

# Real-World

**N**icholas Cerwin recalls the day he was at lunch with others who were working in the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office, and he was asked to handle a hearing coming up that afternoon. He had about 20 minutes to prepare. Even with an experienced lawyer overseeing what he was doing, he was the one on the line to handle matters. "It's definitely not for the faint of heart," he says.

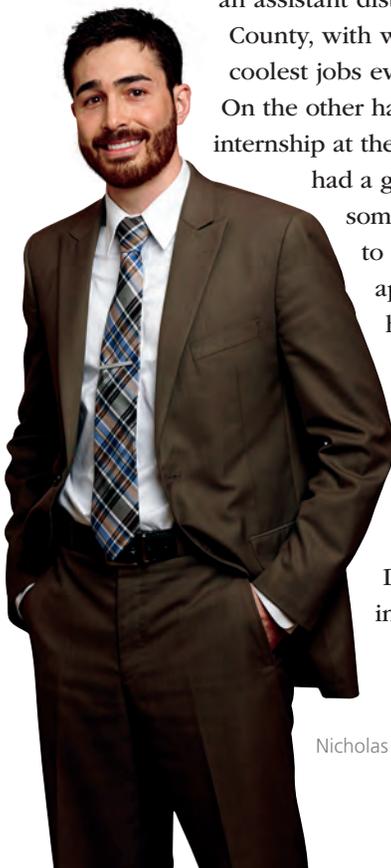
Things went well, especially considering that Cerwin was still a student at Marquette Law School. His internship as part of the school's Prosecutor Clinic allowed him to show what he was capable of. And it gave him both incentive and momentum in choosing a career path—which is to say he is now an assistant district attorney for Milwaukee County, with what he calls "one of the coolest jobs ever."

On the other hand, **Robert Hampton**, did an internship at the United States Attorney's Office, had a great experience, but found out something important: "I don't want to prosecute. It's not in me." As he approaches graduation, he says he learned that being a defense lawyer—working on "the underdog side," as he puts it—fits him better. He was able to pursue that passion by undertaking internships with the Wisconsin State Public Defender and at Centro Legal in Milwaukee.

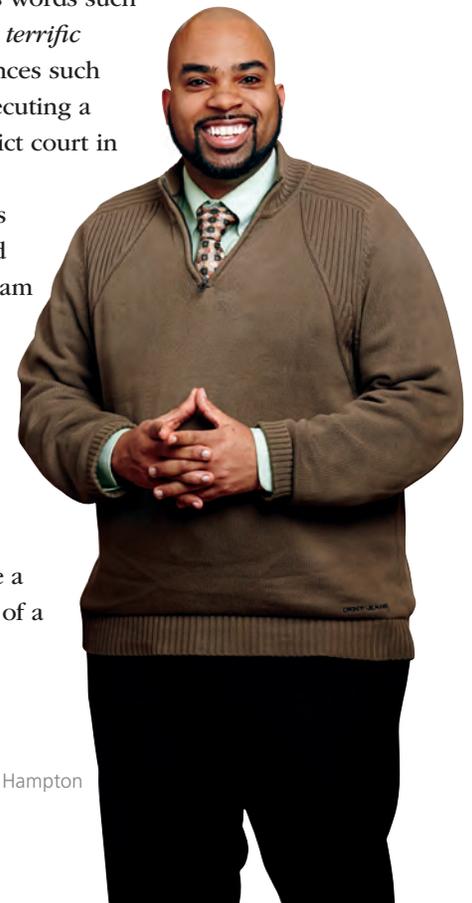
Internship experiences have been part of the Marquette Law School experience for students since the 1960s, but the program has grown substantially since 2000, in terms of both the number of placement opportunities for students and the number of students taking part. The real-world experience offered through internships is a highlight of the Law School's education of hundreds of students.

"I would urge students to take as many internships as they can because it really puts into practice what you're learning in class," says Priya Barnes, who took part in three internships as a student and who is now in private practice, based in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. She uses words such as *phenomenal* and *terrific* to describe experiences such as assisting in prosecuting a case in federal district court in Milwaukee.

Professor Thomas Hammer has headed the internship program since 2001. He says that the goal of the placements is to provide "meaningful, supervised learning experiences" so that students "learn to be a lawyer at the elbow of a lawyer."



Nicholas Cerwin



Robert Hampton

# Lessons

## Wide-Ranging Internship Program Gives Law Students Experience

Internships fall into three categories: judicial internships with judges and justices; placements in clinical programs including the Prosecutor Clinic, Public Defender Clinic, Mediation Clinic, and Unemployment Compensation Clinic; and fieldwork placements at more than 40 nonprofit organizations and government agencies. “There is opportunity to get experience in just about every practice area of the law,” Hammer says. Annual enrollment in the program has gone from a little more than 100 students in 2000–2001 to about 350 in 2012–2013. Participation is now roughly equally divided among the three categories of internships, whereas a dozen years ago the large majority of students (again, fewer in number then) were in the clinical programs.

In the judicial program, students can intern not only for state court trial judges in Milwaukee but also with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, all 7 justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, 11 judges in Wisconsin’s federal trial courts, and 7 state appeals court judges. Hammer said students “become part of the judicial family in every chambers in which they serve.”

As for the fieldwork programs, they offer a wide range of experiences, with new partnerships added each year.

In the 2013–2014 year, the South Milwaukee School District, the Federal Defender, and the corporate counsel’s office of the Blood Center of Wisconsin were examples of new

participants. Hammer says that he makes it a priority for the fieldwork programs to fit the broader mission of Marquette University to work on community needs.

**Hannah Rock** took part in four internships and speaks highly of them all. But she says her favorite internship was with the Metro Milwaukee Foreclosure Mediation Program. Why? “Because I got my job through that internship.” Thanks to networking with lawyers involved in the program, she is set to join a small Milwaukee firm focused on family law and mediation upon her graduation.

**Lisa Galvan** also took part in four internships during her Law School years and, as her graduation approaches, is sorry she didn’t take on at least one more. The placements allowed her to experience in the larger world many of the things she was learning in classes. An internship with Legal Action of Wisconsin developed into work there as a legal assistant during school, and Galvan hopes to pursue similar public interest work as a lawyer.

Some students choose internships in line with their interests. Others choose ones in areas that are new to them. But none interviewed for this story described an internship that didn’t offer valuable lessons.

Sam Berg, who also is approaching graduation, said that he would suggest students take part in a range of internships. “You might never again be able to bounce around so freely among organizations and practice areas,” he said. “My internships have helped me find out what I’m good at and what I like.” ■



Hannah Rock



Lisa Galvan