



Gerard Perches '05

Student

Gerard Perches chose Washburn Law over law schools in his native Texas because, as he put it, "I wanted to go where I was wanted." But after graduating, he plans to return to Texas because, he believes, that is where he is most needed.

"The state is in bad shape," said Perches. "The Republicans have taken over, and it hasn't been the same since." Perches, who earned his master's degree in political science, believes politics is the source of many of the state's problems, particularly its nonexistent public defender and indigent defense programs and its inequitable school funding. But he also believes that politics may hold the solutions to these and other problems, which is why his goal is to one day become governor of Texas. "If Arnold can win, I can win," joked Perches, referring to California's newest governor.

Perches future opponents should think twice before discouraging him from seeking the governorship. When *The Washburn Lawyer* asked Perches who were the most influential people in his life, he replied, "The ones who said 'you can't do it.'" Long before announcing his candidacy, however, Perches plans to get some hands-on experience in the areas that most trouble him. He would like to work for a while in the DA's office "to see what kind of changes I can make there," but he knows he needs to learn the system before he can change it.

That's one of the reasons Perches chose Washburn Law. "You will learn the law here. There's not a lot of fluff," said Perches. "This school, we don't play games." He admits that

nothing prepared him for the rigors of law school, although his undergraduate writing and research helped. He really appreciates having the opportunity to talk with professors one-on-one. "Washburn is not like other schools. The professors always have their door open and are willing to spend time helping you understand the material," said Perches.

As president of the Hispanic American Law Students Association (HALSA), Perches has managed to combine his passion for politics with his law studies. He believes Washburn needs to continue its efforts to recruit more minority students, in part because they bring a different point of view to the classroom. "Law school students need to understand their perspectives, since these are going to be our clients," said Perches. "How are you going to represent them if you don't know them?" HALSA is also a way for Perches to "connect with other law students." "Law school is tough enough, let alone trying to do it alone."

In addition to HALSA, Perches is also active in recruiting students to Washburn through the admissions office. "I want to spread the word about how good the school is, how much opportunity there is here," said Perches. He believes it's incumbent upon all of us who "climb the ladder" not to kick it away, but to pull others up. His advice to students considering law school: "Nothing's impossible. Keep trying. Don't give up." Sounds like the beginning of a very positive campaign.