

Hello Jennifer,

Welcome to the 4th quarter edition of the alumni newsletter. This will be my final address to members of the alumni as President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for giving me the honor of serving as Alumni Board President. I have enjoyed serving our fine law school in this capacity and look forward to remaining involved in the greater alumni community.

As you know, our Alumni Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, November 10th. Ballots were sent out via Constant Contact and voting is open until November 17th at 11:59 p.m. If you have not already cast your ballot, please take some time to do so. Results will be shared early next week. I trust that our incoming Alumni Board will continue to uphold our legacy and mission.

This edition of the newsletter features an interview with alumnus Matthew Brower ('04), Executive Director at the Montana Catholic Conference. Matthew shares his insight and inspiration on how he got to this position.

As always, we encourage all alumni to get involved and connect with us. If you have any ideas for our newsletter, please feel free to send them to: alumniaffairs@avemarialaw.edu.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jaime Hewitt'.

Jaime Hewitt, Esq.

President, Ave Maria School of Law
Alumni Association



An Interview with Matthew Brower '04

Q: Describe your current position.

A: As Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference I represent the Roman Catholic Bishops of Montana on matters of public policy before state and federal lawmakers, including state legislators, our governor, our congressional delegation and various administrative agencies. Yes, this means part of my work involves lobbying. But, that's a minority of what my job entails and the lobbying I do may look quite a bit different from what most people envision when they think of lobbying.



I advise the bishops on policy issues especially when and where they intersect with Catholic social teaching. This requires a reasonable amount of time researching issues and networking with others engaged in the same or similar work.

My role really is somewhat that of a diplomat in addition to advocate. I serve as a liaison to various other groups and individuals including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, the National Diocesan Attorneys Association and many others. In addition, I devote a significant amount of time to formation efforts helping to educate Catholics regarding public policy positions and the Church's social and moral teachings and I serve as resource for others engaged in formation, catechesis and communications.

Q: How did you come to acquire this position?

A: At the time I transitioned to my current position, I was busy running my own law practice in northwest Montana—a solo practice I had opened 6 years earlier. Prior to attending law school I was employed for a number of years in parish ministry at a Catholic parish in west Michigan. Around 2012-13, I was growing increasingly frustrated with what I saw happening in policy and politics and I was looking for a way to combine my background in Church-related work with my legal training and experience.

Out of the blue, the executive director position at the Montana Catholic Conference came open in the fall of 2013. At my wife's urging, I decided to apply but wasn't overly optimistic given my lack of specific experience in policy work. But God writes straight with crooked lines and within a couple of months of applying I accepted the position and closed up my practice. I

haven't looked back or regretted for a moment the decision my wife and I made.

Q: What do you find most challenging about working in your position?

A: Sometimes with public policy work it can feel as though progress is hard to come by and things are derailed by partisan politics. The political atmosphere can be rather toxic and trying to advance the common good in that climate can be daunting and discouraging at times.

Also, the Montana Catholic Conference currently has a staff of only one (me). As one who enjoys functioning as part of a team, this can be challenging. Most people (Catholics included) don't really understand what I do and many are turned off by anything associated with politics.

The colleagues with whom I work closest and who understand the day-to-day challenges and joys of this job are my fellow Catholic conference directors. Despite the fact we are able to gather only a couple of times each year we share a strong bond. Those connections and friendships help carry us through when things get difficult or unpleasant. In politics that's not uncommon.

Q: What do you love about working in your position?

A: The work is challenging, always changing and intellectually stimulating. There's such a range of complex issues with which I get deal there's always a need and opportunity to learn more. I get to collaborate with and learn from wonderful people who are experts and influencers in their various fields, including law.

I find my work quite fulfilling. It makes it easy to go to go to the office when the very nature of one's work entails standing up for human life and dignity and working to promote the common good

Q: What's your personal philosophy on your work as the Executive Director of the Montana Catholic Conference?

A: I think professional success requires confidence, but humility is also essential. Always be willing to learn from others and continue to grow in knowledge, wisdom and prudence. One's work provides an opportunity to witness to the truth and grow in holiness. And remember, your work is not the most important thing. Keep it in proper perspective.

Q: Tell me about someone or something that has influenced your decision to work in your position?

A: Back in 2013, a friend of my in-laws, Dr. Robert Kennedy (Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas) suggested that with my background and interests I should look at employment opportunities at a

state Catholic Conference. The challenge, he said, was finding an opening at a conference as those jobs were very desirable and people rarely left the position.

Providentially, within a couple months of that conversation, my predecessor (a friend and mentor to me to this day) decided to take a new position and the executive director position came open.

Q: What would you tell someone who is thinking about working in your profession/field?

A: I love my job and find the challenges invigorating. If you think you might be interested in pursuing a career in public policy it might be helpful to get a taste of that type of work through internships, volunteer opportunities, etc. The tasks and day-to-day responsibilities are quite different from what one experiences in a traditional law practice.

That being said, lack of experience in public policy should not deter one from pursuing that career path. Many skills developed in legal practice are extremely useful in policy work.

Just as we need good attorneys in the legal profession, we also need good people working in policy and politics.

I am always happy to share my experiences and insights with others who might be interested in work similar to mine. Just call or email!

Q: What do you do when you aren't working?

A: My wife (Miriam) and I have a 5 year-old and a 3 year-old so when I'm not busy with conference responsibilities I'm busy with family. We are blessed to have a huge network of friends who have children around the same ages so we are always doing fun family things as a group (birthday parties, barbeques, etc.).

Living in Helena, Montana there's no shortage of opportunities to enjoy all the great outdoors has to offer. Though, I embarrassingly have to admit I still have not taken up fly fishing.

I always find time to cheer on the University of Notre Dame (my alma mater) whether on the football field or the basketball court. And I still root for all my hometown (Detroit) sports teams.

Q: How has your experience at Ave Maria School of Law prepared you for your position?

A: The academic rigor of AMSOL and an environment that encouraged intellectual inquiry helped me develop an ability to analyze and understand

complex issues. It also helped instill in me a greater confidence in my professional abilities. That, in turn, has allowed me to take bold steps opening my own law practice and then transitioning into a new line of work with my current position. The grind and demands of law school required me to develop discipline and an ability to prioritize while juggling multiple responsibilities. All of my law school courses and professors were top-notch and I think there's probably something I learned from each one of them that I have benefited from and carry with me to this day. But, there were four professors and courses that profoundly impacted me and specifically helped equip me for the work I do today—Mollie Murphy (Torts), Richard Myers (Constitutional Law), Stephen Safranek (Law, Ethics & Public Policy) and Charles Rice (Jurisprudence).

Q: Do you have anything you'd like to share with fellow alumni?

A: Particularly for those who are recent graduates, don't worry about having your entire law career planned out in detail at this point. Follow a well-discerned path but don't be afraid to move in a new direction, whether that's solo practice, government employment, politics, etc. Most likely, the skills you've learned in law school will in some way benefit you regardless of your line of work. If you think you might be interested in public policy, don't hesitate to contact me.

Ave Law's Day of Giving



On Tuesday, October 16th, 2018, Ave Law held its first annual Day of Giving. Thank you to all of the alumni who so generously gave back to help us work towards our goal. The law school raised a combined total of \$12,910.36. This was good news, given that our initial goal was \$5,000!

Part of the celebrations on campus on the Day of Giving included a heated ping pong competition between our very own founder, Mr. Tom Monaghan, and Dean Cieply (pictured above).



Alumnus Ernest Ricci ('12), pictured left, and alumna Indera DeMine ('12), were both celebrated among Southwest Florida's best young leaders, as featured in *Gulfshore Business 2018 40 Under 40*. Congratulations to both Ernest and Indera for this recognition!

[Click here to read the article](#)



Brandon Nickolas Cooper ('16) was honored to be chosen as a member of the Naples Herald's 40 Under 40 group.



Laird A Lile, a board-certified wills, trusts and estates attorney in Naples, has named Brett C. Gold as the firm's first Resident at Law. [Brett C. Gold Resident Announcement](#)



Angela Benson, CMP and Director of Membership at the American Bar Association Section of International Law recently posted the following about recent alumnus Bartłomiej Milewski '18:

"Foreign Law Student Success Update: [Bartłomiej Milewski](#) (Bartek), just passed the New York City Bar and joined the law firm of Ishimbayev Law Firm based in New York as an Associate focused on technology law.

Bartek hails from Bialystok, Poland and moved to the United States 5 years ago after graduating from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan and attending the University of Warsaw as an exchange student. He then attended Ave Maria University in Florida on a full scholarship and completed a J.D. at Ave Marie Law School, also in Naples, Florida. Upon graduating from law school and moving to New York he utilized all of his resources including being fluent in English, Polish and Spanish to effectively network with small and medium size firms which paid off in his new position.

In addition Bartek just recently joined the ABA Section of International Law and is interested in creating a Polish-American Young Lawyer Network to expand opportunities for foreign students from Poland and other European countries..."

Domino's Farms Alumni and Friends Event

On Thursday, September 13th, the annual Alumni and Friends event was held at Domino's Farms in Ann Arbor, MI. Several alumni graciously spoke at the reception, including Paul Mersino ('08), Erin Mersino ('07), Vincent Vernuccio ('07) and Joshua McCaig ('03).



Alumna Erin Mersino ('07), left and Donna Heiser, AMSL Chief Advancement and External Affairs Officer.



Alumnus Vincent Vernuccio ('07), far left, Sarah Meinhart ('07), second from left, Joshua McCaig ('03), third from left, and Dean Cieply, far right.



President and Dean Kevin Cieply, far left, and Paul Mersino ('08), far right.

Class of 2008 Alumni Reunion



During the weekend of September 21-23, members of the class of 2008 joined together in Ann Arbor to celebrate their 10 year reunion. Many alumni traveled far and wide to attend the event and reunite with their AMSL class members. Professor Miller and Associate Dean Milliron were also present. Special thanks to Kevin Wichman and Kevin Normile for planning and making this a successful reunion!



Ave Maria School of Law Happenings

Swearing-in Ceremony

The newest members of the Florida Bar were sworn in by the Honorable Carol Miranda, Federal Magistrate Judge of the US District Court for the Middle District of

Florida, on September 21, 2018. Congratulations! AMSL wishes you success in your careers! Pictured from left: Daniel Hughes '17, Brittany Cocchieri '18, Chelsea Maukonen '18, David Jones '18, Volodymyr Zakhatayev '17, Nidia Borge '16, Jay Hamilton '18, Tylan Ricketts '18, Presley Davis '18, Courtney Brevard '18, and Ila Howard '18.



Interested in employing fellow alumni?

As alumni at Ave Maria School of Law, you know the outstanding lawyers, law clerks and business professionals Ave Law graduates. If you or your employer are looking for talented long or short term employees, post or recruit from Ave Maria School of Law. Contact [Career Services](#) for recruitment options.

Red Mass Celebration - October 26, 2018



On Friday, October 26th, Ave Maria School of Law hosted the second annual Red Mass on campus, sponsored by the St. Thomas More Society. Mass was celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Dewane, pictured above center, left. Our Law School Chaplain, Monsignor McGrath, pictured above center, right was our Concelebrant.

Remember to watch for an invitation to our third annual Red Mass, to be held in October, 2019.



On Friday, November 9th, Ave Law held a Fitness Complex Groundbreaking Celebration. Compass Group is set to begin construction any day now and the entire law school community is looking forward to watching this come to fruition.

Part of the day's celebrations also included our Third Annual Veterans Memorial. Friends and family of the law school joined together with students, faculty and staff to honor several local veterans. Ave Law is grateful to all of those who have so selflessly served our great nation.

Alumni at Ave



Indera DeMine '12, pictured above, was on campus on Friday, August 17th for a Breakfast CLE/Solo Practitioner Workshop. Indera's component focused on the basics of starting off on your own as a solo practitioner. Stay tuned for information on the next installment of our Breakfast CLE series, coming up in the spring.



On Tuesday, October 30th, the Career Services Office held a Legal Specialties panel presentation. Pictured here are alumnus Jason Gartner, '13 (second from the left), and alumna Mary Fowler, '15 (far right). Jason, Mary and 2 other local practitioners shared how their journey, starting with law school, led them along the pathways to their various specialties in law today.

March For Life Alumni Reunion - Save the Date!

Save the date! On Thursday, January 17, 2019, we will be holding our annual alumni event in advance of the March for Life. This informal reunion will again take place at the Capitol City Brewing Company at 1100 New York Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005



Stay Connected!

Ave Maria School of Law encourages our alumni to stay connected. We invite you to share your personal and professional milestones, join our Networking and Referral

Center, and participate in initiatives to grow and guide the next generation of Ave Maria School of Law practitioners. The Career Services & Alumni Affairs Office also offers alumni the opportunity to connect via a Professional Network on Symplicity. Please watch the video linked below for instructions on how to access Symplicity.



Join the Network

Participate in AMSL Events

Alumni Milestones

Class of 2003

Joshua Skinner is the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator and Veterans Affairs Coordinator at the University of Dallas. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Satish & Yasmin Gupta College of Business at the University of Dallas.

Class of 2008

Eric C Bales was sworn in as an Immigration Law Judge in Texas. [Immigration Judge Announcement](#)

Class of 2012

Benjamin Donovan and family welcomed son Sean Brayden Donovan on August 28th, 2018.

Class of 2014

Jaime Hewitt and Katlyn Cinelli Hewitt ('12) welcomed daughter Ella Hewitt into the world on Thursday, August 16. Ella weighed 9lbs 8oz and measured 20.5 inches.

Jamie (Sammon) Carroll and Robert Carroll welcomed baby boy Robert James Carroll on July 21. "RJ" weighed in at 9 lbs and 7 oz and measured 22 inches long.

Derek Goldstein is a workers compensation attorney at Chartwell Law

Class of 2015

Anthony J. Cetrangelo got married to Kristin Cetrangelo on March 3rd, 2018 at Ave Maria Church. Anthony also became managing partner at Threlkeld & Cetrangelo, P.A. in Naples, FL in 2016.

Class of 2018

Michael Wintercorn and family welcomed a baby boy, Steven J. Wintercorn, on July 8, 2018.

Stephanie Williams accepted a position in the legal department of Blackbird Investments of Des Moines, IA in July of 2018. Blackbird Investments is a real estate investment company that places a central focus on incorporating Catholic Social Teaching into each and every project it takes on. Stephanie is so grateful to have the opportunity to work on projects that will directly support the mission of the Catholic Church.

[Click Here to Share Your Milestone](#)

Upcoming Events

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Alumni March For Life Event

5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Capitol City Brewing Company

1100 New York Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC 200005

Thursday, January 24, 2019

Annual Mentor/Mentee Reception

5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

St. Thomas More Commons

Ave Maria School of Law

1025 Commons Circle, Naples, FL 34119

Amy Howarth
Assistant Director of Alumni Affairs and Outreach
(239) 687 5355
ahowarth@avemarialaw.edu
www.avemarialaw.edu
Ave Maria School of Law, Alumni Affairs

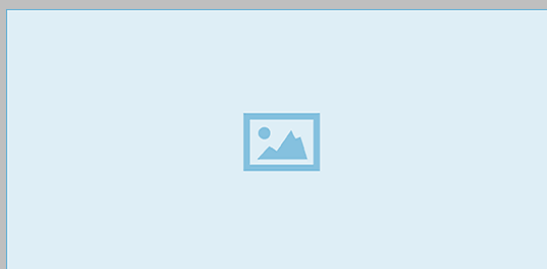


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