When Merle Silverstein, JD '51, was a law student, only one class dealt with the nuts and bolts of trial procedure: a one-credit course that didn't even carry a grade.

Typical of the times, "we took the course, but the course offered no training," recalls Silverstein, a partner at the St. Louis firm of Rosenblum, Goldenhersh, Silverstein & Zafft and an adjunct professor at Washington University for more than 20 years. "It was a once-a-week, no-grade course called Trial Practice, and that's what it was—practice. I essentially trained myself in trial procedure after I got out of law school."

Times have changed. Today the School of Law has a nationally recognized Trial and Advocacy Program (TAP) that provides students intense practice in legal procedure that would take years of experience in the outside world. It is a recent recipient of the American College of Trial Lawyers' prestigious Emil Gumpert Award for Excellence in Teaching Trial Advocacy. The School's Trial Team and the Jessup, Environmental Law, and Intellectual Property Moot Court Teams also frequently capture honors at regional, national, and international competitions.

TAP now encompasses trial and pre-trial practice courses, other trial and appellate courses, trial and appellate moot court competitions, and trial-related conferences and programs. Students receive extensive one-on-one and small-group training with full-time faculty; with judges, trial lawyers, and appellate lawyers serving as adjunct faculty; and with dozens of volunteer alumni and members of the local legal community. TAP has more than 400 participants each year, with virtually every law student participating in one or more of the pre-trial, trial, and advocacy courses or student-lawyering competitions.

"Every law school offers at least some moot trial experience, and most offer a trial course and a pre-trial course," says Peter Joy, professor of law and director of TAP, which launched as a separate program in 2002. "The difference at Washington U. is the number of courses we offer and the fact that our program is staffed by both full-time law school faculty and adjunct faculty who are all working members of the profession in St. Louis. Washington U. also guarantees every student an opportunity to take pre-trial, trial, and advanced trial—something few law schools consistently do."

Christopher Macchiaroli came to Washington University specifically because of its trial and advocacy courses. Originally a transfer student from Penn State's Dickinson School of Law, Macchiaroli earned his JD this past December; he is now working at White & Case LLP in New York City.

"At the beginning of a semester, they know very little about trial work; by the end of the semester, particularly in their final exam, which is a trial, they show the skill and the decorum of experienced trial lawyers."

Merle Silverstein, JD '51

"The trial program affords aspiring lawyers the opportunity to obtain top-notch, hands-on, critical trial skills training while still in school," he says. "I knew that Washington University offered me the best chance to develop..."
place where you integrate all the things you’ve learned. It’s got evidence and procedure and substance. It’s a good place to see how all this goes together.”

Joy points out another major benefit: “Understanding what happens when problems go to court is critical for every lawyer, whether or not that lawyer ever ends up in a courtroom. If they’re ever involved in any type of legal situation that might end up in court, they will be better lawyers if they have an understanding of the trial process.”

Silverstein says he gets immense satisfaction from seeing his students improve from one week to the next. “At the beginning of a semester, they know very little about trial work; by the end of the semester, particularly in their final exam, which is a trial, they show the skill and the decorum of experienced trial lawyers.

“I see my ex-students all the time at the courthouse,” Silverstein continues. “And they all say the same thing, ‘Trial Practice was the best thing in law school.’”

Providing Expertise

In addition to the 12 full-time members who serve as professors and coaches in the School of Law’s Trial and Advocacy Program, numerous practicing judges and attorneys serve as adjuncts and coaches, lending their valuable practice expertise and years of teaching experience.

TAP Full-time Faculty, 2003–04
Bill Dorothy
Kathy Goldwasser
Grady Jessup (visiting)
Peter Joy
Scott Kieff
Pauline Kim
Michael Koby
Jo Ellen Lewis
Charles McManis
Kim Norwood
Leila Nadya Sadat
Ann Shields

TAP Adjuncts, 2003–04
Irl Baris, JD ’48, St. Louis attorney
Beverly Beimdiek, Missouri State Public Defender System
Judge Michael Burton, JD ’85, St. Louis County Circuit Court
Gerard Carmody, Carmody & MacDonald
Kate Denner, JD ’92, Denner & Lynn
Mike Ferry, Gateway Legal Services
Judge Audrey Fleissig, JD ’80, United States District Court, Eastern District of Missouri
Marshall Friedman, JD ’65, St. Louis attorney
Judge Jack Garvey, St. Louis City Circuit Court
Amy Gunn, Simon, Lowe, & Passanante
Judge Sandra Hemphill, St. Louis County Circuit Court
Matthew Homann, JD ’93, Homann Law and Mediation
Charles Jellinek, JD ’93, Bryan Cave Felicia Jones, Federal Public Defender
Vanessa Keith, Bobroff, Hesse, Lindmark, & Martone
Cathy Kelly, JD ’83, Missouri State Public Defender System
Paula Finlay Luepke, JD ’90, St. Louis attorney

TAP Trial and Moot Court Coaches, 2003–04
David Fahrenkamp, Edwardsville attorney
Judge David Mason, JD ’83, St. Louis City Circuit Court
Miriam Miquelon, St. Louis attorney
Stephen Palley, JD ’98, Sauerwein & Blanchard
Mark Rudder, JD ’91, Stahlhuth & Rudder
Gilbert Sison, JD ’00, Bryan Cave
Mark Zoole, JD ’88, Hockensmith, Tatlow, & Zoole

Theodore MacDonald, Burroughs, Hepler, Broom, MacDonald et al.
Judge David Mason, JD ’83, St. Louis City Circuit Court
Miriam Miquelon, St. Louis attorney
James Nowogrocki, JD ’88, St. Louis attorney
Jerry Raskas, JD ’59, Goffstein, Raskas, Pomerantz et al.
Lyn Russ, JD ’92, Union Pacific Railroad
Judge Booker Shaw, Missouri Court of Appeals
Merle Silverstein, JD ’51, Rosenblum, Goldenhersh, Silverstein & Zafft
Tammy Turner Walsh, JD ’84, St. Louis attorney
Donald Wilkerson, U.S. Attorney’s Office

David Mason (left) and Cathy Gilbert celebrate winning the 1983 American College of Trial Lawyers National Trial Competition with Dean F. Hodge O’Neal (far right) and Professor Ronald Carlson.