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Contributions by

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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.

Stephen Horowitz: Living at the Intersection of Law



By Maureen Collins

Stephen Horowitz is Director of Legal English Programs at St. John’s University School of Law. His love of language and of travel are reflected in both his personal and professional lives. He speaks fluent Japanese, and enough Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese to make his way around and enjoy the culture. He has worked to make bankruptcy funny, taught English in a foreign country, and is a determined competitor in international Ultimate Frisbee.

For more about Stephen, see page 2.

Johanna Dennis: Following and Creating a Path of Excellence



By Nancy Soonpaa

Johanna Dennis’s voice sparkles with excitement as she talks about her class’s recent field trip to the local courthouse for “Monday morning roll call.” Wanting to expose her students to a level of realism they had not before experienced (most had never been to a courthouse), she realized “they need to see this” in order to be prepared for their appellate brief assignment—a criminal case.

For more about Johanna, see page 4.

Mary Ann Becker: Say Bonjour!



By Jodie Marcucci

Mary Ann Becker is the Associate Director of Writing Programs and Academic Support at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Mary Ann and I have a bit of a shared history: we taught together in DePaul’s legal writing program, and our time at DePaul as law students overlapped. In fact, Mary Ann was one of my law review editors. So I was pleased with the opportunity to profile her for LWI Lives.

For more about Mary Ann, see page 7.

Stephen Horowitz

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Stephen attended the University of Pennsylvania as an undergrad. With a BA in History in hand, he traveled to Japan where he spent several years teaching in the JET (Japan Exchange Teaching) program. Stephen returned to Japan several times during law school to study at Waseda University and to work for two different Japanese law firms. He remains active in JET, working with alumni and outreach programs.

When Stephen returned to the US, he worked in the bankruptcy field. As a creative outlet in a field not known for its creativity, Stephen came up with a cartoon character known as Bankruptcy Bill. You can follow the hijinks that ensued at bankruptcybill.us. He also wrote a country song about bankruptcy. When asked to share the lyrics, he hesitated, alleging that some of the lyrics were pretty racy. Hmmm. Perhaps a performance at the next LWI conference is in order!

Eventually, Stephen found a way to combine his interests in language and law. He received a Masters Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Hunter College. He reached out to St. John's to find more information on the program there and so began "a fantastic ride."

Stephen began teaching at St. John's in 2014. As director of Legal English Programs, he works at the self-described "intersection of law and language." He teaches in the American Law Discourse & Analysis (ALDA) program, which feeds into the Transnational Legal Practice Program. He teaches courses including Legal Writing & Communications, Reading & Analyzing Legal Texts, and Bar Exam Language and Strategies.

Working with the international students at the law school, Stephen helps to translate the many intricacies and irregularities of Legal English for non-native speakers. He often finds himself teaching these students about the ins and outs of American culture as well. On the website stjohnslegalenglish.com, you can see pictures of him helping the students learn about Halloween at a pumpkin carving event for international students. Stephen described a recent event at the law school where, among the tables of refreshments, sat a kosher table. He found himself explaining to the LL.M.s why there was a designated kosher table, and educating them about corresponding behavioral norms. He described it as "a great opportunity for cultural learning."



Stephen with his family.

Stephen Horowitz

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One of Stephen's passions is Ultimate Frisbee. For those of you who may not know (I didn't!), Ultimate Frisbee is a competitive sport that Stephen describes as "anti-jock." There are no referees, so cooperation among players and teams is a must. The emphasis is on the "spirit of the game." Having picked up the game in college, Stephen was delighted to find a weekly game at a park during his stay in Nagoya, Japan. He has participated in international competitions in Japan, Hong Kong, Brazil, France, Spain and Canada. These days, he plays when he can, and finds that it is a great path to making friends and finding community wherever he goes.

When asked to recommend a favorite book, Stephen mentioned that he is finishing up Ron Chernow's "Hamilton." He describes Hamilton as a "superhero." Given the nature of his work, it may be easy for Stephen to identify with an immigrant who is "young, scrappy, and hungry." He also recommends a young adult novel called "Lost Stars," written by Lisa Selen Davis, a friend of his. Next on his reading list is something on Jacksonian democracy or Doris Kearns Goodwin's "Team of Rivals." He highly recommends the "History of English" podcast written and narrated by a lawyer from North Carolina who, interestingly, is neither a historian nor a linguist.

When asked about his thoughts on the future of international student programs in light of the current political climate, Stephen expressed concern that "the isolationist inclination in the current administration and its reckless approach to international relations" could create significant problems for international programs. He pointed out that, "for all of everyone's effort to build bridges, the ground can shift underneath us at any point."

Here's to Stephen as he continues to build bridges!

Stephen can be reached at horowis1@stjohns.edu.



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Stephen enjoying family time.

Johanna Dennis

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For many of her students, simply going through the security line and being ordered to silence their cell phones was an unsettling experience. Next, two local attorneys cooperated in the learning experience by “getting snarky with each other” and then not dropping it, but continuing to snipe throughout the morning. Later that afternoon, Professor Dennis was carefully planning not only how to use the planned aspects of the experience, but also how to incorporate all of the unplanned aspects to advance her students’ learning. As she put it, that 90-minute morning’s experience “opens up conversations for the rest of the semester,” including learning effective negotiating techniques based on watching public defenders figure out deals and based on her carefully selected and assigned readings on the psychology of deal making.

Meticulous planning with flexibility and leaps of faith: that approach to teaching also characterizes Professor Dennis’s academic life from an early age. Johanna was born in Jamaica and started elementary school there. Her family emigrated from Jamaica to Canada when she was five, and she excelled in school with the constant encouragement of her mother, herself a former teacher who moved into

industry and technology, but later returned to teaching.

With her mother’s rallying cry, “There is no challenge that you can’t meet,” Johanna set an academic path of growth and evolution. She came to the United States for college, graduating from Rutgers at age 19 and Temple Law at 22. She followed up with a Master’s of Science in Biotechnology from Johns Hopkins, and she has finished a Master’s and is pursuing a doctoral degree in education.

Those last two degrees are, again, with the encouragement of her mother. In her second year of teaching, when Johanna turned to her mother for advice in designing a rubric, her mother helped both with the task at hand and with an observation that Johanna might want to actually study education in order to facilitate her being able to thoughtfully design her problems and courses.

Johanna has used that thoughtful approach when teaching at an impressive list of law schools, which all began with her serving as a 2L research assistant for Professor Jan Levine at Temple. Johanna reminisces:



Johanna in her office.

Being Jan's 2L Research Assistant was huge . . . working with him on gathering LRW survey data [felt like it] would actually make a real difference in the legal academy. I also helped him organize the 1Ls’ oral arguments, and that early perspective was so valuable when, later on in my career, I endeavored to replicate the well-oiled machine of appellate argument organization that Jan had shown me was possible. Jan's always been the voice of reason—his "what are you doing" has stayed with me so much that I can hear his voice as clearly as if he were right beside me.

After that auspicious start, her law-teaching career path has included Touro, Vermont, Southern Illinois,

Johanna Dennis

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Northeastern, and now UALR; she has moved from opportunity to opportunity to publish, to teach a variety of courses, and to shape her vision of effective legal education. At SIU, Professor Sue Liemer was

so inspirational to me. . . . She showed me how an effective leader provides support to her team, guides them, but also provides them space and freedom to grow. While I was at SIU, I was taking a course for my degree in effective leadership, and Sue was my muse in describing the ideal leader who I aspired to be. Her energy and reinforcement has been so meaningful in my path since then.

Along the way, Johanna has “self-evaluated a lot.” But as much as that variety of opportunity has served her well and, in hindsight, seemed “almost as if it were planned,” Johanna is looking forward to ending her until-now transient academic life and finding a more settled academic position.

As she does so, she is more fully appreciating the sacrifices her mother made to support her and her brother’s educational pursuits, as she now supports and guides her daughter’s. Anthaea-Grace, an academically gifted almost-seven-year-old who is exploring marine biology and algebra through alternative schooling, is thriving during Johanna’s time at UALR. With violin lessons offered by the symphony and weekend drives to Olive Branch, Mississippi, for ice-skating lessons, they are busy establishing Anthaea’s path and creating doorways to her future.

Away from Arkansas, Johanna’s conferences are an opportunity for enrichment for both her and Anthaea: AALS 2017 in San Francisco included a visit to an observatory, while ALWD 2017 in Minneapolis offered a one-week YWCA camp with horseback riding. Johanna’s meticulous planning creates the layered learning experiences that enrich both her students and her daughter.



First Day of School!

Throughout her education and now through her daughter’s, Johanna has loved English literature, and writing in particular; she herself teaches Anthaea’s English curriculum. She has always “processed everything through writing,” and she has long written poetry that shares her insights and experiences with others. That love of poetry (and writing) started early: excelling in math, she finished her third-grade math curriculum early, and the teacher suggested that she spend math class writing instead—so she wrote poems, songs, and stories—early writing experiences that she now draws on when teaching

Johanna Dennis

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narrative and language.

While her academic scholarship focuses on immigration law, legal writing and analysis, inclusion, and intellectual property, her poetry includes more personal exploration. When in Philadelphia, she watched people line up at the courthouse on Callowhill Street, where the Immigration Court and DHS were then located, for deportation proceedings. She wrote the following:

Johanna has a sense that her life experiences have led her to this stage in her academic life, where she is teaching legal writing and bringing with it her life's education thus far. But as her mom taught her, education and learning are doorways, not destinations. As she calls on the necessity of flexibility in shaping her path, she does so with the confidence of multi-

erational academic excellence guiding her and the retrospective comfort of her life's experiences coming together "almost as if it were planned."

And heralding each step is her determination to honor her mother's teaching and pave her daughter's future by constantly evolving and improving, to "be bigger and better," as she explores and embraces challenge and change to keep moving forward to the places where she can do the most good and be true to her best self.

Johanna Dennis can be reached at jkdennis@ualr.edu

REMOVED*

Can you imagine running away from the worst imaginable place and the worst imaginable pain you could ever feel,

running to the gates of salvation, only to be turned away and put on a one-way flight back to Hell?

What gatekeeper of freedom could possibly ignore the desperation and loss behind the eyes of those who flee?

We need only look to 1600 Callowhill Street, and Lyndhurst's unfeeling lot, and realize that its not just "them" and "they"

who persecute and punish, but its "we" and "us" each time we write that they cannot stay.

* From Johanna Dennis's book of poetry, "Transcending Myself"

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Mary Ann Becker

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Mary Ann and I met to discuss her profile a few days before Thanksgiving on a beautiful Autumn day in Chicago. As we sat down to talk, food was naturally on our minds. Turns out that food connects many of Mary Ann's passions: travel (especially to France), baking (especially French pastries), and learning (especially about baking French pastries).

Mary Ann's passion for travel (and France) started when she was young. Growing up in the Kansas City, Missouri, area, Mary Ann attended a French grade and high school. She has traveled to France many times: first in high school for a summer study abroad trip, next in college for another summer study abroad trip, and again as a law student. A few years ago, she visited her brother in London and took a quick trip to Paris via the tunnel. Her last adventure to France was to various areas, including Provence, where she brushed up on her French by taking a class (in French) about Provençal culture and history. France is not the only place she'll visit; she has also spent time in Iceland, Russia, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. And she will even travel closer to home, including a recent hiking trip to Se-

attle, Washington and another trip to Montana.

Mary Ann's love of France translates to a love of French food, especially pastries. Mary Ann is a skilled baker, having taken a three-day French pastry class focusing on pies and tarts at the French Pastry School of Chicago. She makes her own crusts (although she claims she is not yet "confident" with them), and she prefers using a hand-held, as opposed to a countertop, mixer.

The Provence trip and pastry class are not Mary Ann's only ventures back to the classroom as an adult. She has also taken cello lessons at Chicago's

Bounty from Mary Ann's
French Pastry Class.



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Mary Ann Becker

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Mary Ann in Iceland.

Old Town School of Folk Music. Returning to the classroom as a student has helped Mary Ann understand some of the apprehension her students face when starting law school. Her experiences as a student make her a stronger instructor.

This Thanksgiving, Mary Ann was not traveling, to France or anywhere else. Instead, she and her partner, Jordan, were staying home in Chicago cooking a Fren—I mean Italian meal for themselves. He would be diligently preparing homemade pasta sauces for days, while Mary Ann, of course, would be in charge of dessert: a lemon-curd tart with raspberry sauce. Needless to say, the crust would be homemade. Bon Appétit!

If you'd like to contact Mary Ann, she can be reached at mbeckerl@luc.edu.

UPCOMING LEGAL WRITING EVENTS

March 23-24, 2018
Rocky Mountain Legal
Writing Conference
University of Denver

April 21, 2018
Southeastern Regional
Legal Writing
Conference
Georgia State
College Of Law

July 11-14, 2018
18th Biennial
LWI Conference
Marquette University

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 about why you think the individual's profile would be particularly interesting, it will help us in developing priorities.

Selection and Presentation Process: We believe it is 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.



**Good writing is
clear thinking
made visible.**

- Bill Wheeler

Faces of LWI Committee Members



Maureen Collins
co-chair, JMLS
7collins@jmls.edu



Grace Hum
co-chair, USF
ghum@usfca.edu



Joan Rocklin
co-chair, Oregon
jrocklin@uoregon.edu



Alexa Chew
UNC
achew@email.unc.edu



Iselin Gambert
George Washington
igambert@law.gwu.edu



Nancy Soonpaa
Texas Tech
nancy.soonpaa@ttu.edu



Janis Kirkland
Regent
janikir@regent.edu



Elizabeth Berenguer
Campbell
berenguer@campbell.edu



Jody Marcucci
DePaul
jmarcucc@depaul.edu



Tracy McGaugh Norton
Touro
tnorton@tourolaw.edu



Allison Ortlieb
DePaul
aortlieb@depaul.edu



Rebecca Rich
Duke
rich@law.duke.edu



Byron Wardlaw
JMLS
bwardlaw@sbcgjobat.net

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

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