

er. In 1988, he married Seattle University graduate Ginny Peck. Today, Bob and Ginny have four children; Shannon, 15; Matt, 13; Colleen, 11; and Joey, 9. It is a matter of interest and some note that this mother of four also holds a doctorate in child psychology from the University of Notre Dame.

For Bob Kane, family time is really prime time for communicating, educating and simply enjoying each others' company. In the Kane household there is no dearth of shared activities. Playing tennis or bike riding with the children; attending their sporting events; sharing a ski vacation or time helping out at a nursing home or a homeless shelter—these are the ordinary opportunities of family living that add such an extraordinary measure of meaning and balance to his life.

When he was a bachelor living in downtown Seattle, Kane would often take 60 mile jaunts on his bicycle after work. He even went on a four-week bicycle tour in China. Today, as a family man living in West Seattle, he has learned to be flexible and take what life's circumstances give him. Now the daily commute to and from work have replaced the more ambitious bike excursions. However, he still manages the occasional extended tour with his wife, Ginny. Two summers ago they undertook a nine-day, 900-mile bicycle trip from Astoria, Oregon to San Francisco using the old Coast Highway. Last summer they did the San Francisco to San Diego leg of the coast, going 700 miles in seven days. As a former college gymnast and a runner, Ginny had no problem handling the physical demands of the trip even though these were her first major bicycle rides.

For Bob Kane, genuine balance also involves the spiritual dimension. He tries to attend daily mass in downtown Seattle during the lunch hour. He is active in his local parish where he has served on the finance committee and the school commission, as well as in the R.C.I.A. program. He is also a member of a group of Catholics who meet regularly for prayer and discussion. Their goal is to try to live their faith commitments more fully in daily life, and to raise their families with real spiritual values in a culture that offers so many distractions. Kane has taken classes through Seattle University's graduate program in theology and ministry. One recent class was a study of the Hebrew Scriptures. He hopes that by keeping God as the number one priority in his life he can, by example, encourage his children to do the same.

Kane recalls a book he read about setting priorities in life. One of the author's tag lines was, "even if

you win the rat race you're still a rat." It was a thought-provoking concept that prompted Kane to reassess his priorities. He knows that the gratification people derive from work can be very seductive. It is tempting to feed on that satisfaction, thereby taking important time and energy away from other priorities in one's life. This understanding has led to some significant lifestyle changes for Kane. Saturdays at the office are now



Bob and Ginny at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

the exception and not the rule they used to be.

Bob Kane says that the best chance he has of maintaining balance in his life is to keep his priorities in order. In his case, those priorities are faith, family, friends, and work. He knows that balance is a transient state and not a permanent one. It demands hard work and constant attention. But he also believes that for those committed to the human race and not the rat race, the goal of keeping priorities and maintaining balance is more than worth the effort.



Although he is a true amateur at heart, Bob Dunn still brings the same passion and focus to his sporting interests as he does to his trial work.

BOB DUNN '81

If you have found your life's ideal vocation, consider yourself truly blessed. A fortunate few seem to know their calling early in life, while others never really discover that perfect complement between work and individual temperaments, talents, and goals. For most, it is a process of discovery that evolves slowly, hammered out over time on the anvil of experience. Such was the case for Spokane attorney Bob Dunn whose road to his ideal career was far from direct or easy.

Bob Dunn grew up in the Yakima Valley of Washington state. As the oldest of eight children, he learned the meaning of hard work and responsibility through

long hours caring for his siblings while his parents worked to make ends meet. As the oldest child, he also felt the weight of family expectations; and whether in the classroom or on the athletic field he did not disappoint. An excellent student, he finished near the top of his Grandview High School class while lettering in three sports and making the all-conference football team.

Dunn's abilities and accomplishments earned him a commission to the United States Air Force Academy, where, as a walk-on, he made the freshman football team as a wide receiver. While he liked the regimen of academy life, he had little interest in the curriculum's heavy emphasis on engineering, so he returned home after his first year.

After attending Yakima Valley Junior College, Dunn made two very important life decisions. His best and most important resulted in his marriage to Mary, his high school sweetheart. His second decision was to enlist for a six-year tour with the United States Air Force. He wanted to see the world, but in a classic case of reality trumping expectations, he wound up spending his entire service in Eastern Washington at Fairchild Air Force Base.

At Fairchild, Dunn was involved with the base's well-known survival school where pilots learn such life and death fundamentals as how to live off the land, evade capture, and survive enemy interrogation and imprisonment. In his first two years, Dunn served as a survival instructor in the field. He then became part of the resistance training program which simulates captivity for pilots. Acting as a "hostile interrogator," Dunn questioned more than 2,000 trainees in scenarios that make his current civil depositions look tame. In his last two years, he served as platform instructor teaching various subjects to 175 to 200 students, in classes that rotated on a weekly basis.

The long and irregular hours at the survival school did not deter Dunn from completing his undergraduate education at Eastern Washington University. It was not uncommon for him to drive to Cheney at 5:30 a.m. after completing his night's work as a "hostile interrogator," and catch a few hours sleep in his pickup before beginning a class day that ended at 4 p.m. After a few more hours sleep, he would be back at Fairchild by 9:00 p.m. to start the process all over again. In spite of the challenge, Dunn graduated cum laude with a major in political science and a minor in economics.

About three months before his graduation in 1978, Dunn started thinking seriously about law school. He was not yet convinced that he wanted to be a lawyer, but he knew a legal education would be a tremendous foundation for whatever he ultimately decided to do. In the space of one month, he took the LSAT, applied to law school, and signed up for 25 credits in his last quarter to insure his timely graduation.

Although Bob Dunn was still full-time military during his first year at Gonzaga, he managed to do well academically. In his second year, he began interning at Winston Cashatt, where he came under the direction of experienced and accomplished attorneys such as Leo Driscoll, whom Dunn credits with giving him his foundation in the law. "There were some tremendous attorneys at the firm such as Leo, Bob McNichols, Bob Whaley, Rich Guy, Pat Sullivan, Stan Moore, Jim Connolly, and Patricia Williams to name a few" said Dunn. Serving as both models and mentors these were the people who had a profound influence on his professional growth. A grateful Dunn readily acknowledges his debt to them. "In practice" he said, "you ultimately

become who your mentors are or were."

Dunn had been offered an associate position at Winston Cashatt prior to his cum laude graduation in 1981. He accepted the offer but only after receiving assurances that they would put him to work as a litigator. They kept their promise and two weeks after passing the bar he "flew solo" with his first trial. He remembers how he made an excellent presentation that established a rock solid liability case. Then he rested with a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. That lasted only as long as it took opposing counsel to move for dismissal on the grounds that Dunn had failed to offer proof of damages. Fortunately, the judge let him put on his proof. Dunn won a favorable verdict but he also learned an important and unforgettable lesson on how to make his case in court.

Dunn entered his new profession with the same strong work ethic that had served him so well in the past. Twelve hour days were the norm for the first several years. He figured others might have more experience but he resolved he would not be outworked.

In 1986 he was named a principal of Winston Cashatt. While he valued both his experience and his colleagues, Dunn left to start his own litigation-oriented firm in 1993. He and his new partners assembled a small, highly specialized group of compatible lawyers who fit the firm's culture and shared many personal traits and goals. They were all bright, type "A" personalities and former athletes. Most important, they

all wanted to be litigators. Litigation, Dunn notes, is something you must want to do, it is not something you should ever get into by default.

Today, the nine attorneys of Dunn & Black represent clients involved in construction, employment and labor disputes, government procurement, and civil litigation at the local, state and federal levels. The firm has a historically strong focus on construction law, representing many general contractors in Washington, Oregon, and Montana.

Although his firm does a significant amount of defense work, the vast majority of Dunn's representation is on the plaintiff's side. Plaintiff litigation is of the "one and done" variety so there is no client base to build on. Instead, you succeed by establishing your reputation as a first-class litigator. This is something Dunn has certainly succeeded in doing. An "AV" rated attorney who is listed in the Best Lawyers In America, Dunn has an extensive and enviable record in both jury

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and non-jury trials. He has litigated construction matters, environmental pollution and crop damage cases, condemnations, labor and employment controversies, and personal injury suits including wrongful death. He has also won favorable settlements in numerous arbitration and mediation proceedings.

Bob Dunn has had his share of multi-million dollar verdicts, but his most satisfying work came early in his career when he stepped in to represent a severely ill man suffering from a degenerative bone disease. The client spent two unsuccessful years petitioning the government for disability compensation before Dunn took up his cause and secured the award. The result not only turned the grateful man's life around, it also made a deep impression on Dunn who came to realize the profound difference his work could make in people's lives.



Bob Dunn

Dunn admits he is partial to the plaintiff's cause especially when there is a disparity of size, reputation, or finances that puts the plaintiff in the underdog position. Dunn enjoys "playing from behind." He sees the courtroom as the great equalizer that gives you a fighting chance to "take on the king" if you have a legitimate cause.

The teaching skills Dunn honed as an instructor in the survival school were not forgotten when he entered the legal profession. He has conducted seminars on employment law issues, taught business and construction law at area colleges, lectured on products liability at the Law School, and presented at continuing legal education programs. He also served several years as chair of the Associated General Contractors' annual

Construction Law Symposium. Active in youth education, he taught an introductory law class at a local high school and served as regional coordinator for both the "Today's Constitution and You" program and the mock trial program for Spokane area high schools.

The counterpoint to Dunn's intense involvement in the profession can be found in his love of the outdoors. He began hunting waterfowl and upland birds in the Yakima Valley at the age of ten. Today his love of the sport has found expression not only in hunting but in such complementary activities as clay sports, dog training, and writing for outdoor publications.

Dunn's debut as a published author happened quite by accident. Only a year out of law school, he defended a man charged with baiting waterfowl. Dunn submitted a meticulously researched and well written brief that won the praise of the trial judge. Encouraged, Dunn softened the brief's technical language, changed the format, and submitted it to an outdoor magazine which accepted it for publication. This was the beginning of a freelance writing career that has seen his articles published in such magazines as *American Hunter*, *Ducks Unlimited*, *Sports Afield*, and *Outdoor Life* among others.

Dunn has devoted a great deal of time and energy to sporting clays. This is a shotgun sport conducted on an outdoor course consisting of stations at which the participants shoot clay targets. The course utilizes differences in terrain at each station to create a wide array of target presentations, providing a challenge beyond that of standard skeet or trap shooting. A skilled competitor in the sport, Dunn has won both the Idaho Class B state championship and the Washington Class C state championship. He is now a Class A competitor in both states.

Those who truly love their sport have a desire to communicate it to others. Bob Dunn is no exception. He and his former partner, Stan Schultz, helped establish a foundation to support the teaching of shotgun sports to youngsters. Every other week from March to November, he works with boys and girls as young as nine to teach them the array of skills necessary to participate in and enjoy the sport. Dunn, who is one of only three certified Level Two shooting instructors in Eastern Washington, has taken his students to compete in the state championship in each of the last three years.

Though people have suggested he take his hunting and dog training skills to a professional level, Dunn resists. He is an amateur in the classic sense of the word. He is literally a lover of what he does. He knows these activities, if pursued for profit, would require the mindset he now reserves for his trial work. He is not about to relinquish either of these activities or the perspective that makes them so enjoyable for him.

Bob Dunn is philosophical when asked about his professional future. Litigation is mentally and physically demanding work. He believes that sooner or later the litigator won't be willing to take the risks and put

in the effort it takes to do the job at the highest level. “Litigators,” he says, “have a shelf life.” He is not at that point yet, although he paces himself a little more these days. He is also more frequently sitting second chair for younger lawyers. He believes there needs to be more mentoring in the profession, and he is willing to do his part to give back what he received when he was a new attorney.

Dunn believes he will know when the time for retirement arrives and he is sure he will be ready. He will step away from his practice with the satisfaction that he has given the full measure of his time, talent, and energy to doing what he finally discovered he wanted to do most with his life. When he leaves the law, he will not wonder what to do next because he has managed to cultivate a wide range of interests and involve himself in activities he truly loves. Indeed, it is what he worked to create outside of the legal arena that will ensure Bob Dunn a full and satisfying life long after he has completed his final closing argument.

KARLIN ITCHOAK '03

For most professionals, issues of balance arise in the context of work and family, or the need to strike a productive relationship between work and one’s personal interests and recreational activities. Karlin Itchoak of the Gonzaga Law School class of 2003, understands how important the matter of balance is. But for him it is not just a question of work and leisure, it is a profoundly challenging and personal matter of culture and identity.

The son of a German-Irish mother from upstate New York and an Inupiat father from Barrow, Alaska, the country’s northernmost city, Karlin lives in two worlds. Those worlds come together every day for Karlin in the city of Nome, Alaska where he clerks for Alaska Superior Court Judge Ben Esch. Each of his worlds comes with its own set of customs, perspectives and expectations. In each, the pace of daily life is very different. In one, time is measured by the rhythm



Ice climbing provides an intense and challenging diversion from Karlin’s legal pursuits.



Karlin Itchoak

of nature—the caribou, bird and seal migrations; the whaling season, and the winter breakup. In the other time is marked by court calendars, statutory periods and the insistent regimen of modern life where there is never enough time to accommodate the work to be done. One world focuses on customs and traditions; the other, on comfort and convenience.

There is a natural tension between the two worlds but it is a tension Itchoak believes he must embrace if he is to make a difference to the Native people he seeks to serve. If he is to succeed, he must be as conversant with the economic and legal systems of the majority society as he is with the customs and practices of the western Alaska villages. Because of this tension Itchoak has become consciously aware of how important it is to strike a balance. This can be a difficult task when the balance is inherently offset by a dominant culture.

It is somewhat ironic that Karlin Itchoak was not totally immersed in his Inupiat heritage from an early age. Born in 1971, Karlin was raised in Nome along

with a brother and sister. His living conditions in this city of approximately 3,000 were relatively spartan with no sewer or running water. There were few snow machines, and Karlin often got around in the winter by

dog sled. Although he was exposed to Eskimo dancing and traditional stories, he was never actively initiated into the culture. In part this was due to his father being ill with tuberculosis, which prevented them from participating in many of the traditional hunting, whaling, and fishing activities that are integral to Inupiat life. After his father's death, Karlin's friends, uncles and other relatives took a more active role in his life and his cultural education. As a young adult, he became part of seasonal whaling expeditions and caribou hunts in Shishmaref and Barrow.

As he was building his hunting, trapping, and fishing skills, he was also absorbing the culture and traditions of the Inupiat people.

In 1991 he left Nome to begin his college career at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Knowing he would eventually assume a leadership role with his people, he felt a great responsibility to do well in his

As he was building his hunting, trapping, and fishing skills, he was also absorbing the culture and traditions of the Inupiat people.

education. He succeeded in doing just that as he earned a double major in political science and Alaska Native studies. Active in campus activities, Karlin served as president of the University student body. He was also an intern for two U.S. Senators and one State Senator. During his senior year he was a National Fellow with the Center for the Study of the Presidency. Itchoak graduated with leadership honors and was chosen by his Native corporation as the "Shareholder of the Year for Education". He was also awarded an Alaska State Commendation by then Governor Walter Hickel.

After his graduation from the university in 1995, Itchoak took a position as a rural economic development planner in Shishmaref, an island located north of Nome on the Chukchi Sea. Life on the island allowed him to become totally immersed in Inupiat culture. It also afforded him the opportunity to ponder his professional future. From his high school days he had understood that what went on in the state legislature and in the courts could have a profound effect on the rights, interests, and activities of Native people. He wanted to enter political life but he needed skills that would not only make him employable, but would also support any future he might choose to have in public service. Law offered those skills. If he needed any further confirmation of his direction, he received it after consulting with the elders who told him he could do the most good for his people by studying law.

Based on the recommendation of lawyers he knew, Karlin applied to Gonzaga. Several months later he was resting in his tent on the ice at whaling camp when a radio call came in bringing the news that he had been accepted.

Going from a village of 500 to an urban area of close to 500,000 was a significant transition for Karlin. At first, he felt considerable frustration with the normal incidents of city living. Due to his time in Shishmaref, he hadn't driven in a long time, so stoplights and four lane freeways posed a challenge. In Spokane, he encountered an accelerated pace of life where people are driven by the clock and the demands of work, not by the rhythm of the sun and the seasons. Although he found everyone at the Law School to be friendly, he understood that he was in a more competitive environment. At times he thought of quitting, but those moments passed quickly when he considered his responsibility to his community back home. He did not want to pass the message on to other young Natives that giving up was acceptable.

Of all his valued experiences at Gonzaga, none surpassed Karlin's involvement with the clinical law program. In the clinic he found a supportive environment, superb mentoring, and stimulating real-world legal experiences. He has vivid memories of his first court appearance, a six hour trial where he successfully represented a woman in a divorce case. He found great satisfaction both in helping clients in need and in having the opportunity to do lawyers' work.

For Karlin, a law school career that began with trepidation ended with a great sense of accomplishment. "I was afraid law school would make me less Native. I was hunting walrus, whales, caribou, and seals, and fishing and I didn't want to lose that. Then I realized that law school doesn't teach me what to think, just another way to think." Karlin overcame both his initial fears and early academic struggles to make the Dean's list in his final year.

Karlin did, however, experience some apprehension just before graduation. While his classmates were sending out scores of resumes to prospective employers, Karlin mailed out only one application. That was to the Alaska Supreme Court seeking a clerkship position. Although he had made just a single cast into the lake, Karlin got the big strike when he was hired by the Court as a law clerk to Chief Justice Alexander O. Bryner.

His clerkship year at the Supreme Court in Anchorage was more than just a job for Karlin. It was also a time of tremendous professional challenge and growth. He found the justices to be exceptionally bright, highly competent, and yet fun to work for. Chief Justice Bryner proved

to be both the toughest and the best professor he had ever had. But if Karlin gained much from his clerkship year, he also gave much in return. Chief Justice Bryner noted that "Karlin brings his own background and traditions into a structured legal system. He's got tremendous insight, yet from a slightly different perspective." Bryner also cited Karlin's commitment to both his Inupiat culture and the native people. "What's remarkable has been Karlin's ability to retain his culture throughout his experience at Gonzaga and his decision to return to Alaska where he hopes to help the people of his community. We have very few Alaskan Native students who go to law school, graduate and come back into the community. Karlin is one of the first."

While it was demanding, Karlin's clerkship year was not all work. Weekends were filled with outdoor activities such as ice climbing, hiking and kayaking. He found he did not have to travel very far outside the

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city to find moose, eagles, bears, and the wilderness. All of these helped him make a spiritual connection with the land and nature that nourished his soul and renewed his spirit.

At the end of his year with the Supreme Court, he returned to Nome to take his present position as clerk to Judge Esch in the Superior Court. For Karlin it was more than just a homecoming, it was a step closer to the community and people he seeks to serve. In addition to his responsibilities with the court, Karlin works with a local non-profit corporation to improve the well-being of the area's native population through its wellness program. He is also actively advancing Na-



The demands of professional life have not drawn Karlin away from the traditions of his people.

tive interests with young people in his region through workshops and projects such as the National Color of Justice program.

Back in Nome Karlin is once again in touch with the rhythms of native life and culture, but he continues to live in two worlds. Every morning he leaves his home—a cabin that has electricity but no running

water—to begin his 10-mile commute to Nome and another day in the precise and structured world of law.

In addition to his clerkship duties, Karlin also dons the black robe of a Deputy Magistrate. In this capacity he sees the problems, conflicts, and crises of ordinary people on a daily basis. In a place the size of Nome, it is not uncommon for him to know, or know of, many of the individuals who come before the court. Given that familiarity, it is easy for him to internalize his experiences and conclude he should be doing more to help. “In the legal arena you are so intensely involved in other people’s problems that you often neglect to deal with your own needs” he says. “If you don’t balance things out you lose and then you can’t help anyone.” Itchoak recognizes that other people can be an important part of the process. “Sometimes maintaining balance requires the help of friends and family and we shouldn’t be afraid to seek their support and assistance.”

Karlin has always found that sense of balance by turning to the outdoors and the traditional activities of hunting, fishing, kayaking, and hiking. Since returning to Nome he has also found balance in his emerging passion for dog sled racing. In the winter, his favorite after-work activity is a bracing five- to fifty-mile dog sled run on the treeless tundra that borders the Bering Sea. Often he gets home from these runs late at night, physically exhausted, but emotionally refreshed and ready for another workday.

Karlin Itchoak is still a young man with so much ahead of him. In time he will assume a larger leadership role, guided by his sense of where he can do the most good for his people, especially in matters of education and the family, two of his main concerns. Ultimately this may lead him into government, perhaps not as an elected official but as a member of the executive branch where he can help his people retain their distinct identity and heritage as they participate more fully and effectively in the larger society.

Karlin Itchoak is a very thoughtful and introspective young man who has gained many insights in his relatively short span of life. He recalls reviewing his law school class notes a few years ago and marveling at how often the word “tension” was used. There was tension between branches of government, and tension between parties, jurisdictions, and competing legal issues and interests. Reflecting on this, he came to see that tension was not so much a problem as a simple and often necessary part of life. He understood that problems created by tension could be transcended yielding fruitful results if the right balance point could be struck. As one who lives in two cultures, Karlin increasingly understands how important it is to accept that tension and to embrace differences. As Karlin so eloquently expresses it, he is learning how to “walk in two worlds with one spirit.” ■

Gonzaga Law Student Argues Before Washington Supreme Court

Law student argues that state should pay for girl's counseling

By **Richard Roesler**,
Staff Writer for the *Spokesman-Review*

It's pretty unusual for any lawyer to argue a case before the state's highest court.

But it's really rare for a legal intern to do it.

Jim Merson, 25, earned that distinction this week when the third-year Gonzaga law student appealed a Spokane case before the Supreme Court in Olympia.

"A lot of attorneys go their entire careers and never argue a case before the Supreme Court," said Alan McNeil, the supervising attorney in the case. "This is kind of like the World Series right off the bat."

Merson, as a so-called "Rule 9 Intern," has enough law



Jim Merson

training to do limited legal work, although he hasn't graduated or passed the bar exam.

Legal interns from both Gonzaga and the University of Washington law schools have argued cases before the nine justices in years past, Supreme Court Clerk C.J. Merritt said Friday.

"It's rare, but not unprecedented," he said.

The case involved a Spokane girl whose brother was murdered in 1996 when she was 10 years old. Four years later, apparently overcome by "survivor's guilt" and repressed memories of the murder, the girl

became suicidal and paranoid, according to Merson. She was briefly checked into a psychiatric ward and subsequently sought counseling. She asked the state's crime-victims compensation fund to pay for the care. The state refused, citing the four years that had passed since the murder. The girl's family appealed that decision through Gonzaga's University Legal Assistance program.

On Thursday, Merson argued his case in Olympia's Temple of Justice.

It's an imposing setting. Massive sandstone columns lead to bronze doors and echoing marble hallways. The black-robed justices peer down on the attorneys from a raised platform. The audience sits in pew-like benches, beside a wall lined with old law books.

Merson spent weeks preparing, but the justices gave him a workout, cutting him off frequently with new questions.

"You're in your third year of law school?" was the first one, from Chief Justice Gerry Alexander.

"Yes, your honor."

As a timer ticked away the seconds, Merson outlined his case: that the state should pay the girl's counseling bills, despite the length of time between the crime and her treatment.

The girl, he said, "is an innocent victim. She's entitled to compensation."

But the state will only compensate for problems that are "near-term and immediate" to the crime. The justices' main question: How long after a crime should the state keep paying?

"Is there no end?" Justice Barbara Madsen asked. "Couldn't it be 20 years afterward?"

"Where do you draw the line?" said Justice Richard Sanders.

There shouldn't be a limit, Merson said. Problems from repressed memories or post-traumatic stress disorder, he said, may not emerge until years later.

"How can they be expected to receive counseling when they don't even know they need it?" he said. At age 10, the girl "didn't have the psychological capacity to understand what had happened to her," he said.

Arguments lasted 45 minutes. The court usually takes months to issue a decision in a case.

Merson plans to graduate next spring, and hopes to be a public defender in his native Colorado.

Editor's Note: *As this issue of the Gonzaga Lawyer was going to press, we were informed that the Washington State Supreme Court had rendered a unanimous verdict in favor of Jim Merson's client. This decision reverses both the trial and appellate courts which had previously ruled in the state's favor.*



Andrew Biviano '06 is the recipient of this year's Lawless Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship is given annually to the student who achieves the highest academic average in the first-year class. Spokane Superior Court Judge Tari Eitzen presented the award to Biviano at a ceremony in her courtroom. The award is named for the late James J. Lawless '50, a highly respected Superior Court Judge from the Tri-Cities. Biviano represents the second generation of his family to attend Gonzaga. His mother, Spokane attorney Mary Murphy, is a 1989 Gonzaga Law graduate.

Students spend their spring break assisting residents of a nursing home in Costa Rica

Five students (Christy Johnson, Jennifer Rebolz, Leslie Hollander, Danielle DeCarlo and Christina Harney) spent their spring break in Cartago, Costa Rica performing public service through Cross Cultural Solutions, an international public service organization. Cartago is the oldest city in Costa Rica and is located in the mountains just outside of San Jose. The project sight was Hogar a Manos de Jesus (house of the hands of Jesus) which is only one of two nursing homes in the entire country that accepts residents who cannot walk through the entrance under their own power. It was founded by a Catholic priest who could not find a nursing home to care for an elderly man who was not able to walk.

There are currently 26 residents, all of whom have been abandoned by their families and who did not pay into the country's pension program so they would be eligible to receive pension benefits. The nursing home

receives US\$30 per month per resident from the government and relies on donations and volunteering to support the facility. The Gonzaga students spent their time interacting with the residents through arts and crafts, hand massages, playing games, making and breaking open a piñata, learning how to make empanadas, gardening, and helping to feed those residents who could not feed themselves.

In one week, the volunteers not only got to help out a very worthwhile program, but learned a lot about a culture quite different from their own. They spent quality time with a group of people who have no family and truly appreciated seeing that someone cares enough to be there and offer love and support. This was very apparent on the last day of volunteering when the two groups shared their good byes, thank yous and tears.

Because the decision to organize this trip came late in the year, the group is about \$2,500 short of its fundraising goal. The participants had to cover the remainder of their expenses out-of-pocket. Most used financial aid money that was earmarked for rent and food. They are continuing their fundraising into the spring to try to recover some of this expense. ■