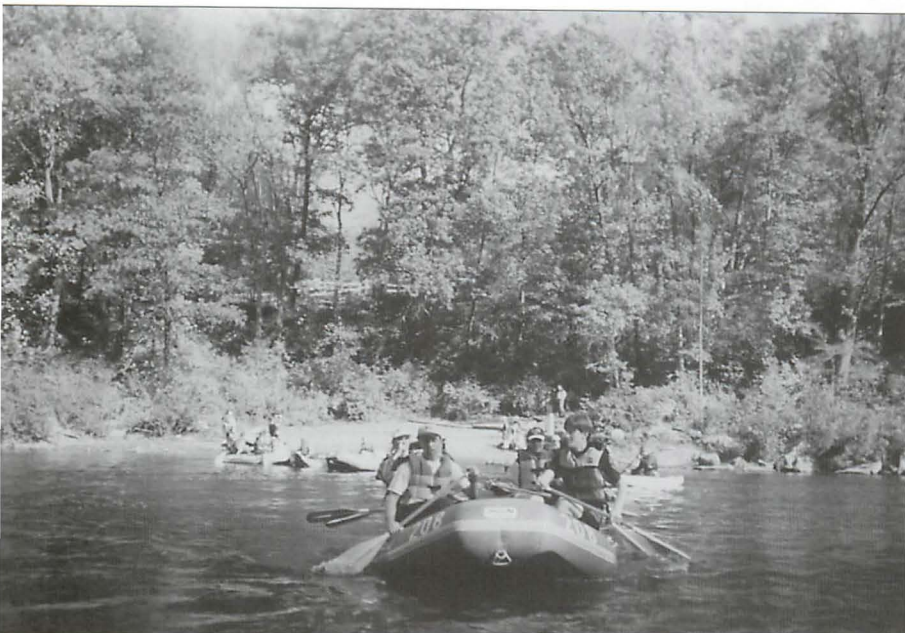


A Decade of Environmental Law Program Achieves National



Environmental Law students enjoy a rafting trip on the Youghiogheny River in Ohio, Pa.

When students from the Environmental Law Clinic walked into a Washington, D.C. courtroom last April, they retraced steps taken more than a decade earlier by the clinic's first students. But this time there was a difference, one that reflects how far the School of Law's Environmental Law Program has come since its creation in 1987. The students at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit were not watching their professor argue a clinic case; they were arguing one themselves.

Clinic students Todd Hooker and Tanya Greeley's case was a product of the clinic's long-time representation of citizen groups living near military facilities. In 1995 the clinic won a court order requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate hazardous waste generated at these facilities. The students' April litigation sought to require the EPA to broaden

its regulations to ensure thorough cleanup of dangerous chemicals left at military firing ranges.

This is the Environmental Law Clinic—part of Maryland's highly successful Environmental Law Program. Now in its 11th year, the program boasts an impressive accomplishment: bringing national recognition to the school. Since 1995 the program has consistently been ranked among the top environmental law programs in the nation. It attracts exceptional students from across the country who come to the School of Law to specialize in environmental law.

The genesis of the program dates back to 1986 when students convinced Professor Michael Millemann to offer a course in environmental law. While teaching himself the new subject, Millemann appreciated how highly specialized the field had become. An inveterate entrepre-

neur, he lobbied to establish a specialty program that would capitalize on the school's proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and centers of federal and state environmental policymaking and on the University's strengths in environmental sciences.

After securing funding, Millemann helped recruit Robert Percival to direct the Environmental Law Program. Percival was a senior attorney at the Environmental Defense Fund and joined the faculty in 1987. He established an Environmental Law Clinic, which fought its first case on behalf of a citizens' group in a small Maryland community threatened by toxic wastes from an aluminum smelter. Assisted by the first group of clinic students, Percival won a major victory in 1988 when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that the EPA had unlawfully failed to regulate hazardous wastes generated by aluminum smelters.

In April, clinic students argued in the same courtroom in which the clinic's first case had been heard. While the court ultimately rejected the students' challenge to regulating spent munitions, Chief Judge Harry Edwards took the unusual step of complimenting the students from the bench for the high quality of their advocacy.

The students' ability to argue complex litigation before one of the highest courts in the land is a product of the rigorous training received from Professor Rena Steinzor, director of the Environmental Law Clinic. Steinzor, who joined the faculty in 1994, previously served as staff counsel to the congressional committee overseeing the Superfund program and as the partner in charge of environmental practice for a Washington law firm. Students in her clinic devote 20 to 30 hours per week for an entire year serving

Success

Recognition

clients in matters that do not always involve litigation. Working with state Sen. Brian Frosh, chair of the Maryland Senate's Environmental Matters subcommittee, students helped draft innovative legislation to facilitate the cleanup of brownfields sites.

Students also gain practical experience in environmental law through the program's externship program. Each semester students receive law school credit for working at the EPA, the National Wildlife Federation, and other environmental agencies and organizations. The school's proximity to D.C. enables students to take advantage of opportunities



The D.C. Circuit Court Argument Team (L-R) Professor Rena Steinzor, Charles Dodge, Tanya Greeley, Todd Hooker, Eric Manas, Tara Thornton, Lori Schectel and Cathy Lemar

to gain work experience. "National environmental policy is being made in our backyard," explains Percival, "and we make sure that our students witness this process first-hand." Percival, who lives on Capitol Hill, meets regularly with students on externships and leads field trips to witness environmental cases being argued in the Supreme Court.

Students are enthusiastic about the extensive curriculum. More than a dozen environmental courses and seminars are taught both jointly with faculty from other parts of the University and by outstanding practitioners serving as adjunct faculty. Students who complete 17 credits in environmental courses, while satisfying research and experiential learning requirements, are eligible to receive certificates of concentration in Environmental Law. The first certificates of concentration were awarded to students at graduation last May.

The national reputation of the school's program is enhanced by its faculty's top-notch scholarship that focuses on issues at the forefront of contemporary policy debates. Steinzor has published some of the most thoughtful work on reinventing regulation, while Percival's environmental law textbook has become the standard in the field. Published in 1992, *Environmental Regulation: Law, Science and Policy* has been used at more than 70 law schools throughout the country. A second edition was released in 1996 and a third edition is scheduled for publication in the year 2000.

Steinzor attributes the program's success in large part to the students it attracts. The student organization, the Maryland Environmental Law Society (MELS), is particularly active in organizing events, including a speaker series, an annual dinner and field trips. In 1994 MELS attracted national attention when it became the

first student group in the nation to purchase and retire Clean Air Act emissions allowances at the EPA's annual auction. This innovative strategy for reducing allowable levels of air pollution has now been widely emulated by other groups. Environmental law students also regularly participate in national competitions. Last spring Maryland students placed second and third in the National Environmental Negotiation Competition.

Students praise the Environmental Law Program for its friendly and supportive atmosphere. "The faculty really care about the students and that doesn't end at the classroom door," says MELS officer Stuart Barr, a third-year student. Each year Percival tells students in his environmental law course that "we care about what happens to you after you graduate." Program Administrator Laura Mrozek provides students with job information, assisted by the program's extensive network of alumni working in the environmental field. Mrozek edits the program's biannual newsletter, *Environmental Law at Maryland*, which reports on program developments and features articles written by alumni and students. Each December the program hosts a wine tasting party that is highly popular with students and alums.

Graduates have been successful in securing jobs in the environmental field with government agencies, law firms, public interest groups and consulting firms. "As our reputation has grown," Percival says, "employers know that if they hire a student from our program, they can depend on them to produce immediate results."