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Sha Na Na co-founder picks law over limelight

■ **GREENE:** The visiting law professor has a background in be-bop



GREENE

By Samantha Martin
Associate Editor

Dennis Greene's weekend job during his undergrad years at Columbia really kept him boppin' — literally. As a co-founder and singer in the a cappella group Sha Na Na, Greene's college experience was highlighted with weekend gigs and tours.

Greene, who holds degrees from Columbia, Harvard and Yale, is a visiting professor at the University's School of Law. With myriad occupations from singer to vice president of production at Columbia Pictures, it's no wonder that Greene's law focus lies in business planning, entertainment law, and corporate law.

"I had always planned to go to law school as a child," Greene said. "It's just that I got away from it for a while."

Greene said his background contributed to his motivation to pursue a law career.

"After many years in the entertainment industry, of seeing how important it is to have effective legal representation and protection as a businessperson, it became that much more important to me as I made my transition into the motion picture industry to make sure that I had a formal legal education," Greene said.

This year, Greene is teaching courses in entertainment and contract law, and business planning. Greene said he hopes his students will gain a sense of self-empowerment, a sense of ethics and a better sense of history from his classes.

"Hopefully they will also gain a strong sense of realism," Greene said. "What underlies a lot of actions and activities are often perceived from the basis of presumption, rather than analysis and perception."

Greene advises students to focus on work and not be unnecessarily intimidated by a

fear of capability.

"Be prepared and apply yourself so that your energy is intelligently spent. Don't allow yourself to be intimidated by the classroom

style you encounter that may be challenging, or the admonitions of friends and family before you come, because if it were impossible, there wouldn't be so many people who were lawyers."

Greene said one of his most satisfying experiences was graduating from law school.

"It was more dramatic than my college graduation because I was on tour in Europe at the time," Greene said. "I had to fly back for graduation on a Tuesday and flew back to Amsterdam on Wednesday."

As for Sha Na Na, the group was started while Greene was a freshman at Columbia. As a singing group on campus, the members decided to do a concert.

"The students liked it so much we decided to see if we could turn singing into a summer job," Greene said. "We auditioned for a club downtown, and the guy who ran the club liked us so much that we played that night. We played the club for two weeks and got booked into Woodstock. And the rest is history. Two weeks at one little basement club turned into 15 years and many European tours, 10 albums, and a television series. It was a good summer job."

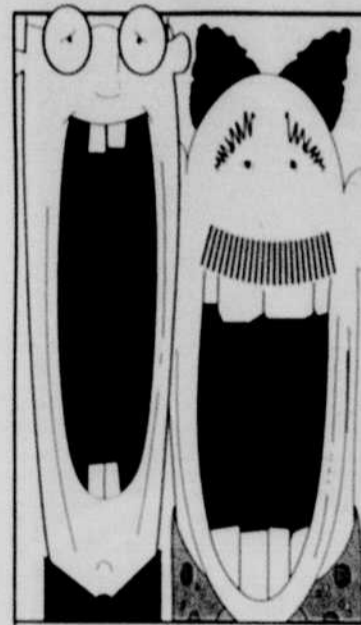
While his past experiences may seem hard to top, Greene is more than satisfied with his current position.

"Law is a very interesting place to be. It gives me an opportunity to touch people in an intellectual environment while constantly having the opportunity to encounter new ideas and thoughts. I find this to be very, very gratifying."

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