Albany Law School’s Newest Tenured Professor

Because Melissa Breger has spent countless hours advocating for children and families in different parts of the country, she’s acutely aware of the cultural differences within family court systems. Institutional distinctions between courts are typically very subtle though not always—Breger says, and the advocate must adhere to these varying norms. Characterizing and defining the impact these cultural differences have on case outcomes is one of several topics driving her current research.

“I am also interested in exploring cognitive psychology theories when examining judges and juries, as well as issues germane to institutional lawyering,” she said. “If I aggressively challenge the judge today, is my next client going to pay a price in front of that same judge tomorrow?”

Breger is also working on an article currently titled: “Healing the Wounds of Sexually Trafficked Children by Examining Strategies for Childhood Survivors of Family Violence and Sexual Abuse.”

Health Law Clinic Gets Award for Innovation

The Albany Law Clinic and Justice Center’s Health Law Clinic received a Statewide 2008 Innovative Project Award from the New York State Department of Health’s Cancer Services Program in recognition of the Clinic’s collaborative advocacy initiatives.

Using a model of collaboration between law students and medical professionals, Clinic students resolve legal disputes that simultaneously improve health outcomes for clients. Since the inception of the Clinic’s Cancer Care initiative in 2004, 70 law students have represented 300 clients affected by cancer in 620 cases.

“The Clinic is designed to teach students how to identify and address the legal issues that affect individuals living with chronic health conditions,” said Professor Joseph Connors, director of the Health Law Clinic. “The students alleviate a great deal of stress for our clients, allowing them to focus their limited energy on their underlying health problems.”