



annual report
to donors
2006-2007

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THE ADVOCACY PROGRAM: *ultimate courtroom training*

Each aspect of the law requires attorneys to communicate the written and spoken word effectively, and to persuade various audiences, be they juries, judges, clients, corporate boards, or peers. These universal skills are developed in the South Texas Advocacy Program. Moot court and mock trial students learn to analyze complex problems, formulate sound resolutions, and communicate on their feet. They invest substantial time and energy in the program, but the rewards far outweigh the costs—their talents, confidence, and contacts grow exponentially.

Although the law school has had advocacy teams since the 1950s, Associate Dean T. Gerald Treece, who became director of advocacy in 1978, forged the Advocacy Program into the powerhouse it is today. In its early years, the program was a dedicated group of a few students who traveled across the country to compete in moot court and mock trial competitions. Today, the Advocacy Program encompasses internal competitions as well as the law school's nationally ranked moot court and mock trial program. Last semester alone, 21 South Texas advocacy teams competed in 13 tournaments across the country. Another 200 students participated in the program's intramural moot court and mock trial competitions. It is difficult for a student to leave South Texas without participating in the Advocacy Program in one way or another.

The Advocacy Program is sustained by the commitment of faculty members and former advocates, who volunteer to judge countless practice sessions. That is truly the secret to its success. Excellence is demanded and expected, and South Texas advocates deliver.

With 96 national titles, the Advocacy Program at South Texas has been compared to the 1927 New York Yankees, the World Champion team considered by many to be the greatest in baseball history, and that analogy could not be more accurate. For each semester, South Texas advocates enter the most difficult moot court and mock trial competitions in the country—and consistently win them.

“Moot court,” says 3L Gabe T. Vick, “has given me the opportunity to work on real-world legal problems with some of the brightest students in the law school. I have developed advocacy and analytical skills that you cannot receive in the classroom.”

COURTNEY CARLSON: *champion advocate*

“The Advocacy Program,” says 3L Courtney Carlson, “is the reason I came to South Texas.” In her career planning, she explains, Courtney knew two things early on: she wanted to be a trial appellate lawyer, and South Texas College of Law was the only place where she could receive the training to help her excel in that specialty.

Courtney's journey toward her dream began during the summer of 2006, following her first year at South Texas. That summer, two significant events took place in Courtney's law school career. First, through the College's internship program, she landed a position with the Supreme Court of Texas. In this position, which involved writing memos for the justices, Courtney gained a wealth of knowledge about the inner workings of an appeals court, as well as insight into what appellate judges look for in a case.

The second major event for Courtney that summer was being selected to participate in the Advocacy Program. Courtney's rise through that program was a rapid one, and seven months later,

as a second-year student, she helped South Texas claim its 95th national advocacy title.

Delivering their oral arguments before an array of state and federal judges, including three from the Supreme Court of Texas, Courtney, as lead-off speaker, and partners Alex Horton and Jessica Sycora won the National Constitutional Law Moot Court Competition in February 2007 at William and Mary Law School in Williamsburg, Virginia. They also received the competition's Best Brief Award; in addition, the college's second team at the event was the runner-up finalist.

Courtney credits her success in advocacy to Associate Dean T. Gerald Treece's skilled instruction in Moot Court and the knack he and Rob Galloway '91, Distinguished Lecturer of Appellate Advocacy, have for nurturing students' courtroom talents. "They teach you how to be a responsive and respectful advocate," she says, "while at the same time having fun."

The Advocacy Program, says Courtney, has enabled her to improve in two main areas: writing briefs and speaking in front of judges. "The program," she says, "provides a unique opportunity to review the appellate process. It teaches you what it takes to draft a solid brief and the preparation needed to handle any question that might be thrown at you in oral argument."

What makes Courtney the most proud, however, is that she achieved her success in advocacy on her own, not because she is the daughter of Professor Elaine Carlson '79. And Courtney's success makes Professor Carlson very proud as well.

"Courtney's legal reasoning and powers of persuasion, both oral and written," says Professor Carlson, "have truly been honed as a result of the incredible one-on-one training she has received from South Texas's masters of advocacy, Dean Treece and Rob Galloway. What a tremendous experience! She has already argued to several members of the Texas Supreme Court—and won—while participating in a national advocacy contest. Where else could she develop these skills and get that type of experience?"

Through the Advocacy Program, Courtney has gained an extended family of alumni coaches who listen to advocates' practice arguments and advise them on winning techniques. "I never feel pressured by our coaches," she says, "but rather pressured by myself, knowing that so many other students would love to be in my place. The opportunity to represent South Texas as a varsity advocate is a privilege. The school's winning history is unmatched by any other program in the country, and knowing that advocates before you have done it makes you work that much harder to sustain and improve the school's reputation."

On November 2-3, Courtney, along with partners Adam Massey and Spencer Solomon, will compete in the 14th Annual Burton D. Wechsler First Amendment Moot Court Competition, to be held at American University in Washington, D.C. "My goal for the coming semester," she says, "is to continue to improve under the direction of Coaches Treece and Galloway and hopefully bring home another victory."

After graduation, Courtney has exciting plans as well, for she was recently hired as a law clerk for Texas Supreme Court Justice David Medina '89 for the 2008-2009 term, starting next May. And in her spare time, says Courtney, she wants to give back to the school that prepared her for the courtroom and her clerkship by serving "as a mentor to those who come after me."



*The Advocacy
Program, is the
reason I came to
South Texas."*

– Courtney Carlson

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*The initiatives of
the Transactional
Practice Center,
“are generating
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students but also
among our facul-
ty. They’re the
most significant
thing going on in
the South Texas
curriculum.”*

– Dean Alfini,



THE FRANK EVANS CENTER: *conflict resolution leader*

Established in 1994 upon the initiative of former South Texas board member Robert A. Mosbacher, the Frank Evans Center for Conflict Resolution is known statewide for its innovation in teaching the art of resolving disputes. The product of years of work by its founding director, Judge Frank G. Evans, and its first executive director, the late Professor R. Hanson Lawton, the center is actively supported by its Advisory Board, consisting of members of the law school faculty and staff plus some 250 prominent lawyers, judges, physicians, scientists, and business leaders.

The initiatives of the Frank Evans Center, one of the college's Centers of Excellence, range in scope from local to national to international. Among the center's current activities is the collaborative Cross-cultural Conflict Resolution Project it is conducting with business and governmental leaders in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. The purpose of this project is to design, implement, and test

- *advanced conflict resolution systems that offer a wide range of fair, affordable, and effective conflict resolution processes*
- *state-of-the-art communications and risk evaluation technologies that enable parties to resolve their disputes without regard to time, distance, or language barriers*
- *a system of plans and activities that encourage cultural awareness, stable business investments, economic growth, and productive job opportunities for people in the three regions*

The outgrowth of this effort has been an international internship program that placed South Texas students with judges who were working with alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs in Guyana, Jamaica, and Panama in the summer of 2007.

The center also offers both classroom and skills-training courses in mediation and arbitration concepts and practices. In advanced training provided by the center's Mediation Clinic, law students learn how to provide services as mediators or arbitrators and also how to represent clients as advocates in ADR procedures. In addition, law students in the Mediation Clinic learn the practical aspects of family law practice, offering pro-bono coaching assistance to divorcing parents in the Online Parent Coaching Program.

The center also provides law students with the opportunity to participate in the American Bar Association's regional and national competitions in negotiation, mediation, and client counseling. Students are taught how to evaluate the risks and costs involved in litigated cases, using such tools as the CAN-WIN (Computed Assisted Negotiation–Web International Network) software.

In addition, the Frank Evans Center, along with the State Bar ADR Section and other ADR-related organizations, hosts the Annual Institute on Responsible Conflict Resolution, which provides a community-based forum for the exchange of information and ideas regarding the use of responsible conflict resolution protocols and processes.

MARK WOLFE: *experienced mediator*

Mark Wolfe is not just another South Texas work-study student, although that's what he thought he would be when he accepted a position as a research assistant in the Frank Evans Center for Conflict Resolution. Mark, a 3L, is keenly interested in practicing international business law upon graduation and knows how valuable mediation training is to those who negotiate mergers

and other business transactions. So when he heard about the center's work-study position from a friend, he applied. Little did he know how involved he would eventually become in Judge Frank Evans's International Judicial Internship Program.

Mark doesn't like to portray himself as being fluent in Spanish, but to most people, he is. After studying the language at Texas State University, he traveled to Spain, where he spoke nothing but Spanish. With his superb mastery of the language and knowledge about how the Texas court system works, as well as his four years of experience working in the Guadalupe County District Attorney's Office, he was a natural fit for the projects that the Frank Evans Center is involved in.

Between his first and second years of law school, Mark received his mediator certification after taking Professor Kimberlee Kovach's 40-hour mediation training course. He then enrolled in the center's Mediation Clinic, and under the direction of Judge Bruce Wetman received advanced training on how to provide services as a mediator and an arbitrator and how to represent clients as an advocate in ADR procedures. While involved with the clinic, he mediated over 30 cases in small claims court in Humble, Texas.

When Mark began his work at the center, Judge Evans and the center's Advisory Board were engaged in a collaborative Cross-cultural Conflict Resolution Project with business and governmental leaders in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. An international internship program, which would place students with judges working with ADR programs in Guyana, Jamaica, and the Republic of Panama, began to evolve out of this effort. With the internship program set to begin in the summer of 2007, Mark began to research issues related to the Panama Canal and the Panamanian government. Through May he worked closely with Judge Evans, gathering information that helped formulate the Panama program.

Since Mark is fluent in Spanish and had newly acquired knowledge about the Panamanian governmental and court systems, he was a shoe-in to lead the student interns who began their work with the Republic of Panama's Supreme Court in July. While there, Mark and his fellow student interns were able to work directly with the Supreme Court justices and learn more about the many mediation centers located throughout the country. Their work gave them the opportunity to observe and evaluate these mediation centers and make recommendations on how to improve their services. In the course of their observations, they found that most legal cases were being sent to and clogging up the Supreme Court system, when they could have been settled through the centers.

"I was impressed with how the mediation centers performed," says Mark, "but I learned that the general public did not have the same knowledge of or confidence in their services as we do in the United States, since they were mostly run by volunteers."

Mark's unique experiences working as an international intern, as well as his mediation training at the Frank Evans Center and his work at the Mediation Clinic, have given him "a new outlook about how to handle legal issues," he says. With this hands-on knowledge, "I learned that mediating first rather than litigating a case is not a disservice to one's client."

Mark's future goal is to handle international business mergers and sales. "My mediation and negotiation training," he says, "will be a great benefit to me in my career."



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"All of the professors were exceptionally knowledgeable," and provided exemplary guidance into the transactional discipline."

— Jessie Herrera



TRANSACTIONAL PRACTICE: *a great deal*

Midway through their law school careers, some students discover that their true interests lie not in winning a court case but in closing a multimillion-dollar business deal. For these students, the college's Transactional Practice Certificate Program provides the perfect avenue for launching a legal career in the world of business.

Directed by Professor John Worley, the year-old program is unique: "It's the only certificate program being offered by South Texas College Law," says Dean James Alfani.

"The purpose of the program, which is open to 2Ls with at least a 2.9 GPA, is to prepare students for a transactional legal practice," says Professor Worley. Its requirements are intensive:

- *three required substantive courses: Corporations, Agency and Partnership, and Secured Transactions*
- *three elective substantive courses, to be chosen from 14 approved courses*
- *one foundational skills course: either Contract Negotiations and Drafting or Contract Building Blocks*
- *one capstone skills course: either Transaction Skills (Corporate), Transaction Skills (Real Estate), or Transaction Skills (International Business/Intellectual Property)*
- *a substantial writing requirement*

To qualify for a Transactional Practice Certificate, students must earn a 3.33 GPA in the program's courses and a 3.0 cumulative law school GPA.

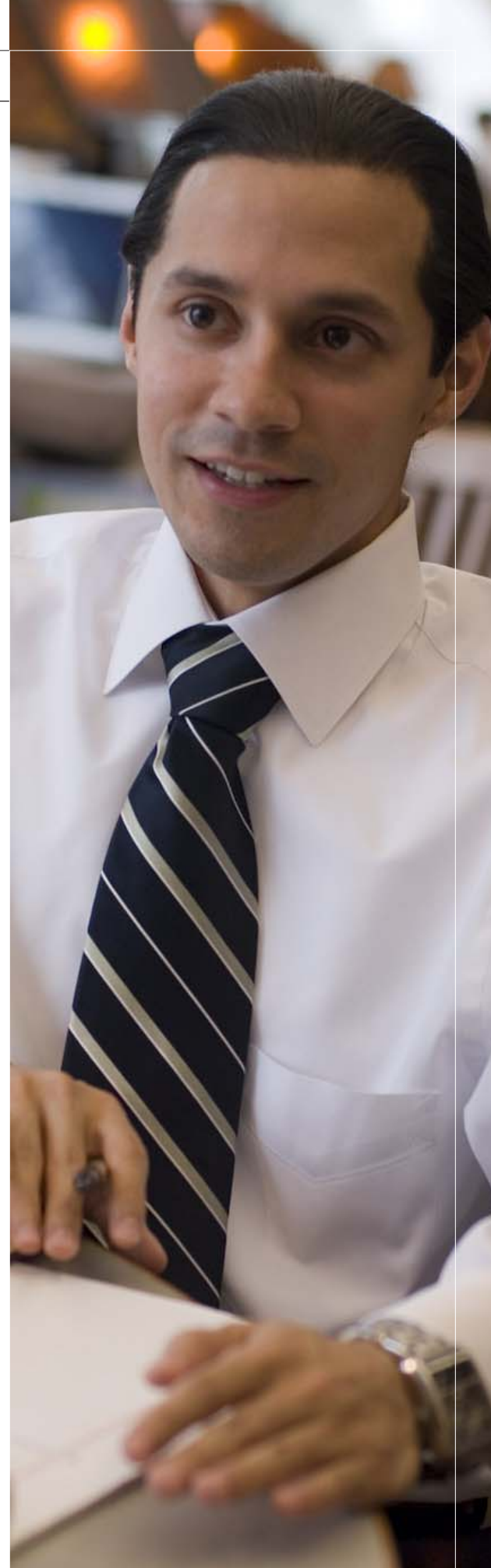
In May, four South Texas graduates—Allen Bertin—'07; Jessie D. Herrera Jr. '07; David Pierson '07; and Kris Westbrook '07—received the first certificates awarded by the program. Currently, about 30 students are pursuing certificates.

Origins of the Program: The certificate program is an outgrowth of the Transactional Practice Center, which was founded in 2004 by Professor David East, with the help of former Vinson & Elkins partner Ron Astin, as one of the college's Centers of Excellence. The three capstone skills courses that form the foundation of the certificate program were developed by Professor East, the center's director, with significant assistance from faculty colleagues and practicing transactional attorneys.

The first such course, a corporate leveraged buyout now known as Transaction Skills (Corporate), was created in 1999, says Professor East, after then-Dean Frank T. Read asked alumni what the college could be doing better. According to Professor East, a number of alumni responded with a common theme: "You taught us to be very competent litigators, but did not teach us enough about what transactional lawyers do."

Professor East created that inaugural course with the assistance of an advisory group of transactional attorneys and faculty colleagues, and he first taught it in the spring of 1999. When Ron Astin joined the adjunct faculty, in the fall of 2004, he took over the teaching of that course and Professor East began developing the Real Estate and the International Business/Intellectual Property problem models, with the help of additional full-time and adjunct faculty. Today a corps of highly experienced adjuncts continues to represent a significant part of the center's faculty.

Transaction Skills (Real Estate), created and team-taught in 2005 by Professor East and Adjunct Professor Carl Moerer, a real estate and environmental attorney, requires students to learn about selecting the right entity for a real estate acquisition and to prepare key acquisition and financing documents. Since 2006 that course has been taught by Adjunct Professor Allan



Boss '93, a real estate attorney.

The International Business/Intellectual Property problem model is team-taught by Professor Cherie Taylor and Adjunct Professor Irene Kosturakis '86, an intellectual property attorney with BMC Software. Professors Taylor and Kosturakis created the course in 2006 with help from Professor East. In this simulation, the students form a joint venture to sell high-tech products to the European Union, creating a licensing agreement, a joint venture agreement, and financing documents.

As a prerequisite for the capstone courses, students must have earned 60 credits. "Sixteen students are enrolled in each course this semester," says Professor East, "and we expect that level to continue. In the next two years, he says, "we want to develop an additional capstone course on energy transactions and a third foundational skills course on negotiating a deal."

The initiatives of the Transactional Practice Center, says Dean Alfini, "are generating excitement not only among our students but also among our faculty. They're the most significant thing going on in the South Texas curriculum."

JESSIE HERRERA: *business whiz*

At the college's May graduation, Jessie D. Herrera Jr. '07 was one of the first four South Texas graduates to be awarded a Transactional Practice Certificate in addition to their JD degrees. "I was drawn to the certificate program," he says, "because I had an interest in both the legal and business fields. The courses allowed me to incorporate business topics and concepts into my legal studies."

The certificate program, says Jessie, was "a great introduction to the transactional practice and business-related legal arena," offering him "a balance of business law courses and transactional skills classes."

Through the program, Jessie took the foundational skills course Contract Negotiations and Drafting and the capstone skills course Transaction Skills (Corporate). These classes, he says, gave him "practical, hands-on training in structuring complex transactions and drafting multifaceted documents."

In addition, Jessie took such elective courses as Corporate Finance and International Business Transactions, which, he says, gave him insights into "fundamental legal concepts that have evolved from business transactions."

The interconnection of the program's courses appealed to Jessie. "Many of the commercial transactions that I studied in one class," he says, "were touched upon in the other business courses, which allowed me to have a better understanding of the legal and business issues."

He was also impressed by the program's faculty. "All of the professors were exceptionally knowledgeable," says Jessie, "and provided exemplary guidance into the transactional discipline." He recommends the program "as a great alternative" to consider for "any prospective student who is interested in obtaining a JD and MBA." It prepares new attorneys, he says, "to hit the ground running in the practice of commercial transactions."

Concludes Jessie: "It was an honor to be a part of the first graduating class of the Transactional Practice Certificate Program, and I look forward to its future growth."

*“The purpose of
the program is to
prepare students
for a transactional
legal practice,”*

— Professor John Worley

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FRED PARKS: *the legacy*

“The greatest, most challenging, and totally rewarding accomplishment of my life was becoming an attorney.” This was the opening remark made by the late Fred Parks ’37 in 1999 when the South Texas Alumni Association presented him with its Distinguished Alumnus Award. Mr. Parks made many contributions to South Texas over the course of his career to thank the college for the opportunity it gave him to reach that singular goal.

In addition to being a successful attorney, Fred Parks was also a visionary entrepreneur who cared deeply about the future. His vision for the future of urban transportation led him to purchase the technology and patents for a unique mass transit system known as Aerobus, and he devoted many years in the latter part of his life to making that vision a reality.

“Mr. Parks also had a vision for the future of South Texas,” says Dean James J. Alfini, “and this came to fruition shortly after his passing, in 2001.” At that time, the college learned that Mr. Parks had made an unrestricted gift of \$10 million to South Texas through his estate plan. Today that visionary gift is ensuring a legacy of opportunity and excellence for many future aspiring lawyers like Fred Parks who attend South Texas College of Law.

“As a tribute to Fred Parks’s vision for South Texas,” says Dean Alfini, “we are proud to announce the establishment of the Fred Parks Legacy Society. Charter membership in the society is available to all alumni and friends who have designated contributions to South Texas College of Law in their estate plans.” One such alumna is Sharon Schweitzer Robinson ’89, whom we salute here for helping South Texas students realize their own visions for the future.

SHARON SCHWEITZER ROBINSON: *charter member*

Sharon Schweitzer Robinson ’89 learned the importance of thinking about and planning for the future from her mother, Evelyn Laga Schweitzer. When Sharon was a young girl, Mrs. Schweitzer gave her a book inscribed with the following quote: “Your future lies before you, like drifts of deep white snow; be careful how you treat it, for every step will show.”

Sharon planned her steps carefully: following undergraduate studies at Ohio State University and a pre-law summer study program at the University of Oxford, she enrolled at South Texas College of Law in 1986. She had always known that she would become a lawyer, for, says Sharon, “Growing up with five brothers and sisters, I was constantly resolving conflicts and mediating disagreements.”

Sharon flourished in the Advocacy Program under the tutelage of Advocacy Director T. Gerald Treece. “Sharon was so talented,” says Dean Treece, “that she was a true horizon-buster in the program.” In 1987, Sharon was a member of the winning teams in two national advocacy competitions: the National Administrative Law Moot Court Competition and the William F. Starr National Insurance Law Moot Court Competition.

Following graduation from South Texas, in 1989, Sharon began her legal career with a small firm in Austin; then, seeking trial experience, she worked as an assistant attorney general for four years. She went on to serve as legal counsel for employee relations and ADA coordinator for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, and later as legal counsel for Jenkins & Gilchrist, P.C. Currently, she is founder and president of the Protocol and Etiquette Academy, LLC, an international consulting company based in Austin. Sharon’s planning for the future has truly enhanced her career.

Sharon continues to plan her life’s steps in another important area as well: her support of the

college. Earlier this year, as she and her husband finalized their estate plan, Sharon made provisions for a bequest to the South Texas Advocacy Program. By making this bequest, she became a charter member of the college's Fred Parks Legacy Society. Says Sharon: "I want to ensure that the law school continues to have the resources to help motivated students reach their goals."

Bequests to the College: There are many ways to provide for South Texas College of Law in your will. The most common method is to bequeath a specific dollar amount to the college upon your death. Or you may wish to direct a percentage of the value of your estate to the college, or a specific asset such as stocks, bonds, or real estate. You should always consult with your professional financial advisers to determine the best method for your particular goals.

Bequests to South Texas may be unrestricted or restricted. An unrestricted bequest to the Annual Fund gives the college the discretion to use the funds where they are most needed. A restricted bequest allows you to indicate how you would like the funds to be used—for example, to set up or add to a scholarship or professorship or an existing program such as the General Civil Clinic or Advocacy. When making a restricted bequest to South Texas, it is always a good idea to consult with the college in advance.

For more information on becoming a charter member of the Fred Parks Legacy Society, please contact Kim Parker, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, at (713) 646-1803 or kparker@stcl.edu.



*“The greatest,
most challenging,
and totally re-
warding accom-
plishment of my
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an attorney.”*

– Fred Parks '37

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*“I want to ensure
that the law
school continues
to have the re-
sources to help
motivated stu-
dents reach their
goals.”*

*– Sharon Schweitzer
Robinson '89*

“It was an honor to be a part of the first graduating class of the Transactional Practice Certificate Program, and I look forward to its future growth.”

– Jessie Herrera

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