

# Self-Made Mentor

*Augustine makes it his mission to guide Turney to, and through, Washburn Law.*

When **The Honorable Patrick Augustine, BA '77 and JD '85**, met **J. Bo Turney, '14**, it was pure happenstance. They weren't family. They weren't working together. They simply had mutual friends, and wound up at the same table at a Denver restaurant.

Despite the age difference of 30-odd years, and the fact that they had been strangers hours before, Augustine saw something promising in Turney, then a college junior.

"I just felt that he would make a great attorney. Especially when I started to see some of his written stuff," Augustine said. "I just go, 'Gosh, with his passion, speaking skills, writing, and desire to change what he perceived to be social injustices, let's give it a try and see if I can't push him in the law school direction.'"

It wasn't because they're carbon copies. Augustine, a judge since 1997, is calm and intentional, even-keeled and self-assured. Turney is gregarious and energetic, and enthusiastic about everything from politics and writing to cars and computers.

Augustine had been a mentor before. Due to plain old logistics, he hadn't mentored a Washburn Law student — in spite of his fervent allegiance to his alma mater. But over time, Turney became that student.

The two kept in touch through Turney's junior and senior years, with Augustine critiquing papers and proposing next steps. The possibilities ranged from a master's in computer science to a career in public service. But the discussion always came

back to the law. When application time rolled around, Turney considered six law schools, Washburn Law included.

"Once I got him on campus, once he met with the people I lined him up to talk to, and once he just got the feel, I felt that he would make the right decision," Augustine said with a smile.

Turney did make the "right" decision, attributing most of it to Augustine's influence. They touched base weekly throughout Turney's first year at Washburn Law. Through calls and emails and crises of confidence, Augustine acted as adviser and sounding board, at times gently asking and encouraging, at other times prodding and challenging.

"First and foremost, there's a sense of grounding that I've gotten from the help that he's given," Turney said. "I would immediately go to, 'There's no way I'm going to understand this. This is way too complicated.' He knows me very well. So he can say, 'Stop. It's just like this. It's just like that.' And then I'd say, 'Oh, that makes sense. That's not so hard, is it?'"

As Turney settled in, the communications eased up. More than just finding his way, he was thriving. Augustine lists off Turney's accomplishments with pride: He served as a teaching assistant. He dove into Moot Court. He shined as a student ambassador. Augustine was dead-on about Turney's writing skills; he won top paper in three courses, plus top brief in Moot Court.

"When you have somebody who knows the folks there, you come into a school with a sense of camaraderie," Turney said. "Having met the professors ahead of time, having the study groups set up right off the bat. Not just through Patrick, but I had a support structure built in. And that is really meaningful for a first-year."

Post-graduation, Turney has forged a path all his own. While Augustine has had three jobs in 30 years, Turney has four jobs right now — different roles to feed his interests and keep him engaged. He's priming students for the bar exam as director of legal education for The BARBRI Group. He's developing safety and loss-management policies and procedures for Tolin Mechanical, and clocking in at the Topeka firm of **Pedro Irigonegaray, '73**, "to get my chops." Most interesting of all, he has transformed from student to bar preparation coach.

## *Become a Mentor*

To learn about mentoring a 1L at Washburn Law, contact:

Tammy King, Director  
Professional Development Office  
tammy.king1@washburn.edu | 785.670.1703

## *Share a Prospect*

To pass along the name of a potential Washburn Law recruit, contact:

Preston Nicholson  
Director, Admissions Office  
preston.nicholson@washburn.edu | 785.670.1706





Even now, with Turney flourishing, the mentoring continues. Augustine is nudging him toward academia, envisioning him as a legal analysis, research, and writing professor. Augustine, it seems, is just as invested in Turney's career as his own.

Turney has followed suit. Merely one year out of school, he is mentoring a 1L through the program. For first-years not lucky enough to stumble on a mentor, the program offers that vital connection. Since 2003, the Professional Development Office has matched 856 students with a coach and confidant.

"For us, on our end, it's nice to be able to reflect and help and look back fondly," Turney said. "And on their end, hopefully it'll make their lives easier."

It's a sentiment Augustine couldn't agree with more.

"It's just a matter of paying it forward. I had great people helping me, and if I could smooth the way for other people behind me, it's just going to make things better."