

Judicial Clerkship and Government Lawyering Externship

Clinical Externships Integral to Judge Fleissig's Career

AS A PARTICIPANT in the Judicial Clerkship program during her final year of law school, Audrey Fleissig, JD '80, was privy to some of the thought processes of her supervisor, U.S. District Court Judge Edward L. Filippine, a respected jurist on the Eastern District of Missouri bench.

"Judge Filippine would talk candidly to me about cases he was handling and issues he was facing," says Fleissig, now an accomplished judge, herself, on that same court. "I would get to hear his thinking from a philosophical as well as from a legal standpoint."

Fleissig says she not only benefited from the mentoring she received, but also the two developed a mutual respect for one another. "Judge Filippine's been my friend for 30 years," she recalls. "I don't know how you put a price on that."

Later, in a symmetry of events, Fleissig was nominated to the U.S. District Court seat that Filippine had once held. Today it's Fleissig who talks frequently to law students, offering them insights into the inner workings of the court.

"For instance, if a judicial extern was watching a motion hearing or part of a trial, at the end of the day or during a lunch break, I'm able to share with him or her what I think worked or didn't work," she says of the attorneys' arguments.

"I also discuss with the student why I ruled a certain way, or how the attorneys might have handled the matter differently," continued Fleissig, who also is a longtime adjunct professor at the law school and currently teaches courses in evidence.

Fleissig has experienced clinical externships from many sides—first as a student, then as a supervisor of law students while an Assistant U.S. Attorney and as the U.S. Attorney, next as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Missouri, and now in her current role on the U.S. District Court.

DURING HER STINT in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Fleissig oversaw students in the Government Lawyering Externship. The placements are designed to expose students to either the civil or criminal divisions of the U.S. Attorney's Offices in both the Eastern District of Missouri and the Southern District of Illinois. Supervised by Professor Katherine Goldwasser, law students have the opportunity to work on all facets of investigations and prosecutions that come before the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The experience as a clinic student and now as a supervisor has convinced Fleissig that

RESEARCH EXCERPT

Katherine Goldwasser, Professor of Law
"The Perils of Empowerment" (with J. Aiken), 20 *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 139 (2010)

"We have come to believe that, if the aim is to significantly reduce domestic violence, approaches that focus on empowering abused women are flawed in ways that render them not just ineffective, but actually counter-productive. Our thesis is that the use of such strategies reflects fundamental misconceptions and false assumptions about the nature of domestic violence, about why this sort of violence persists, notwithstanding the panoply of legal remedies designed to combat it, and, ultimately, about what it takes to change behavior that has long been tolerated, if not actually fostered, as a result of deeply imbedded social and cultural norms."

clinical externships are a winning proposition for both the students and the attorneys or judges they serve.

"Clinics and externships offer incredibly valuable learning experiences," she notes. "They help prepare students for handling the rigors of practicing law after graduation."

Fleissig recalls that she entered her clerkship in her final semester of law school with "a pretty good idea that I wanted to be a litigator." During her clerkship, she learned such valuable nuggets as how the court's work flowed, where the clerk's office was located, and who did what in the courthouse.

"As a young trial lawyer, it was wonderful to have had that experience," says Fleissig, who worked in private practice after law school. "I felt more at ease in federal court. I had a better idea of what was going on and what you should and shouldn't do."

Now under the supervision of Charles Bobinette, who has taught in the clinical program for nearly 30 years, the Judicial Clerkship program places students as part-time law clerks under the supervision of local, state, and federal trial and appellate judges in Missouri and Illinois.

Fleissig believes the hard work of her clerks helps the court system run smoothly. "The public deserves to have the finest, most efficient product come out of this chamber that we can possibly create," she notes. "Our experience shows that with proper supervision and guidance, bright externs help us get that work done more efficiently." IIII



Left: Judge Audrey Fleissig, JD '80, left, has close affiliations with the Judicial Clerkship and Government Lawyering Externship, as a former student and then sharing valuable insights as a supervisor through the U.S. Attorney's Office and the U.S. District Court. **Right:** Professor Katherine Goldwasser, left, an accomplished former litigator, supervises students in the Government Lawyering Externship, while veteran civil rights attorney Charles Bobinette, not pictured, coordinates Judicial Clerkship placements.