Imagine this: a celebrity’s “people” invite your partner to a cruise in the Cayman Islands because your husband, the president of his own video game company, has created a mulitplayer video game that the celebrity and his friends love and want to play aboard the ship.

Your husband comes home and excitedly discusses having both of you on this dream vacation. A no-brainer, right? You go!

Last year, this amazing opportunity was presented to Professor Cassandra Burke Robertson and her husband, Thom Robertson, but instead of immediately diving into the Caribbean Sea, they declined this most generous offer and chose to remain in Cleveland.

Celebrity, who? Video game, what? Declined, why, you ask?

It was all because of us students that Professor Robertson gave up her and her husband’s spot that created such an enticing ethical dilemma, proving to be the pinnacle of Public Affairs to construct a formal structure around the 3L Class Gift program.

The 2014 class gift will be allocated to the Student Interview Travel Fund, which helps to follow in their paths is important. The 3L Class Gift program enables all 3Ls to leave as proud graduates. Much like all graduating classes, leaving their mark for those who will not accept payment from any students at CWRU to any student that asks. As a strict ethical matter, Thom will gladly gift his game to us students as a gift to a cruise in the Cayman Islands because your husband, Thom, the video game genius, will give a copy of his video game, for free, to any student that asks. As a strict ethical matter, Thom will not accept payment from any students at CWBU Law. Thom will gladly gift his game to us students as a perk of just knowing Professor Robertson. That, my friends, is true love.

Besides scoring the vacation of our dreams, Professor Robertson also made history by becoming Case Western Reserve University’s newest tenured professor on July 1, 2013, reaching the pinnacles of her career. As Democrat representatives ran to the Holiday Inn and Denny’s in Ardmore, Oklahoma, while the Democrat senators headed to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to avoid the vote, the Texas Solicitor General was tasked with ordering the senators and representatives to come back to Texas via a mandamus action. But in order to get the courts to hear this emergency motion by Monday morning, the motion had to be filed by the end of business on Friday evening at 5 pm.

Professor Robertson had only been at the Attorney General’s Office for about a week when Ted Cruz, finishing the mandamus at the last possible second, tasked her with serving process of the mandamus papers with ordering the senators and representatives to come back to Texas via a mandamus action. But in order to get the courts to hear this emergency motion by Monday morning, the motion had to be filed by the end of business on Friday evening at 5 pm.

And meeting the artist Jonathan Coulton aboard an enticing cruise is enough to make anyone beam with excitement. While Professor Robertson was in Austin, she brushed shoulders with the infamous Ted Cruz, now U.S. Senator Ted Cruz. Ted Cruz had started as the Solicitor General at the Texas Attorney General’s Office at the same time that Professor Robertson started as the newest Assistant Solicitor General in that division.

Professor Robertson has fond memories of her time working under Ted Cruz, including the time when the Governor of Texas had a coup in the state legislature. In response to a Republican redistricting plan, Democrat representatives and senators left the state to avoid a quorum.

As Democrat representatives ran to the Holiday Inn and Denny’s in Ardmore, Oklahoma, while the Demo- crat senators headed to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to avoid the vote, the Texas Solicitor General was tasked with ordering the senators and representatives to come back to Texas via a mandamus action. But in order to get the courts to hear this emergency motion by Monday morning, the motion had to be filed by the end of business on Friday evening at 5 pm.

Professor Robertson had only been at the Attorney General’s Office for about a week when Ted Cruz, finishing up the mandamus at the last possible second, tasked her with serving process of the mandamus papers with only 10 minutes left until the 5pm deadline.

With the one hundred degree heat of Texas summer bearing down on poor Professor Robertson, this newly minted attorney went running out of the office, sprinting from the state capital area, down Congress area for five blocks, and finally, up a flight of stairs, serving the papers with just seconds to spare.

Dripping with sweat, adrenaline coursing through her veins, Professor Robertson apologized as she served the...
papers to compel the Democratic lawmakers to come back to Texas. Professor Robertson accomplished no small feat and bested Ted Cruz’s impossible ask with her athletic prowess.

Professor Robertson proved early on in her career that she could handle tough ethical issues. While she was working as a Staff Attorney for the Texas Supreme Court Justice, she wrote about the issue of discretionary jurisdiction that involved contentious, deeply personal issues.

One case involved the issue of whether parental rights should be terminated in the case of adopted Latino children. The case was fraught with problems of language, ability and potential misunderstandings of the consequences of the relinquishment of parental rights by a Hispanic father.

On the other side was the plight of the adopted parents who had adopted children who were newly borns, forming strong familial ties to them for four years, and only recently their parental rights put in question.

As could be predicted, the court operated with a divided majority, with emotions riling high. It is from this background of tough ethical dilemmas that Professor Robertson draws her strength in teaching and discussing highly charged legal issues.

In one of Professor Robertson’s forthcoming papers, to be published in 94 Boston Univ. L. Rev. 183, she discusses why law firms should be allowed to take investments from private companies, to allow unemployed and underemployed attorneys to offer their services to the middle class. With outside sources funding the endeavor, individuals that couldn’t otherwise afford legal services might be granted further access to justice.

Professor Robertson feels strongly about this issue, as this model would allow companies to pay salaries to attorneys. It would also allow attorneys to be available for consultation without having to hang their own shingle and bear the costs of opening up a private practice.

In addition to her scholarship on alternative legal services, Professor Robertson feels strongly about the issue of student debt. From her background in budget analysis, she posits the view that the cost of legal education must be transparent, and that real value must be offered to law students to make the law school investment worth it.

Most if not all students have undergraduates debt to finance their law school education, and Professor Robertson is quickly becoming a champion of our plight. http://www.legalethicsforum.com/blog/2012/02/after-the-student-loans-army-faces-the-issues.html

Professor Robertson practices what she preaches and implements what she learns. She is well aware of the pressures students face to secure those elusive jobs after graduation. She sympathizes with students, and she provides students with as many opportunities as she can to get their writing published.

For her Professional Responsibility class, Professor Robertson gave students the ability to transform their Ignite PowerPoint presentations from class into a legal essay for the Legal Ethics Forum Blogging Competition, in exchange for extra credit.

Many students rose to the challenge, but it was Guangdong Cheng, Xiang Liu, Yihong Zhang, Yuanjing Zhao, Kun Cang, and Amanda Souza (that won the overall competition and a Panera gift card from Professor Robertson).

The winning essay gave a brief overview of the similarities and differences between the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Lawyers and the ABA’s Model Rules of Professional Conduct. Professor Robertson is immensely proud of her P.R. students for immersing themselves into the rules of legal ethics, and the added bonus was having the winners of the blogging competition flesh out an analysis of Chinese and American rules that had never been done before.

Professor Robertson continues to provide students with the tools to get their names and their writing out there, and I have personally taken her up on her offer to write an article for the Civil Rights Litigation Section, of which she serves as the co-Chair of the Civil Procedure Sub-Committee. Under her guidance, I will tackle an article on outlined (and offensive) terms and how skillful practitioners can draft their ways around them.

Professor Robertson is constantly adapting to her students’ needs and incorporating new teaching methodologies. She has immediate plans to restructure the admittedly tough, yet vitally important course, Secured Transactions, that teaches students how to secure their clients’ interests in the field of commercial law. As challenging as the content is, Professor Robertson is not giving up, and she is determined to transform the course into one that students will greatly appreciate come time to prepare for the bar exam.

Professors Robertson will teach students to be as analytically rigorous as she is, for generations to come.

Hearteningly, Professor Robertson will never judge students for loving video games, or foreign language dramas (she has the DramaFever app on her phone so she can watch Spanish soap operas). She will never chastise you for needing a break, and furthermore, she will provide opportunities for you to shine, and encourage you every step of the way.

It is this caring that makes Professor Robertson a favorite at CWRU Law. While she is busy with her own scholarship and adjusting to her new role as tenured professor, we know that she will take time out of her busy schedule to be there for her students.

And, what’s more, we can be confident in knowing that she will not abandon us at the drop of a hat. In fact, we know that it will take not one, but two requests from a celebrity’s people to convince her to leave us for the Cayman Islands.

The Docket

Monday, March 3, 2014

International Friendship Program: My American Family

XUAN MA (SOPHIE) LLM

Contributing Editor, The Docket

I feel so lucky that I met Fern and Wayne when I came to Cleveland. They are my American family. Fern always says that I am her adopted daughter. She even says this to her friends.

We met through the CWRU International Friendship Family Program. Thank you to Lisa for holding this program for LLM students. It is really helpful for me. I heard of this kind of thing when I was in China. One of my friends started with an American family for a year.

This program was called a homestay family program. My friend told me she had a great time when she stayed with them. So, I was wondering what this program would be like, and what kind of American culture I would experience. I signed up for this program immediately, and a few days later, I met with Fern and Wayne at the law school.

The first meeting at the law school was short. We were the first group that left the reception area. When Fern found out that I can play traditional Chinese music, she invited me to the Cleveland Institute of Music to see a concert. I felt it was so special because I had met a musical family. Fern is a professional musician, and she has been playing the organ for sixty years. Her husband Wayne can play the euphonium. It took me a long time to realize that Wayne is not just a musician.

He is a staff member at CWRU who focuses on surface engineering. It was so excited because music concerts always light me up. After the concert, we planned to meet once a week and do something different every week. When Fern found out that I can play traditional Chinese instruments, she introduced me to the Cleveland Chinese Music Ensemble. I went to a few of their performances. She said I could play Chinese music, I would not be bored here. We planned to attend concerts almost every week. I could not count how many concerts I have been to with Fern.

Fern always thinks about me. As we all know the terrible weather in Cleveland, she likes to say that I would have an unforgettable winter here. In early October, Fern worried about whether I would have enough heavy clothes, boots, and hats or not, and she asked me when I would have time to go shopping with her and her friends to buy new heavy clothes to keep warm before the winter came. It was very nice of her, especially because I do not have a car in Cleveland. When the winter did come, Fern gave me a very warm sweater, a hat, and a pair of gloves to keep warm. When we meet, she always asks, “Do you need anything? Do you want me to take you to the grocery store? I am worried about you, that you do not get enough food. She is so nice to me and makes me feel that even though I am thousands of miles away from home, there is still someone who cares about me.

There was a special weekend that we did not see a concert, but we planned to make peanut muffins. I could not believe it when I was back home, she even gave me the ingredients so that I could bake muffins by myself and share with my friends. I did it successfully.

Last Thanksgiving Day, Fern and Wayne invited me and my friends to their house and cooked a lot of delicious food for us. It was the first time that I went to her home. I thank

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