

Not (altogether) your

It may seem for Jessica M. Swietlik, L'06, Emily F. McNally, L'06, and Katie (Germanotta) Boycks, L'00—as well as many of their contemporaries—that being a Marquette lawyer has been hard-wired into their genetic codes. They represent a growing number of second-, third-, and even fourth-generation Marquette lawyers, who are now as likely to be the daughters of Marquette lawyers as sons.

The diplomas and the quality of education of recent grads may resemble those of their parents and grandparents before them, but they often find, upon comparing notes with their parents, that their experiences were different.

father's law school

It's in Their Blood

Consider Jessica Swietlik, who comes from a long tradition of Marquette lawyers. Jessica's great-grandfather, Francis X. Swietlik, was a 1914 graduate of the Law School and served as Dean of the Law School from 1934 to 1952.

His son, John M. Swietlik, was a 1956 graduate of Marquette Law School. The third generation is represented by Jessica's dad, John M. Swietlik, Jr., a 1984 graduate.

"I guess it's just in my blood," said the younger John. "My dad and uncles went to Marquette Law School, and it was never an issue of where I was going." John said his dad's influence made a big impression on him. "He was, in my opinion, one of the best trial lawyers in the state of Wisconsin." He recounted his father's experience at law school and acknowledged an even greater transformation in the time that transpired between his own education and his daughter's. "There isn't mandatory attrition any longer," he explained. "The old 'look to your left, look to your right, one of you isn't going to be here in a year' lecture is no longer given." He credits a well-executed selection and admission



*Some Swietliks pictured in the early 1980s:
Francis, L'14; John, L'56; John, Jr., L'84; Jessica, L'06*



*Dean Francis X.
Swietlik in 1934*

process that yields students most likely to succeed.

John recounted moments of pressure and near-fear during his days of law school in the early 1980s. He noticed that his daughter Jessica, who graduated this past May, had a much different experience. "She

loves the school and enjoyed it," said John. Jessica agreed and added, "There is a wonderful support system here at Marquette."

One thing that hasn't changed is the quality of the education. "The education at Marquette is very practical," said John. "The curriculum is geared toward going out and practicing law." And that is exactly what he did. Immediately after graduation in 1984, John went to work for a short time in Janesville at a general practice firm. He came back to Milwaukee in November of 1984 and joined Cook & Franke, where he practiced defense litigation for 16 years. In January 2000, he joined Kasdorf, Lewis & Swietlik in Milwaukee—the firm from which his father recently retired as the senior partner.

As for Jessica, she has her whole professional career in front of her. Born during her dad's law school orientation,



John Swietlik and daughter Jessica Swietlik

it is only fitting that she now has added her name to the long list of Swietliks who have passed through the halls of Marquette.

Jessica is the oldest of four children of John and Sandy Swietlik, who is a teacher. Jessica acknowledges that the single most important thing she learned during law school is this: “My parents were right: Education will open many doors for you.” While in law school, she had the opportunity to be involved in two national moot court competitions and also worked as a research assistant for Professor Jack Kircher, L’63, in addition to volunteering at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic. She now works at Simpson & Deardorff in Milwaukee and looks forward to the opportunity to help others. “That’s what good lawyers do,” she said.

Coming Home

When Emily McNally was considering going to law school out of state, her dad, John F. McNally, L’71, helped persuade her to change her mind. “Conversations with my dad and other alumni made me realize that connections with members of the Milwaukee and Wisconsin legal communities are vital,” explained Emily.

John McNally’s dialogue with his daughter came from the heart because of the significant

changes that had been made in the curriculum and methods over the years. “Today, I think that the students have much better and closer relationships with the faculty,” John explained.

Emily agrees that times have changed since her dad was in law school in the 1970s. “There are several opportunities available to students today that were not available when my dad was in law school. Back then, I think the curriculum was very straightforward and that it was difficult, if not impossible, for a student to stray from the core classes or to specialize in any particular area of law,” she said. “Today, the Marquette law student can sample a wide variety of courses and can specialize in certain programs, such as sports law or intellectual property.” Workshops offered by the Law School, such as trial advocacy and pretrial practice, help specifically to prepare the law student for the practical aspects of a legal career. “In addition,” she said, “I believe that the clinics, judicial internships, and supervised fieldwork programs provide students with the opportunity to gain a wealth of practical knowledge and



John McNally and daughter Emily McNally

legal experience, while simultaneously building their resumes and lists of references.”

The course charted by her father—as well as her maternal grandfather and several aunts, uncles, and cousins—has been rewarding to Emily. She is glad she followed in their footsteps, but is ready to blaze her own trail. Having graduated from the school in May, Emily plans on pursuing a career in litigation. She began work as an associate at Peterson, Johnson and Murray, SC, in July.

John McNally has been practicing law at McNally Law Offices, SC, in Milwaukee for 33 years (after working for two years as an assistant district attorney in Milwaukee). The family tradition may continue further. John and his wife, Susan Jones McNally, have been married for 32 years, and Emily is the oldest of their six children.

Opportunities Abound

John J. Germanotta has been practicing law for 35 years, most of that time on Milwaukee’s East Side at the corner of Farwell and Brady. John and his wife, Mary Ellen, have three grown children.

A 1971 graduate of Marquette Law School, he says that he has some perspective on his legal education. Although he recalls the sometimes-intimidating style of teaching, Germanotta is grateful for the education and experience he received. “Attending Marquette Law School allowed me to see firsthand the operation of the legal system because of its close proximity to both the state and federal courts.”

Throughout his years of practice, John has hired two Marquette graduates and has had numerous interns work at the office. “They have all done well, and I have been impressed,” he said—impressed enough that he highly recommended Marquette to his daughter, Katie, when she was contemplating her legal education options.

“My dad played a significant role in my decision to attend Marquette,” said Katie (Germanotta) Boycks, who graduated from Marquette Law School in 2000. “He has always loved what he does, and I viewed his career as stable and respected—something I wanted for myself as well.”

Katie, who is married and has a one-year-old



John Germanotta and daughter Katie Boycks

daughter, works in Madison as the Director of the Wisconsin Association of Life and Health Insurers. “My legal training is useful to me every day,” she said. “I like being an advocate for the association’s members when I am working with the Wisconsin legislature, and I enjoy playing a role in the making of policy.”

Katie remembers fondly her law school days, which she thinks differed quite a bit from her father’s experience. Katie said that the biggest difference she perceived was that the professors and administration seemed aware of other matters in the students’ lives. “They understand that some students have families, hold full-time jobs while attending law school, or are working toward another degree simultaneously. They didn’t expect us to put all other aspects of our lives on hold for three years,” she said. John understatedly said, “I think today’s students have more fun in law school!”

Everyone who becomes a Marquette lawyer joins a proud tradition, but it is an evolving one. The school has a different curriculum and emphases from even as recently as two decades ago, as undoubtedly will be true again in another 20 years. What has not changed are the efforts of its administration and faculty, by the best lights available to them, to strive to improve and make a positive difference in the lives of students so that the next generation of Marquette lawyers will continue the tradition to serve others. •