



## Co-ordinator's message by Drew Dowling

It is time again for our spring update on the happenings in the Law Clerk Advanced (formerly Legal Administration) Program.

We have a number of interesting articles in this year's newsletter including a report in Vicki Stewart's article on the new LCAD fast track program. We have an article from our dedicated Program advisory committee chair Theresa Ferguson as well as a number of grad profiles including four profiles from the Walker Head Law Firm in Pickering for which I am partially responsible as I have been associated with the firm for over twenty years. Walker Head is the largest law firm in Durham and has had a longstanding relationship with Durham College and the Legal Administration/ Law Clerk program. Many graduates of Durham College have done field placement and have worked in various capacities with the firm over the last two decades. The four graduate's profiled represent a wide spectrum of law clerk skills from the newly minted grad Skye, the experienced Kayla and Carol Ann to the very experienced senior clerk Michelle. Please have a look at their profiles and perhaps recognize a former classmate from the distant and not so distant past.

Program faculty have had an extremely busy year as we recently completed a formal program mapping process that always helps faculty focus on curriculum review and enhancement. We have a formal program review which will get under way shortly and we invite any of you to participate and help us in this process. Our veteran professor Vicki Stewart is the faculty lead on this latest endeavour and she will be seeking some help from alumni and recent grads as outlined in her article.

I have one final request that would greatly assist faculty in the program in the next year or two. We are currently in a restrictive financial environment and there is not much money in the college system to assist with purchasing and renewal of computer hardware as well as software upgrades. One of the strategies that we are employing as faculty is attempting to lobby some of the more common software vendors such as PC Law, Do Process/the Conveyancer, Divorcemate and Teraview to allow our students easier and cheaper (read free laptop or home download access) to software for training purposes. If any of you have contact with or a relationship with any of these software vendors we would greatly appreciate you putting in a good word for Durham College and all Law Clerk programs throughout the college system to help us get our current student's cost effective access to the various software which are critical to success in the legal field.

Please make sure you read the article on Lesley Wagner's 2012 alumni of distinction award which clearly shows how successful graduates of our program can be. Remember if any of you wish to submit a profile or an article please contact me and let me know. I hope you enjoy reading some of the articles and look forward to perhaps seeing some of you in our program review process.

On a final note as we are only sending out the newsletter electronically, please make sure you keep your alumni profile up to date send any changes to [alumni@durhamcollege.ca](mailto:alumni@durhamcollege.ca). If you are in touch with a fellow classmate, send them a copy of the newsletter and make sure that you remind them to update their profile as well.

## Dean's Message by Stephanie Ball

Hello everyone:

I want to share with you two items of significance to Durham College in this edition.

This past year, Durham College participated in the government mandated Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA). This audit is always a great opportunity to self-assess and benefit from the external assessment of the auditors.

Six criteria are examined in detail, through a college self-study document and an on-site visit by the auditors. The criteria are:

1. Program level learning outcomes for all programs of instruction are set, are consistent with the college mission and the programs' intended purposes, and are appropriate for the credential offered upon successful completion of the program.
2. Admission, credit for prior learning, promotion, graduation, and related academic policies support program development and student achievement of program learning outcomes.
3. Programs confirm to the "Framework for Programs of Instruction" and the Credentials Framework, are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature/titling principles, and maintain relevance.
4. Methods of program delivery and student evaluation are consistent with the program learning outcomes.
5. Human, physical, financial and support resources to support student achievement of program learning outcomes are available and accessible.
6. Regular program quality assessment that involves faculty, students, industry representatives and others as appropriate for the purpose of continual improvement is in place and happens.

We are expecting the formal report shortly, but were successful as a college in meeting all six criteria! This is a significant accomplishment!

The second item is that the program is losing one of its key faculty members, Virginia Harwood. Virginia has chosen to join the Centre for Academic Faculty Enrichment at the college, which is an excellent resource for all faculty within the college. Virginia's passion is teaching effectively, and she will continue to be a fantastic resource for our faculty as she assumes her new position. Many of you will have had the pleasure of learning in one of Virginia's classes and I know will wish her the best as she moves forward with her new responsibilities. While we wish her the best, we will certainly miss her!



I hope all of you are doing well, and I do appreciate you staying in touch.

## The Institute of Law Clerks of Ontario (ILCO) 23rd Annual Conference

By Lesley Wagner



I had an opportunity to attend the 23rd annual ILCO conference held from May 8th to 10th at the Blue Mountain Convention Centre. This year's conference theme was "Take it to the Top". Darla Weir, one of newest part-time faculty members, was also in attendance for Thursday's sessions.

Durham College was one of the many sponsors of this conference, again, this year and was recognized at the conference as a sponsor to one of the sessions entitled, "THE TAX COURT – "THE BEST COURT IN THE LAND" The Honourable Eugene Rossiter – Associate Chief Justice – Tax Court Canada"

I had an opportunity to attend informative seminars and keynoted addresses on various specialized topics. These topics included: The Devil in the Details, how a minute book review assists the diligence process, Leadership and Mentoring for Law Clerks, Gifts by Wills together with Estate Planning and Administration for Persons with Disabilities.

While at the conference, I had time to network with the many representatives of law firms, legal recruitment offices, publishers of legal materials and legal software providers. One of the legal recruitment offices has inquired about starting a scholarship/bursary for our Law Clerk students.

As an ILCO Certification Committee Member, I also spent time discussing ILCO's new certification initiative for ILCO members. This initiative will allow current members who have ten years' experience, in a designated field, to obtain a "Certified by ILCO Expert" designation. The certification process and policies are currently being created and are going to the ILCO Board for further discussion at the end of this month. Stay tuned for more details.

Other highlights included an opportunity for us to speak to Rose Kottis, the President of ILCO, Past President, Lisa Matchim and former Legal Administration/Law Clerk grads, Andrew James (ILCO-Education Coordinator) and Angela (Spatola) Helliwell (Dentons LLP - Corporate Law Clerk).



# Update on Hybrid courses and the Law Clerk Fast Track Program

By Vicki Stewart

I recently reflected on Durham's Strategic plan while preparing to write this article. It has been a year since I returned from my 2011-2012 sabbatical and accomplished my goal of aligning my professional development activities with several of the goals articulated in the 2010-2013 College planning document. A new Strategic plan has just been unveiled and we will be guided by its principles going forward from 2013 to 2016.

While on Sabbatical I explored the College directive toward ensuring program delivery models and services are varied and accessible to meet the needs of all types of learners by designing a hybridized version of the Residential Landlord and Tenant course, which is, taught to Law Clerk, Mediation and Paralegal program students. The hybrid delivery model of this course combines the best of both worlds. I interact with the students face-to-face for a 2 hour per week lab where we explore the Landlord and Tenant Board forms and procedures through fact scenarios and role-plays. One hour per week is online where the students work through modules on their own time and at their own pace. It includes media rich online learning activities in order to appeal to social-media savvy students. I have organized participation in asynchronous online discussions and provided ongoing experiential and connection activities to keep the students engaged. The course also includes live lecture captures and PowerPoint presentations that can be re-visited for learning reinforcement. Hopefully, by incorporating emerging technologies into our learning environment we are matching our students' expectations and technical capabilities. Providing flexible and varied learning opportunities for our students is a constant work in progress in Law Clerk Advanced Diploma program.

I piloted the new incarnation of the Residential Landlord and Tenant Law hybrid delivery to students in the Mediation and Paralegal programs. Here is a sample of student feedback about the delivery mode:

"Having to do a module each week made me accountable. The in-class time is important as it allowed me to learn more and ask questions. I crave regimen. I like that the course was divided into well-organized modules with clear expectations. I could work ahead if I had available time. I will keep my binder of modules as a resource for the future."

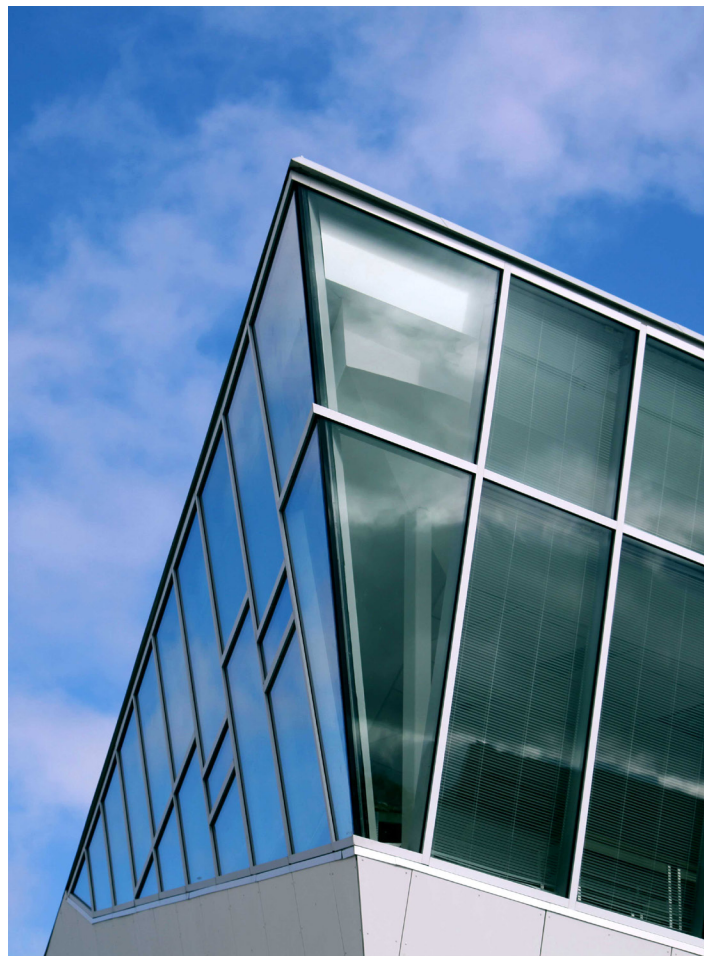
My other sabbatical project involved a collaboration with School of Justice and Emergency Services, Dean Ball, to create a new fast-track Law Clerk Program designed to round out the legal education of Paralegal program graduates. This initiative aligned with the College strategic growth priorities of providing a comprehensive and relevant mix of existing and new academic programs to meet market needs and development of high affinity academic pathways for students wishing to enhance their post-secondary education.

It was economically viable to offer the accelerated program with a spring semester start so that students could be imbedded into existing law clerk courses in the fall and winter semester. If a paralegal graduate wants to top-up their education right after their graduation, while they are waiting to be licensed as paralegals by the Law Society of Upper Canada, the new program will be a career-related pathway for them to consider. We are currently piloting this intensive program starting spring 2013 with 6 post-graduate students. There is lots of opportunity for one-on-one

attention with the smaller class size as I teach a Real Estate Fundamentals course. In fact I have fallen in love with the teaching profession again. After a year's absence from teaching everything seems new and fresh. After all that is the real purpose of a sabbatical... to refresh. Mission accomplished.

I recently attended a Town Hall meeting where the College President Don Lovisa laid out the strategic plan for 2013-2016. One goal that was championed was the conversion of targeted 3-year advanced diploma programs into 3-year undergraduate degrees. Does the Law Clerk Advanced program have degree status in its future? Time will tell.

Next year I am looking forward to new challenge. I will be the lead person on a program review of the Law Clerk Advanced Diploma program as part of our ongoing pledge to curriculum renewal. I am looking for grads to form part an ad hoc committee reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of our program. If you are interested in sitting on such a focus group please contact me directly at [Vicki.stewart@durhamcollege.ca](mailto:Vicki.stewart@durhamcollege.ca). I'll report about the program review in the next edition of Legal Reflections. In the meantime take care and maybe I'll see some you as part of the review process.





## Voice from the Chair of the Program Advisory Committee

By Theresa Fergusson

I always expected that once my children were grown and things at work “settled down a little”, I would finally have some extra time to myself. I can’t say that this is turning out to be the case. I don’t know where I got the idea that things would ever “settle down” at work, and although my children have indeed grown up and flown the coop, they still need a little help now and then (my scrubbing, painting and weeding skills have never been sharper). I also forgot to factor in



the occasional assistance now required by aging parents and, of course, my sweet granddaughter who commands my full attention and free time whenever possible. All whining aside, as much as I value my spare time, I can honestly say that I’ve truly enjoyed and never regretted one minute of my time spent over the past many years as a member of the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Law Clerk Advanced (LCA) program which I am now chairing together with the Office Administration – Legal (OAL) program.

My first experience with the PAC was as a student representative while in my third year of the LCA program (1980/1981). At that time, the PAC members included a judge, local lawyers, local bankers, HR personnel from a couple of the big downtown law firms, alumni and several faculty members. My participation on the committee as a student member afforded me the unique opportunity to meet a variety of people in the industry and to learn a little more about the various issues surrounding being a law clerk at that time. In fact, my first position as a financial

services law clerk came about as a result of my meeting the HR Manager of a large Bay Street law firm while a PAC student representative. This position provided me with 10 years of excellent training and experience prior to accepting my current position as financial services law clerk with Stikeman Elliott LLP, another top Bay Street law firm and terrific employer, where I have continued to work on complex financing transactions for the past 20 years. Today, together with several faculty members, our PAC continues to be comprised of a dedicated group of employers and alumni from a variety of fields within the legal community, providing diverse perspectives on any issue.

I have had the opportunity to be involved in several stimulating projects as a member of the LCA PAC, including being on a focus group reviewing the vocational standards for law clerk programs initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in the fall of 2010. After participating in a survey regarding vocational standards and learning outcomes with respect to the Ontario colleges’ law clerk programs, a few faculty and non-faculty members of our LCA PAC met at York University with representatives of the law clerk programs of colleges in the Western Ontario Division (for our convenience since the Eastern Ontario Division meeting was being held in Ottawa) to discuss our findings in a focus group forum. By the end of the day, it was clear that the standards and learning outcomes for our 3-year program needed to be revised to better reflect its enhanced curriculum as compared to the 2-year programs offered by the other colleges. After much faculty effort and back and forth with the Ministry to re-define their “final” standards and outcomes, Durham College’s law clerk program was renamed Law Clerk Advanced and its vocational standards and learning outcomes appropriately

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amended to better reflect the enhanced curriculum it offers. The Ministry expressed its sincere appreciation for the input and efforts of our group in connection with this review which was most appreciated by all of us who participated.

Now, as chair of the PAC for the LCA and OAL programs, I continue to enjoy exploring issues pertaining to the programs. Our bi-annual meetings are consistently well-attended and our members provide insights that are always well-considered and thought-provoking, often leading to lively debates and resulting in “action items” to be monitored over future meetings. In fact, the faculty on our PAC excel in making sure that our action items are brought to fruition as quickly as possible, often before our next meeting, and to explain any roadblocks that might be impeding the implementation or execution of any of our action items (translation: monetary constraints). For example, a recurring concern of students of the LCA program reflected in the annual KPI statistics has been the purchase of expensive textbooks that were ultimately not referred to by the professor, not withstanding they were noted on the “required” book list. When this issue was brought to the attention of the LCA PAC by a student representative about a year ago, it quickly became an “action item” that faculty immediately acted upon resulting in a marked improvement in student satisfaction in the area of course materials in last year’s KPI satisfaction numbers! They are also currently working on locating on-line copies of the required textbooks to offer students the option of an electronic or hard copy. It’s definitely gratifying to see such tangible results so quickly!

Another interesting event involving PAC chairs is the annual Board of Governors dinner meeting and roundtable discussion where the President and Vice-President of the college provide a local and global overview of the state of post-secondary education and the Deans/Associate Deans, Board of Governors and PAC chairs have an opportunity to discuss and identify opportunities for the college and make suggestions for its evolution over the near future. A common message at this year’s roundtable discussion was the need for adjustments in the methods of teaching, adaptation to current trends in technology and diversification of education. It was reassuring to learn that some of the issues and areas of improvements deliberated on by our PAC, such as the importance of students acquiring appropriate soft skills to allow them to better market themselves to employers and communicate with clients and co-workers, are not unique to our LCA program as they were also expressed as areas of concern by other PAC chairs.

Another topic we discussed at our most recent PAC meeting this spring was the importance of students being diligent in preparing themselves for the competitive job market – not just in terms of marks, but also by learning how to best market themselves through the many resources available to them and by taking full advantage of every opportunity that presents itself. This reminds me of an article I wrote for this newsletter in 2005 where I spoke about the benefits of “thinking outside the box” when considering a career as a law clerk and I still hold true to that belief. My personal career began unconventionally as a commodity taxation specialist with an international accounting firm, and subsequently as a financial services law clerk specializing in structured finance – roles not traditionally held by a law clerk. I am incredibly fortunate to have always worked with people at the top of their field who are not only generous in sharing their expertise but who also understand the economic value in utilizing law clerks in roles usually reserved for junior lawyers – now more important than ever considering the challenges of our current economic climate where clients are looking to save money wherever they can. How unfortunate it would have been if I had not accepted the

positions that came my way simply because they were unconventional and unfamiliar to me. My professors advised me that the position with the accounting firm would be instrumental in opening doors for me in the future notwithstanding that the pay was low and the amount of legal application questionable. Their advice was right on the money and that leap of faith resulted in an incredible learning experience for me, both professionally and socially, and one I would have been very sorry to miss, even though I eventually left that position to get back into the legal arena.

I firmly believe that having an effective PAC dedicated to a program is vital to the success of the program and to its students, and I invite employers and potential employers of LCA and OAL graduates and alumni who would like to participate on our PAC to please contact me. However, a graduate’s success ultimately rests with her/his own resourcefulness, perseverance and ability to stay positive. Best of luck to all our graduates and rest assured, there are fulfilling career opportunities waiting for you – it just might require a little extra patience and creativity to find them!





## 17th Annual Legal Administration Career Fair A Great Success!

*By Kathleen Stewart, Professor*

Legal employers eager to hire highly skilled, soon-to-be Legal Administration graduates descended on Durham College's Oshawa campus on Monday, March 4, 2013 for the annual career fair. Equally eager (and somewhat nervous) students made the most of the opportunity to network with professionals in the field and practice the art of showcasing their skills, knowledge, and abilities.

Though the weather was a little less cooperative than last year, it did not stop the employers from visiting the campus to discuss career opportunities with their firms and organizations. While interacting with employers can be daunting for many students, most realized after the event that it wasn't nearly as overwhelming as they had anticipated. This is thanks in large part to the wonderful representatives who attend the event who are always approachable, friendly, and understanding. I am pleased to report that several students secured follow up interviews with employers and were ultimately successful in securing employment!

The college is grateful for the support of the following employers who attended this year:

Dentons (formerly Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP)

McMillan LLP

Region of Durham – Provincial Offences

Institute of Law Clerks of Ontario

Groia & Company

Cyberbahn – Thomson Reuters

Robert Half Legal

### LEGAL CAREER PREPARATION AWARD WINNERS

Each year, when the third year students in the Legal Administration Program embark on fundraising for the career fair and field placement host appreciation luncheon, they work hard to go the extra mile to raise money for the Legal Career Preparation Award. For the past six years, students have raised enough money for 11 bursaries of \$500 each!

The fundraising efforts are tremendous with students participating in selling chocolates (thank you to all the placement hosts who graciously allow our students to strategically place those chocolates in offices just prior to Christmas!), hosting bake sales, and attending events like the Boston Pizza Celebrity Server night.

The award is presented to students who have demonstrated excellent employability skills throughout their time in the program. Criteria includes demonstrating a strong commitment to their education, excellent communication skills, an ability to meet deadlines while producing high quality work, the ability to take initiative, and strong collaborative work skills. This year's winners were Jennifer Oliver and Stephanie Jerrard. Congratulations ladies!

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*Jennifer Oliver & Kathleen Stewart*



*Stephanie Jerrard & Kathleen Stewart*



*2013 Field Placement Host Appreciation Luncheon*

On April 8th, faculty, staff, and students joined in thanking employers for their commitment to the field placement program for Durham College's Legal Administration Program. Fifteen host agencies were represented at the luncheon which is an afternoon event organized by the third year students as part of their Legal Career Preparation course.

Students apply for positions on various organizing committees and work from January to April to prepare all facets of the event from invitations and decorations to fundraising and catering (and everything in between!). The project is meant to simulate the work flow and challenges faced by individuals when functioning as part of a small team that is part of a larger organization. This experiential learning opportunity helps students develop important communication and interpersonal skills that will be required of them as they embark on their careers.

This year's event was a great success. Tanya Brown, an alumni of the program from the class of 2011, addressed those in attendance and offered great words of advice including being kind to everyone you meet throughout your career, taking ownership of your mistakes and learning from them, and always being the best you can be at whatever task you have been asked to complete.

Each year, the college recognizes an agency who has been a strong supporter of the field placement program. This year, Fasken Martineau was recognized for their longstanding commitment to the support and development of students in the Legal Administration Program. Iwa Fung - Human Resources Advisor, accepted the award on behalf of Fasken Martineau.



*Iwa Fung & Lesley Wagner*

## New Legal Research and Information Management Program Celebrates its First Graduating Class!

*By Nicole Doyle*

Our new program had a very successful first year. The group of students this year was diverse, with some students having a university degree and others having a diploma in Legal Administration/Law Clerk or Paralegal. Graduates with Law Clerk and Paralegal backgrounds were able to expand their skill sets to include more advanced legal research, along with information management techniques. Students particularly enjoyed the hands on work with knowledge management systems (intranets) and e-Discovery/case management software (CaseMap from LexisNexis). Through the exploration of social networking in a legal environment, our graduates are well prepared for emerging opportunities in government, corporate and legal organizations. For more information on this 8-month certificate program which is offered through compressed, hybrid delivery (only 2 days per week on campus!), contact Nicole Doyle (nicole.doyle@durhamcollege.ca) or visit our website:

[www.durhamcollege.ca/legalresearch](http://www.durhamcollege.ca/legalresearch).





## Carol-Ann Healey - Class of 2001

I graduated from the Legal Administration / Law Clerk Program in June, 2001. During my last year at school, I completed my co-op placement at Legal Aid Ontario, Oshawa Area Office. Upon completion of my placement the Area Director offered me a full time contract position working as support staff. This is where my career began.

I worked at Legal Aid for the next year until my contract came to an end in the early summer of 2002; due to restructuring my contract was not renewed. It was at this point in time that I changed my career path and obtained employment as a Junior Law Clerk with a local Family Law Lawyer.

I worked in a small Family Law practice, consisting of two Lawyers and two Law Clerks. The Lawyer I was working with based the majority of his practice on Family Law, although he also practised Criminal Law as required for a select clientele. During my employment with this firm I was mentored by a senior clerk who taught me the ins and outs of clerking in a small practice; I was taught on the requirements of running an office including performing general office duties, completing long hand manual accounting, serving and filing Court documents, vetting new client's, commissioning sworn documents, opening and closing files, etc. In a small practice such as the one I worked in there was no task that I was not exposed to on some level.

In December, 2006, I obtained employment at another firm in Oshawa, Borden & Goddard LLP, whose practice was based solely on Family Law. The firm was a little larger consisting of two Law Clerks, and three Lawyers but soon grew to include four Lawyers, three Law Clerks and a receptionist. My new position provided me with a vast amount of experience and exposure as I was attending Court, meeting with client's and drafting Court materials under the supervision of the lawyer I was working for, as well as all general office duties including vetting clients, opening and closing files, and ongoing file management. The firm was dissolved in 2010, and I was requested to assist in closing down the practice. The Lawyer I was working with was leaving to explore a new employment path as the head of the Family Law Department at Walker, Head Lawyers. I soon learned that the closing of a firm is very complex and detail oriented task. I believe that successfully completing that task has greatly assisted in my success as a Law Clerk, as my day to day organizational skills came into play on a large scale.

That summer I stayed home with my son who was three years old at the time, we enjoyed a fun filled summer together before I returned to the work force.

In December, 2010, I obtained employment with my previous employer from Borden & Goddard LLP who was now the head of the Family Law Department at Walker, Head Lawyers. I continue to work at Walker, Head today where I am responsible for running a series of files under the supervision of the head of the department while also assisting the three associates in the Family Law Department in the carriage of the files they are responsible for. I am also in charge of preparing pre-bills for the department heads approval, forwarding invoices to clients and collecting outstanding balances. This along with everyday administrative tasks keeps me very busy.

As I sit here writing it is hard to believe that I began my career twelve years ago. Time has gone by quickly and I have gained a vast amount of knowledge in that time. I am not saying that my job is an easy one, especially given the field that I am employed in, but I enjoy what I do and I continue to learn new things every day.

## Michelle Andersen - Class of 1994

I cannot believe that it has been close to twenty years since I was a student at Durham College. My name back at Durham was Michelle Ross. I currently live in Bowmanville with my husband, my nine year old daughter and my seven year old son. I am a senior law clerk in the Wills and Estates Department at Walker, Head the largest law firm in the Durham Region.

In September of 1993, in my third year of the Legal Administration Program, I went to the firm of Walker, Head to complete my required third year work placement. My placement went really well and just as I was about to finish my work placement, I was offered a permanent job. I have been with Walker, Head ever since.

When I was first hired at Walker, Head, I worked in various positions, including reception and filled in where needed in other departments such as family law and litigation. In 1996, I moved into the Wills and Estates Department to work for a junior associate named Andrew Felker, and I continue to work for Andrew who is now a partner at the firm. When I was taking the course, Wills and Estates, I thought that this was one area of law that I would never, ever want to work in because I thought it was so boring and I really didn't enjoy the Wills and Estates course very much at all. However, once I started working in the Walker, Head Wills and Estates Department, I quickly learned that it isn't boring at all. Over the past many years I have developed relationships with many clients who often call me in their time of need. Sometimes it is simply to make some revisions to their Will. Often clients are ill or their spouse or loved one has passed away and they need someone to talk to. I believe that clients are comforted in hearing a familiar voice who is ready to guide, help or just listen, on the other end.

It is a bit unusual to have worked at only one firm since my graduation in 1994, but I feel very lucky to have worked for a terrific boss for so many years. I feel quite fortunate to work with great people and to be employed in a career that I enjoy and one that has been very rewarding and gratifying for close to twenty years.

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## Kayla Perry - Class of 2009

Shortly after Graduation, I was able to secure a contract position at McMillan LLP as a support assistant in their Debt Products department. My contract lasted approximately six months, during which time I completed various office administration tasks such as entering dockets, editing and reformatting documents, drafting letters, etc. After that contract ended I did another one month contract as an administrative assistant in their Professional Growth & Management Department. This department dealt specifically with the recruitment of articling students.

After that contract ended I began applying for dozens of jobs in the legal field, as well as any administrative jobs I could find. I was willing to take any job that would get my foot in the door.

I had heard about a few different job openings through a professor Kathleen Stewart. I had emailed Kathleen about a positing she had previously sent, as I was looking to see if she knew whether or not they had hired someone already. She wrote back a short time later, and advised me that the position had been filled. She did tell me that she heard that Drew Dowling's firm, Walker Head, was hiring. She mentioned that I had interviewed with them before for a placement position, and that I had done well. She suggested that I forward my resume to Drew to submit to his firm.

I immediately sent my resume to Drew and patiently awaited a response from Walker Head. About a week later, I received an email from a partner at Walker, Head named Andrew Felker. He was inviting me to attend at their office for an interview. I was beyond excited, as I had delivered some documents to Walker, Head during my placement with CAW, and I had thought I would love to work here one day. On the day of my interview, I put on my best dress clothes, and arrived at my interview with references in hand. Andrew explained all the duties of the job, talked a little bit about the area of law that he worked in, (which happened to be Wills and Estates, my dream job!). As the interview began to wrap up, I felt really confident that I had done well. It turns out that I had done well, because he offered me a job right then and there.

I started work at Walker, Head the following Monday as a legal assistant. I have now been gainfully employed by Walker, head for the past three years. My jobs duties were the same as any other junior assistant. I provided reception relief, drafted basic letters, processed Wills and Powers of Attorney, and completed tasks following the lawyer's instruction. As I began learning more, I was given harder tasks to complete. Over the last year I have been primarily working on Andrew's Estate Administration files. I am able to complete most tasks with little guidance, but there are still lots of things that I still need to learn about this specific area of law. When I graduated I thought I would be a law clerk within a couple of years, I have now realized that becoming a law clerk does not happen overnight, and that I still have so much to learn.

## Skye Bignell - Class of 2013

I walked into Walker, Head just over a year and a half ago for my second year placement. At that time I believed this to be one of many stops to finding my desired work environment. It only took me a few days working within real estate and corporate law, as a summer student, to realize that this is where I wanted to work once I graduated.

I continued to work during my final year at Durham College part-time and was offered a full-time position prior to completing the program. I have only been here short time, but each day I come into work excited and eager face new challenges and learn new skills. Working for Walker, Head has given me the ability to ask questions and receive feedback while continuing to expand my existing knowledge that Durham College has provided me with.

When I decided to return to school and complete the Legal Administration/ Law Clerk Diploma Program I was eager to work with clients and assist them in their legal needs, and working for Walker, Head has allowed me to do just that. I have a very active position that includes following a transaction from beginning to end and building positive relationships with clients.

I hope to remain at Walker, Head, like many of my colleagues, for many years.





## Profile: Amber Marshall, Broker, Mincom New Vision Real Estate Inc.

*1998 graduate of the Legal Administration/Law Clerk program*



During my late teens I spent many hours debating whether I should pursue the more theory based aspects of university, or the more practical, hands on approach that college programs offered. Both had several advantages and disadvantages relevant to my situation but in the end, college was the best choice for my post secondary education.

I investigated a variety of different programs offered at a few different colleges and discovered that Durham College had a great selection of programs that I found interesting. Durham was also a great fit for me as I lived in Whitby and could complete my post secondary education locally, not having the added living and travelling expenses of attending college away from home. Once I read over the course curriculum for the Legal Administration Law Clerk Program, I knew immediately that this is what I wanted to take. The courses sounded very interesting, and the fact that there were two placements and such a wide variety of career options was very appealing to me.

I began my first year in the Legal Admin program and I found the broad curriculum to be both interesting and relevant. Second and third year became increasingly focused and streamlined, allowing me to get an in-depth feel for the separate avenues that a career in the legal field could offer me. Contract Law & Real Estate were my favorite classes and these courses in addition to Title Searching, Conveyancing, Land Planning and Municipal Law, have definitely helped me throughout my career as a Real Estate Broker.

My field placements were fundamental in determining where I would end up. In my two week, year two placement I worked for a small local law firm where I was very fortunate to work alongside an accomplished and helpful law clerk. I accompanied her for several days in office, shadowed Land Registry Office visits to complete title searches, and attended court office trips to file documents. I also had the opportunity to accompany two of the lawyers to family law court and gain some insight into the area of Employment Law. I was very thankful to have my second year placement opportunity and to be afforded a glimpse into so many different facets of the legal profession. After taking the summer to fully process the experience, I realized that as interesting and exceptional as my placement was, working in a law office was not what I wanted to do for my full time career. When third year placement came around, I got an interview at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation and completed my third year placement in their Oshawa office, working two days a week. Here I worked alongside a few different property inspectors, going out into the field with them, assisting in residential, commercial and farm inspections, appraising properties, updating and learning the OASYS database, reviewing valuations for court & learning how customer inquiries and appeals are dealt with.

Upon completion of my three years in Legal Administration, I was offered a full time position at the Oshawa-Durham Sleep Laboratory where I had worked part-time since my last year of high school and through college as an Office Administrator. I accepted the position at the sleep laboratory with the intention of going out and applying for full time work in the legal field. Before I knew it, 3 years had flown by! I liked working at the sleep laboratory but was still primarily interested in a career in the legal field.

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Recalling how much I enjoyed Real Estate, Contracts, working at MPAC and anything property related, I made the decision near the end of 2001 to further educate myself and started taking Real Estate Sales courses in night school while still working full time. In 2002 I was a licensed Real Estate Salesperson. As difficult as it was to leave a good paying, full time position to start a new, commission based business of my own, I did it and have never looked back, not even a glance! I continue to take courses as part of my mandatory continuing education to maintain my license. In 2008 I became licensed as a Real Estate Broker and two years ago, I became a member of the Professional Standards Review Committee with the Durham Region Real Estate Board. I've been a full time realtor for 11 years now. I've developed a fantastic loyal client base and thoroughly enjoy what I do for living. It's different every day, meeting new people, liaising with other realtors and industry professionals including lawyers, law clerks, mortgage specialists & inspectors. Selling and leasing properties, researching property history and sales, negotiating contracts and helping people make potentially the largest investments of their life!

My career is a "non-traditional" Legal Administration career however the program allowed me to discover my passion for real estate. The course undoubtedly has benefited me throughout my career, setting the foundation of negotiating skills, familiarity of legal documents, a thorough knowledge, confidence and understanding of property/real estate law, contracts, land planning, municipal government, zoning by-laws, even landlord and tenant law. I'm proud to be a graduate of the Legal Administration/Law Clerk program and am so glad I chose to take the program at Durham College. The fact that it's a 3 year versus 2 year diploma offered by other colleges, the variety of career options, the phenomenal professors & the opportunity to apply legal theory practically both in class and through two separate field placements, in my opinion really set this program apart from other programs offered. I highly recommend it to anyone considering a legal or legal related career!



## 2012 Alumna of Distinction

*Lesley Wagner*

Legal Administration, 1985

Since completing the Legal Administration program in 1985, Lesley Wagner has spent more than 27 years in the legal sector working at various corporate law offices and has spent her 12 most recent years at Durham College. When she began teaching with the School of Justice & Emergency Services in 2000 she committed herself to the success of Durham College, its programs, and students. Through her professionalism, experience and strong networking connections, Wagner ensures her students graduate prepared to meet employer demands.



In addition to her full-time role as a professor, Wagner has also worked as the field placement co-ordinator for the Legal Administration/Law Clerk program for the past ten years, working one-on-one with more than 100 students each year. She goes above and beyond to match students with the right field placement host, which often results in graduate employment.

Throughout her career Wagner has made significant contributions to the college. She helped shape the foundation for the Court Support Services program (CTSS) and secured the Ministry of the Attorney General's endorsement of the program to other Ontario colleges. The CTSS program has become a program of choice for many second career and mature students and has set the standards for skill requirements entering this field.

In 2010 Wagner was invited by the Ontario Ministry of Training, College and Universities to review and revise the program standards for the Legal Administration and Law Clerk programs. This exercise further strengthened her skills as a professor in ensuring her students were well-prepared when entering the workforce.

Wagner continually promotes Durham College students and alumni as well as its unique programming through her association with the Institute of Law Clerks of Ontario and the Eastern Region Academic Coordinators' Conference.

She genuinely cares about her students' success and continually liaises with community contacts to assess employment opportunities both for current students and alumni.

In her free time, Wagner enjoys spending time with her family and travelling.

LEGAL REFLECTIONS is an annual electronic newsletter published by the Law Clerk Advanced program at Durham College. For more information about the program or Durham College, please contact Drew Dowling, professor and program co-ordinator, at [drew.dowling@durhamcollege.ca](mailto:drew.dowling@durhamcollege.ca) or 905.721.2000 ext. 7380.