ALWD Visiting Scholars Committee: Interested Scholar Form

Name: Julie A. Oseid

School: University of St. Thomas School of Law, Minneapolis, MN

Email address: jaoseid@stthomas.edu

General background (describe your professional life in a paragraph):

I have practiced law in many different contexts, including as: a law clerk in the Criminal division of the largest county attorney’s office in Minnesota; a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals law clerk to Judge John T. Noonan, Jr.; an associate in the business litigation and professional malpractice group at a large private law firm; and a legal writing and research professor. When I found the law I found people whose approach to the world was similar to my own; when I found teaching I found home.

Areas of scholarly interest consistent with the purpose of the grant program (“The Legal Communication & Rhetoric Visiting Scholars Grants are intended to further support, strengthen, and encourage scholarship focusing on the study and practice of professional legal writing.”):

My scholarly focus is on legal writing, professionalism, and the importance of human lawyers in the age of artificial intelligence. My goal is to help law students and lawyers improve their writing and advocacy.

A representative list of your scholarship; please include any available links to online versions of your publications:

Professional Legal Writing Scholarship:


Scholarship Related to Professionalism:


Scholarship Related to Teaching:


Ideas for programming that you might offer a host school, including potential topics and target audiences:

   I could discuss some, or all, of the presidents I wrote about in my book: Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, Grant, and Teddy Roosevelt.

   I have made several presentations to judges and lawyers about Lincoln and Grant in two sessions lasting 45 minutes each. Lincoln’s quality of brevity is the perfect complement to Grant’s quality of clarity. I could make a similar presentation to a group of law professors, students, and lawyers.

2. Charlotte A. Cavatica: The Importance of Imagination in Finding and Telling Our Client’s Stories.

   E.B. White created an incredible role model for lawyers in his book Charlotte’s Web. Charlotte was Wilbur’s lawyer, and it was her imagination in both finding and then telling Wilbur’s story that saved him from death. Imaginative lawyers have followed Charlotte’s lead to advocate for their clients; these human lawyers can’t be replaced by artificial intelligence.
I believe this presentation would appeal to law professors, law students, and lawyers.


I could reveal the spine-tingling Edgar Allan Poe sensation I had when reading about the synergy between stories of horror and legal writing. Poe defined the short-story and named four qualities—brevity, unity, focus, and brilliant style—as critical. These same qualities are familiar to lawyers because they are just as critical for persuasive briefs. The presentation would examine Poe’s critique of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Twice-Told Tales,* review some of Poe’s own work, and apply Poe’s advice about great short-story writing to legal writing.

This presentation would appeal to all legal writers and to the wide Edgar Allan Poe fan base (which I did not know existed until I published and presented on this topic).

4. I could also present on two other topics that are not directly related to legal writing:

a. *Mentoring in the Legal Profession.*

I have written several articles about mentoring in the legal profession and how I share my mistakes to mentor new lawyers. I have developed a set of value dilemmas that I faced in my legal practice and ask audience members to decide what they would do in similar circumstances. This presentation would appeal to law students.

b. *Law School Teaching.*

This presentation would be based on my recently published essay entitled *Talk Less, Smile More* in the Journal of Legal Education. I could use the article as a springboard for a discussion about effective teaching practices. I would design this as a participative workshop for faculty.

**In no more than 300 words, describe why a host school should consider you as a Visiting Scholar:**

I do not offer any earth-shattering advice about legal writing. Instead, I reinforce the well-known qualities of excellent legal writing (clarity, brevity, strong organization, rigor, zeal, and use of vivid language) by comparing legal writing to other kinds of writing. Why? Because it is interesting, helps people make connections to writers they already admire, and puts a little joy into legal writing.

My approach to legal writing scholarship builds on the fact that legal writing is, almost always, the most effective way to communicate legal analysis. Justice Kagan said, “To be a good legal writer, honestly, is to know the law, and to be a good writer.” Neither one of those tasks is easy. I acknowledge the challenge, but I encourage others to believe that they can always improve both their legal thinking and their legal writing.
I have worked with law students, lawyers, judges, and professors. But the student who has influenced me the most is me. I work to improve my writing and my understanding of the law every day; I suspect the quest will continue until I write my last word.
Julie A. Oseid  
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Employment:

Morrison Family Director of Lawyering Skills  
& Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law  
Courses: Lawyering Skills I, II, and III  
In(Famous) Trials  
Supervised Research and Writing  
Fall 2018 - present

Faculty Member, The National Judicial College  
Reno, NV  
March 2014 – present

Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas School of Law  
August 2013 – August 2018

Associate Professor, University of St. Thomas School of Law  
August 2005 – August 2013

Visiting Assistant Professor, University of St. Thomas School of Law  
August 2004 – June 2005

Associate, Oppenheimer, Wolff & Donnelly, Minneapolis  
Areas of practice: business litigation, products liability litigation,  
professional malpractice  
1987-1991

Adjunct Professor, University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis  
Course Taught: Legal Research and Writing  
1988-1989

Judicial Clerk, The Honorable John T. Noonan, Jr., San Francisco, CA  
United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit  
1986

Law Clerk, Criminal Division, Hennepin County Attorney’s Office  
1984-1986
Education:

University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis
J.D. magna cum laude 1986
Graduated first in class
Order of the Coif
Notes and Comments Editor, Minnesota Law Review

University of Minnesota, Duluth
B.A. summa cum laude 1983
Majors: English and Communications
Varsity Women’s Tennis Team

Northland Community College, Thief River Falls, MN
A.A., honors, 1981
Women’s Basketball and Men’s Tennis Teams
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, vice-president
Student Council President

Publications:

Book:


Law Review Articles:


**Shorter Articles and Essays:**


**Other Professional Writing:**

Content Consultant for *How to Analyze the Works of Abraham Lincoln* (designed to help high school students understand critical theory) (2012).

**Presentations:**

1. “Artisanal Advocacy: Using Narrative and Empathy in Briefs and Oral Argument to Reveal a Hidden Story” presented at the Eighteenth Biennial Conference of the Legal Writing Institute, July 11-14, 2018 (Milwaukee, WI) (co-presented with Melissa Love Koenig, Associate Professor of Legal Writing, Marquette Law School, and...
Amy Vorenberg, Director of Legal Writing, University of New Hampshire School of Law).


9. “And Bad Mistakes? I’ve Made a Few: Sharing Mistakes to Mentor New Professionals” presented with co-author Professor Steve Easton at the 2014 Annual Mentoring Conference at the University of New Mexico Mentoring Institute, October 22-24, 2014 (Albuquerque, New Mexico).

10. “Teaching Appellate Judges How to Write with Brevity and Clarity” presented at a Judicial Education works-in-progress conference at the University of Missouri, October 9-10, 2014 (Columbia, Missouri).


12. Moderator for Scholarly Paper Presentation (“Historical Perspectives” panel presentation with Prof. Ken Chestek, University of Wyoming College of Law, David Cleveland, Valparaiso University Law School and Jeffrey Jackson, Washburn University School of Law) at the 2014 Sixteenth Biennial Conference of the Legal Writing Institute, June 29-July 2, 2014 (Philadelphia, PA).

13. “The Scopes Monkey Trial,” presented with co-panelist Professor Ed Larson following The Illusion Theater’s production of *Naked Darrow*, April 12, 2014 (Minneapolis, MN).


17. “Teaching Professionalism” presented at LWI Regional One-Day workshop, December 2, 2012 (Drake School of Law, Des Moines, IA).

18. “American Presidents as Writing Heroes” presented at the Fifteenth Biennial Conference of the Legal Writing Institute, May 29 – June 1, 2012 (Palm Desert, CA).

19. “Lincoln’s Speeches as Examples of the Persuasive Power of Brevity” presented at LWI Regional One-Day workshop, December 2, 2011 (Hamline School of Law, St. Paul, MN).


21. “A Room of One’s Own: Finding a Place for Legal Writing Scholarship” (panel presentation with Prof. Linda Berger, Mercer University School of Law; Prof. Jason Cohen, Rutgers School of Law - Camden; Prof. Suzianne Painter-Thorne, Mercer University School of Law; and Prof. Jennifer Sheppard, Mercer University School of


27. “Take Me Out to the Ball Game: Using the Seventh-Inning Stretch to Teach Law Students,” The Central Region LRW/Legal Writing Fifth Biennial Conference, October 5-6, 2007 (University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, Kansas City, MO).


30. “Reaching the Summit: Meeting Teaching Challenges and Working with Challenging Students” (co-presented with Prof. Jayne Kacer, Chapman University School of Law; Prof. Robin Wellford Slocum, Chapman University School of Law; and Prof. Nancy Soonpaa, Texas Tech University School of Law), Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Legal Writing Institute, June 7-10, 2006 (Atlanta, GA).

31. “Make ‘em Laugh: Using Humor to Teach Difficult Writing Concepts” (co-presented with Prof. Leah Christensen), The Rocky Mountain Regional Legal

Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Presentations:


Awards:

1. Morrison Family Director of Lawyering Skills (inaugural titleholder), 2018.

2. Professor of the Year, University of St. Thomas School of Law, 2018 (selected by the graduating class).

3. University of St. Thomas School of Law, 2017 Mission Award: Dean’s Award for Outstanding Scholarship.

4. University of St. Thomas Women’s Law Student Association, 2012 Faculty Woman of the Year.


6. University of St. Thomas Women’s Law Student Association, 2010 Faculty Woman of the Year.

7. University of St. Thomas School of Law, 2009 Mission Award: Dean’s Award for Outstanding Teaching.

8. 2007 Warren E. Burger Prize awarded by the American Inns of Court Foundation.

9. University of St. Thomas Women’s Law Student Association, 2007 Woman Faculty/Staff Member of the Year (first annual award).