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## Dean's Desk: Celebrating Student Excellence in Journals, Advocacy Boards

Austen L. Parrish  
*Indiana University Maurer School of Law, austparr@indiana.edu*

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# Dean's Desk: Celebrating student excellence in journals, advocacy boards

Austen Parrish May 3, 2017 **KEYWORDS**

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For many of us, law school brings back memories of hard work on law journal and moot court. From writing during the first year, to the tedious proofing and cite-checking of the 2L year and the leadership roles of the 3L year, the law journal experience combines the intellectual rigor of law school while building time-management and team-building skills. The same holds true for moot court: research, writing and advocacy come together in the final appellate advocacy rounds each fall before a distinguished group of state and federal judges. Nearly 75 percent of our 2L class at the IU Maurer School of Law participates in moot court each year.



**DEAN'S DESK**  
Austen Parrish  
Indiana University  
Maurer School of Law

The business of putting out a law journal volume or running a moot court or mock trial competition is a time-consuming endeavor that takes incredible dedication and cooperation. As the semester ends and we head into our graduation ceremonies, it's worth highlighting and praising the talented student leaders of this past year. Notably, for the first time in the law school's history, the editors-in-chief of all three of our major journals — along with the advocacy board's chief justice — are students of color.

The roads these student leaders took to get to the law school, and to the helms of the Indiana Law Journal, the Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies, the Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality, and the Sherman Minton Advocacy Board all vary. But Annie Xie, Brandon Dawson, Melissa Logan and Andrea Douglas-Williams have led the journals and the advocacy programs in the same direction: forward.

Brandon Dawson came to Bloomington from Texas A&M. "Indiana Law just made sense," he said, after discovering the school's program on environmental law and the potential for a joint degree. "Professors like Jim Barnes, Fred Aman and Bill Weeks have done everything they could've done to mold me into the best environmental lawyer I could be." Brandon will have an opportunity to hone those skills when he goes to work for the U.S. Department of Justice's Environmental Resource Division later this year. Leading the IJGLS is something he is particularly proud of. The journal is celebrating its 25th birthday in 2017, and so is Brandon. "That means something to me," he said. "I'm the first African-American editor-in-chief of the IJGLS. The first year they published was the year I was born. That's special."

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When Katherine Fay, '14, introduced Melissa Logan to the Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality at Admitted Students Day in 2014, she "knew it was the journal I wanted to be involved in. I've always been interested in issues of social equality," Melissa said. "I was able to get on the journal and had the fortune of meeting the executive team and leaders like Jazzmin Lewis, '16. To see how invested they were in the journal was amazing."

Melissa's grandparents are from Indiana, but they had to move to Ohio due to anti-miscegenation laws at the time. Her grandfather, William Bagby, wrote for the Indiana Daily Student, "but couldn't get a haircut in town," Melissa said. Now his granddaughter leads one of the law school's most progressive journals at an important point in its history. Melissa will join Baker McKenzie in Chicago after graduation.

"My 1L practice group adviser drove home the point that if you were after the best opportunities as a law student, there was no better place than a journal or moot court experience," said Annie Xie. So after her 1L year, Annie eagerly accepted her invitation to join the Indiana Law Journal. Working on the journal has been an eye-opening experience into the world of production schedules, organizational management and leadership.

"What I've found particularly rewarding is the ability to make decisions while still getting input from my peers," she said. "Balancing leadership with being open to others' ideas is a critical skill I'll use in my career."

Annie, who will join Ice Miller's Indianapolis office after she graduates, is looking forward to staying connected with the law school. She said she's happy to have been a part of something as special as the Indiana Law Journal. But even more so, she's proud to be part of a bigger community that has welcomed her and others so warmly. "I look back and see that this is where our school is today and what people can achieve here — and what they're expected to achieve here — it's just a reflection of what this community is really like."

Andrea Douglas-Williams served as moot court chief justice this year. "Moot court is a rite of passage in law school, and placing my footprint on that legacy, especially in a leadership capacity, was very rewarding," she said. "Personally, serving as chief justice has made me a better teammate, problem-solver and advocate. Moreover, it has taught me patience, the grace of being slow to speak, and the value of building a team that you feel supported by and can depend on." Andrea is anticipating a move to Atlanta, where she will begin her professional career.

These graduates, with their compelling stories of leadership, are just four ways in which the class of 2017 holds great promise for the legal profession. But theirs are not the only stories. Each year, our students run more than 40 student organizations and hold leadership roles in our research centers, live-client clinics and pro bono projects. It's nice to celebrate all of their achievements as we commemorate our 175th anniversary this year.

Perhaps more important, these four student leaders reflect the face and the future of a changing legal profession. Today, government, law firms and business communities need and demand legal representation that reflects the diversity of our nation and the interests of the people they serve. The law school plays an important role in this effort. Last year, 51 percent of our entering class were women, and we supported a wide array of scholarship programs that made it possible for lower-income students, including students from underrepresented and minority backgrounds, to attend law school. Annie, Brandon, Melissa and Andrea are just a few examples of the phenomenally talented students that we are fortunate to have in Bloomington. As they head to Washington, D.C., Chicago, Indianapolis and Atlanta, we wish them all the very best and hope they stay in touch. Congratulations to them and their classmates. •

**Austen L. Parrish** is dean and James H. Rudy Professor at the Indiana University Maurer School of Law. Views and opinions expressed are those of the author.

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