The view from the bench: History alum lays down law

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Go down to the courthouse and duck into Judge Janet Protasiewicz’s courtroom. You might find her overseeing a jury trial, setting someone’s bail, or hearing a plea from a defendant in a child neglect case.

“There is no greater honor, in my opinion, than to have this job where the public trusts you with making important decisions every single day,” she said. “I like these cases and I find them interesting. I hope I can help people, the victims and defendants alike.”

Judge Protasiewicz was elected to her seat on the Milwaukee County Circuit Court in 2014 and currently presides over domestic violence and child abuse cases. Before that, you could still find her in the courtroom, arguing in front of the bench as a Milwaukee County Assistant District Attorney.

Before that, she was a history student at UWM.

Protasiewicz’s mother attended UWM to earn a Bachelor’s degree to augment her teaching career. As a child, Protasiewicz often accompanied her around campus, so UWM had always felt like home. She enjoyed her own time at college and loved history so much that she was set to pursue a Master’s degree after she graduated in 1985.

However, law seemed to be calling, and UWM gave her a good start.

“The liberal arts give you the evaluation and analysis abilities you need to be successful in law school. It makes you look at both sides of an issue and the history around it,” Protasiewicz said.

Protasiewicz graduated in 1988 from Marquette University Law School and spent the next 26 years as a Milwaukee County ADA. She started out prosecuting domestic violence cases before she eventually wound up dealing with general felonies – anything from armed robberies to violent crimes.

“Some of those armed robbery cases, we had to work really hard. Like, a bank wouldn’t have a good video of a particular armed robbery. We would try (to find a video) at the gas station across the street to see if we can identify them,” Protasiewicz recalled. “There were many different ways to build a case and put it together.”

Eventually, she grew tired of arguing in front of judges and lobbying for decisions that she thought were appropriate. Wouldn’t it be nice, Protasiewicz thought, to be able to make those decisions herself?

Continued on page 13
From the environment to racial justice, and from medicine to poetry, our faculty, students, and alumni in the College of Letters & Science have an array of fascinating passions and causes.

That's why this year, we are proud to bring you several special editions of In Focus that highlight one area of interest and the many ways the people of the College of Letters & Science approach it.

This month, we shine a spotlight on crime and the justice system. Please enjoy the inaugural issue of the special edition In Focus: Focus On!

What makes UWM Milwaukee’s best university? Its people - like Chemistry doctoral student Margaret Guthrie or Political Science major Daniel Kafka - who work every day to make it so. https://youtu.be/V2KJreGXnWE
There are talented people working on the practical side of the criminal justice system, but crime has an important and fascinating academic component. Every day, researchers are compiling statistics to pinpoint the causes of crime, how to reduce it, and how to make the justice system fairer and more effective.

UWM Sociology professor Aki Roberts is one of those researchers. She sat down with In Focus to talk about her field of study and the nuances of crime and justice in the field of criminology.

Here’s the obvious question: what is criminology, and how does it relate to sociology?

In sociology, we typically try to look for social causes of all kinds of phenomena. Criminology is one of the largest and fastest-growing subfields of sociology, and criminologists focus on sociological explanations for causes of crime. They also take a sociological view of how the criminal justice system, including police, prosecutors, and judges, responds to victims and offenders. Of course, criminologists do not ignore individual causes of crime, such as personality and psychological characteristics, but in general, they are especially interested in factors related to the larger world in which individuals live.

Are there sub-specialties? Criminology seems like a very broad field.

Yes, there are. I already mentioned one distinction, between research that is mainly about crime itself and that which is mainly about the criminal justice system. Within these there are further differences. In the first group, some criminologists may focus on neighborhoods and crime, while others may study differences in crime rates across nations. In the second group, some researchers examine the police while others look at courts and corrections. Research projects may draw on more than one of these areas, but the scope of criminology has grown too large for one researcher to know all its parts.

What is your area of interest?

One of my specialties is homicide clearance. A crime is considered “cleared” when police have arrested at least one offender for the crime incident. It is important to study crime clearance since it is the first stage of criminal justice processing of a crime incident.

When you look at the homicide clearance rate in different countries, there turns out to be great variation. For example, Japan’s rate is 98 percent, while in the U.S. it is only 60 percent. That got me interested in why the U.S. has a lower homicide clearance rate than many other advanced countries.

Did you find any reasons for that in your research?

One important part of this is that the U.S. (compared to Japan and other countries) has a larger proportion of murders committed by guns. That leaves less physical evidence on the victim than when people are killed by means like strangulation or stabbing. In those cases the offender leaves relatively more evidence, often including their own blood, for police to effectively investigate, aiding clearance. In Japan most homicides are by these means, because gun ownership is usually illegal.

Also, in the U.S. there tend to be more homicides committed by strangers (to the victim). Of course, if a murder is committed by a stranger, it is harder to investigate and clear than if it is committed by, say, a family member.

People tend to think that the Japan’s higher homicide clearance rate shows that Japan has a more effective police force than the U.S., but in fact, this mainly follows from the reality that more of the murders that Japanese police confront are easier to investigate and solve. It is like Japanese police are getting easier homework than their U.S. counterparts.

Understanding the cause of crime: Sociology and criminology

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Aki Roberts studies criminology in the UWM Sociology department.
Mock Trial gives real results for skills beyond the classroom

By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Mikayla Ness’ last court appearance was when she presented arguments in a bribery case. This time around, she’s preparing to argue an age discrimination lawsuit.

It’s a big responsibility for someone who’s never been to law school.

Ness is an Anthropology major and the president of the UWM Mock Trial team. Mock Trial is a nation-wide organization that mirrors the actual justice system by asking students to pose as either attorneys or witnesses to argue hypothetical cases. They are given all of the regular court documents – case law, witness affidavits, evidence exhibits – and must follow all of the regular rules of the courtroom.

“We go through the procedures a real trial would go through. We do an opening statement, direct questions, cross-examination, and closing statements,” Ness said. “We get scored, but at the end of the day, it’s not so much which side would have won. The presentation is the important part.”

UWM boasts one of the nation’s oldest Mock Trial programs and is coached by criminal defense attorney and UWM lecturer Brad Bloch. The team competes in up to seven tournaments throughout the school year, including a regional tournament during the spring semester. The top teams at Regionals go on to compete in the Opening Round Regional Championships, and teams that place are sent to the national level.

“ORRCs was exciting. It was the first time we’d gone in a while,” Ness said, recalling her first year on Mock Trial when the team qualified. That year, the hypothetical case was grim; it involved two children who had found a parent’s gun and played Russian Roulette. The team had the option to try a child for homicide or to go after the parent for neglect.

The tricky part of Mock Trial is that the team must prepare to act as both the prosecution and defense. In order to do well at tournaments, they must argue each side during different rounds of competition.

Ness prefers to take roles as an attorney, saying she has no talent for the acting that playing a witness requires. She competed on her high school’s Mock Trial team and still goes back during college breaks to coach and judge. Her glowing report of her high school experiences were what convinced Mock Trial secretary Mallory Nordin to join the UWM team.

“It sounded so cool, and I knew that was what I wanted to do,” Nordin said. Hailing from a family of attorneys, Nordin, an Economics major, finds tax law and public policy particularly fascinating.

However, Mock Trial wasn’t the amazing experience she thought it would be at first.

“After my first year, I honestly hated it,” Nordin admitted with a laugh. “You have to go up in front of people. You don’t have a script with you. I felt like I was so bad at it. One of the reasons I kept with it is because I knew it would make me better.”

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Any spaghetti western would have you believe that Indian country is a wild, lawless territory, but that’s not the case. Just ask Eric Lochen, an Indian country attorney whose job is to interpret and apply federal Indian law for his clients in court and other legal arenas.

“The biggest challenge is understanding the jurisdictional issues involved. There are a lot of questions about which laws apply to a tribe,” Lochen said. “I get questions about employment matters, criminal jurisdiction, tribal governance, corporate formations. You apply general principles and apply case law, but then you have to run it through a filter of whether or not it applies because of the fact that a tribe is involved.”

Lochen isn’t what you’d expect of an Indian country attorney. For starters, he isn’t affiliated with any tribe, and furthermore, he didn’t initially set out to be a lawyer. For nearly a decade after he completed his undergraduate degree at Miami of Ohio, Lochen worked in the corporate and marketing communications industry. After years in those types of jobs, however, he found himself wanting a change.

He found it at UWM in the Master’s in Liberal Studies program where he found a mentor in professor Jeffrey Hayes, who passed away in 2012.

“I sort of stumbled on the program and decided it would be a good fit for me, and I enjoyed working with Jeffrey. He was a brilliant man, a dear friend, a kind soul, and a wonderful champion of his students’ passions and pursuits,” Lochen said. “I used the MLS program as a vault to change careers, and it really worked well for that in an intangible way. You come out of a program like that, and it really helps you develop your mind and think about things in different ways.”

Two years after he graduated from UWM, Lochen used those different ways of thinking to take himself to William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, which is now the Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Lochen graduated in 2008. The college had a strong Indian law program and good connections to local attorneys. Lochen credits one of those attorneys, John Jacobson of the Indian law firm Jacobson Law Group, with guiding and influencing much of his own professional law career.

“I always had a focus on history and American Indian history,” Lochen said. “Combine that with a business background, and at the end of the day, a lot of the work that I ended up doing was giving this same advice to tribes – not just for casinos, but for other corporations tribes have developed, and their governmental infrastructure also. It combined a number of interests and the experiences that I’d had.”

Tribes enjoy “sovereign immunity,” which recognizes them as a separate government entities that are, in some respects, immune to or exempt from state and federal laws. For example, certain provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act do not apply to tribal governments, and civil suits against tribes may be limited due to the legal principles unique to such entities.

Continued on page 14
Read it again: PTSD in prisoners and an alum's forensic career

In the past, In Focus has featured articles that focus on crime and the justice system. Read again about Psychology professor Shawn Cahill’s research into the rate of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among incarcerated populations, and learn more about Anthropology alumna Taylor Kroes’ job as a forensic investigator in the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s office.

Prisoners and PTSD
By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Americans who spend time in prison are nearly twice as likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder than those who don’t, according to a study by UWM psychology professor Shawn Cahill and his graduate students, Tim Geier and RaeAnn Anderson.

The team used data from a series of surveys collectively called the National Survey of American Life to study PTSD. Their research was published in Criminal Behavior and Mental Health. Cahill and graduate student Tim Geier explained their research and what they found.

And you found that people who had been imprisoned were more likely to report having PTSD?

Cahill: Yes. None of these people are currently incarcerated. Everything that we have is looking back, and we don’t have information about where the symptoms were relative to the incarceration. Did they start before the incarceration, during the incarceration, or after?

It could be that PTSD existed before they went to prison and it might be a risk factor for incarceration. It could be that they were assaulted while incarcerated and developed PTSD because of that experience, or it could have developed after release.


Alumna investigates deaths
By Sarah Vickery, College of Letters & Science

Life in the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s office is no CSI. In fact, Forensic Investigator Taylor Kroes gets exasperated when it’s mentioned.

“I don’t think I’ve ever interviewed a suspect,” she said. “We can’t take a liver temperature and tell you when a person died. There’s so much science that goes into it.”

Kroes and her colleagues deal with death on a daily basis. When there is a homicide, a drug overdose, a death in the home, or a death under suspicious circumstances, she is called out to the scene. She will talk with police, interview family members, and pore over medical records to determine what happened.

“We’re the eyes and the ears for the doctors in our office,” she said. “We help determine if they need an autopsy or not, and the doctors can go off our report at the end of the day to help them determine the cause and manner of death.”

Working in the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner’s office has been Kroes’ dream job since she decided to major in Anthropology at UWM. She chose the university because it was within easy driving distance of her hometown, Racine, but she had a hard time choosing a major until she took an introductory anthropology course and got hooked.

Read the rest of the story at http://bit.ly/2k99HhN.
Sarah Kehoe (’10, BA Communication) was promoted to assistant media planner/buyer at Boelter + Lincoln Marketing Communications. She will help to monitor media buying and planning and will work on implementing full-scale media search campaigns for accounts including the Door County Visitor Bureau. [http://bit.ly/2iiWyLJ]

Tim Ryan (‘73, BA Psychology and Political Science) will retire this year after 17 years as the sole owner of the high-end men’s clothing store Harley’s. Ryan anticipates his business, which has become a Milwaukee staple in the men’s clothing industry, will be sold and continue in business after he leaves. [http://bit.ly/2izTdKO]

Todd Willis (’16, Masters of Public Administration) was named the new economic development coordinator for the city of Brookfield, Wis., jumping from position as an intern to his predecessor, Tim Casey, to his new role. Willis graduated in December. [http://bit.ly/2ic0a7X]

Joe’Mar Hooper (’05, Masters of Public Administration) is joining CommonBond Communities, a St. Paul, Minn. nonprofit promoting affordable housing. He is leaving his post as the head of the Business, Community, and Family Partnerships Department in Milwaukee Public Schools to take the new job. [http://bit.ly/2jw11Bh]

Omer Farooque (’11, BA Political Science) has joined U.S. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal’s (D-Wash.) staff in Washington, D.C. as the communications director. [http://bit.ly/2jHBG4X]

Kathy Marschman (’94, BA Political Science) was appointed by Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker as the interim secretary of the state’s Department of Veterans Affairs in early January. Marschman will work with the governor, legislators, and other representatives to ensure benefits are fairly distributed to Wisconsin veterans. [http://wdhne.ws/2jQolr4]

Emily Phillips (’07, BA History and Sociology) and Audra O’Connell (’08, BA Comparative Religious Studies) were selected as two of Milwaukee Business Journal’s 40 Under 40, an awards program that honors 40 young members of the Milwaukee community who have made a positive impact in the city or gained significant professional achievement. Phillips is a financial advisor for Robert W. Baird & Co. ([http://bit.ly/2izzoom]) and O’Connell is the executive director of Walker’s Point Youth and Family Services ([http://bit.ly/2ixeI04]).

Marc Pederson (’04, MS Biology) was named the 2017 Georgia Biotechnology Teacher of the Year by the Georgia BioEd Institute Board of Advisors. Pederson teaches at Paulding County High School in Dallas, Ga., and was nominated by his peers. The award recognizes excellence in Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology (STEM) teaching. [http://bit.ly/2ksXwww]

Natalie Harlan (’08, Masters of Human Resources and Labor Relations) was appointed by United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County as the new director of the Milwaukee Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families, an initiative that aims to reduce Milwaukee’s infant mortality rate. [http://bit.ly/2jpRDyG]

Steve McKellips (’00, MA Communication) was named Senior Director of Admissions and Financial Aid by UNC-Asheville. He begins the position on March 1, after serving as the vice provost at the University of Memphis. He is currently completing his doctorate in communication at the University of Memphis. [http://bit.ly/2k5kg1s]

Jim Nelson (’12, PhD History) served as an expert facilitator leading discussions at a symposium hosted by the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for Politics and the People at Ripon College for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. [http://oshko.sh/2iyvVdc]

David Herro (’85, MA Economics) was named Morningstar’s 2016 International-Stock Fund Manager of the year for Oakmark International. Herro serves as the Chief Investment Officer of International Equities and portfolio manager of four Oakmark Funds. [http://bit.ly/2jfaPq5]
Upcoming Events

Feb. 2

Feb. 3


Biological Sciences Colloquium: Modeling vaccination strategies for management of sylvatic plague. 4 p.m. Lapham N101. Hosted by Emily Latch, UWM.

Feb. 3 - Feb. 24
Planetarium Show: Life of a Star. 7 p.m. Manfred Olson Planetarium. Tickets are $4. Show runs Fridays at 7 p.m. http://uwm.edu/planetarium/

Science Bag: All About Vitamin D! 8 p.m. Physics 137. Free and open to the public. Alexander Arnold shares amazing facts about vitamin D. Show runs Fridays at 8 p.m and Sunday, Feb. 12 at 2 p.m. https://uwm.edu/science-bag/

Feb. 9

Feb. 12
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Feb. 13

Feb. 15

Feb. 16

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Criminology

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This point is important even in comparisons within the U.S. Police cannot control what kinds of murders occur in their jurisdiction. Yet, the homicide clearance rate is often used to judge police performance. This isn’t really fair to some departments, as their seemingly poor performance may reflect the sort of homicide cases that they have to investigate, rather than the genuine effectiveness of their police work. One of my studies statistically adjusted for the fact some department have more easy-to-investigate homicide cases than others. In some cases this adjusted measure suggested a much different assessment of an agency’s effectiveness than one would get from the raw clearance rate.

What kind of jobs can undergraduates get with a criminology concentration?

Many undergraduates who studied criminology later get jobs in law enforcement and other parts of the criminal justice system. Some go onto law school. Others students find jobs with government, non-profit, and community organizations. Because criminology uses data and data analysis – I teach one class on data analysis using social and crime data – some of my students have gotten jobs as data analysts supporting research on crime being done by state or local government agencies.

This is an impossibly broad question, but – in your estimation – why do people commit crimes?

It is hard to pinpoint “the cause of crime”, not just because criminology is a relatively young field and still has much to discover, but because so much depends on the specific circumstances of a particular time and place. However, there are some regularities that seem pretty well-established. For example, one relatively consistent social predictor of crime is income inequality. Societies with higher levels of income inequality like the U.S. tend to suffer from higher crime rates. You compare yourself to economically well-off members of the community, and for many people, that creates economic strain or stress. This feeling of relative deprivation is associated with many kinds of criminal behavior. On the other hand, it’s probably easier to live with one’s own absolute poverty if everyone else around is also poor.

While economic factors are clearly significant, it is also important to understand what limits or enhances a community’s ability to work together to control crime. For example, a community with many short-term residents or which lacks trust in police may struggle more with crime. Large-scale societal changes are important too. For instance, when women typically stayed at home, their exposure to victimization and opportunity for offending were both limited. The improved status of women brought lifestyle changes that increased exposure to victimization, and also created more potential for crime-inducing feelings of blocked opportunity to fulfill economic goals. Women’s offending and victimization is still quite different from men’s, but these changes should narrow this gap.

Upcoming events

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Feb. 17
Geography colloquium: The rise of the shortgrass prairie. 3 p.m. AGS Library. Glen Fredlund, UWM. http://bit.ly/2ja6qik

Feb. 22
Foreign Language and Literature Lecture - Rewriting the Modernist Encounter: ‘At the Hawk’s Well’ and the Dance Poem Movement in Japan. 3:30 p.m. Greene Hall. Tara Rodman, Northwestern University. http://bit.ly/2jD2u6g

Feb. 23
Rebecca Neumann (Economics) was named as one of the winners the 2016 Governor’s Financial Literacy Award. Winners are chosen by the Governor’s Council on Financial Literacy for their efforts to develop the financial capabilities of Wisconsin citizens. Neumann was selected in the “Legacy” category, an award given to organizations, businesses, and individuals whose purpose and heritage is ingrained in sustained financial literacy and capability. [http://bit.ly/2j18Mzq](http://bit.ly/2j18Mzq)

The American Political Science Association (APSA) named Kennia Coronado (Political Science and Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latin@ Studies) a 2017-2018 APSA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) Fellow. The MFP is tasked with increasing the number of under-represented scholars in the political science discipline.

Coronado is a senior and a recipient of the Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship for Brazilian Portuguese. She studied at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, is a McNair Scholar, and participated in the 2016 APSA Ralph Bunche Summer Institute. Coming from a community where many are undocumented, Kennia spent the past several years as a community organizer advocating for immigrant rights. Her research interests include collective action/social protest; immigration policy; and Latin American, race and ethnic politics.

Abbas Ourmazd (Physics) has been appointed to the Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Board Committee of the Department of Energy.

The UWM Psychology Department was approved to join the Clinical Child and Pediatric Psychology Training Council. This group includes Clinical Psychology doctoral, internship, and postdoctoral programs that focus on science and practice training in Child Clinical and Pediatric Psychology across the country. UWM will become part of discussions about how to best promote the advancement of graduate and postgraduate education and training in clinical child and adolescent psychology and pediatric psychology. [http://bit.ly/2iyyvQg](http://bit.ly/2iyyvQg)

### Laurels, Accolades, and Grant Awards

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### Planetarium Show: Life of a Star

**Do you ever look up at the night sky and wonder how those stars got there? The UWM Planetarium is answering that question with the "Life of the Star" show.**

**Planetarium Director, Jean Creighton, will discuss the evolution of the star, all the way from birth to black holes.**

**Where:** Manfred Olson Planetarium, 1900 E. Kenwood Blvd.

**When:** Fridays Feb. 3-24, 7-8 p.m.

**Cost:** $4

**More Information:** [uwm.edu/planetarium/](http://uwm.edu/planetarium/)

Lawmakers should not be so quick to dismiss a class at UW-Madison called “The Problem of Whiteness,” argued Gregory Jay (English) in a letter to the editor in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. [http://bit.ly/2j1jq5B]

Krista Lisdahl’s (Psychology) research was featured in an Inquisitr.com article reporting on increased marijuana use among teens in states where marijuana has been legalized. [http://bit.ly/2hMyvXL] She was also quoted in a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article about UWM joining the largest long-term study of childhood brain development and health in the U.S. [http://bit.ly/2jCUeNP]


Lecturer Katherine Milco (Religious Studies) presented at the Anaphora Institute near Cairo, Egypt, at a major ecumenical conference in December exploring the theme, “Saint Irenaeus and Enlightened Humanity.” [http://bit.ly/2j5qjD3]

Amanda Seligman (History) advised introverts on the all-important skill of networking in a post for the American Historical Association blog. [http://bit.ly/2iQDP0M]

Research by Ira Driscoll (Psychology) suggesting a link between increased caffeine consumption and a decreased risk of dementia was featured in the Bonner County Daily Bee [http://bit.ly/2iZ4equ] and on the BlogHer website [http://bit.ly/2j1cb0V].

USA Today College featured student Amanda Springbob (Communication) for her side-gig as a motivational speaker who talks about coping with anxiety and depression. [http://usat.ly/2hYcOsK]

Working moms still do more housework than their working husbands, but that trend may be changing, according to research by Noelle Chesley (Sociology) quoted on Child & Family Blog. [http://bit.ly/2ifb1hb]

Why does political science hate American Indians? Kennan Ferguson (Political Science and Center for 21st Century Studies) attempted to answer that question in an essay that was featured on the cover of Perspectives on Politics, a journal of the American Political Science Association.

The National Science Foundation is considering defunding the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico, a move that could hurt U.S. prominence in the astronomy field, Xavier Siemens (Physics) said in an article appearing in the journal Nature [http://go.nature.com/2ihjBO7] and Scientific American [http://bit.ly/2ifHSiB].

Students working at UWM’s Innovative Weather have contracted with power company We Energies to provide forecasting, We Energies said in a press release. [http://bit.ly/2jbILxi]

Student Trevor Jung (Urban Studies) supports Gov. Scott Walker’s proposal to cut tuition for in-state students, but hopes to see that cut offset by additional state funding for the UW-System, he told TMJ4. [http://bit.ly/2jOhQf2]

There are some physical and visceral components of the sociology of plants, writes Jennifer Jordan (Sociology) on the London School of Economics and Political Science blog. [http://bit.ly/2jHPc3D]

Survey says – Marika McGhee (Physics) was amazing on Family Feud! McGhee appeared with members of her family on an episode of the popular game show, hosted by Steve Harvey, which aired on Jan. 23. [http://bit.ly/2kt2Q01]
Several women from the Milwaukee area traveled to Washington, D.C. for the Women's March on Washington in mid-January, including students Chelsea Miller (Psychology), as quoted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (http://bit.ly/2k0PTt9), and Emily Wright (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies), as quoted on WUWM (http://bit.ly/2jQQBKl).

Joel Berkowitz (Jewish Studies) added his name to a long list of scholars who signed an open letter published on JewishJournal.com urging Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) to oppose President Donald Trump’s nomination for the ambassador to Israel.

Graduate student Ej Basa (English) sat on the panel of a roundtable discussion regarding the humanities and career paths at Northwestern University. http://bit.ly/2iEPJGJ

Latinos make up about 10 percent of metro Milwaukee’s population, according to a study by the Center for Economic Development quoted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. http://bit.ly/2jtDgKC

History should not be so quick to condemn Herbert Hoover’s presidency, Glen Jeansonne (emeritus History) argues in his new biography on the former president, which was reviewed in the Weekly Standard (http://tws.io/2jSRR00) and on History News Network (http://bit.ly/2ihZ9Ms).


The United States and Russia have entered the Cold War 2.0, Jeffrey Sommers (Africology and Global Studies) opined in The Nation. http://bit.ly/2jeK5M2

Felipe Alberto (Biological Sciences) was part of a research project that discovered how quickly underwater kelp forests could recover from destructive events, which was reviewed in the Santa Barbara Current. http://bit.ly/2jkrBtv

Cerebral television shows like “Sherlock” or “Westworld” run the risk of getting hung up on their own brilliance, Elana Levine (Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies) told Quartz. http://bit.ly/2koOuwJ
With that thought, she ran for Circuit Court in 2013. The race was politically charged; her opponent was governor-appointed Judge Rebecca Bradley, and Protasiewicz lost by a slim margin. The next year she ran unopposed, and is now serving a six-year term that will end in 2020.

Sitting on the bench gave Protasiewicz a new perspective on court proceedings.

“You go from being an advocate to a magistrate. Anytime I sentence anybody, I look at a number of factors: how serious the crime is, the need to protect the public, and what I know about the character of the person I’m sentencing,” she said. “You have a lot of discretion to do what you think is right.”

Protasiewicz does get her share of dangerous defendants, but she often sees defendants whose circumstances who need assistance more than punishment.

Those are the cases that reveal what she sees as the strengths and weaknesses of the justice system. The courts have many helpful programs in place – drug treatment courts, for example – to help offenders become more productive members of society. Unfortunately, there aren’t enough resources to serve everyone’s needs.

Protasiewicz particularly remembers a mother charged with child neglect who had not completed her court-ordered programming. She had been evicted because of her conviction and worked two jobs to cover the cost of her hotel room, leaving her no time for classes. There were few community resources to help her find affordable housing.

“People have some serious challenges that I think it’s important that we stay aware of,” Protasiewicz said, but, “You have to take yourself out of the advocate role and be a neutral magistrate, listening to both sides and drawing your conclusions, judging as though you have no horse in the race.”

After her term is over, Protasiewicz has a few options. She loves her job, but her dream is to one day run for Congress. If the circumstances are right in a few years, she said, she’ll consider running.

Until then, you’ll find her down in the county courthouse.

Scholarship applications are open

The Scholarship application process for 2017-18 (next school year, starting in September) is now open. Students who will be sophomores, juniors and seniors by Aug. 31, 2017 are eligible to apply. The deadline is March 1, 2017.

All college-wide scholarships for Letters & Science are awarded between March and May; students are notified within this time period, but the award payments are for September 2017 and January 2018. If you miss this application cycle, your next opportunity to apply will be January 2018 for the 2018-19 school year.

There is a single application to apply for all scholarships given by the College of Letters & Science. You can read about the scholarships available and apply online at http://uwm.edu/letters-science/scholarships/continuing-student-scholarship.

The application button can be found at the bottom of the page or in the menu on the left-hand side of the page.

Alumna on the bench

With that thought, she ran for Circuit Court in 2013. The race was politically charged; her opponent was governor-appointed Judge Rebecca Bradley, and Protasiewicz lost by a slim margin. The next year she ran unopposed, and is now serving a six-year term that will end in 2020.

Sitting on the bench gave Protasiewicz a new perspective on court proceedings.

“People have some serious challenges that I think it’s important that we stay aware of,” Protasiewicz said, but, “You have to take yourself out of the advocate role and be a neutral magistrate, listening to both sides and drawing your conclusions, judging as though you have no horse in the race.”

After her term is over, Protasiewicz has a few options. She loves her job, but her dream is to one day run for Congress. If the circumstances are right in a few years, she said, she’ll consider running.

Until then, you’ll find her down in the county courthouse.
Mock Trial, real results

And therein lies the value of Mock Trial. In addition to helping members find camaraderie – Ness recounted stories of the shenanigans she and her teammates cooked up during their competitions – the club builds skills that both Ness and Nordin say will help them beyond college.

“Me, personally, it’s helped my leadership skills. It helps with public speaking, critical thinking, and thinking on your feet,” Ness said. “It helps with being persuasive, crafting an argument, commitment and dedication.”

And, if you’re planning on law school like Nordin is, Mock Trial gives you an excellent preview of what to expect. That’s what current students hear time after time from graduates who have pursued their law degree.

“(One student) said she’s already got a huge leg up on people just from knowing the rules of evidence,” Nordin said.

And beyond that, it’s just fun.

“It’s a time commitment, but it’s very rewarding,” Nordin said. “I think it has something for everyone. It’s a fun time and we have a great group of people. I say, go for it.”

Indian country law

What makes practicing Indian law even more challenging is that many times, not even federal and state government employees understand all of the nuances of a tribe’s sovereign immunity. Lochen recalled one case where a state was trying to prosecute a tribal member on criminal charges, while Lochen and his client argued that the case was a civil matter. In a civil case in certain states, like Wisconsin or Minnesota, the state would have no authority to prosecute.

“After appearing in court for that matter, making the oral assertion, submitting the brief, and at the end of the day after several arguments over the phone with the prosecutor, the prosecutor dismissed the case before the judge could rule on it,” Lochen said. “That’s really satisfying, when the prosecutor decides that they can’t possibly prevail, nor is it in their interest to let the judge make a ruling on this matter. It’s the equivalent of a ‘case dismissed’ for my client.”

Over the past 10 years that Lochen has been working in Indian country, including during his time at law school, he’s worked with more than 30 tribal clients, from governments to corporations to individual members. He’s worked in seven states across the country and is licensed to appear in 10 tribal courts, two different state courts, and federal court. He owns his own practice – Lochen Law Offices (http://www.lochenindianlaw.com/) in Minnesota – and loves that he is his own boss.

It’s a far cry from where he started.

“It’s never too late to switch your career,” he said. “What I’ve gone through to get to where I am requires a lot of hard work, especially after being out of school for so long. You think about lost income. Some people have families. Some people have aging relatives that they take care of. Do they want to go into debt to do this? I think about this all the time, and I can’t imagine if I hadn’t done it.”