What Do Indiana Law Schools Do for Students in Need?

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Lawyers find ways to stay active, make healthy choices

I graduated from law school in 1991 and began working 80 hours per week. I was newly married, without children and had an exercise routine already established. I always managed to fit exercise into my day. In 1998, we were lucky enough to have our first and only child and I took a hiatus from law to raise our child. I could have easily given up on an exercise routine. I didn’t, once again readjusting to keep exercise a part of my life.

In the past year, I returned to the practice of law and living the billable life. Having written this column about the importance of health and wellness for lawyers for the past seven years, I realized that staying in shape in the legal profession was easier said than done. I am humbled at how difficult it is to juggle family life, schedules, work, clients, house/yard duties, exercise and having a healthy home-cooked meal on the table every night. I needed to readjust my routine once again to fit it all in. As I made this transition, I wondered how my colleagues at Riley Bennett & Egloff mastered their healthy lifestyles, despite the demands of Lady Justice. Here are some of their ideas — they work!

A colleague who “doesn’t consider herself to be the post-child for health and wellness” stays in shape by:
1. Playing basketball two mornings a week before work and playing “Old Guy” basketball outdoors on Sunday nights from spring to fall.
2. Playing softball on Thursday night in the Lawyers’ League.
3. Riding a stationary bike trainer in the basement during winter.
4. Walking with his wife and their dog after dinner every night.
5. Golfing nine holes at least once a week.
6. Using a stand-up desk at work and taking frequent walks around the office to deliver things, using the stairs.
7. Keeping nothing to eat in his desk drawer, because has no will power to let it sit there; splitting meals with his wife at restaurants.
8. He credits the firm’s wellness coach for educating and inspiring him with the “New Year, New You” challenge, drinking more water, and scheduling an annual physical examination in January to keep holiday eating and drinking in check.

A colleague who is just as fit now as he was in high school, about 45 years ago:
1. Uses the stairs to go down five flights to the first floor.
2. Runs or uses the Pacers bike share to attend meetings downtown.
3. Works out three nights a week at home.

Bravo! Brava! Bravi! Ballet company to grace Indianapolis

Indianapolis will soon join New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, Nashville, Cincinnati, Milwaukee and other great cities as a home to a professional ballet company. Thirteen years after the curtain came down on Ballet Internationale, Indianapolis has the opportunity once again to support a professional ballet company. Indianapolis Ballet will debut in Indianapolis in early 2018.

Full disclosure: Ballet has always been a passion of mine, a passion that I recognize is not shared by the masses. For many reasons, the addition of professional ballet company to a city does not draw the same level of enthusiasm as the addition of a professional sports team. However, even if you have never been to the ballet or have attended and found it a perfect time to rest your eyes, I encourage you to welcome and support this new professional company to Indianapolis.

A professional classical ballet company is a leap forward for the arts and cultural scene in Indianapolis. Classical ballet will be front and center, but so too will be the music, often live, that accompanies the ballet. Costumes, lighting and makeup will also glide onto the scene. The result will make Indianapolis a more interesting place to live and work, providing the opportunity for a richer date night, field trip or client development outing. Ballet and the profitability of ballet have struggled through the years, and Indianapolis will now have the chance to be part of its revival. Indianapolis Ballet welcomes its own unique classical ballet company that will reflect the Circle City.

The opening of a ballet company in Indianapolis also means that Indianapolis will be a city where a dancer can fulfill a professional career. Local ballet students can stay in Indianapolis and work professionally. A local ballet company provides opportunities for other non-professional dancers and artists to train and dance with professionals. In our profession, we know well the importance of mentoring and opportunity. As professionals, I encourage you to applaud this opportunity for dancing professionals and non-professionals, both adults and children.

If I have not swayed you yet, then here is my plea (plié if you will) for why ballet is good for you. Ballet is beautiful. The integration of movement with music makes Ballet is relaxing (for those of us not on the stage). In our fast-paced, technology-driven lives, ballet allows us to take a deep breath and live in the moment. Ballet is history. Ballet originated in the courts of the Italian Renaissance, but its rise in popularity is owed in large part to Louis XIV, who was quite a dancer himself. Ballet is grace. This most beautiful and vivid example of grace is a good
JUNE 29

Juvenile – CHINS
In the Matter of K.S. (Minor Child) Child in Need of Services; J.J. (Mother) v. The Indiana Department of Child Services 49A02-1701-JC-38.

The Indiana Department of Child Services failed to present any evidence that a newborn’s mother did not have stable housing or that her actions seriously endangered her child, the Indiana Court of Appeals ruled in reversing a child in need of services adjudication.

DCS was notified that mother J.J. had tested positive for marijuana after giving birth to K.S. A caseworker went to the hospital to speak with J.J., but she was uncooperative. A few days later, the caseworker returned to the hospital and J.J. signed DCS paperwork. J.J. told the caseworker she’d be living with her cousin upon discharge, and there were no signs that K.S. tested positive for marijuana or had any issues.

DCS then filed a petition alleging the newborn was a CHINS, citing mother’s admission to using marijuana while pregnant, that she failed to provide K.S. with a safe and proper living environment free from drugs, and that she was homeless and lacked a plan for stable housing.

K.S. went into a foster home and J.J. had a few supervised visits with him. At the CHINS hearing, the court adjudicated him to be a CHINS, saying K.S.’s physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or endangered as a result of J.J.’s inability, refusal or neglect to provide him with life’s necessities. The court also said J.J. uses marijuana and does not have stable housing.

J.J. appealed, arguing DCS didn’t have sufficient evidence to support the adjudication. The COA reversed, with Judge Rudolph Pyle writing that there is no evidence showing how mother’s admitted use of marijuana two months prior to giving birth to K.S. seriously impaired or endangered K.S. All testimony at the hearing said K.S. was doing fine and mother was engaged and loving at their supervised visits.

Mother had moved in with her cousin and her statement to the caseworker that she felt she “wasn’t really wanted” at her cousin’s house does not support the court’s finding that J.J. did not have stable housing, the appellate panel found.

“Although the trial court may have been concerned that at some point, Mother and K.S. would be asked to move out of Mother’s cousin’s house, at the time of the fact-finding hearing, this had not happened,” Pyle wrote.

LAW SCHOOLS

Continued from page 10

University Maurer School of Law where upper-division students are trained to engage in the career, academic and well-being development of the 1L students — have been successful at guiding students to the right services, but also at identifying programming that addresses students’ needs in real time such as small sessions on self-care, the so-called “imposter syndrome,” and professional identity.

Programming in the Indiana law schools not only focuses on mental health and substance abuse issues, but also offers a wide array of opportunities for the students to address gender/ability/racial/sexual-orientation biases and specific challenges veterans face in law school, offers self-care packages and sessions, information on healthy nutrition, mindfulness teaching, and stress management sessions. The schools focus on diversity and inclusion issues which trigger additional law school stress to students affected by implicit and explicit biases, such as the Diversity Initiatives at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law.

These services serve a short-term goal of supporting students to be successful in law school, but also assist long-term in helping them lay a foundation to follow a balanced work-life career path. The intent of law schools is to prepare students to become lawyers who know when and where to seek help when they deal with professional and personal stressors, mental health issues, or substance abuse issues. JLAP has partnered with the Indiana law schools to help fulfill these needs by offering educational programs in individual classes or at programs open to the entire student body to introduce its services to students. These programs have included topics such as “How and When to Call JLAP,” Compassion Fatigue,” “What Law Students and Lawyers Need to Know about the Use of Alcohol and Drugs,” and “Resiliency in the Legal Profession.” Professors often invite JLAP to speak in a variety of classes but in particular to Professional Responsibility classes to bring the connection between attorney well-being and competent, ethical performance into their classrooms.

JLAP also participates in student health fairs, special events on campus, and frequently brings the JLAP therapy dogs to the law schools for stress relief during exams. JLAP offers one-on-one consultations to students and is soon going to start scheduling a JLAP staff member to consult with students on campus once a month. Last year, JLAP and IU McKinney partnered with the American Bar Association’s Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs to create a video to help law students understand that help is available and they do not have to suffer alone — whatever their stressors may be. The video is available to all law schools nationwide and may be seen on the JLAP website at in.gov/judiciary/jlap/. In the compact but intense experience of law school, law students are exposed to mental health, well-being and substance abuse challenges. These challenges are representative of those they will face throughout their legal career as practicing attorneys, and JLAP’s partnership assists schools in bridging that transition.

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