At first the door barely budged, but with assistance from Michelle Mitchell-Bromfman, JD ’97, law student Angie Schisler is working part-time for the Office of Legal Counsel at The May Department Stores Company. Schisler, JD ’05, had been trying to get her foot in the door at this retail giant for more than a year before landing her first interview.

“I knew that working for an inhouse counsel department would offer great experiences,” says Schisler. So she paid special attention two years ago when the corporation introduced its Office of Legal Counsel to first-year students. Enthusiastic about her initial contact, Schisler started an all-out campaign to make herself known at May, frequently sending her résumé during the next year.

But May’s Office of Legal Counsel, which had suspended its summer clerkships, had no immediate plans to hire law students. Schisler stayed positive: “Although they seemed to be moving away from hiring students, I knew they had previously done it, and they might consider it again.”

Mark Smith, then associate dean of student services, applauds Schisler’s persistence: “She did exactly what she should have been doing, making contacts and just staying on them. She created her own opportunity.”

Smith recommended that Schisler contact Mitchell-Bromfman, who has been counsel with May for seven years. “I try to hook up students with alums who are willing to help.”

Mitchell-Bromfman, who had coordinated her office’s summer clerkship program, says Schisler’s résumé immediately grabbed her attention. She decided to meet with her, in part because Schisler already had solid work experience at a small Clayton firm.

In August 2004, just as Schisler was beginning her third year of law school, she nabbed her long-awaited interview.

“Angie was very poised and outgoing. She asked good questions,” Mitchell-Bromfman says. “It impressed us that Angie continued to pursue her interest in the company when the clerkship program had been suspended. She took the initiative to follow up; not everyone does that.”

Based on the interview, Mitchell-Bromfman knew that Schisler could “hit the ground running.” So she strongly recommended that the corporation give Schisler a second look when the litigation department made the surprise decision to hire a student for part-time work.

Again, Schisler stood out.

Schisler remembers that the second interview focused on her ability to balance school and work: “I’ve worked throughout law school. I’m the type of person who excels when I have more to do. By working during school, my grades actually improved.”

On November 1, 2004, Schisler started in her position, where she is conducting research and writing memos on a range of issues. She is enjoying the work.

For her part, Mitchell-Bromfman says, “Angie is doing well and has been up to the work we’ve given her.”

As a result of her experiences, Schisler advises other students intent on finding their dream job to “know what your career plans are and be proactive. If you go to Career Services with the right questions and the right mind-set, they may be able to help you find someone like Michelle to open the door. Then it is up to you to proceed through the door—by working hard.”

Alumni Michelle Mitchell-Bromfman (left) was instrumental in helping Angie Schisler obtain part-time work with The May Department Stores Company.