They are no longer the same, these new lawyers from the Class of 2002. Five of the recent graduates reflect some of the changes since their first day at Washington University School of Law. In those three years, one found her niche in public service; one learned balance as lawyer and parent; one merged poetry, law, and community service; one took a new career path; and one enjoyed blending the theoretical with the practical. And since graduation, these five attorneys have begun legal work throughout the United States—from Alaska to St. Louis.

A

fter graduation Brooke Browning moved to Alaska, a place where no one can threaten to fry an egg on the sidewalk in August. She’d had enough heat after a childhood in Sylacauga, Alabama, and undergraduate college at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, where she worked the graveyard shift as a disc jockey at radio station WEMM her last year. Then she came to law school in St. Louis. She’d chosen both Marshall and Washington Universities in spite of their climates and primarily because of their scholarships.

When she was making her next decision about location for her summer 2001 internship, she picked the Land of the Midnight Sun. “I always wanted to go to Alaska,” she says. After interviewing with the United States Army’s Judge Advocate General Corps, she was told she could pick anywhere in the world for her assignment. “JAG was happy to send me to Alaska,” says Browning, who worked at Fort Richardson for the military prosecutor.

This spring she graduated from law school as her younger brother Matthew, who had lived with her for two years, graduated from Clayton High School. This past summer she worked as a trial assistant for the Office of Public Advocacy in Anchorage while she studied for the Alaska bar; this fall she is a law clerk for the Anchorage District Court, a level of the state trial court.

Looking back, Browning says the best part of law school was discovering her interest in trial work and public interest, thanks, in part, to guidance from Peter Joy, professor of law, and Katherine Goldwasser, associate dean for student affairs and professor of law.

“Law school seemed like a natural step for someone like me, a nosy person who likes to write,” Browning recalls. Being able to listen for a long time (“I’m a champion eavesdropper”), to retain facts, and to think on her feet earned her a position on the trial advocacy team, coached by David Mason, JD ’83, a St. Louis circuit judge. Mason also helped her find her direction in life, she says. She was one of about a dozen people, including Michael Nolan (see page 13), who won the regionals in the National Trial Competition in 2002; she was also on the team that won the regionals in 2001.

“I hadn’t anticipated that I had a knack for this; I just tried out on a whim,” she says. “I’ve never been interested in topping the heap or making a lot of money. Finding my niche in public interest made me very happy, and I give Washington University the credit for that.”
Poetry is not commonly found in applications to law school. That's one of the reasons Kinnier Lastimosa composed a poem as his personal statement, but he also felt the poem said much about him as a candidate.

In the course of studying creative writing at Northwestern University in Chicago, Lastimosa had also taken a practical course in publishing that exposed him to trademarks. “I became curious about what happened when the brand name Aspirin became the generic aspirin. That made me curious about intellectual property and that led to

At the close of her studies, Claybour had become both a lawyer and a mother. “Having a baby at the end of law school was a great idea—in theory,” she says. Claybour had to spend the last year of law school on her own as her husband had enrolled at Georgetown University’s School of Medicine in Washington, D.C.

Claybour carefully planned her last semester. She worked with Colleen Erker, the registrar, who helped her devise a schedule of classes that required only one final examination since the baby was due during finals week. “I was very pleased with the support I received.”

But Addison Olivia Claybour had other plans. The Claybours’ daughter arrived three weeks early—even before her father could get back to St. Louis.

After graduation Claybour spent her summer studying for the Illinois bar and then moving to Washington, D.C. She is now working in the Washington, D.C., office of Winston & Strawn, while her husband continues his medical studies.

“During law school, I changed perspective,” Claybour says. “It was no longer me against the world. I learned balance.”

She was drawn to Washington University for several reasons: her in-laws live in St. Louis, the School of Law offered a scholarship, and the warm atmosphere found at the School. “When I visited Washington University, I had a good sense about the School,” Claybour remembers. “I liked that the professors’ offices were in the library and accessible.”

She took a course her first year with David Becker, the Joseph H. Zumbalen Professor of the Law of Property and associate dean for external relations. “He’s one of those professors everyone remembers,” she says, because he’s “demanding, revered, and feared.” By the end of the course, “I realized that Professor Becker prepared us not just to know property law, but to be lawyers. I’ve come to appreciate that unspoken lesson.”

Over the years she had often thought about becoming a lawyer. In fact, she partially paid for her undergraduate studies at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, by working in a large law firm in Washington, D.C., and a small firm in Chicago where she worked as a paralegal. “For me, it was an easy way to make money,” Claybour says.

After her marriage to her college sweetheart, Peter Claybour, and their move to California, she decided to try “something different.” But thoughts of becoming a lawyer persisted. So Claybour applied to various law schools.

An African-Caribbean born in Jamaica, she immigrated to the United States with her parents when she was 14. The family settled in the Washington, D.C., area.

Starting law school when she was in her late 20s meant that Margaret Claybour brought experience as well as education to Washington University. She had worked in public relations with a small San Francisco firm whose clients launched high-technology companies and for a French street furniture company where “one of my duties had been to serve as a liaison between my French boss, who spoke a little English, and the city of San Francisco. That taxed my communications skills,” she recalls.

“Volunteering is a good outlet in order to do something tangential to the law.”

C. Kinnier Lastimosa

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“Civil procedure was my favorite course the first year,” he says.

After graduation, followed within days by his marriage to his college sweetheart, Jennifer Cheng, at Northwestern University’s chapel, Lastimosa went to work on complex civil litigation in the Chicago office of Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold.

Regardless of the field of law chosen, Lastimosa says, “if you work with diligence and integrity, then you know that everything in the judicial system works.”

Before starting law school at Washington University, Nolan had a few concerns: “I figured that I was going to be older than most of my classmates and didn’t quite know how I’d fit in.” However, he found himself “pleasantly surprised” once classes began and he met some of his peers. “I’ve met a lot of really nice people.”

He was also surprised by the diversity of the class. “The class is made up of a lot of brilliant, friendly people, all with different backgrounds and interests. I have really enjoyed getting to know many of them.”

One of the classmates Nolan has come to know is his mock trial team partner, Brooke Browning (see page 11). Nolan and Browning won the National Trial Competition regional tournament held February 2002 in St. Louis and went on to represent the School of Law at nationals in Austin, Texas. “I really enjoyed having Brooke as a partner. She had been on the team and competed at nationals the year before, and she really taught me a lot.”

Now that he has graduated, Nolan has joined Husch & Eppenberger in St. Louis, working in the general business litigation department. He had enjoyed working at this firm during the summer after his second year. “Husch
Charles R. McManis

As he launched a new graduate program in intellectual property/technology law, Charles R. McManis, professor of law, was convinced the program would attract students. He knew that local lawyers were signing up for classes a year early, hoping the classes would become part of the LLM program he now directs. These local lawyers planned to attend classes part time either to bolster or begin their education in intellectual property law.

What McManis did not realize was that the new program would attract “people who pulled up roots and came full-time. We had practicing lawyers return to school to retool as lawyers in a field with a future—one of the hottest areas of the law,” McManis says.

For instance, there was Piper Fuhr of Schaumburg, Illinois. She had worked for Motorola Inc. drafting and negotiating large communications systems contracts. Fuhr took a leave of absence because she wanted to advance her career.

“Studying intellectual property satisfied what I was looking for,” Fuhr says. “I was able to study in depth, which I could not have done while I was working.” She focused her studies on how established areas of the law have been affected by technical advances and by science and business trends in intellectual property.

Fuhr had earned her law degree at the University of Illinois in 1984. “I didn’t think of intellectual property then because, at that time, the term referred mostly to patent law. Now it’s a lot more than that and a lot more important to the economy.”

She is now looking for a legal position in St. Louis that will allow her to use her knowledge of intellectual property.

In describing the makeup of the 13 students who enrolled in the new program, McManis says that roughly a third were returning lawyers like Fuhr. Another third were returning lawyers like Fuhr.

The final third were international students, who made up nearly half of the program’s first graduating class. Taeman Kim, for example, came to St. Louis from his post in the Korean Intellectual Property Office.

Clare Priest was one of 45 people in her high school graduating class in Machias, Maine, near the Canadian border. From there she went to a larger school in a larger city: Columbia University in New York City.

“I think my classmates were surprised that I picked a place so big,” she reminisces. For law school, Washington University in St. Louis seemed like a good compromise.

At Columbia, she had majored in economics with a concentration in

Thriving on Theory and Practice

“At law school, every class I’ve taken seemed like the right path for me.”

Clare Priest

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Spanish. Immediately after graduation, Priest enrolled in law school because it offered both the theoretical aspect of economics, which she likes, and practical application to people, which matters to her.

Washington University, she says, "was everything I wanted because of the interaction with the faculty and the students."

The student community turned out to be less competitive than she had expected: "When I was sick in the first year and missed classes, people came up to me, people I didn't even know well, and said, 'I noticed you weren't in class. Would you like to borrow my notes?'"

"At law school, every class I've taken seemed like the right path for me," she adds.

Because she wanted to gain a range of experience, she worked as a research assistant for Dorsey D. Ellis, Jr., the William R. Orthwein Distinguished Professor of Law, and also interned in a prosecutor's office. "It was wonderful to work that closely with Professor Ellis," Priest says. "I liked the contrast between the slower pace of the library atmosphere and the faster-paced office, where people's lives were affected every day."

Since graduation Priest has chosen to practice commercial litigation with Leonard, Street and Deinard in Minneapolis. In the summer of 2001, she had worked in two law firms—one in Portland, Oregon, and the other in Minneapolis. "Cooler weather is in my blood," says the Mainer.

Her partner, Jessica Rosenfeld, whom she met in New York, accompanied Priest to St. Louis and supported her throughout law school; Rosenfeld now is pursuing her master's degree in urban planning at the University of Minnesota. "It's my turn to support her," explains Priest.

Influenced to some extent by her father, who is a lawyer, Priest is now helping another law student—her mother—begin her studies at the University of Maine School of Law in Portland after having taught mathematics in South America and Bangladesh for seven years. "I promised my mother that I'd save all my notes from law school for her," says Priest.

“Washington University has a good curriculum for intellectual property, and Professor McManis, who is well known in South Korea, is a very good professor in this field, so I came to study here,” says Kim, who is now furthering his studies in the United States by researching international standards for protection of geographic indication. He then plans to return to South Korea in May 2003 to resume his government position.

As full-time students, seven of the 13 entering students completed the program in one year, graduating in May 2002.