



Left: Appellate Clinic alumnus Wade Carr, JD '10, currently clerks for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. **Right:** Carr credits Professor Bruce La Pierre, left, and Carr's experience as a clinic student arguing before the Eighth Circuit with preparing him for his current role with the court. Students in the Appellate Clinic generally represent pro se litigants in Eighth Circuit cases.

Appellate Clinic

May It Please the Court

By Wade Carr, JD '10

"TERRIFIED" PROBABLY BEST DESCRIBES how I felt as I stood at the podium ready to address my panel for oral argument. I wasn't arguing before the Eighth Circuit. At least not yet. In one of three moot court sessions organized by Professor D. Bruce La Pierre, my adviser for the Appellate Clinic, my panel of "judges" included Washington University professors and local practitioners ready to subject me to up to 45 minutes of relentless questioning.

The nerves hadn't completely disappeared when I finally appeared before the Eighth Circuit to argue the clinic's case, *Allen v. United States Air Force*, 603 F.3d 423 (8th Cir. 2010). But I was comfortable and confident that I could field any question the real judges might throw at me.

My experience working in the Appellate Clinic taught me far more than how to present a 15-minute oral argument. For several months prior to the argument, Professor La Pierre guided a group of students [now alumni] from the Appellate Clinic—Aaron Block, Nicholas Niles, Shibani Shah, Stephen Winter, Reed Wycuff, and me—as we combed through a challenging record of court martial proceedings, researched military law, developed potential arguments, and, finally, drafted our brief.

Throughout the process, Professor La Pierre provided careful instruction while, at the same time, giving us a significant amount of independence and control over the assignment.

The students decided which arguments would best make our case. The students drafted the briefs. And for the oral argument, I decided exactly how to address the court. Professor La Pierre simply ensured that our work lived up to the Appellate Clinic's high standards. He helped us tackle a daunting task, and we emerged with a much greater understanding of federal appellate advocacy.

Now as a clerk to the Honorable Lavenski R. Smith on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, I'm viewing the appellate process from a much different perspective. And I'm finding that my clinic experience prepared me well.

As a clerk, I have come to recognize the qualities Professor La Pierre emphasized—thorough preparation, candor with the court, clear and organized arguments, meticulous editing, to name a few—as the hallmarks of effective written and oral advocacy. My clinic experience has helped me become a more critical thinker and a better writer. On a more practical (and perhaps more mundane) level, my familiarity with appellate rules and practices allowed me to hit the ground running.

I'm extremely grateful for my experiences in the Appellate Clinic—both the joy of working with Professor La Pierre and my classmates and the thrill of arguing my first case before the Eighth Circuit. Just as important, I'm confident that the lessons I learned will serve me well for years to come. ||||

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