

This section focuses on alumni who are having early career successes that the pioneer alumnae could have only dreamed of decades ago. These are alumni whose careers bear watching as they quickly maneuver through the public and private world to conquer the challenges that lie ahead and to encourage others to do the same.

## The Next Generation Recent Grads on the Move



### Marlee Carpenter '99

Marlee Carpenter is passionate about politics. As director of Taxation and Small Business for the Kansas Chamber of Commerce & Industry, she puts that passion to work lobbying business tax, tort reform and retail issues before the Kansas Legislature. In her position, she closely reviews bills, rules and regulations to gauge their impact on the business community and regularly speaks with legislators about the issues before them—hard work, but work she clearly enjoys. “To have the ability to influence whether a bill gets passed or killed is something very exciting,” said Carpenter.

During her four years with KCCI, Carpenter has worked successfully on several key pieces of legislation, including increasing the income tax credit for property taxes paid, civil recovery for juvenile shoplifting, worthless check legislation and passage of the integrated plant sales tax theory.

Although a law degree is not a prerequisite for becoming a lobbyist, said Carpenter, it helps. “I use the skills I learned in law school everyday when I research issues, write testimony or speak before a House or Senate committee.” Carpenter believes that having an open mind and learning how to compromise are also important to being an effective lobbyist. “In a legislative session, you may not get everything you ask for, but building political good will and a good case for your issue will put you miles ahead of

others the next legislative session.”

Carpenter’s responsibilities also include directing the KCCI’s political action committee, where she researches candidates and makes recommendations to the PAC’s board of directors. “To be involved in political elections and support those candidates who you can believe in and help them get elected is very rewarding,” said Carpenter.

Looking ahead, Carpenter sees herself continuing in politics, whether as a lobbyist or working on political campaigns, and her law degree from Washburn Law will no doubt continue to be an asset. “You don’t have to join a law firm and become a traditional lawyer to put your law degree to good use,” said Carpenter. ■



### Paul Davis '98

Paul Davis understands the importance of public service, a quality he attributes to former Congressman Jim Slattery '75, who he once worked for and who has had, in Davis’ words, “a big influence on my career.” “To me, Jim embodies everything that we should want in a lawyer and elected official: honesty, integrity and a great respect for the process,” Davis said.

Last year, Davis saw a new opportunity to serve the public when Rep. Troy Findley resigned his position to serve as legislative liaison for Gov.



## Sean Harlow '02

Sean Harlow is assistant director of Alumni Relations at Harvard Law School. Currently he's soliciting law firms and Fortune 500 companies around the globe to sponsor the law school's Worldwide Alumni Congress in London. But Harlow's interest in academic development can be traced to more humble beginnings: the Washburn Law School Annual Phonathon.

During his three years at Washburn, Harlow was actively involved in the school's annual phonathon, a fundraising event whose proceeds are used for scholarships, technology upgrades and program needs. As a 3L, he served as co-chair of the phonathon and participated in redesigning the program. According to Harlow, that year they raised the most money in the School's history—and perhaps more important, he discovered his career path. “After stepping back and reflecting on what we had accomplished both monetarily and structurally, I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in academic development,” said Harlow.

A law degree was essential to landing the position with Harvard, Harlow said, not because the position required a great deal of legal expertise, but because it required someone who was familiar with how lawyers think and interact with one another. “I sincerely believe that a legal education is the most important and versatile graduate degree an individual can attain,” said Harlow, “and that it opens doors even outside the law. At least it did for me.”

Opening doors is at the heart of education, and successful development programs are essential to ensuring that a school can provide the scholarships, research, faculty and courses necessary for educational excellence. Harlow encourages Washburn alumni to give back to the school that gave them so much and, in so doing, open doors for future students. “Each of us benefited from the largesse of those who came before us, and we owe it to the students that follow us to make the experience better than it was for ourselves.” ■

Kathleen Sebelius. “After serving as legislative counsel for the Kansas Bar Association for almost four years, I decided to seek a legislative seat,” said Davis. Within days of the start of the 2003 session, Davis was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives by the precinct committee persons in his district.

Although new to elected office, Davis is no newcomer to government or politics. In addition to working for Slattery, Davis also served as assistant director for government affairs for then-Insurance Commissioner Kathleen Sebelius. Later, as legislative counsel for the Kansas Bar Association, he was actively involved in monitoring legislation and lobbying on behalf of the KBA.

Following his election, Davis resumed his private law practice at Meyer & Davis, L.L.C., in Lawrence, where he works primarily in the area of family law. “I greatly enjoy the opportunity to serve in the Kansas Legislature, especially since there is a shortage of lawyers in the Legislature right now. My law practice... really helps me to be a better legislator.”

Davis credits Washburn Law with a great deal of his professional success and wants to give back to the school that gave him so much. “I will always be grateful to the many professors and staff members who went the extra mile to help provide me with a superb legal education,” said Davis. “Over the remainder of my career, I plan to be an active alum and do everything I can to support the future of the law school.” ■

# Recent Grads ...



**Lisa McPherson '94**

Lisa McPherson's experience at Washburn Law lends new meaning to "family law." McPherson was the fourth generation in her family to graduate from Washburn University School of Law. What's more, she met her husband, Boyd McPherson '92, while they were both students at the law school.

Now a partner in the Wichita law firm Hite, Fanning & Honeyman, L.L.P., McPherson fondly remembers her graduation day, when she carried the cane that her father, grandmother and great-grandfather before her carried when they graduated. She describes her father, Thomas A. Adrian '69, as her greatest mentor "in law and life." "[He] taught me the importance of honesty, integrity and hard work to succeed not only as a lawyer but in life generally," said McPherson.

Her father's lessons have served McPherson well as she has advanced from associate to partner practicing in the demanding area of medical malpractice defense litigation. Along the way, she was also guided by other experienced lawyers. "When I was hired as an associate, I was assigned to a partner...whose practice was exclusively medical malpractice," McPherson explained. "He took me under his wing and gave me great experience and provided opportunities to try many cases."

McPherson's commitment to her law practice is equaled by her commitment to her community and her passion for literacy. An active member of the Junior League of Wichita since 1994, McPherson is currently involved in the organization's "Share A Story" project for at-risk kids, which seeks to end intergenerational illiteracy. "I have learned that it is as important to do a good job in the legal work you do as it is to be involved in the community in which you practice," she said. "Your clients are the community."

Today, McPherson divides her energies between her legal work, her husband and two children, and her community. "You can have it all," she says. "You can have a demanding legal career, a family and community involvement without sacrificing any aspect of any of those areas. It just takes organization and desire."

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