

DeVaughn Swanson

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Rising second-year law student DeVaughn Swanson has always been a problem solver. Though he did not start out knowing he would end up in law school, his experiences and passions have led him down his own unique path.

Originally from Ypsilanti, Michigan, Swanson moved to Atlanta to attend Morehouse College and pursue a business degree. After graduation, he was selected as one of Chick-fil-A's inaugural fellows, working directly with the restaurant's Chairman and CEO Dan T. Cathy as well as the Executive Director of the Chick-fil-A Foundation Rodney Bullard on strategic initiatives. Swanson still considers Cathy and Bullard as friends and mentors who helped him get to where he is.

Swanson then began his career in consulting, but quickly saw a need for a law degree. "It clicked when I was helping a client do some geographic expansion work. Our work impacted the company's international presence, thus requiring the contribution of several lawyers," he said. "I learned then the importance of a legally trained mind, and I knew I wanted to get a degree where I could be a problem solver at the table."

However, before studying the law, he obtained his Master of Theological Studies from Duke University, as he believes "a lot of the problems in the world often reside at the intersection of multiple disciplines. [Thus] I found it important to basically study in two fields, theology and law," he said.

Now armed with degrees in business and theology, he is pursuing his Juris Doctor with hopes of going into corporate transactional work. He feels he has found a perfect crossroad

between his interests and skills.

"I enjoy reading on ethics and writing about ethics. I hope to have a career that

allows me to work at that intersection of ethics, compliance and things of that nature," he said.

Though he is just beginning his second year of law school, Swanson has big plans for his future. This summer, he successfully secured a judicial clerkship with Presiding Justice Harold D. Melton (J.D.'91) of the Georgia Supreme Court.

"One day I would like to lead a company's legal department, as some type of chief legal officer, but I would also like to be over governmental affairs or the philanthropic arm of the company," he said. "That's what I would love to do some day, to lead both of those sectors."

Swanson believes his experiences and education will help make him an effective legal leader as his career unfolds because he has learned to "analyze and strategically think about situations."

Though he is usually busy studying, Swanson recognizes the importance of maintaining a relationship with his faith community. "I think that I've always managed to keep relationships with one – my [personal] community – and two – the faith community – which is very important to me. [I enjoy] taking the skills and resources that I have gained in the secular world and using it to uplift the faith community," he said.



Toni Wormald

CHASING OPPORTUNITIES

Recent graduate Shannon T. "Toni" Wormald is constantly on the move. The 26-year-old Atlanta native said she always knew she wanted to be a lawyer, but her steps to becoming one were unpredictable.

"I have moved 24 times in the past eight years, but that is what you have to do if you chase opportunities," she said.

Wormald, the first person to become a lawyer in her family, started law school at the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law on a full-ride scholarship after earning her undergraduate degree and working for a law firm in Charlotte, North Carolina.

After finishing her first law school semester ranked fifth in her class, Wormald realized she did not want to practice law in Ohio and began to look at other options.

"I still had my residency in Georgia and, as most people know, the University of Georgia School of Law is extremely economical and a great law school. I knew that the likelihood of opportunities long term would be great at UGA," Wormald said.

Caroline Savini

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Recent graduate Caroline F. Savini has always been a Georgia Bulldog fan. Between her grandfather serving as a professor and the associate athletic director, both of her parents being graduates and her sister earning two degrees from UGA, it's no surprise that after she earned her undergraduate degree from the university, she decided to stick around.

What is surprising, however, is that she enrolled in the School of Law. "When I was in high school I was reserved, which is different from how I am today," Savini said.

In high school, one mandatory debate in AP U.S. History changed all of that. "I thought that I would pass out, but as it turns out, I loved it," Savini said. From there, law school was a choice on the horizon.

After being admitted to the School of Law, Savini was still unsure of whether to enroll, and looked for guidance from Dean Peter B. "Bo" Rutledge. "We sat down for over one hour, and he was what tipped the scale in favor of law school. He has been with me through my whole law school career and has taught me so many things both academically and personally," she said.

Once enrolled, Savini took her law school experiences in stride. From participating on the staff of the *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law* and being a member of the championship Charleston National Moot Court Competition team to working as a teaching assistant and assisting Rutledge with his casebook, Savini did her best to become as involved as possible at the School of Law.

"I've done a little bit of everything in law school, which was awesome because it let me figure out what I like. Finding your passion in school is really important because you're putting so much work in and you have to love what you're doing," she said.

Transferring to the School of Law after her 1L year, Wormald wasted no time getting involved and pursuing her passion for corporate governance law. She served on the *Georgia Law Review*, was active in the Women Law Students Association and the Corsair Law Society, worked as a research assistant for Associate Dean Usha Rodrigues for two years and was a peer mentor for other School of Law transfer students. She also was honored as a Sea Island Scholar, which is a new women's leadership initiative with UGA's Terry College of Business.

With the support of Rodrigues, Wormald accepted an externship on a scholarship with the Delaware Court of Chancery after her second year, working with Vice Chancellor and 2006 alumna Tamika R. Montgomery-Reeves, which she describes as the "best decision" she has ever made.

"Vice Chancellor Reeves is the sharpest and most hard-working person I know. It was a true honor to work with her. Being a female in corporate law is not as common as in some other areas of law. In

Though the rigors of law school meant Savini did not have a lot of free time, she got her inspiration from a very special source.

"I have a mentally disabled cousin who lives in Athens, and I've had a really special bond with him since undergrad.

... The unconditional trust and faith that he has in me – you can't find it anywhere else. It has inspired me to want to do my best and make a difference in this world," she said.

This summer, Savini studied for the bar and clerked in the North Carolina Business Court for Special Superior Court Judge Adam M. Conrad (J.D.'05). Though she plans to stay in Charlotte for a while, Savini would like to return to Georgia one day to become a law professor.

"Someday I think I would like to be a role model for people who are a little bit shy or uncertain or scared or overwhelmed. I could be someone that those people could come to and point them in the right direction. Of course you impact peoples' lives all over the place in the legal profession, but I've always wanted to have kind of a mentor role and help people realize their potential. I think the best way to do that is to teach," Savini said.



—All profiles by Claire Taylor

the Court of Chancery's 225-year history, Montgomery-Reeves is the first African-American and second female on the court. She is such an inspiration," Wormald said.

"I am the first lawyer in my family, so I never really had anyone to help me navigate some of the non-legal realities of the legal world. She really helped with that, and she made me realize how important it is for women to support each other," she added.

Wormald received an anonymous scholarship of \$5,000 for her seven-month externship, which made the opportunity possible for her. Because of the experience, she was able to make connections that led to her accepting a full-time position with Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati in California post-graduation.

"I was able to [do the externship] because of that scholarship, and it made all the difference," she said. "I look forward to when I can give back to School of Law because I think that it will enable others to chase after their dreams."