

Bria Kelly: Finding a Warm Setting in the North

When she was choosing a law school, Bria Kelly was impressed by something Marquette's Professor Paul Anderson told her: That she would thrive at Marquette Law School.

But she was more impressed by a second thing Anderson told her: That she would thrive wherever she went.

That confidence in her meant a lot. Kelly said some people doubted whether she should go to law school. But she was determined. "I don't like to discourage myself," she said.

Discouragement was the last thing she found when she visited Milwaukee.

Kelly was surprised to be visiting Marquette at all. Panama City, Fla., is home, and Florida A&M in Tallahassee was where she did her undergraduate work. She assumed she would go to a law school in the South. She had never lived in the North and

knew no one in Wisconsin except one person she met in college. "I didn't even know where Milwaukee was on the map," she said.

But she noticed that Marquette was offering a waiver of application fees at the time when she was looking at law school materials. So, why not?

The impulse turned into a serious thought. The Marquette people responded. Kelly visited. Once she was at the law school, her assumptions about where she was going changed. For one thing, Kelly was interested in sports law—when she visited, she learned that sports law is a Marquette Law School specialty. Other schools she looked at didn't offer nearly as much in that area. More broadly, Kelly just felt that things looked promising in Milwaukee.

On the airplane home, Kelly weighed the pluses and minuses. She saw a lot of pluses. The minuses? Winter. But she decided, "If the only downfall in choosing this school is that it snows, that's crazy."

So Marquette it was. Kelly coped with the demands of her first year ("You have to learn a whole new way of thinking") and was excited about what she was learning as her second year headed toward its end in 2017. She still likes sports, but she's become interested in intellectual property matters such as trademarks.

Milwaukee's still a long way from Panama City, but Kelly said it's working out well. She's made friends. She's gotten involved in pro bono programs for law students in the community. She lives downtown, in walking distance to both Marquette and entertainment attractions, including Milwaukee Bucks basketball games. "Milwaukee's cool," she said. "I definitely like the cheese curds." Even the snow hasn't been so much to cope with.

Kelly is a living lesson in a lot of the character traits that educators are increasingly saying are keys to a student's success at any level. Determination. Resilience. Curiosity. Optimism. Eagerness to learn. Willingness to try new things.

Marquette Law School—that was one big thing she was willing to try. "I don't regret that decision at all," she said with an understated smile. ■



Bria Kelly

Students Join Pro Bono Eviction Defense Project

“I think if you’re part of a community, there are things from the community that you take,” said Khatija Choudhry. That obligates you to give back to the community, by her lights.

In her first year in law school, Choudhry, from Rochester, Minn., is enthusiastic about Marquette Law School and Milwaukee. And the ways she has been giving back include her participation in a new pro bono effort, the Eviction Defense Project.

Evictions became a hotter subject nationwide, and particularly in Milwaukee, following the release in early 2016 of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond. The book focuses on Milwaukee and was named by the *New York Times* as one of the 10 best books of 2016. (The first event upon publication of the book was an “On the Issues with Mike Gousha” program with Desmond at Eckstein Hall.)

Raphael Ramos, L’08, an attorney with Legal Action of Wisconsin, said the Eviction Defense Project was in the works before the book was released, but the book spurred interest in offering legal assistance to people facing eviction. In the book, Desmond described how people with little or no knowledge of the system were overwhelmed by the hubbub in the small claims court in the Milwaukee County Courthouse when multiple eviction actions are underway at the same time.

A grant from the Legal Services Corp., created by Congress, is supporting a two-year effort to help some of the people who have received eviction notices. Legal Action is leading the effort, with Ramos as the coordinator. Pro bono attorneys, many from the Quarles & Brady law firm, and a dozen Marquette law students are among the volunteers who are helping.

Begun in January, the project offers low-income people facing eviction the opportunity to meet with an attorney—in many cases with a law student assisting—ahead of their court appearance. Ramos said that while most are indisputably behind on their rent, in some cases proper procedures have not been followed and facts are in dispute. In other cases, there are circumstances that make negotiating an agreement, with a lawyer’s help, a better route for both the landlord and the tenant than an eviction.



Khatija Choudhry and Jillian Lukens

There can be defenses to an eviction, Ramos said. “Each case is surprisingly unique. There are often opportunities to work with the tenant and to try to work with the landlord to see if there is some amenable solution that both parties can reach.” A goal is to do what can be done to stabilize peoples’ lives.

Angela Schultz, the Law School’s assistant dean for public service, said students were impassioned about getting involved in the eviction project. The dozen volunteer positions for the spring semester filled quickly. Schultz hopes the program will grow.

Jillian Lukens, a 1L from Bucks County, Pa., expected that taking part would be both a way to help people and a good learning experience. That was proving to be true. “I like being able to see what they’re teaching us in its application,” she said. “You can see the immediate effect” on the people facing eviction when they enter the small claims court better able to understand what is going on. The work, she said, “grounds you in why you’re in law school.” ■

Yale Historian Excavates the Roots of the Holocaust

People think that they understand the Holocaust. Not as Timothy Snyder sees it: His goal is to provide much deeper insight into the roots of the killing of six million Jews and millions of others in the World War II era. It's a provocative exploration, one that has helped make Snyder a prominent scholar of the events of that time.

Snyder is the Levin Professor of History at Yale University; his writings include two recent acclaimed books about the Holocaust and the political mass murder by the Soviet and Nazi regimes between 1933 and 1945. He described his purposes and conclusions during an “On the Issues with Mike Gousha” program at Eckstein Hall on October 19, 2016.

“[M]y whole point in this discussion, for which I’m very grateful,” Snyder said, “is that the Holocaust is something that we not only have to understand but that we can understand because some elements of it just aren’t that far away, either from the world we know or from the world as we unfortunately might be about to know.”

Snyder said most people’s idea of the Holocaust focuses on the Auschwitz concentration camp. “We have an image of the icon of the railway tracks, which lead from a place we can’t see to another place that we can’t see. The odd thing about this image is that—and this is sad to say, and brace yourselves a little bit—but the sad thing about this image is that it minimizes the Holocaust. It separates us from the Holocaust. What we don’t see is how the Holocaust could actually begin. Auschwitz was the end.”

Snyder’s perspective includes aspects such as Nazi Germany’s goal of seizing control of agriculturally fertile parts of eastern Europe to assure its food supply; Adolf Hitler’s extreme view of racial struggle; and the importance of the absence of government control in places



Timothy Snyder speaks with Mike Gousha in Eckstein Hall.

where mass killing was the most widespread.

“The fertile soil of Ukraine was the central goal, the main goal, of Hitler’s war in the east,” Snyder said. “[Hitler’s] view of the world was this: that the planet had only so much fertile soil, only so many resources. It was a finite space. That’s what he says on the first page of *Mein Kampf*. It’s a finite space.”

Snyder described Hitler’s belief as follows: “[T]here’s no such thing as humanity. We are members of races, and the destiny of races is to struggle for that land. The same way that he thinks species struggle in the natural order, races must struggle. That is what we do. And if we are doing anything else, if we’re having a civilized conversation, if we have political institutions, if we have walls, if we believe in human solidarity, if we believe in Catholic

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— Professor Timothy Snyder

mercy, if we believe in any idea of reciprocity, which allows me to see you and you to see me as human beings, that idea, says Hitler, is Jewish.”

Many people associate the mass killings of the Holocaust with intensely authoritarian government. Snyder said the opposite is the case: The killing was at its worst in places where there was no functioning government. “There’s a whole body of social science which says it’s not strong states that kill people,” Snyder said. “It’s generally states that are falling apart. It’s generally conditions of state failure where ethnic cleansing takes place. And what’s . . . special about Nazi Germany is that it was a state that cultivated [an] institution, the SS, to destroy other states and then take advantage of the anarchy.”

He said one of the important lessons of the Holocaust is that “people who are . . . very much like us can kill other people very much like us for no particular reason in very, very large numbers.” He added, “[T]his was face-to-face, this was intimate . . . , this was brutal.”

Snyder elaborated: “To be very clear, anti-Semitism is a bad thing. We should condemn it. It was central to Hitler’s worldview. You can’t imagine the war without anti-Semitism. You can’t imagine the Holocaust without anti-Semitism. It’s a central part. But it’s not the only thing that happens. And the idea which we like or we’re drawn to, that the Holocaust was caused by anti-Semitism and that one

can line those things up in a simple way, that is far, far too optimistic.

“The reason why it’s too optimistic in contemporary terms is that we think, okay, so long as I’m not an anti-Semite and you’re not an anti-Semite, then everything is all right. Everything is not all right because views like this can change very quickly.”

Snyder told Gousha, “When I look at all of this, Mike, . . . the point is not that the Holocaust as such will repeat itself in the same form. The point is that if we understand the causes of the Holocaust as causes, we can see where one or two of these things line up” in some situations in the world today.

Snyder told the audience, “I think the Holocaust was such a rupture, such a central event of the century, that if . . . learning about it doesn’t shake up the way we see things, then we haven’t really learned about it.”

Snyder’s books include *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* and *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning*. The hour-long program with Gousha, attended by an overflow crowd of more than 250 people in Eckstein Hall’s Appellate Courtroom, can be viewed on the websites of both the Law School and Milwaukee Public Television, which broadcast the conversation. ■



Victims' suitcases from the Nazis' Auschwitz concentration camp in Oswiecim, Poland, in operation between May 1940 and January 1945.

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