



# Young Lawyers

Praise

# Gustavus Education

for their

# Success

by Christina Sand '15



The choices students make throughout their time at Gustavus Adolphus College impact the path they will take after graduation. The groups they choose to be involved with, the courses they take, the major they pursue, and the activities they participate in can all play an important part in who they will become.

Four different Gustavus alumni, who are either finishing their last term of law school or are already practicing lawyers around the state, all readily agree that their time at Gustavus played a significant role in getting them to where they are today.

Pete Schwingler '05 is a commercial litigation, class action, and antitrust attorney at Leonard, Street, and Deinard. Compared to many of his classmates in the first year of law school, Schwingler felt very well prepared. "I felt that my classmates in law school weren't accustomed to having to work as hard as law school required," Schwingler says. "I realized I had to work hard, and it was a wake-up call as a freshman at Gustavus, that this is what you need to do to succeed."

Derek Hilding '10 is a third-year law student at William Mitchell Law School who will be starting his career as an associate attorney at Fabyanske, Westra, Hart & Thomson in September.

Hilding agreed that something about Gustavus gave him an edge. "The biggest thing, when I look back to my first year of law school, was that I had such a well-rounded liberal arts background. Compared to other people at law school, I feel like I had a broader background in more areas which helped a lot," says Hilding.

There's no doubt that Gustavus offers a challenging undergraduate experience, but there are also some specific aspects that appear to be giving graduates an advantage in law school. "I think a really big key is the reading and writing component. Gustavus does a really good job preparing people for professional writing, and it helps to have an edge on other students who haven't been trained in that," Hilding claims.

Of course, this means that faculty deserve much of the praise for pushing students to excel and improve their skills. Hailey Harren '07, now a commercial finance and real estate attorney at Gray Plant Mooty, points out several professors who helped prepare her for law school. "I had some great guidance from communication studies professor and pre-law adviser Terry Morrow, and political science professor Richard Leitch, who was a very good mentor as far as helping me correct and improve my writing," Harren says.

Other faculty were also cited as being impactful. "I had a fantastic adviser who really supported me once I made the decision to pursue law school. It was [political science professor] Alisa Rosenthal," stated Krista Hiner '07, an associate attorney at Peterson, Logren & Kilbury. Schwingler praised the mathematics



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Commercial litigation, class action,  
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**Hailey Harren '07**  
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and economics professors, and Hilding also gives credit to professors Morrow, Leitch, and Rosenthal.

In addition to the wonderful professors that help prepare and guide students, specific courses were distinguished for having an impact. “In law school you are groomed to think and analyze in a way you probably never have before. The Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence courses offered a nice introduction to that,” Hiner said about her most beneficial classes.

Meanwhile, Schwingler claimed that his math courses were some of the best preparation that money can buy, “because it forced me to be disciplined to have sound reasoning and supported conclusions, the way I needed to for law school.”

In combination with world-class faculty members and challenging courses, there’s also an extra-curricular component. From tennis, to golf, to cross country, the alumni all credited their time as part of a team as an important factor in their learning at Gustavus. Schwingler (tennis) and Harren (cross country) both earned NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships for excelling both athletically and academically at Gustavus. Other activities were also cited as being helpful, particularly Student Senate and being a student tutor. One important program that alumni claimed to be helpful was the Gustavus pre-law program.

“The pre-law seminar was very practical and helpful to prepare you for the application process and for what law school would be like,” says Harren. In sincere agreement, Schwingler states that having the course with Professor Morrow was helpful because

“law school is a lot different than college. It can be intimidating due to the volume of work you have to do and the fact that the classroom method is very different than what you’re used to. So anytime you can talk to someone who’s been through law school and succeeded, it gives you the confidence that you can succeed too.”

“I was nervous heading into law school, but people from Gustavus have a really good base line so I wish I wouldn’t have spent as much time being so worried,” Hilding admits. Even Harren stated that she chose Gustavus based on her ultimate plan to pursue law school. “At the time there were statistics out about the number of Gusties who went on to highly ranked law schools, so I knew it was possible to attend Gustavus and get in to a good law school.”

The only thing Harren says she would have done differently regarding her time on campus is to go to more presenters, speakers, and extra-curricular activities. “I think it would have been better to get more experiences and a broader world view if I had attended more non-class and non-athletic activities,” she says, highlighting the fact that there’s so much at Gustavus that students need to take advantage of while they can.

For Gusties who strive to “Make Your Life Count,” it’s important to remember that your decisions and the connections you make at Gustavus matter, and to help best prepare yourself for law school and beyond, take some advice from Gustie alums and make each decision count.

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**Derek Hilding '10**  
third-year law student at  
William Mitchell Law School

*Christina Sand is a political science with honors and communication studies double major at Gustavus Adolphus College. Among the many opportunities and activities presented at Gustavus, Sand has participated in India: Social Justice, Peace, and Development Gustavus semester abroad, spent a semester interning in Washington D.C., and been a representative in Gustavus Student Senate. Sand currently volunteers with Pound Pals and Study Buddies, participates in campus ministries of Proclaim and Prepare, and works for the Political Science Department and the College’s Marketing and Communication Office. After graduating from Gustavus in 2015, Sand plans to pursue law school.*

*Design and layout by Anna Franke '16*