

In Memoriam

Health Law and Policy Brief

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IN MEMORIAM

The *Health Law and Policy Brief* family recently lost Jocelyn Sweet (nee Moore). She passed away on April 2, 2014 after battling bone cancer.

Jocelyn received her Juris Doctor from American University Washington College of Law in 2011, and she was involved with the *Health Law and Policy Brief* throughout her time at WCL. Jocelyn served as both Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief of the brief. She led the publication during its transition from *Health Law and Policy* to the *Health Law and Policy Brief* – a significant shift in recognition for the publication at WCL and at large. She brought a tremendous work ethic to the brief, as well as humor and kindness to every situation. Jocelyn’s colleagues recognized her intelligence, creativity, and humility. Jocelyn worked tirelessly to help establish the quality and reputation of the *Health Law and Policy Brief*, which continues to serve as part of the foundation of the publication today.

Jocelyn will be remembered as a champion of health law, working to advance legal scholarship in the field of health law and directly impacting access to healthcare through a career at the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Those who befriended Jocelyn through the brief are devastated by her loss, and extend their deepest condolences to her loving family.

Two members of the WCL health law community, Professors Robert Dinerstein and Corrine Parver, each of whom knew and taught Jocelyn during her time at WCL, also have extended some thoughts about her:

ROBERT DINERSTEIN

Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Professor of Law and Director, Disability Rights Law Clinic, American University Washington College of Law

Certain things are not supposed to happen. Parents are not supposed to survive their children. Teachers are not supposed to survive their students. Friends are not supposed to die young. Jocelyn Sweet’s passing is incomparably sad. She was a vibrant young woman who was still early in her legal career. In her life, she had to deal with illnesses and medical conditions that would have defeated others. She bore these challenges with grace, tenacity, and an unwillingness to have them define her.

I had the honor of having Jocelyn in two of my classes—in my Law & Disability Seminar (Spring 2010) and in the Disability Rights Law Clinic (AY 2010-11). Jocelyn was a wonderful student and student attorney. She was thoughtful, hard-working, and creative. She cared deeply about her clients, and they about her.

In one of her cases, her client sent her, and her partner Sharita Jennings, an email that read:

I just wanted to say thanks again for all of the hard work and effort that you put in for today’s hearing with Judge Banks. No matter what the

decision and/or outcome, I will be eternally grateful to the two of you for what you accomplished, for your time, for your encouraging words, and for the professional way in which you conducted yourselves at all times.

As it happens, Jocelyn and Sharita prevailed at this hearing, in which we argued that the Social Security Administration should waive the requirement that our client repay benefits that had been overpaid to her (for which she was not at fault). Before the hearing, the administrative law judge asked the client to leave the hearing room and addressed Jocelyn and Sharita directly, telling them that his staff had complained to him that the students were too aggressive and demanding with them on the telephone. He said he was passing on this information to them for their benefit as young lawyers-to-be. Jocelyn plainly was disbelieving; when she began to protest, the judge upbraided her, seeing her desire to defend her actions as proof of the behavior of which she was accused. The judge then called the client back into the hearing room and the hearing proceeded. Having a judge reprimand one for being too aggressive right before a hearing could have thrown even an experienced lawyer, let alone two student attorneys. But Jocelyn and Sharita presented the case exactly as we planned. The client gave a plausible though hardly unassailable explanation for why her living expenses were necessities, such that requiring repayment would be unjust. (These expenses included a time share, retirement plan contributions, and her synagogue dues.) The judge took the case under advisement, though not before telling the client in our presence that the students had done a great job in representing her. Several weeks later, we received the decision upholding all of our claims and granting our request that repayment be waived.

CORRINE PARVER

*Founder of the American University Washington College of Law
Health Law and Policy Project*

Lovely, caring, bright, responsible, organized, brave, and courageous. These are but a few descriptions that immediately come to mind when I remember, with great fondness, my former student, Jocelyn Sweet. Through oftentimes terribly harsh personal circumstances due to her wickedly invasive disease, Jocelyn persevered mightily, showing a strength of character and determination that few persons could have displayed under the same or similar circumstances. Always smiling through what must have been highly painful and discouraging setbacks, she nevertheless carried on to complete successfully a heavy course load and demanding schedule, both for overseeing the publication of the law school's *Health Law and Policy Brief* and fulfilling her duties as an executive of the WCL Student Health Law and Justice Society. I am profoundly saddened at her passing, and wish for her memory always to be a blessing for her family.