

Student Service



The "Day of Pay" Program: Giving a Day Now, So That Others May Give for Their Careers

The 2001-02 "Day of Pay" effort by the Notre Dame Law School's Public Interest Law Forum (PILF) is in full swing. In the wake of the exciting announcements from NDLS Dean Patricia A. O'Hara '74 J.D. that the Law School will budget \$50,000 per year to fund loan repayments for alumni engaged in public-interest work, and from University Executive Vice President Reverend Timothy Scully, C.S.C., that the University will match that amount for a total of \$100,000 available annually for loan forgiveness, PILF has also collected a total of approximately \$4,000 from students to help grow the loan repayment endowment so that the program can sustain itself well into the future. Additional gifts from faculty and alumni have helped to increase the endowment total to more than a quarter of a million dollars. And our collection efforts are far from over!

In 2000, PILF redefined the "Day of Pay" program — which, in the 1990s, had been used to secure financial support for students engaged in service work during the summer — to begin a grassroots, student-led initiative to accomplish two goals. First, "Day of Pay" would raise money to fund an LRAP endowment. Second, the program would help to demonstrate to the Law School and University administration, as well as to alumni, that the student body considered debt relief for those pursuing public-interest employment to be a vital component of the NDLS mission to "educate a different kind of lawyer."

The need for loan repayment assistance is quite urgent. With the skyrocketing costs of a quality legal education, students often have \$50,000 to \$90,000 in debt from law school alone. Nevertheless, the median public-interest salary has stagnated in the low \$30,000 range. Well-educated, but highly indebted, students consequently are often unable to enter the public-interest sector, perpetuating the

shortage of public-interest lawyers. Thus, the poor and disadvantaged continue to have limited access to the legal system, and the majority of their legal needs go unmet.

The "Day of Pay" program functions as a pledge drive. In the spring, PILF accepts student pledges to donate earnings from one day of summer employment. Then, throughout the fall, PILF collects the money that was pledged. Any amount is welcome, and PILF greatly appreciates any amount that students can give. The donations are tax deductible and, for 3Ls, current law students who earned their undergraduate degree from Notre Dame and alumni, the pledges count toward the football-ticket lottery. Alumni are welcome to donate as well, and are encouraged to inquire about their firms' matching-gift programs. The "Day of Pay" program facilitates an outward display of the Law School community's generosity and mutual support for each other's career choices. Even students who work in unpaid or low-paying public interest jobs for the summer donate to "Day of Pay." Students working to support their own families donate to "Day of Pay." And students who may never intend to benefit from the loan repayment program donate to "Day of Pay."

The Law School continues to raise funds for the endowment so that, in the

near future, the interest from the endowment alone will sustain the program. Such an endowment would allow a perpetual program independent of the vagaries of the budget process.

The Law School has also formed a committee to determine the appropriate method for distributing endowment earnings from the loan repayment fund.

Associate Professor Matthew J. Barrett '82, '85 J.D. currently chairs the committee, which includes as members Professor of Law Teresa Godwin Phelps '73, '75 M.A., '80 Ph.D., Professor Conrad Kellenberg, Director of Law School Administration M. Catherine Roemer, and students Sean O'Brien '95, '01 J.D. (LL.M. candidate) and 3L Susan Prchal. The committee has as its goal making recommendations to Dean O'Hara in time to have the program in effect for the Class of 2002. The committee meets regularly to make decisions on the parameters and scope of the program. Watch for updates about the details of the program in future issues of this magazine.

Thank you for your continued generosity. "Day of Pay" would not be successful without alumni participation. Also, thank you to the PILF alumni who laid the groundwork for the current students. For questions or comments about the "Day of Pay" program, the LRAP or other PILF initiatives such as student-funded fellowships, please send an e-mail to pilf@nd.edu, or visit the PILF web site at www.nd.edu/~pilf.

— Susan Prchal, Class of 2003
PILF President, 2001-02
Huntington Beach, California

SBA Student Service Initiatives

Thanks to the hard work of Myra McKenzie, a third-year student from Slidell, Louisiana, who chairs the Student Bar Association, and her committee, the NDLS student body has been busy participating in a number of service projects — both one-time and semester-long.

The semester-long projects included:

- Story-time with Head Start, where law students read stories to preschool children in local schools for one hour per week;
- Tutoring at the South Bend Center for the Homeless, twice each week for one-and-a-half hours; and
- Dinner at Dismas House, where law students cook dinner for the residents of this program, which helps those convicted of crimes to reintegrate themselves into society after incarceration.

One-time or seasonal projects included:

- Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build in October 2001, where law students joined with other University students to build a house for a low-income South Bend family over fall break;
- Kids and Kandy Halloween party, where law students provided treats and fun for children from a local Catholic elementary school;
- Thanksgiving basket drive, for which the SBA, Social Justice Forum and the ND Men's Baseball Team joined forces to collect, package and deliver Thanksgiving meals to needy families in South Bend;
- Nursing home Christmas project, through which law students helped to refurbish a local nursing home's activity room with video games, crossword puzzles and board games after some of the home's supplies were stolen; law students also delivered Christmas stockings with candy to each of the home's 243 residents; and
- Toys for Tots, co-sponsored with the Military Law Students Association, to collect toys and funds to purchase toys for the annual project sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps.

Committee members for 2001-02 include: Tamona Bright, a 3L from Harker Heights, Texas, who served as education programming coordinator; Hilary Baldwin, a 3L from Baltimore, Maryland, who served as children's programming coordinator; Mildred VanVolkom, a 2L from Houston, Texas, who served as compassion programming coordinator; 3Ls Kristina Campbell of Notre Dame, Kathleen Finn of Aurora, Illinois, and Maureen Threapleton of Burlington, New Jersey; and 1Ls Zenaida Alonzo of Chicago Heights, Illinois, Sally Boston of Indianapolis, Indiana, Paola Canales of Miami, Florida, Rebecca D'Arcy of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Brian Josias of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Jim Murray of Huron, Ohio, and Rabeh Soofi of Inverness, Illinois.



Top. SBA and the Military Law Students Association (MLSA) team up in the annual U.S. Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" campaign. Pictured with NDLS community contributions to the toy drive are (left to right): Larry Ward, a 2L from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, who serves on the SBA as a representative for the Class of 2003; Tamona Bright, a 3L from Harker Heights, Texas, who belongs to the MLSA; and Myra McKenzie, a 3L from Slidell, Louisiana, who chairs the SBA's Community Service Committee.

Middle. Members of the SBA Community Service Committee making candy-cane reindeer for the SBA Christmas Service Project are (left to right) first-year law students Devyn Cook of Columbus, Ohio; Rabeh Soofi of Inverness, Illinois; and Paola Canales of Miami, Florida.

Bottom. Members of the SBA with gifts made and bought for the SBA Christmas Service Project. Front row (left to right): 1L Brian Josias of Fort Lauderdale, Florida; 1L Rebecca D'Arcy of Grosse Pointe, Michigan; and 2L Mildred VanVolkom of Houston, Texas. Middle row (left to right): 3L Myra McKenzie of Slidell, Louisiana; 1L Paola Canales of Miami, Florida; and 3L Tamona Bright of Harker Heights, Texas. Top row (left to right): 1L Devyn Cook of Columbus, Ohio; and 3L Maureen Threapleton of Burlington, New Jersey.