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Dean Logan's Blog

RWU Law Continues to Play a Role in the “War on Terror”

Posted by David Logan on 12/08/2009 at 12:00 AM

I am glad to report that two members of the RWU Law faculty are playing important roles in continuing fallout from the reaction to the 9/11 attacks and the resulting challenge to both the civilian and military justice systems.

Professor Jon Shelburne manages to find time in his busy academic schedule (besides teaching core courses, Jon is our Coordinator of External Forensic Competitions), and is now in trial at Camp Pendleton, defending a Marine officer in a court martial that alleges dereliction of duty for failing to adequately investigate allegations that soldiers he commanded had murdered two dozen civilians in Iraq. Jon's opening statement was covered by both the [New York Times](#) and the [Boston Globe](#).

Jerry Cohen, a partner at the Boston/Providence firm [Burns & Levinson](#), has been designated a “Superlawyer” for his expertise Intellectual Property. Jerry is a respected member of our Adjunct Faculty, teaching Patent Law, but also finds time to represent detainees at Guantanamo pro bono for the past five years. Recently, a writ of habeas corpus was granted to one of his detainee clients. Jerry and co-counsel Stewart Eisenberg are seeking his transfer to an appropriate country. In addition to direct representation, they have been writing and speaking about the decline and recovery of Rule of Law norms. Jerry says this is part of gaining public recognition of the need to protect the Constitution.

Here are Jerry's thoughts on the importance of public service:

“*Engaging in pro bono activity has intangible rewards of bringing dignity to people, new learning in life and law, perspectives, friendships with people in many walks of life, the satisfaction of meeting crucial needs, and serving as an example to encourage other lawyers and law students to do the same. The pro bono dimension of a lawyer's life rounds out the life-long acquisition of education and skills, the license to represent clients before diverse tribunals, service as a trusted agent, the privilege and duty to maintain confidentiality,*

*and client counseling roles. All of these aspects of a lawyer's role are
complementary and enhanced by pro bono representation”*

RWU Law students are lucky to be able to learn from two such dedicated lawyers.