

Wisconsin Legal Education



Among the many UW law students and recent alumni who set their sights on practice in New York City are, from left, Mark Noel, Janell Wise, Anwar Ragep, Amanda Croushore, Brian Jenks (partially obscured), and Erin Ehlke.

+ New York Opportunities

= Perfect Fit



MIKE APPLETON

UW law students and recent graduates share thoughts on choosing to practice in NYC firms.

“I knew I wanted to practice law in New York City, so the only question was which firm to join,” says **Marisa Shemi '07 (Kirkland & Ellis)**. “I interviewed with a handful of top firms, but ultimately Kirkland & Ellis was the best fit.”

Shemi is part of a noticeable trend: new graduates and current students are choosing New York firms for cutting-edge work and the draw of the city itself.

“Our top students have a lot of opportunities to choose from, and many of them choose New York,” says Assistant Dean Jane Heymann, Director of the Law School’s Office of Career Services. “New York is the legal capital of the world, so it’s an obvious choice. Almost every big national law firm has an office in New York. The big banks are there, and most international organizations.”

Mark Bussey '06 (Simpson Thacher & Bartlett) is among those who found New York to be the clear choice. “I worked abroad as a paralegal prior to law school, and coming out of that experience I knew that I wanted to practice corporate law,” he says. “New York seemed

the perfect place to get a broad-based corporate experience. I was particularly interested in Simpson Thacher because of the strength of its mergers-and-acquisitions practice and private equity client base, and also because of its rotation system, which allows corporate associates to work for a period of months in the firm’s credit, securities and M&A/fund formation groups prior to settling into one practice area.”

Lisa Infield-Harm '06 (King & Spalding), who is originally from the Northeast, combined the opportunity to be closer to home with significant professional advantages. “New York is a great place for international transactional work,” she says, adding, “I’ve been able to work in the Middle East/Islamic Finance practice, which is one of our firm’s key practices.”

For **Sinan Kalayoglu '07 (Weil Gotshal & Manges)**, the choice also began with the city. “I wanted to be in New York,” he says. “I had previously worked in the city the summer after my 2L year and enjoyed my New York experience. The firm I chose appealed to me because I liked



Jessica McNamara '09 and Emily Gold '09



Mark Bussey '06



Chiann Bao '07

its people, reputation, and breadth of practice areas.”

The pull of New York was tied to a focus on litigation for **Brian Jenks (Cravath, Swaine & Moore** summer associate). “For litigators, New York is really one of the most exciting places to practice law,” Jenks says. “I wanted to be on the cutting edge of my profession, and that’s what I’m finding here.”

Amanda Croushore (Kaye Scholer summer associate) had the same motivation. “New York is where all of the highest profile, most groundbreaking legal disputes are litigated,” she says. “I wanted to see what it would be like to be a part of that! So far I have not been disappointed.”

Wisconsin-educated attorneys

When the Law School hosted a reception for New York area alumni in January, a Waldorf-Astoria banquet room was filled with Wisconsin-minted attorneys from a wide range of practice areas, public and private, who came to reconnect with each other and greet new arrivals.

“Because we have an increasingly large group of alumni in New York, it’s a welcoming place for graduates,” Heymann says. “In addition, a growing number of our students are interested in going to New York to work as summer associates. This year we have the biggest number of 2Ls so far who are choosing New York.”

Ready for the challenge

UW law graduates who choose to work in New York firms are prepared to roll up their sleeves and tackle long hours and challenging work. “I’ve definitely put in my time at work and then some,” says **Chiann Bao '07 (DLA Piper US)**, “but I entered into this market knowing the expectations. As long as I am working with good people and learning, I am okay with the hours.”

Adam Trigg '07 (UBS Investment Bank), who may win the prize for most hours spent at work, has a similarly positive mindset. “My experience has been every bit the New York experience. I regularly work 100-plus hours a week. On average I arrive home between 2 and 3 in the morning and put in 10-to-12-hour days. While I work way more than I’d like to, I have had opportunities here in New York that I wouldn’t have had anywhere else. In my first year I have had the chance to travel several times to Argentina, Brazil, and Asia, as well as various domestic locations. I have been the lead on a \$200 million transaction and worked on a \$150 billion transaction.”

A wide range of UW Law School experiences helped prepare these young attorneys for their challenging work.

“I focused on courses that related to corporate law and, where possible, those that focused on building transactional skills,” says

Mark Bussey of Simpson Thacher. Bussey cites his courses in business organizations, securities regulation, fundamentals of business transactions, and tax as providing him with a solid background.

Adam Trigg of UBS Investment Bank also says his course in fundamentals of business transactions was “absolutely invaluable for the transactional work I do every day.”

Erin Trigg '07 (Seward and Kissel) comments, “I took almost every business class that the UW Law School offered.”

Lisa Infield-Harm of King & Spalding alludes to the UW Law School’s law-in-action teaching focus as helpful preparation: “I benefit from being trained not just in legal analysis but to think about non-legal factors when helping clients evaluate their options and make choices. That happens to fit in very well with the approach of the partners I work with.”

Others point to their hands-on training. “Clerking for Judge Barbara Crabb, participating in the yearlong Consumer Law Litigation Clinic, and taking Pre-Trial Advocacy all helped me to develop my research and writing skills and to gain experience with client interaction, motion practice, and the litigation process,” says Marisa Shemi of Kirkland.

Jessica McNamara (Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom summer associate) names her clinical work at the Remington Center as the best



Adam Trigg '07



MIKE HALL (9)

Erin Trigg '07

preparation for her summer work. “I knew how to handle real work on my own, and had plenty of hands-on experience with legal writing.”

Emily Gold, the Law School’s second **Skadden** summer associate this year, credits clinical work with developing her client-interviewing and writing abilities. Gold adds, “The other experience that prepared me for my New York summer is having taken Professor Christians’ intro tax class my 2L year. That class changed a lot of my perceptions about what it might be like to practice tax law. When I got to Skadden this summer, I gave tax law a try. Tax ended up being my favorite practice area and will likely be what I pursue as a new associate.”

Anwar Ragep (Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft summer associate) also cites his clinical work. “The best preparation for the work I am doing now was the Wisconsin Innocence Project.”

One summer, two jobs

Three students this year took on the particular challenge of a “split summer.” Anwar Ragep followed his work at Cadwalader with an internship working for the chief counsel at the Internal Revenue Service’s regional office in New York. Jessica McNamara combined Skadden in New York and the Alaska Public Defender’s Office. **John Cornelius (Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamil-**

ton summer associate) split his time between the firm’s New York and London offices.

Ragep, whose chief focus is tax law, had planned to spend his entire summer at a large New York firm specializing in tax work, but when the IRS came to campus for interviews, he was intrigued and applied there as well. With offers from the IRS and New York firms, he thought he would have to forgo the IRS experience, but the Career Services Office had another idea: a split summer.

“I contacted people at the firms I was interested in, and they were all extremely accommodating,” Ragep says. “In fact, every time I contacted a firm, I was encouraged to do a split summer with a government agency. I thought this was an opportunity I shouldn’t miss.”

Jessica McNamara chose both Skadden and the Alaska Public Defender’s Office, pleased that both were willing to let her split her summer. New York was her home territory, while Alaska was a new adventure. “I’m really glad I chose to come here,” she e-mailed from Alaska in July. “People have been very welcoming, and from what I’ve seen so far it is a beautiful state.”

John Cornelius split his summer between two offices of Cleary Gottlieb. “The firm offered half the summer in London and half in New York, and I gladly accepted,” Cor-

nelius says. “The primary challenge was that it takes a while to settle into one office, and when you arrive at the other office you have to start all over. The benefits were that I was able to see more of the firm and get experience in the European and Emerging Markets practices.”

New York pastimes

Newly-hired New York attorneys all have favorite ways of enjoying the city. Mark Bussey favors “running in Central Park and ramen in the East Village,” while Chiann Bao enjoys “checking out the many ethnic restaurants, going to rooftop establishments, and hanging out in Central Park.” Sinan Kalayoglu lists “museums, shows, concerts, cafés, bars, etc.,” adding, “It’s endless!”

For summer associates, firms typically organize a packed schedule of social events. At Skadden, reports Jessica McNamara, activities range from casual events, such as baseball games and a poker night, to more formal events such as Broadway shows and an evening at the Museum of Modern Art. Brian Jenks at Cravath lists “movie screenings, parties, benefits, golf outings, sailing, cooking classes, beer tastings, networking events, and Broadway theater, just to name a few.”

Balancing the demands of work with the offerings of the city is a job in itself, but young attorneys who choose New York wouldn’t have it any other way. “My job has been a lot like law school so far, in that it’s challenging but rewarding,” says Amanda Croushore. “I am very encouraged by that, because it reassures me that I have found a profession that I will enjoy and continue to find interesting. Also, New York is a great place to be. I don’t think I could ever get bored here!” ■



For Three Prominent Prosecutors, the Road to New York Began in Wisconsin

Bridget Brennan, Luke Rettler, and Deborah Landis, all members of the Law School's Class of 1983, share memories of the Wisconsin experiences that led to their New York careers.

The Class of 1983's trio of top New York prosecutors have become colleagues and friends in the course of the twenty-five years since they earned their law degrees and headed east. When the Gargoyle first called Luke Rettler at the New York County District Attorney's Office, where he is Chief of Homicide Investigations, he happened to be on the phone with Bridget Brennan, New York's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, discussing a case. Brennan and Deborah Landis, who shared a New York apartment for four years early in their careers, have recently been on the phone discussing plans to attend their twenty-fifth Law School reunion.

All three speak enthusiastically of their work as career prosecutors, describing the paths that took them from the UW Law School straight to our nation's largest city.

Bridget G. Brennan '83
Special Narcotics
Prosecutor for the City
of New York



Bridget Brennan is in charge of the only agency in the country dedicated exclusively to the investigation and prosecution of major narcotics offenses.

The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (OSNP — often referred to as "Special Narcotics") coordinates investigations into national and international narcotics trafficking and prosecutes approximately three thousand felony cases a year.

As Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Brennan was appointed by the District Attorneys of all five counties of New York, a procedure devised so



that no county jurisdiction problems impede the agency's efficiency. Now in her tenth year as head of OSNP, Brennan focuses on high-level felony cases. Her long list of achievements includes establishing a Narcotics Gang Unit, developing innovative programs that stemmed the flow of drugs into the city, expanding investigations of money laundering, targeting Internet drug sales, and dismantling organizations that distribute narcotics throughout the country.

Twenty-five years ago, law student Bridget Brennan would have found these facts difficult to believe. Raised in the Milwaukee suburb of Brookfield, she had come to law school from a career in journalism. Her intention was to return to journalism with expertise in legal issues to enhance her reporting.

This whole plan was derailed, however, on the day when Brennan gave her closing argument in Professor Frank Tuerkheimer's Trial Advocacy course.

Tuerkheimer, now a Professor of Law Emeritus, remembers it vividly.

"It was phenomenal. I've seen a lot of closing arguments. This was better than 90 percent of practicing lawyers could have done."

A few weeks earlier, Tuerkheimer had been in New York, having lunch with Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, as he usually does when he is in New York. (Tuerkheimer had been an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York when Morgenthau was U.S. Attorney.) Over lunch, Morgenthau had said, "If you see anybody good, send 'em my way."

After Brennan's outstanding argument, Tuerkheimer remembered Morgenthau's request. He left a message for Brennan to come to his office.

Brennan, like Tuerkheimer, recalls the events of that day well. "I had never gone to his office to see him," she says. "He asked me, 'Have you ever thought of working in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office?' I said, 'No, because I've never even been to Manhattan.'"

Although the idea had come out of the blue, Brennan thought

it over and decided to give it a try. She went to New York for a set of three interviews, the final one with Morgenthau. He offered her the job, and she accepted on the spot.

Brennan at first feared that she would have to leave behind all her favorite outdoor activities in a city of concrete. She learned differently, and now shares her enthusiasm for tennis and bike-riding in New York.

In the midst of talking with the *Gargoyle* about a bike path on the New Jersey shore she is interrupted by an assistant. "Can I call you back?" she asks. "Something has come up." Fifteen minutes later she is back on the phone. "I had to do a TV interview," she explains. "We seized four hundred pounds of cocaine in a very sophisticated concealed compartment — everything about this operation looks like an international organization — and I had to describe the compartment so people would recognize the high-level planning that went into this operation."

Brennan was initially assigned to trial work and became a homicide

prosecutor at the height of the crack epidemic. Most of the homicide cases she tried were drug-related, and she remembers feeling a great sense of frustration, wanting to get to the root of the problem. At Special Narcotics, which she joined in 1992, “We were able to pursue the traffickers who were bringing drugs into the city, and we were able to successfully prosecute them. It was extremely rewarding. It was very satisfying to trace the organizations you knew were pumping those drugs out.”

Brennan, who lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two children, still has strong ties to Wisconsin. She keeps up with fellow Wisconsin graduates in New York, and her mother in Wisconsin and ten siblings, most in the Midwest, have all come east to visit her.

“I love the University of Wisconsin — I love the Law School,” she volunteers. “When our entering class of about sixty-five attorneys from around the country started at the D.A.’s office, I was proud to see how the UW and UW Law School were highly regarded here, and that the education I received prepared me well to handle a job in such a fast-paced, complex environment.”

Luke H. Rettler ’83
Chief, Homicide
Investigation Unit
New York County District
Attorney’s Office



Luke Rettler, like his classmate and colleague Bridget Brennan, is a Wisconsin native whose path to a challenging career as a high-level New

York prosecutor began at the UW Law School.

Rettler has been Chief of the New York County D.A.’s Office

Homicide Investigation Unit since 2003. Previously, his positions included Chief of the Asian Gang Unit and Senior Trial Counsel in the Homicide Investigation Unit. In his twenty-five-year career, he has prosecuted numerous major cases involving drug-gang murders, racketeering, and narcotics conspiracy.

It is a very different world from that of Rettler’s youth.

“I grew up on a dairy farm near Hartford, Wisconsin,” Rettler says. “Most of my family is still involved in farming.” He attended UW-Oshkosh and, at the advice of a professor there, he majored in criminal justice and went on to law school.

Rettler’s goal on entering the Law School was to be an FBI agent. This was before he met Professor Herman Goldstein, the Law School’s preeminent authority on the police function, who hired Rettler as his research assistant. Rettler recalls, “Herman said, ‘You should be a prosecutor — and if you want the real experience, go to New York.’”

Rettler’s first view of New York was from inside police cars, when he spent a week “riding with cops” and writing up a field report for his Washington, D.C.-based internship with the Police Executive Research Forum after his first year of law school. His next trip there was to interview for a job with the Manhattan D.A.’s Office.

Rettler was hired directly following his law school graduation, and has been with the D.A.’s Office in various capacities for virtually his entire career as a prosecutor. The exception is a two-year period in the mid-1990s when he worked for the U.S. Attorney’s Office of the Southern District of New York, investigating and prosecuting two major racketeering cases.

“I’ve had an unbelievable career here,” Rettler says. “I love coming to work. There is so much to learn, as a lawyer and as a person.”

Rettler singles out the lack of hierarchy in the D.A.’s Office as one of its great advantages. “There is only one D.A., and that’s Robert Morgenthau. Everyone else is an Assistant D.A., so there’s no cut-throat competition.”

Again like Bridget Brennan, Rettler is at home both in Manhattan and in the Midwest. “My Wisconsin roots are very strong — I still root for the Packers,” he says. “My whole family is there, and I go back to see them.”

He adds that he and his wife now have a farm in Connecticut, splitting their time between it and their home in Brooklyn. “It satisfies my Wisconsin farm need,” he says.

Looking back on the occasion of his twenty-five-year milestone, Rettler comments, “I’ve had a great career here. I’ve been blessed with many opportunities, and one of them was going to the UW Law School.”

Deborah E. Landis ’83
Senior Litigation Counsel
U.S. Attorney’s Office
Southern District of
New York



This year Deborah Landis is marking her twentieth year as a prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New

York. In these two full decades she has conducted and supervised a wide range of complex investigations and prosecuted criminal cases from narcotics distribution to perjury by public officials. Since 1992 she has focused almost exclusively on white-collar crime.

In the late 1990s Landis led one particularly high-profile investigation into a scheme to defraud the



PHOTO: DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

Law School alumna Bridget Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York, inspects a load of more than 1,000 pounds of cocaine seized in a New Jersey warehouse in 2006. Brennan's office worked with other agencies to close in on the six individuals responsible for the drug operation, then indicted all six on the felony charge of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the first degree.

U.S. government of tens of millions of dollars in grants, loans and subsidies (including education grants, housing and business loans, and old-age benefits), which took five years and involved a task force of agents from the FBI, HUD, IRS, Social Security Administration, Department of Education, Small Business Administration, and Postal Inspection Service. It resulted in convictions of all defendants following an eleven-week trial, and brought Landis the Attorney General's John Marshall Award for Trial Litigation, presented to her by Attorney General Janet Reno.

For six months beginning in 2000, on temporary detail from her New York position, Landis worked in Washington as both an Associate Deputy Attorney General and DOJ Special Counsel for Health Care Fraud. "That experience gave me perspective from the very top of the Justice Department, which was especially interesting in an election year," she says.

For the past three years, Landis has been the lead prosecutor in a widely-publicized case involving tax shelters sold by the accounting firm

of Ernst & Young.

"Being a prosecutor is a great job," Landis comments. "I'm not accountable to any client other than the public good. I get paid to use my judgment to do justice."

Landis attributes her career path to her experiences at the UW Law School, both in the classroom and in practical learning experiences.

She points to two classes with Professor Frank Tuerkheimer as essential to her current work. "I had Frank Tuerkheimer for Evidence, and because he had been a prosecutor, he had a very practical orientation to evidence. I use what I learned in that class every day."

Her second class with Tuerkheimer was Trial Advocacy. "I was terrified to take Trial Advocacy," Landis says. "I was kind of shy; public speaking had never come easily to me. I knew this would be the most difficult thing for me to overcome."

"But Frank was very encouraging. He taught it in a way that was very accessible to me and gave me confidence. I came out of that class feeling 'I can do this.' It was a real turning point."

By the time Landis completed

her law degree, she knew she wanted to become a federal prosecutor. "I knew that because I had done a clinical at the U.S. Attorney's Office, and I was a student clerk for Judge Barbara Crabb."

Landis, who had grown up in the New York City suburbs, chose New York as her professional base. To prepare herself for her goal of becoming an Assistant U.S. Attorney, she was a judicial clerk for two years with U.S. District Judge William Conner of the Southern District of New York, and next worked in white-collar criminal defense at the firm of Lankler Siffert & Wohl, whose partners were three former prosecutors. "I told them up front that I wanted to be an Assistant U.S. Attorney," Landis says, "and when we all agreed that I was ready, they wrote letters of recommendation for me to the prosecutors in this very office."

Landis has come full circle from the time when she was terrified to take Trial Advocacy: for the last ten years she has taught that very course at Harvard Law School. "One week every January I teach basic trial advocacy," she says. "I love it."

Late this summer Landis was offered a voluntary early-retirement package that was "too good to turn down," and thus her twentieth anniversary at her current job will mark her last year there. "People in my position don't typically stay here twenty years," she says. "I stayed because I loved it so much."

Landis plans to take some time off and then set out on the adventure of seeking a new job. "I can't imagine that I'll find anything I will enjoy as much as I've enjoyed this job," she says.

Like her classmates and friends Luke Rettler and Bridget Brennan, Landis considers herself extremely fortunate to be a career prosecutor. "Of all the lawyers I know," she says, "the ones who are happiest with their jobs are prosecutors." ■