rescue, should the right one come along.

You can contact Candace at Centeno@law.villanova.edu.



(Left) Candace and Joe's three sons. Twins, Cesar and Henry are on the left and in the middle, respectively, and the youngest son, Joey, is on the right.



(Right) Candace's family, including her husband Joe and her amazing mom.

Susan DeJarnatt (continued from page 1)

boys who worked at the mill. Susan's parents, however, were determined for her to follow a different path. Both of Susan's parents were teachers; her father was also a track coach and state legislator. Susan's mother and sister had attended Oberlin, and Susan decided to follow in their footsteps. Susan was thrilled to be at Oberlin, a school she describes as "a very East Coast school that happened to be in Ohio." And, it led to somewhat of an epiphany: Susan realized she was actually an East Coast person after all!

Susan recalls Oberlin fondly. At the time, Oberlin had dropped its course distribution requirements and allowed students to choose whether to take classes for a letter grade or for credit. Susan opted for the latter, deciding that she wanted to savor the academic and intellectual experience and just "be" in college. At the time, her academic advisor cautioned Susan against this choice, warning Susan that, if she wanted to go to graduate school, she would need grades. Susan, however, was confident that graduate school held no interest to her. She majored in history, finding her most rewarding and interesting classes in the field of African American History. In the early 1970s, this was a brand new academic field, and Susan reveled in the burgeoning scholarship.

Throughout her career at Oberlin, Susan continued to eschew thoughts of graduate school. But, during the spring of her senior year when all of her classmates were taking the GREs or LSAT, Susan thought it might be a good idea to join in the fun. Despite having very little intention of ever applying to law school, Susan decided to take the LSAT. And, of course, because she felt no pressure when she took the test, she scored very well! Notwithstanding her success on the LSAT, Susan continued with her original post-college plan to move to Philadelphia and officially embrace her newfound East Coast identity.

Once in Philly, Susan found work in an offset print shop before learning about an open paralegal position with Community Legal Services (CLS). Susan thought the position sounded interesting, so she applied for and received the job. She fell in love with the work. With a newfound goal of making a legal career at CLS, Susan decided to finally put her LSAT score to good use and applied to law school. Despite the dire warnings of Susan's Oberlin academic advisor, Susan found a home at Temple, which had an admissions program for students who did not have undergraduate grades.

As a student at Temple, Susan recalls that she was not the most active class participant and rarely took advantage of

faculty office hours—two facts which now influence her own interactions with her current crop of Temple law students. Susan encourages her students to see faculty as a resource they should not ignore. And, although she tries hard to engage all her students, she recollects from her own time as a student that some may learn best through observing, not talking.

After graduating from Temple, Susan served for two years as law clerk to the Honorable Joseph S. Lord, III, Chief Judge of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Although she assumed

she would go back to CLS as an attorney, there were cutbacks in legal services, and she found that path closed. So she went to work at a private personal injury firm. While Susan valued her time helping clients who had been seriously injured, she found that private practice was not for her. She missed working in the field of social justice. After her first child was born, she was able to transition back to her social justice calling and began her career as a lawyer with CLS. There she worked with indigent homeowners facing foreclosure, with the bulk of her work involving



Susan and her husband, Peter Schneider, at their favorite restaurant in Mexico City.

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Susan DeJarnatt (continued from page 3)

Chapter 13 bankruptcy proceedings. Susan loved her career at CLS and had never really considered teaching. But, after a divorce, she was a single mom and wanted to supplement her income from CLS. Rutgers was hiring, and so she took a position as an adjunct while still working at CLS. Although her initial intention may have been to earn a bit of extra money, Susan was thrilled to find that she loved teaching.

Susan continued to work at CLS and eventually got remarried—to another CLS attorney. Around the same time, the Republican Party gained a majority in the House of Representatives and pursued the legislative agenda known as “The Contract with America.” Susan ruefully notes that to CLS it felt like “The Contract ON America” because it decimated legal services programs. With the future of legal services shaky, Susan decided to apply to Temple which, for the first time, was hiring fulltime legal writing faculty. Temple has been her home ever since.

After transitioning to academia, Susan managed to balance her love of teaching with her passion for social justice. Her

earlier career at CLS inspired her early scholarship in consumer bankruptcy. But, circumstances intervened and caused her to pivot once more. By 2001, Susan had one son in kindergarten and a daughter in high school. At the time, the Philadelphia school system was taken over by the state and was going to be privatized by Edison Schools, Inc. As a parent, Susan was involved in fighting the privatization of the public schools. As a writing professor, she was keyed into the rhetoric of school reform. One thing that Susan found striking: The media never mentioned the Philadelphia school district without referring to it as “failing” and needing to be held “accountable.” Susan found it maddening the way privatization voices used those terms.

This maddening rhetoric inspired extensive scholarship on the rhetoric of school reform, as well as the financial and governance issues arising from the privatization of public schools. Susan remains active in the fight for education equality in Philadelphia and sits on the Board of the Education Law Center.

More recently, Susan’s scholarship has expanded to include the globalization of LRW. She has spent several summers teaching in Italy, most recently working with Paolo Butturini at Università di Verona. The Italian legal education system differs from the American system—law is an undergraduate program. Classes are almost uniformly large lectures, and there is little to no experiential learning. Together, Susan and Paolo have sought to bring experiential learning to the Verona law school experience. Last fall, Paolo joined Susan at Temple where they co-taught an intensive two week transactional skills course. They recently published an article about the experience: *Taking on the Role of Lawyer: Transactional Skills, Transnational Issues, and Commercial Law*, 44 S. ILL. L.J. 225 (2020).

The COVID-19 crisis has put Susan’s plans to spend part of the summer teaching in Verona on hold. But, Susan is not complaining. She is most concerned for the well-being of her students, particularly the recent graduates who face so much career uncertainty. In Susan’s fantasies, she retires in Italy and embraces the Italian culture she loves—a culture she sees centered around beauty and community and family. In the meantime, she continues to help her students excel despite the current unprecedented circumstances.

If you’d like to get in touch with Susan, you can do so at susan.dejarnatt@temple.edu.



Susan with her colleagues Paolo Butturini from Università di Verona and Laura Little from Temple University.

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

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

The August Issue: Sheltering in Place

For the August 2020 issue, LWI Lives is going to do something a little different. We have invited submissions of short essays about our members' experiences of sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate all the essays that have been submitted, and we hope you will enjoy reading about your colleagues' experiences.

LWI Lives Selection Process

The Committee is organized into three teams, and each team is responsible for selecting, proposing, and writing the three profiles in each issue. To ensure a diverse newsletter, teams propose individual names to the Co-Chairs, and the Co-Chairs review the suggestions to ensure a wide range of coverage over time.

If you have someone in mind who we should interview in a future newsletter, please feel free to email any of the committee members listed below. If you could include a note explaining why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

Committee Members



Grace Hum
Co-Chair, UC Hastings
humgrace@uchastings.edu



Rebecca Rich
Co-Chair, Duke
rich@law.duke.edu



Joan Rocklin
Co-Chair, Oregon
jrocklin@uoregon.edu



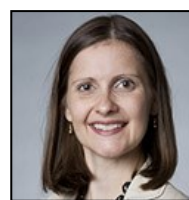
Cindy Archer
Loyola, LA
cindy.archer@lls.edu



Elizabeth Berenguer
Campbell
berenguer@campbell.edu



Alexa Chew
UNC
achew@email.unc.edu



Whitney Heard
Houston
wwheard@central.uh.edu



Jody Marcucci
DePaul
jmarcucci@depaul.edu



Brooke Ellinwood
McDonough GWU
bellinwood@law.gwu.edu



Dyane O'Leary
Suffolk
doleary2@suffolk.edu



Allison Ortlieb
DePaul
aortlieb@depaul.edu



Nancy Soonpaa
Texas Tech
nancy.soonpaa@ttu.edu

