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## Alumni Spotlight: Jordan Eyal '17 wants to speak your language

Julia Sonenshein



**WE ARE NEW YORK'S LAW SCHOOL**

**JORDAN EYAL '17**



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**Jordan Eyal '17** knew she wanted to learn about people as much as possible. A teacher once told her that “knowing a little bit about somebody’s religion was like being able to speak their language,” she says. She’d been lucky to travel as a young person, and she wanted to continue seeing the world and meeting new people. So at Lehigh University, she studied religion and global studies, hoping to learn more about the world and its inhabitants.

She stayed on at Lehigh for a master’s degree—earning a full scholarship after her undergraduate success. In a cohort of 12 students, she studied political science and took the extra year to “grow and develop as a person.” It was in that extra year that she homed in on her values and her goals in life.

After graduation, she spent a year working at a real estate management company, but knew it wasn’t the path for her. Law school had always been on her mind—her mother is an attorney, so she’d grown up around the legal profession. She decided to take the plunge and apply.

**Building Relationships at NYLS**



Paul Faglione '17 and Jordan Eyal '17

“I had a wonderful experience at NYLS,” Eyal says. She was a student in the second class of the newly introduced two-year program, and the cohort was small—only 22 students—which allowed Eyal to build strong relationships with her fellow students and professors. “I had wonderful professors,” she says, and she was involved in many extracurricular programs, including Moot Court and the Civil Rights Clinic. So much of her confidence in her current role, she says, is owed to the “prep and support [she] received while in law school.”

And, she gained a lifelong relationship: She met her now-husband, Paul Faglione '17, in her program.

**Life After Law School**



Jordan Eyal '17 (left) and NYLS students at the Women's March in Washington D.C.

After graduating from NYLS in 2017, Eyal applied for jobs in various district attorney offices in New York City. But she received a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: a job as a staff attorney at the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. She took the job and served two years before joining the Manhattan DA's Office in 2020, where she was assigned to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP). Her values guided her: “By the time I had applied to the DA's office the second time around, it was the summer when George Floyd and Breonna Taylor had been murdered, and there were lots of protest marches—many of which I participated in,” she says. “I was acutely aware of how much power prosecutors wield in the courtroom and felt certain that I would do my best to ensure that justice was served and not just look to get as many convictions as possible.”

## The Alternatives to Incarceration Program



Brenda Alejo '17 and Jordan Eyal '17 at the 2018 UCLA Cyber Crimes Moot Court Competition

In November of 2021, Eyal started assisting Zoe Shea, Chief of SNP's Alternatives to Incarceration Unit, a revolutionary practice that seeks to minimize the collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement and offers individuals reduced dispositions following program completion.

SNP partners with the Center for Justice Innovation and the Manhattan Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court to give eligible defendants facing felony charges the opportunity to engage in treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Appropriate services are individualized and can include substance use treatment, mental health services, cognitive behavioral therapy, educational and vocational training, case management, housing support, and other programming. This approach aims to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety by diverting appropriate participants away from incarceration and into services that address the underlying needs driving criminal behavior.

In July of 2022, Eyal was named Deputy Chief of the ATI Unit, and in December of 2022, she received an Exceptional Contribution award as Deputy Chief of ATI.

## A Lifetime of Service

Service was a part of Eyal's life from a young age, stemming from her parents' influence. Growing up in a Jewish household, Eyal participated in the coming-of-age tradition of being a bat mitzvah when she was 13. In the Jewish milestone, it marked her official transition to adulthood. To mark the transition, her parents encouraged her to participate in some kind of community service activity which kicked off a life of giving back.

Eyal and her family began volunteering with her synagogue's chapter of Midnight Run, an organization that coordinates volunteers from churches, synagogues, schools, and other civic groups in distributing food, clothing, and personal care items to people experiencing homelessness on the streets of New York City. Eyal continued her service work by founding and leading her high school's chapter of Midnight Run. Years later, Eyal still volunteers regularly with people experiencing homelessness in her neighborhood through Crossroads Community Services, where she serves as a Breakfast Distribution Captain.