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January 2010 Alumni Newsletter

New York Law School

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Meet the Network

Marianne Camille Spraggin's '76: American Pioneer

Trying to catch up with Marianne Camille Spraggin's '76 is no easy feat. The Wall Street veteran, political activist, and president of a consulting company, BHP Institutional Strategies, has two conference calls before lunch. One is with a committee planning the restoration of The Howard Theater in Washington, D.C. (and only one of many boards and committees on which Spraggin's has served). The second involves her developing a policy paper on business development for small and mid-sized companies. Both exemplify her wide-ranging interests, which include pioneering change in culture, politics, and business.

Pioneering change is nothing new for Spraggin's. In 1990, while in the Municipal Division of Smith Barney Shearson, she became the first African American female managing director on Wall Street. Also, Spraggin's knows fellow pioneers when she sees them. She backed David Dinkins's mayoral race and was the first and, for a long time, the only superdelegate from New York to help elect President Barack Obama.

"My 90-year-old godmother asks me every few weeks, 'Is the black man still president?' It is still hard to believe. I pinch myself. But I believed he could win and would win. It was a moment larger than all of us."

Currently, Spraggin's is helping her clients "get their voices heard" and navigate rough economic waters by searching out new avenues of development, including investment in green companies.

Spraggin's taught at the Law School at the beginning of her career and says returning to teach is not out of the question. Laughing, she says, "I'd certainly have new perspectives to offer."

"My 90-year-old godmother asks me every few weeks, 'Is the black man still president?' It is still hard to believe. I pinch myself. But I believed he could win and would win. It was a moment larger than all of us."
Dr. Otto L. Walter ’54 was one of the most accomplished alumni of New York Law School, an internationally known jurist, and a major voice in post-World War II reconciliation between the United States and Germany. It was Nazi hatred that put Dr. Walter on the path that brought him to New York Law School. Like many Jewish intellectuals, Dr. Walter was prohibited from practicing his profession by the Nazis in the years prior to the outbreak of World War II. He was disbarred by Hitler’s anti-Jewish laws but tenaciously recreated a life as an attorney in the United States.

Dr. Walter was born in Bavaria in 1907. His father was an attorney, and Dr. Walter was trained to continue the family path. At the University of Munich, he studied civil and canon law, as well as economics. He earned a Doctor of Laws from the University of Erlangen in 1930. The Nazi government then passed the Nuremberg Laws, which forbade Jews from professional employment. After his disbarring, Dr. Walter found work as a law clerk for some years, and then immigrated to New York City in 1936 with his parents.

Dr. Walter first worked in New York City as a bookkeeper while studying to become a certified public accountant. After launching his own accounting firm and working for several years, he had saved enough money to attend New York Law School. Here, he left a distinguished record, making Law Review and graduating in 1954, a full 24 years after earning his first law degree.

In 1955, Dr. Walter and business partner Henry Conston founded Walter, Conston, Alexander & Green, PC, a firm that became well-known for its specialized practice in transnational law and later merged with Alston & Bird, LLP.

After the repeal of the Nuremberg Laws, Dr. Walter resumed his original career path and joined the Munich law firm of Ott, Weiss, Walter, Fischer-Zemm, Rechtsanwaelte, as one of the few attorneys to practice in both Germany and the United States. Dr. Walter worked hard to improve relations between the two countries, especially in the area of international taxation. He advised the German Ministry of Finance on the 1954 United States-German Income Tax Treaty and its 1965 amendment, and served as an advisor to the German government regarding the United States-German Estate, Inheritance, and Gift Tax Treaty of 1980. Dr. Walter also co-authored a four-volume work on the German American Tax Treaty.

Dr. Walter and his wife were revered philanthropists with a lifetime of generosity to New York Law School. Their names and importance to the Law School have lived on in the Walter Distinguished Writing Award, the Walter International Fellowship Program, and the Otto L. Walter Lecture in International Law. There will soon be an announcement regarding an extraordinary gift to the Capital Campaign from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation.

New York Law School Heritage

Otto L. Walter ’54

In October 2009 alone, these New York Law School professors presented on topics in their fields. Test your knowledge of current scholarship at your alma mater and match the following items with the professors listed below them.

A. She presented “Culture, Conflicts, and International Law,” at the Seventh Annual Works in Progress Intellectual Property (WIPIP) Conference at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark, NJ.
B. He delivered the keynote lecture on law and visual culture at “Intersections of Law and Culture,” a cross-disciplinary conference held at Franklin College in Lugano, Switzerland.
C. He spoke at the Canadian chapter of the Alternative Investment Management Association’s monthly luncheon event in Toronto. His talk was titled, “Hedge Funds and the Battle for Credit Risk Transfer.”
D. She presented a paper titled, “Cross-Judging: Tribunalization in a Fragmented but Interconnected Global Order” (co-authored with Professor Robert Howse of New York University School of Law) at the Globalization, Law, & Justice Workshop at the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto.
E. She delivered the keynote address at the New York State Judicial Institute on Professionalism in the Law’s Convocation on Lawyer Independence at Fordham Law School in New York, NY.
F. He spoke to the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law at its annual meeting in Baltimore, MD, on “’My Brain Is So Wired’: Neuroimaging and Competency to Be Executed.”

Choices

Check the answers on the Web site!

To take this quiz and see the answers, please visit the Alumni & Friends page on the New York Law School Web site, www.nyls.edu.
Errol Taylor’s decision to trade the white lab coat of a scientist for the suit and tie of a litigator came through a bit of serendipity. Taylor ’87 was educated in science, but felt that a traditional science career, which he pursued after college at Squibb Corp. (now Bristol Myers-Squibb), was too solitary for his taste.

“While I had a love for scientific subject matter, working in laboratories and supervising research didn't really excite me after a few years,” he says.

As Taylor pondered his next career move, a friend asked him to help her study for the LSAT exam. “She said, ‘You're actually better at this than I am. You should take the exam.’” Taylor recalls. He took the advice, and enrolled in the evening program at New York Law School. He did well and in a mere six years he was made a partner at Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper, and Scinto. Taylor was courted by Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy in August of 2003 with the offer of a partnership and a promise of being able to create his own pharmaceutical litigation practice.

“It was exciting, and it was a little bit unnerving, because I was taking an entrepreneurial risk when I was on or near the top of my career. I did it partly because I wanted a challenge,” Taylor says.

Now more than six years into it, Taylor says the practice is thriving, though building a practice is a slow, steady process. “You work at becoming a good lawyer, you cultivate relationships and contacts, and hopefully through both of those things you attain a good reputation, and attract and retain clients by doing good work. In litigation, of course, winning more than you lose helps.”

Litigation is something for which Taylor has always had a passion. Even in law school, he saw himself as a trial lawyer. In fact, despite his science background, his initial inclination wasn’t to go into patent or intellectual property litigation.

“It was more important to me to litigate, to try cases, to be in court; and it was during law school that I understood I could marry my science and pharmaceutical background with litigation. It turned out to be a really good mix for me.”

Taylor’s background in chemicals and chemical processes enables him to examine the scientific merits of his opponents’ claims—often generic drugmakers infringing on an innovator’s patent claim before the patent has expired.

Taylor had many litigation mentors at his former firm, but says the “key one” was Robert L. Baechtold, Chair of Fitzpatrick’s Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals Litigation Group. “He’s probably the best patent pharmaceutical lawyer there ever was,” says Taylor.

Baechtold taught him that a great litigator pays attention to details, has the ability to persuade, to portray a level of credibility, and is someone who is willing to scrupulously prepare for trial. “I learned early in my career that the senior lawyers I admired who were always so able to deftly answer any question and deal with any issue—it wasn’t that they were quick on their feet. It was that they were well prepared.”

Taylor has served as lead trial counsel in complex pharmaceutical and chemical patent litigation, including numerous cases involving generic drug approvals and the Hatch-Waxman Act. In 2003, Taylor was named by The National Law Journal as one of the nation’s top trial lawyers.
Save the Dates

**Wednesday, February 17**
Spotlight Luncheon on Massive Litigation

**Thursday, February 18**
An Evening of Networking Honoring Hon. Bernice Siegal ’85
Hosted by Cathy Hershcopf ’85

**Tuesday, March 9**
Spotlight Luncheon on Public Service

**Thursday, March 18**
All Roads Lead from NYLS

Please visit www.nyls.edu/alumni for more information.
Laurie H. Hutzler ’79 and the Emotional Toolbox

Imagine you are the head writer for a TV show. Season One is a huge hit, but Season Two is a disaster. What happened? How can you get back your audience? Or imagine you’re a lawyer who has a hundred amazing stories you’d love to tell but doesn’t know how to start to turn them into a screenplay or a novel, or where to find the time. What do you do? For either scenario, the answer is: call Laurie H. Hutzler ’79.

The Wisconsin-born Hutzler is a media consultant for FremantleMedia’s Worldwide Drama Division and helps writers and would-be writers—as well as film finance fund executives, producers, and other creative decision makers—analyze the emotional content of projects, and transform them into major international hits. For example, two of her films, In the Valley of Elah and Tsotsi, have won Oscars, and testimonials on her Web site, www.etbscreenwriting.com include the screenwriter for the latest James Bond film, Quantum of Solace, and Crash.

For New York Law School alumni who have dreamed of turning ideas into print, film, or TV, Hutzler is providing a unique opportunity during Alumni Weekend, April 23–25. In a special one-day workshop at the Law School on April 25, she will offer to our community the instruction sought after by the screenwriters of Oscar-winning motion pictures.

Hutzler’s training as a lawyer is evident in her practical approach to helping writers find emotional verity. Her method involves answering six crucial questions about the character. “Whatever I do, it has to be immediately practical for the writer. Theory is just cocktail conversation unless you can put it to use.”

Key to Hutzler’s approach is mining personal experience and feelings for fiction. Doing that requires creating a “character map.” She has identified nine character types—characters who are motivated by internal conflict particular to what they value most. Some include Power of Reason, Power of Excitement, Power of Imagination, and Power of Truth. A Power of Reason type attempts to master chaos by imposing order.

“Think Dr. Jack Shephard (Matthew Fox) on the hit TV series Lost,” Hutzler says. “At the beginning of the series, Shephard is an expert at handling the crisis of a plane wreck, even if his personal life is in shambles. The tension comes from watching a Power of Reason character attempt to master chaos. He can’t!”

Hutzler, who is married to fellow alum, attorney James Charne ’79, also says insights into character are valuable not only for lawyers who want to be writers, but also for lawyers who want better results.

“A contract is a story. Litigation is a story, client testimony is a story, negotiation is a story. How well you understand the characters in the story—whether that’s a client, your team of lawyers, or your adversaries—will make you a more effective advocate.”

Understanding what motivates people fascinated Hutzler even in law school. There, she wrote The Attorney’s Malpractice Prevention Manual, a professional risk management guide for lawyers. The same principles of good storytelling apply to avoiding malpractice: know who you are dealing with and understand the emotional side of client relations.

For her fellow alumni with literary ambitions, Hutzler’s one-day workshop will offer practical concrete tools for transforming ideas into real stories.

“Lawyers are by nature creative thinkers and risk takers,” Hutzler says. “Who knows how many of my workshop students may end up in Hollywood? Television, film, and publishing are filled with lawyers who, like me, made the transition into the entertainment industry.”
Alumni Weekend 2010
Friday, April 23–Sunday, April 25
New York Law School
185 West Broadway (at Leonard Street)

www.nyls.edu/alumniweekend2010
Join us for a fabulous weekend.

Friday, April 23
For Alumni from Class Years Ending in “0” or “5”

Your reunion only happens every five years.

REUNION DINNER DANCE
Reunion Classes Only
6:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.
Cocktails: 6:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.
Dinner and Dancing: 7:30 p.m.–11:00 p.m.

Festive Attire
Visit www.nyls.edu/reunion2010 for more information and to see who is attending.

Saturday, April 24
For All Alumni and Friends

DEAN’S STATE OF THE LAW SCHOOL BRUNCH
11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Dean Matasar spearheaded the creation of our new academic home. Join us for a Best of the Lower East Side brunch as he talks about the impact of the new building on New York Law School, and unveils his plans for the Law School’s future endeavors. We’ll also toast members of the Class of 1960 on their golden reunion. Each returning member of the Class of 1960 will receive a special gift from the New York Law School Alumni Association.

Writing the History of an Enslaved Family
12:45 p.m.–2:15 p.m.
CLE credits available (1.5 General)

Annette Gordon-Reed, a professor of law at New York Law School since 1992 and winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in History for her book The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family (W. W. Norton, 2008), is recognized as one of our country’s most distinguished presidential scholars. Professor Gordon-Reed will talk about how law shapes our understanding of reality, and how that makes it difficult to accept realities about enslaved families. She will be available during the session to sign copies of her book.

Cocktails, Dinner, and Gambling*
7:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.

Ante up! You don’t have to travel to Vegas to test your luck! Join us for cocktails, dinner, and—for those who are game—a night of gambling (blackjack, poker, roulette, and craps) for great raffle prizes.

*You must be 21 or older to participate.

Sunday, April 25
For All Alumni and Friends

SCREENWRITING FOR LAWYERS
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Laurie H. Hutzler ’79 has never met a lawyer who didn’t have dozens of great stories to tell.

In this full-day workshop, you will learn how to turn your own experience into powerful, entertaining fictional movies, books, or TV, populated by a cast of memorable characters only you can create.

Workshop leader Laurie Hutzler started her career in entertainment as a staff writer and story consultant on the NBC series The Black Donnellys. Since then, she has consulted and lectured widely in the television and film industry. Among her successes, she has consulted for Academy Award winner Paul Haggis on his recent films: In the Valley of Elah and Quantum of Solace (James Bond). Laurie is currently a consultant for FremantleMedia’s Worldwide Drama Division, working on a long-running television series in the UK, Europe, and Australia. On April 25, she consults for you.