



Michigan in Washington Program
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Fall and Winter Semesters 2006-2007

Introduction

Michigan in Washington participants met with the president's chief of staff, two U.S. Supreme Court associate justices, and members of Congress among others in their semester-long stays in the nation's capital in fall 2006 and winter 2007. They took private, behind-the-scenes tours of Smithsonian Institution museum exhibits, guided by the exhibit curators, and they attended as many as 10 theatrical performances, chatting with the directors and casts after the curtain came down. The 35 students worked a minimum of 32 hours a week Monday through Thursday at internships in government, law and non-profit organization offices around the District, while taking a full load of courses and fitting in laundry, grocery shopping, cooking and sight-seeing when they could. Most of the students say their semester in Washington, DC is the hardest semester they have ever had, but they would do it again in a heartbeat.

Students and Internship Placements

In Fall 2006, 18 students (four men and 14 women) worked in the following organizations: The First Amendment Center; the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development; the Department of Justice; the General Accountability Office (GAO); the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Representative Dennis Kucinich's office; Senator Dick Durbin's office; Lake Research Partners (polling and campaign consultants); the Cato Institute; The Atlantic Council; the Center for Immigration Studies; the National Criminal Justice Association; the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; law firms Olsson Frank and Weeda and Dykema Gossett; and, the ABC News Political Unit.

In Winter 2007, 17 students (three men and 14 women) worked at the following organizations: the House Judiciary Committee (Democratic Majority staff); Sen. Carl Levin's office; Sen. Barak Obama's office; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO); the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA); District of Columbia Attorney General's office; Federal Communications Commission Office of Strategic policy; the United Nations Information Center; the Department of Justice Office of Justice; One Economy (a non-profit using the Internet to fight poverty worldwide); the National Association of Latino Elected Officials; the Brookings Institution; the Center for Advanced Defense Studies; Lehman Brothers; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Washington Center; and, the Chamber of Commerce International Department.

Special Events, Tours and Guest Speakers

The Christmas tree was up in the lobby of the West Wing of the White House when students were ushered into the office of the president's new chief of staff, Joshua Bolten. To their

surprise as the students entered, President Bush's chief political architect, Karl Rove, shook each one's hand, as he was leaving Mr. Bolten's office. Mr. Bolten spent nearly an hour with the students, talking about the demands of his new job and answering questions. While his comments were off-the-record, as many guest speakers' comments were, his enthusiasm for his job was unabashed and he encouraged the students to find a career in public service. Even at 6:00 p.m., having started his official workday at 6:45 a.m., he took his time with the students, relaxed in manner, leaning against desk with his arms crossed, offering amusing and educational anecdotes. The students remarked later about his mixture of quiet confidence and humility.

Spring was coming to the District of Columbia when the Michigan in Washington participants stood on a balcony of the Old Executive Office Building, admiring the view of the West Wing of the White House directly ahead, the Washington Monument to the right, and Pennsylvania Avenue to the left. Clay Johnson III, the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), told the students that he often had meetings on this balcony and was inspired by the view while working for the president to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Executive Branch. "This is what it's all about!" he exclaimed, while gesturing broadly to the West Wing below, exhorting the students to make their careers in government.

Thanks to Prof. Sally Katzen, former Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the students spent more than an hour with Clay Johnson and Susan Dudley on April 10, discussing the role of the OMB as cheerleader and disciplinarian for efficiency and fiscal responsibility for federal agencies and departments. Just a few days earlier, Ms. Dudley had become the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) at OMB, a position Prof. Katzen had held in the Clinton Administration. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Dudley talked frankly about the challenge of working with department and agency leaders to set goals and make progress achieving them. Mr. Johnson said he's found sports analogies and lessons everyone learns in kindergarten often help him cut through discussions that otherwise drift into government jargon. One of the Michigan interns worked at OIRA in the winter term and saw first-hand the challenges in maintaining workable regulations that Ms. Dudley discussed.

Students heard first-hand how rough politics can be from Jane Harmon, U.S. Representative from California's 36th District. Ms. Harman represents a district in Los Angeles County with 20 miles of coastline, but, according to press reports, when students talked to her in mid-November, her life in the House was anything but a day at the beach. Ms. Harman was the senior Democrat on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, but, according to news stories, soon-to-be House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a sister Californian, passed her over for committee chairmanship for not having challenged President Bush's intelligence policies. Rep. Harman talked to the students about how her service on the Intelligence Committee and the Homeland Security Committee were important to her district, which includes the Port of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport.

Carl Levin, senior U.S. Senator from Michigan, talked to the students about committee work, among other topics, in late March. Senator Levin made special note of his chairmanship of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, made famous (or infamous) by the abuses of a junior senator from Wisconsin, Joe McCarthy. While other committees' jurisdictions are limited

in scope by topic, the Permanent Subcommittee may investigate any topic it chooses. Senator Levin emphasized that he never subpoenas a witness simply to embarrass or harass him or her, as McCarthy did. Senator Levin said he is sensitive to the history of the subcommittee and tries to exercise power as chair fairly. He exhorted the students to be ethical and avoid abusing power in their forthcoming professional lives.

Prof. Katzen made sure that the students also talked to members of the highest court in the land. Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg visited with the fall semester participants, and Associate Justice David Souter talked to the winter semester participants. The students spent the better part of the day at the Supreme Court, listening to oral arguments first and asking questions of Justice Ginsburg or Souter thereafter.

The oral arguments in the case the students listened to March 28, 2007 turned out to be historic: some of the justices and one of the attorneys exchanged jokes. It was the first time in many years that laughter was heard inside those hallowed halls, not once, but three times. The case, *Tellabs, Inc. v. Makor Issues & Rights* was hardly one that would seem to provide levity. At issue was shareholders' right to sue companies for securities fraud. In 1995, in an attempt to cut down on frivolous lawsuits, Congress passed a law that tried to set a standard investors had to meet before such lawsuits would be entertained in court. But exactly what that standard was was unclear. Congress had written the law using the words, "strong inference." Was that standard equal to "the preponderance of the evidence," as it is in a civil case? Was it "beyond a reasonable doubt," as in a criminal case? Was it something else in between these two? Arthur Miller, flamboyant and well known Harvard Law professor, appeared before the court for *Makor Issues & Rights*, and he and Harvard-educated Justices Roberts and Scalia struggled to quantify the phrase, "strong inference." At one point, Mr. Miller said a district judge would look at a potential case and say, "Okay," which prompted this exchange:

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Just okay?

MR. MILLER: No, I did not mean that. Don't take me literally on that. For heavens sakes, I'm from Brooklyn. I'm very colloquial. I'm very sorry about that.

JUSTICE SCALIA: Let me write that down. We should not take you literally. All right.

At least for one day, the decorum of the Supreme Court was punctured by chuckling.

While the students went to the U.S. Supreme Court, Capitol Hill, the White House and the Old Executive Office Building to talk to government leaders who gave of their time generously, several guest speakers came to the students' dormitory at the Boston University Washington Center. Several MIW supporters and members of the MIW DC Advisory Board entertained the students' questions and comments. Norma Shapiro, Legislative Director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, amused and educated the fall semester students about her career as a lobbyist. The key to success as a lobbyist, whether it is promoting or resisting policy

change, is building a coalition of interests that work together. As she noted, those coalitions change, depending upon the topic, and she gave some examples of how politics makes strange bedfellows. Attorney Richard (Rick) Frank, partner at Olsson, Frank and Weeda law firm that specializes in representing clients in the food and health industries, emphasized a related point: when lobbying for your client, remember to try all avenues in the government. If you cannot get something in Congress, try a regulatory agency. If you cannot change policy at the federal level, try the state level.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and civil rights leader Roger Wilkins, in his last year as George Mason University history professor, urged the fall and winter students to find something they believed in and fight for it. He said it was easy to protest government policy when scores or hundreds of people were protesting. It is hard when you are one of a handful or even alone. He recounted how he marched with a placard outside the South African embassy in Washington, protesting apartheid. He recalled one day vividly because he was the only protestor, soaked to the skin with cold rain on a late afternoon. But, his sagging spirits were revived after he returned to his house because he knew that he had to be a part of fighting a grave injustice, and he consoled himself with the hope that one day, racist leaders would no longer dominate South Africa.

Each student received an autographed copy of board members Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein's new book, *The Broken Branch: How Congress Is Failing and How To Get It Back On Track*, at a book signing and talk at the Washington, DC bookstore "Politics & Prose." The students posed for a picture with the two Michigan alumni after a public question-and-answer session. Drs. Mann and Ornstein serve on the MIW DC Board and are long-time research collaborators across the political spectrum. Dr. Mann is at the Brookings Institution, and Dr. Ornstein is at the American Enterprise Institute. Both chided Republicans and Democrats for failing to keep Congress a vital branch of government, and their recommendations for renewal, especially in Congressional ethics, became the talk of the town as the incoming Democratic majority took ideas from the book under review.

Students heard from many guest speakers from government or related organizations, such as the World Bank, FBI and CIA; however, they also had the opportunity to take behind-the-scenes tours of museum exhibits, guided by the curators who mounted those exhibits. MIW Prof. Allyson Purpura, formerly a Smithsonian curator of African art, led her cultural anthropology class through four site visits in the fall semester, including trips to the National Museum of Natural History and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. At the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Asian art, Chief Exhibition Designer Dennis Kois showed the students an exhibit in the making, a seemingly monumental undertaking of negotiations with museums and governments around the world, contracts, security, crowd flow and control, artifact preservation, climate control, public relations and public education.

Curator Emil Her Many Horses showed some of the treasures the Smithsonian keeps in the American Indian Cultural Resources Center, a meeting place for Native Americans/American Indians, a research center, and a climate-controlled warehouse of artifacts. The center is in Suitland, Maryland, 45 minutes from downtown Washington. He pointed out a pair of elaborately beaded moccasins made for a child. Even the soles were beaded. Such footwear

would be worn only for a special ceremony. Obviously, the beadwork would be ruined if the child walked on the soles, so the child would be carried or held throughout the ceremony. This showed the great love the parents had for the child, that they would decorate even the soles of the child's moccasins and not allow his or her feet to touch the ground.

Winter semester participants had the opportunity to see 10 plays in District professional theaters, ranging from Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Richard III* to Wendy Wasserman's *The Heidi Chronicles*, which won the Pulitzer Prize and the Tony award for best play in 1989. MIW Prof. Ari Roth also had the students see less well known plays, and after each play, the students questioned a member of the cast or the director about the production. For example, students and other audience members at Theater J, where Prof. Roth is artistic director, quizzed playwright and actress Sherry Glaser about her one-woman performance of multiple roles in her play, *Family Secrets*, and how she has maintained a fresh approach since its debut in 1993. Prof. Roth's class paid particular attention to the late playwright August Wilson's work about 20th century African-Americans, with two of his 10 "Pittsburgh Cycle" works, *Jitney* and *Gem of the Ocean*.

Although the students spent most of their waking hours on class work or at their internships, there was some time for fun. The fall participants spent a lovely afternoon at the St. Michael's, Maryland beach home of Michigan alumni Karen and Langley Shook, who introduced them to the art of cracking freshly steamed crabs on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The winter participants enjoyed a Mediterranean dinner at the home of Michigan alumna Jan Buresh. For some of the students, the conversation centered on a mobile Jan gave to her husband for his birthday. The students go to the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art to see Alexander Calder's mobiles every semester, and they had been reading about the engineering necessary for these pieces of modern art.

John Fahey, President and CEO of the National Geographic Society, who received his MBA from Michigan, gave a November 29 reception for the MIW students and DC-area graduates of the UM Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise, a joint program for MBA and MS students with the Ross School of Business and the School of Natural Resources and Environment. The students mixed with professionals in business, government and non-profit organizations, munching hors d'oeuvres in a gallery with models of dinosaurs flying overhead at the National Geographic Society's Explorers' Hall museum.

UM DC Law Club President Gary MacDonald, a partner at Skadden, Arps law firm, and other UM Law alumni entertained students interested in law school. The attorneys gave presentations on the various kinds of careers in government or private practice they have pursued and offered tips individually to students about law school applications and professional opportunities.

The UM DC Alumni Club donated tickets to its annual Congressional breakfast, March 7, where the students ate with UM alumni who live in the metropolitan area and listened to an update from the senior U.S. Representative from Michigan, John Dingell, the longest serving member of the House. The UM DC Alumni Club, its officers and members have served as mentors for MIW students, contributed money to the MIW program, and helped MIW students and graduates search for internships and permanent jobs in Washington, DC.

Looking Ahead

The Michigan in Washington program finished its second year of residence at the Boston University Washington Center in Woodley Park; however, students will be living and taking classes at the University of California's Washington Center beginning in the fall of 2007. The UC DC building is located at 1608 Rhode Island Ave., NW, at Scott Circle, across the street from the Australian Embassy. The building houses all the UC campuses internship programs, as well as the University of Pennsylvania and Michigan programs. Whereas Michigan students have had only two or three electives from which to choose each semester in the past two years, this coming year, they will be able to take courses not only from Michigan faculty, but University of California—Berkeley and University of Pennsylvania faculty too. Fall 2007 students have a choice of six electives total. In return, Michigan faculty will welcome Berkeley and Penn students in the Michigan elective classes. The three universities' internship programs are going to cooperate on guest speakers, events and tours also.

The Michigan in Washington participants, faculty and staff look forward to another school year of fun and hard work in the nation's capital.

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