

High Court deliberates at University

□ Students get first hand experience interpreting the U.S. Constitution

By Hope Nealon
Emerald Reporter

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All persons having business before the Honorable, the Supreme Court of the United States, are admonished to draw near and give their attention, for the Court is now sitting. God save the United States, and this Honorable Court."

As one student reads the traditional Supreme Court introduction, the class of about 100 stand in one motion. The nine black-robed figures somberly file in and take their seats at the front of the room.

The nine students had had two weeks to review past cases and decide how the justices they are portraying would see the cases they are about to hear. This simulation is part of Political Science 484, U.S. Supreme Court.

As the class sits, the counselors stand to argue before the court. One of two lawyers representing each side barely begins when a justice interrupts, asking a question about the counsel's reasoning.

As in the real Supreme Court, the counselors argue their cases, answering any questions that members of the Court may have.

Student counsel Amy Fredericks said trying to understand the legal language of the cases was hard at first, but eventually understanding the typical 30 to 40 cases needed for background information became easier.

"It was exciting to go before the Court and keep pushing myself," Fredericks said.

Each week nine new members file into the room to hear and argue their case precisely as their justice would. The individual student's opinion has no place in this class.

Students of the class seem to approve of the simulations.

Brad Rowe, who played Justice White, said the experience of taking on another justice's identity can be quite overwhelming.

"You go most of the term doing nothing, just watching simulations with no lectures or anything, and all of a sudden in a two week period you have two weeks of terror," he said.

Lisa Lawrence, who played Justice Clarence Thomas, said she wouldn't call



U.S. Supreme Court Justices (from left) Antonin Scalia (Jeff Barrett), John Paul Stevens (Pete Moe) and Byron White (Brad Rowe) interpret the Constitution during professor James Klonoski's innovative Supreme Court class, Political Science 484

not having lectures a disadvantage of the class, and said she actually learned more about the Supreme Court by watching the simulations.

"You can always learn the nuts and bolts of constitutional law by reading," she said.

She said the participatory nature of the class forces students to really know their cases inside and out.

"It allows us to use everything we've learned so far and apply it and show our own ability," she said. "I wish more upper division classes would be like that."

Professor James Klonoski said he converted the conventional lecture class into a student role-playing type of class in 1968.

Klonoski said his reasons for the switch were to break the tradition of students in the passive role of listener and get students to participate in an active way.

"The end product should be an analytical mind disposed to get into affairs of the community ... or what good are you?" he said.

Klonoski said that by having every student learn the background and values of each justice, the students discover the truth about the Supreme Court: that these peo-

ple don't find the law but make it out of their values.

"They are a political decision-making body," he said. "You can't avoid that because the large questions are totally political no matter how much you dress it up with constitutional language."

Klonoski said that overall, students do a good job of correctly interpreting the justice's would-be opinions, but the main challenge for students is to demonstrate they can think analytically.

Brad Rowe said the long hours at the law library definitely taught him a lot about the inner workings of the Court.

"By going so in-depth on one topic, you learn what the Constitution is all about," he said.

Do students get to choose their justices? Not quite. Students write down which justice they prefer, but in the end, the choices are Klonoski's.

A graduate student taking the class, Bo Adan, said when he signed up for the first simulation, he told Klonoski which justice he preferred.

"I went up to him the first week of class and said, 'please, please, make me Stevens,' (one of two liberals on the court). And he said 'I'm going to make you Rehnquist.'"

Adan said when Klonoski announced the justices in a hat. Some of you got who you wanted ... and," he said, looking at Adan, "some of you didn't."

Adan said the groups of student-justices that are assigned the same cases tend to hang out together after the case is tried and decided.

"That comradery is a wonderful gift and wonderful tool," he said. "It really develops a student bond as opposed to a student passively listening to the lecturer."

Klonoski said he knows this class has a lasting effect because people stop him and ask if he's still teaching the course.

"What do you remember about your education?" he asked. "You remember classes where you got into it and where you became a participant and an actor."

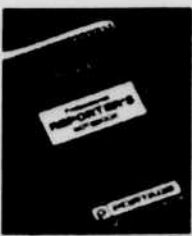
Klonoski said he had more fun teaching the class when the Warren Court was handing down more liberal decisions, but the changing mood is not enough to make him stop teaching the class.

"I could quit, but I tell my wife, 'what would I do?'"

The University is not only a place to learn, it's a place to dream

□ In acting classes, students are introduced to the world of the theater and end up learning something about themselves along the way

By Karen Engels
Emerald Reporter



A giddy princess, a frumpy librarian, a giddy seductress, a Hollywood producer, and a parrot. That's me. Sort of.

When I signed up for Acting I, I took it as a dare to myself. You know, to banish the terror of the recurring theater dream. The one everyone has. Well, at least the one I have.

I'm on stage, the leading lady, but I don't know my lines or anyone else's, or the plot, for that matter. I promptly destroy the production for the other actors. The oblivious audience applauds anyway.

I also embarked on this class to instill myself with the intriguing world of theater, and instill myself with poise for the inevitable job interviews of my long put-off adulthood.

For the first few days, as teacher and classmates got acquainted, we learned about everyone's acting history

or lack thereof. Mine consisted of small-town princess pageants and the time I dressed as a giant blood drop for my high school blood drive. I needn't have felt silly.

Others' illustrious acting careers included real high school and college plays, but others were in my league, having played shepherds and angels in church Christmas shows or apples in Girl Scout presentations.

Sigh of relief. At least I wasn't the only one there without "real" acting experience.

The class was everything I didn't expect and more. I must have read the time schedule wrong. Surely this class was worth 30 credits, not the three I signed up for. But I did happily survive and even enjoyed myself.

After eight weeks of class, I'm nowhere near Katherine Hepburn, and Constantine Stanislavski would snicker at my feeble attempts of portraying someone else, but that isn't really important, because halfway through the term, my dream changed.

I'm on stage, but this time I know my lines. The show is beginning, but I have a problem. I never got to the costume shop, it seems. I run out to change and consequently miss half the play. But all's not lost. After all, I knew my lines.

Acting class exercises are designed to teach us the basics — self awareness, theater terminology, and the thought process and preparation involved in acting. We thespian wanna-be's learned how we appear to others and how to overcome our tendencies when necessary.

The show is beginning, but I have a problem. I never got to the costume shop, it seems. I run out to change and consequently miss half the play. But all's not lost. After all, I knew my lines.

One of our first exercises was to imitate ourselves. Simple, eh? It's harder than it looks. We then graduated to spying on and subsequently imitating our classmates' mannerisms and voice patterns for the whole class. Enlightening and embarrassing to say the least. Do I really click my tongue when I speak and play with my hair that much?

We then progressed to scripted scenes, improvisations, and rehearsal exercises, designed to give us new insight into our chosen characters. One of my favorite "games" was the day when we came dressed as our characters, all playing that role and mingling for a 45-minute staged "cocktail party."

An interesting blend of photographers, art historians, prostitutes, nannies et al. attended that bash. Two "con-