Alumni Spotlight: Jessica Crowson (Class of 1997)

Jessica is with the law firm, Pennington Law Firm, LLP in Columbia, SC doing primarily wireless telecommunications law. She finds this a fascinating area in which to practice because it is on the cusp of new technological advances and developments. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor teaching law classes to college and MBA students.

Education/ Work History

Jessica has had an extremely diverse legal practice with many different experiences since she graduated from Vanderbilt Law School 7 years ago. Straight out of law school, she clerked for the Honorable Chief Judge Kaye G. Hearn, Chief Judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals. This experience gave her important insights to the inner operations of the Court and the process judges go through in evaluating and ruling on cases and appeals. Plus, in getting to know Chief Judge Hearn, she gained an invaluable resource, mentor, and friend. After that clerkship, she moved to Florida and practiced as an Assistant State Attorney in the Fourth Judicial Circuit for several years. To date, this was the most interesting work she has ever done. She specialized primarily in sex crime prosecution in the Special Assault Division handling anything from sexual abuse and child abuse to domestic abuse. This taught her to handle a tremendous case load and to argue cases and hearings to judges and in jury trials. It also gave her a great sense of accomplishment of having done something positive to give back to the community. After that, she moved back to South Carolina and has been in private practice with two different law firms. She initially handled insurance defense litigation and is now in wireless telecommunications law.

How the political science degree helped her get where she is today.

"I wouldn't trade my political science degree for anything. My 4 years at CofC were so much fun. I made life long friends that I still see often. While at CofC, I threw myself into the political science department and was extremely involved. The professors spent a great deal of time working with me, mentoring me, and guiding me through the law school application and selection process. I truly was not just another student or a number to the political science faculty - I was an individual. As I now teach college and MBA students, I chuckle as I teach of the same subject matter that I recall Dr. Jos, Dr. Moore, and Dr. Creed teaching me."

Advice to college students considering a career in law

"After law school it is imperative that you either clerk for a judge or work as a prosecutor/ public defender for a couple years. Ideally, you would do both. You will make almost no money, but the experience you gain will prove to be invaluable. These areas are truly the training grounds for young attorneys, and you will learn things that you cannot learn at a large firm straight out of law school."