

Practice-Ready Graduates

BELSAN, '09, NAMED 2012 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CIVIL DIVISION ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Tim Belsan, '09, was recently named the 2012 U.S. Department of Justice Civil Division Rookie of the Year. This elite award is given "in recognition of exceptional performance and notable contributions toward the Division's mission by any employee with fewer than three years of service with the Division, and fewer than five years overall Federal service."



Tim
Belsan, '09

While attending law school, Belsan was editor-in-chief of the *Washburn Law Journal* and later worked as a law clerk for The Honorable Deanell Reece Tacha with the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit before joining the U.S. Department of Justice. He is a member of the Kansas, Missouri, and Tenth Circuit bars.

HENKE, '12, ELECTED DISTRICT MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Renee Henke, May 2012 Washburn Law graduate, was elected as district magistrate judge in Kansas' 17th Judicial District, Division 4. Henke is based in Downs, Kan., in the north central part of the state.



Renee
Henke, '12

After winning the Democratic primary in August, Henke defeated Richard E. Linton in the Nov. 6 general election, garnering 59 percent of the vote. Henke campaigned door-to-door and said she was pleasantly surprised that her youth was viewed as a strength. She said that most people "liked to see someone young moving back to the area, using their education and coming back and trying to help build the community and maybe encourage other young people to come back here as well."

In preparing for her position, Henke worked closely with current Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Thornton and spent time shadowing 17th Judicial District Judge Preston Pratt. As a district magistrate, Judge Henke has jurisdiction over traffic infractions and cigarette or tobacco infractions as

well as criminal misdemeanors and juvenile cases. She has authority to conduct preliminary hearings, arraignments in criminal felonies, and jurisdiction over probate matters.

While in law school, Henke was a law clerk with Irigonegaray & Associates; a teaching assistant for Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing; and secretary for the Washburn Student Bar Association.

LAUTT, '12, WINS SUPREME COURT CASE 22 DAYS AFTER BAR ADMITTANCE

Steven A. Lautt, May 2012 graduate, argued his first case before the North Dakota Supreme Court 22 days after being sworn in and won the case when the Court issued its opinion in *Hamilton v. Woll* on Nov. 27.



Steven A.
Lautt, '12

At issue was the important oil and gas principle of whether certain conveyance language creates a "royalty" interest or a "mineral" interest; the distinction can have significant financial and development ramifications. Lautt was successful for his client by convincing the Court to overturn an adverse summary judgment to allow consideration of extrinsic evidence to interpret an oil and gas conveyance. As a result of the Court's remand, Lautt is handling his first trial in district court.

Lautt says the critical balance of confidence and humility learned at Washburn Law has helped him navigate law practice upon graduation.

"The most important idea that Washburn Law teaches its students is the appropriate balance of confidence and humility. Law school graduates in their first year of practice certainly don't know all the answers, but Washburn graduates can be confident that the instruction they received during law school will allow them to find the answers and effectively argue on a client's behalf."

Lautt works at the Pringle & Herigstad Law Firm in Minot. While attending Washburn Law, he was a staff writer for the *Washburn Law Journal* and president of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies.