Hill ingested the clinic experience like a wonderful meal, and as dessert found his calling as a prosecutor. After law school, he began his career with the District Attorney’s Office in Queens, New York. He handled domestic violence cases for 18 months and then narcotics cases and felony assaults, robberies, and burglaries for three years.

Last winter he left Queens, and in January 2011, Hill joined the criminal division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Washington, D.C. He explains that he changed jobs because he was both interested in the office’s high-profile cases and because he wanted to be closer to his family in Glade Spring, Virginia.

“I love trying cases,” Hill says. “Being in the courtroom was my whole point in becoming a lawyer. I can’t see myself in an office working on contracts or mergers.

“I love the opportunity to interact with different members of the community,” he continues. “As a prosecutor you’re dealing everyday with the victims, their families, and the police officers working the case.”

No matter what kind of cases he prosecutes, however, his job does carry a burden. “The hardest thing,” he says, “is that every day you’re faced with a very serious matter. You’re dealing with someone’s life.

“You want to investigate fully to determine that the right person has been charged,” he continues. “That’s something you take home with you every day. You’re always thinking, ‘Is this the right person I’m charging? Is this the right person that I’m going to trial against?’ Because you don’t want people sitting in jail for something they didn’t do. And you don’t want to let a guilty person go free and not get justice for the victim.”

Despite the accompanying job stress, Hill wouldn’t change anything. “It’s been a marvelous career,” he says.

RESEARCH EXCERPT

Emily Hughes, Professor of Law and Co-Director, Criminal Justice Clinic


“Ever since the United States Supreme Court opened the door to the jury’s ability to consider any evidence offered in mitigation, capital mitigation specialists have strived to explore a wide range of investigative avenues. As part of that investigation, they undertake a significant role working with defendants’ families to develop mitigation evidence. Even though capital mitigation specialists are well positioned to identify and to help stop cycles of family violence before they impact the society at large, in order to safeguard the capital defendant’s constitutional right to a fair trial, the mitigation specialist’s job does not include such interventions.”