

LEARNING TO SERVE OTHERS

Through work benefitting a range of communities, Boston College Law School students are learning about public service



Ann Eisenberg '94 has been addressing human rights and social issues throughout the world

THE IMAGE OF A LAW STUDENT may be of a person cloistered in a library or engaged in a Socratic dialogue with a professor in the classroom. At Boston College Law School, however, a student is just as likely to be working with legal services organizations or public agencies, contributing to significant legal issues through research, or participating in the governance of their communities. In their spare time, students may supplement these activities by serving meals to the homeless or helping residents of inner-city housing projects.

The amount and type of their involvement might vary, but all of these students are interested in public service — both as a way of life and as a career. Drawing upon their legal education and experiences thus far, they hope to join the Boston College Law School graduates who already are working to make a difference in the circumstances of others.

ANN EISENBERG

For the past three years, a great number of Boston College Law School activities related to human rights and public interest law have had one thing in common: Ann Eisenberg '94. For Eisenberg has continually presented programs, engaged in direct service, and other-

wise become involved with both domestic and international issues.

Eisenberg has been a student member of the Standing Advisory Committee of the Law School's Holocaust/Human Rights Research Project (HHRRP), founded by and now named for the late Owen M. Kupferschmid '86; the Project's purpose is to ensure that the precedential value of Holocaust-related law is fully realized and applied to state-sponsored human rights violations today. This organization was one of the reasons Eisenberg was attracted to Boston College Law School. She says, "Given the way I look at the world, Owen's idea of bringing different countries together to understand human rights issues made sense to me."

Eisenberg strives to understand the issues underlying societal problems and has sought to provide others at Boston College Law School with similar understanding. Through HHRRP, Eisenberg has organized panel discussions on topics such as ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and balancing concerns for justice with aspirations for peace in Israel, Northern Ireland, and South Africa. She also has participated in planning a 50th anniversary commemoration of the Nuremberg trials. She says, "We [student members of HHRRP] continue to consider the value of Nuremberg in terms of law it generated and how that law has an impact today. Most students here feel very committed to understanding what is happening in the world and to being a part of the process to keep atrocities from happening again."

Last summer, Eisenberg was able to examine human rights and social justice issues more closely when she traveled to Northern Ireland to work for the Committee for the Administration of Justice, a civil liberties group promoting free speech, freedom of association, and freedom in employment for all people in Northern Ireland. She notes that one of the Committee's staff members, Martin O'Brien, has received the Reebok Human Rights Award for his efforts.

In Ireland, Eisenberg focused on children's rights and prepared a report on this topic that was submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Eisenberg says, "I came to realize how children have no recourse regarding legal issues. Children are very vulnerable, and their vulnerability means there should

be a heightened scrutiny of any legislation that affects them."

Through her research, Eisenberg discovered that children in Northern Ireland over the age of 15 and suspected of a crime can be held and questioned by police for 48 hours without parental notification. Some have been coerced into confessions of guilt. And some of these children have been detained for two years or more be-



David Mori '95 is exploring his career options in the public sector

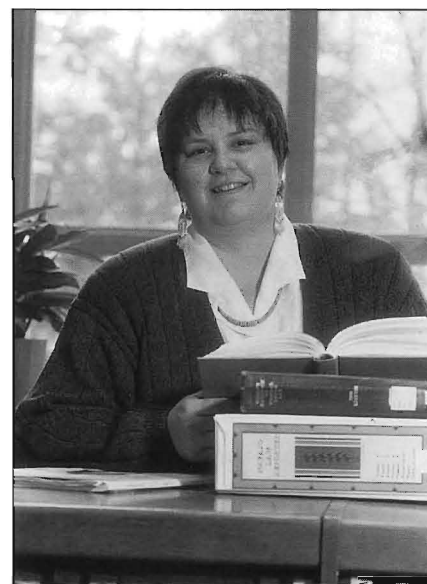
fore being tried. Eisenberg says, "Because there is no Constitution in Northern Ireland and no right to due process, the system is much more discretionary, and there are more opportunities for abuse."

Eisenberg is interested in domestic as well as international issues and has been particularly active with immigration law issues. She was among a small group of Law School students who assisted Haitians in Miami, Florida, with their asylum cases. Upon her return to Boston, she continued to work on asylum cases through the Political Asylum and Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project.

Though she was particularly active as a law student, Eisenberg has been concerned with the relationship between citizens and social institutions for many years. As a Brandeis University undergraduate, Eisenberg served as a Big Sister, volunteered in a soup kitchen, and organized a human rights group related to the African nation of Mali. She later became a counselor with Youth Advocates, a San Fran-

cisco, California, agency serving young women convicted of felonies and operating a shelter for runaways. She subsequently joined Planned Parenthood in Oakland, California, where she provided family planning counseling. Independently, Eisenberg also counseled people with AIDS.

"I like the work," Eisenberg says of all of her efforts. "Part of it is that good



Rachel Bettencourt '94 spent a summer with the Native American Defense Fund in Alaska

feeling, that what I'm doing is really right. I've learned a lot from working with people who have not been protected by their governments and have no power. And I've learned a lot in law school. I'm hoping my law degree will give me more clout in helping to bring about the changes that have to take place in our society."

DAVID MORI

David Mori '95 came to Boston College Law School desiring a career in the public interest. He joined the student organization known as the Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) and this year chaired its summer stipend committee to provide the financial means for others to serve the public good. He also conducted client intakes for the Shelter Legal Services Foundation, an organization that assists the homeless in Boston. But it was a position he began in the summer of 1993 and continued into the most recent

academic year that cemented Mori's aspirations for the future.

Mori, an Asian-American from California, worked with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). He investigated employment discrimination claims related to age, sexual orientation, race, color, and religion. He engaged in fact-gathering and the discovery process and sent written interrogato-

about being a public defender by working for the Committee for Public Counsel Services in Boston. Whether this will remain his chosen work once he has explored it further or whether a permanent public defender's position lies beyond graduation, Mori does not yet know. But he is confident that he will find a place in the law, saying, "You can do a lot with a law degree. When you know the law,

English, prepared clients for asylum hearings, and assured that translators presented the applicants' cases accurately.

The following summer, Paniagua held a position with the Housing Unit of Merrimack Valley Legal Services in Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city in which Latinos are the majority of the population. Under the supervision of an attorney, Paniagua was responsible for eviction cases involving both Latino and non-Latino clients.

Though Paniagua describes this work as "fun but stressful," she was able to contribute an uncommon understanding of the experiences of new immigrants to the United States. She and her family had arrived from their native El Salvador in 1980, when Paniagua was 12 years old. Her life already had been shaped by the civil war in her country. Paniagua says today, "I can't separate what drives me, or my views toward justice and injustice, from my background. I feel fortunate that I didn't witness more."

While working seven days a week at two jobs, Paniagua completed a B.A. at the University of Massachusetts in Boston in 1991. With an interest in politics, she began to consider attending law school, though she felt she knew little about it or the legal profession. But Paniagua believed that law was the best means to facilitate change and enrolled in Boston College Law School.

From the time she began law school, Paniagua set out to better the circumstances of others around her. Aside from her summer employment, she has volunteered at the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans and at Rosie's Place, a Boston women's shelter. She participated in the Law School's Legal Assistance Bureau (LAB) clinical program serving low-income clients. As a third-year law student, Paniagua was President of the Latino Law Students Association (LALSA), encouraging the organization's outreach to community groups, and also became a mentor to a local high school student through the Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation. At the same time, she was an intern in the Trial Unit of the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, conducting legal research pertaining to civil cases.

"What I have liked most in all of my work is the client contact. The satisfaction is in providing guidance," Paniagua says.



Carmen Paniagua '94 earned a scholarship from the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys (MAHA) because of her community service efforts

ries to lawyers representing claimants or employers accused of discrimination. Based on the information Mori obtained, public hearings were held before a commissioner acting as a judge.

For Mori, the work was an eye-opener. He says, "I was surprised by the number of cases and the extent to which people discriminate. Reading case files is sometimes like watching *Hard Copy* on television; it's so hard to believe that people will discriminate in the ways they do."

Mori came to law school hoping to become a prosecutor. Now that he has worked with MCAD, he is convinced that a public-sector career is the right choice for him, but his preference is to find a position as a public defender. He explains the shift by saying, "I have sympathy for the underdog, and public defenders are a check against government over-extension. I see it as civil rights or civil liberties work, to make sure people are protected from wrongful government interference."

This summer, Mori is learning more

there's a sense of empowerment to make society what you would like it to be."

CARMEN PANIAGUA

"Many times I have seen the injustice people face because they don't speak the language or know the culture," says Carmen Paniagua '94.

Throughout her years at Boston College Law School, Paniagua has worked to alleviate these injustices, an effort that earned her a community service scholarship from the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys (MAHA) in 1993. After her first year of law school, Paniagua spent the summer with Centro Presente, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, agency seeking political asylum for Central American refugees. Like legal interns anywhere, she conducted research and wrote memoranda. But Paniagua also used her Spanish language skills to interview asylum applicants, subsequently wrote affidavits in

"I have dealt mostly with lower-income families, and many have been Latino. I get satisfaction out of working with people to resolve some of the fundamental issues — housing and family matters. To enjoy life, you must have the fundamentals."

RACHEL BETTENCOURT

For Rachel Bettencourt '94, the summer clerkship she received from the Native American Rights Fund meant more than an opportunity to do interesting legal work. It also was a way to reconnect with her identity.

Bettencourt, a Peoria Indian, lives in Leominster, Massachusetts, with her non-Native American husband and three young daughters — far from her family's tribe in Oklahoma. Culturally isolated, she had been removed from Native American affairs since pursuing a minor in Native American studies at Dartmouth College more than ten years earlier. In addition, Bettencourt says, "I don't look like a Native American, and that has always been an issue for me. In college, I felt ostracized by other Native American students because of that and because I was from more of a middle-class background than many of them. I was not really accepted by the students. So being accepted for the clerkship and being accepted for my involvement in the issues was gratifying for me."

To pursue the clerkship during the summer of 1993, Bettencourt and her youngest child, now two years old, traveled to Anchorage, Alaska. There she worked with two attorneys whom she says are among the most highly regarded in the field of Indian law in the United States. Bettencourt, whose primary responsibilities were legal research and writing, recalls, "The day I arrived, I had to help one of the attorneys prepare for federal court — and I actually came up with a decent argument for him."

A key legal issue she and the Native American Rights Fund lawyers addressed during the summer was whether tribes are sovereign entities, which Bettencourt says rests upon the notion of whether Indian territory exists in Alaska. The specific case for which Bettencourt wrote a supplementary legal memorandum concerned an orphaned child who was adopted by an aunt under tribal law. When the woman

subsequently applied for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), that request was denied — because the legality of the adoption was denied.

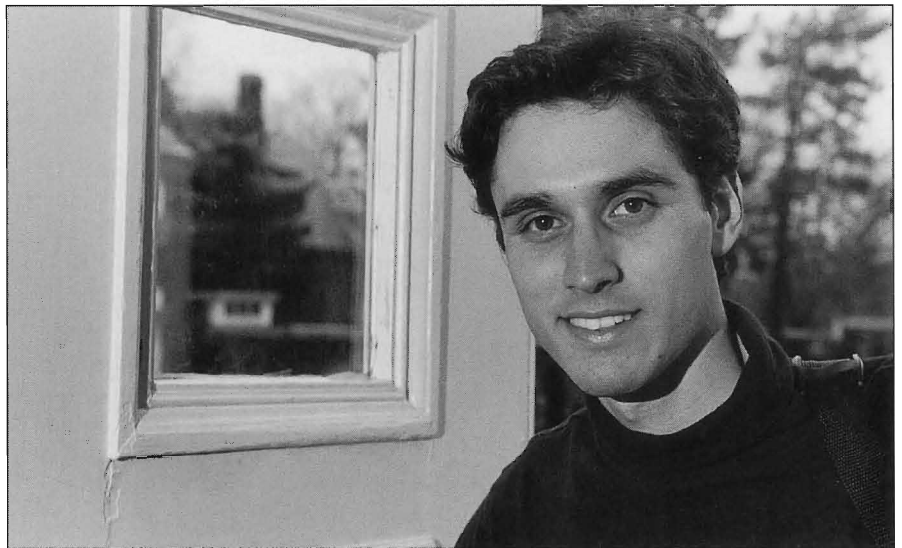
That case and others involving children removed from Native American homes and placed with Caucasian families — a violation of law, according to Bettencourt — have led Bettencourt to decide that she would like to work on behalf of children after she graduates from Boston College Law School.

"I've seen that there is a vast need for competent representation for children,"

JEFFREY RYAN-CATALANO

"There is something in the soul of Boston College Law School that is very supportive of students who do public interest work. I feel that from the administration and from the overall student body," says Jeffrey Ryan-Catalano '94.

Ryan-Catalano bases his assessment on his own three-year experience as a student who explored varied opportunities to engage in public service and learn about public interest law. He was involved in the student group known as the



Jeffrey Ryan-Catalano '94, who worked for the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing in Chicago, was this year's Chair of the Law School's Public Interest Law Foundation student group

says Bettencourt, who also has participated in the Law School's civil Legal Assistance Bureau (LAB) and Criminal Process clinical programs. "I'm someone who wants to help people, and what better people are there to help than kids?"

In the meantime, Bettencourt has been demonstrating her renewed identification with Native American issues through her academic coursework. This spring, as part of a Jurisprudence class, she conducted research comparing ethics as described by Aristotle with Navaho law and philosophy. And for a course titled Advanced Criminal Procedure, Bettencourt surveyed federal Indian criminal code.

Bettencourt would like her legal career to involve both children and Native American affairs. With a juvenile law practice, she says, "I could make it known that I can help Native American juveniles. I'd like to continue my connection in that way."

Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF) throughout law school, serving as its Chair in his final year. The organization provides summer stipends to students who would not otherwise be able to afford to take low-paying or non-paying public interest positions and also supports the Law School's Willier Award and Loan Assistance Program for graduates working in public interest law. Though Ryan-Catalano describes PILF as primarily a fundraising organization, he did not want to overlook more direct service and this year encouraged students to participate in a PILF-sponsored clothing drive and to serve meals at Boston's Shattuck Shelter.

While a law student, Ryan-Catalano also received a Public Interest Law Initiative Grant to work with the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing in Chicago. He was one of approximately 30 students awarded this grant funded by

private corporations and law firms, though he says, "I had no connection to Chicago; I had never even been to Chicago."

But in addition to working with PILE, Ryan-Catalano had spent a year as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. He had served as a caseworker at the Compass School, a Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, alternative school for troubled adolescents. So when Ryan-Catalano went to Chicago to help address the housing needs of low-income people, he already had acquired some sensitivity to what he describes as "the myriad of issues affecting segments of society under-represented or neglected by government."

With the Lawyers Committee for Better Housing, Ryan-Catalano informed residents of their legal rights, conducted interviews with tenants of low-income housing units, and accompanied agency attorneys to court. In addition, he heard

other public interest lawyers talk about their work.

"I heard one attorney say, 'Why do public interest work? Because it's an obligation.' I think that's true; as attorneys, we have an obligation because the foundations of society are crumbling," Ryan-Catalano says.

Ryan-Catalano eventually hopes to help residents of poor communities become advocates for their own legal rights. He would like to start one block at a time, ideally in Boston's neediest neighborhoods — including Dorchester, where he lived while working at the Compass School.

But his priority for now must be his work as a new associate with the Boston law firm of Stern, Shapiro, Rosenfeld & Weissberg, which Ryan-Catalano says is "a public interest private law firm."

Though he is entering private practice, Ryan-Catalano believes he has not aban-

doned his commitment to serving the public good. He says, "I will always in some fashion maintain a connection to public service."

YOLANDA WILLIAMS

This past year, Yolanda Williams '94 became the first woman and first Black student ever named a Circuit Governor for the American Bar Association (ABA) Law Student Division. In representing the 13 law schools of the Circuit, Williams capped three years of service to law students and to her future profession.

When she entered Boston College Law School with an already long list of accomplishments — Williams had received a Presidential Service Award at her College of the Holy Cross graduation ceremony — she quickly joined both the Black Law

Law Students Help Boston's Children Excel

Many Boston College Law School student organizations provide direct community service. Members of the American Bar Association Law Student Division have assisted people with their taxes. The various minority student groups — the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association, Black Law Students Association, and Latino Law Students Association — also have engaged in service activities. Still other organizations, including the St. Thomas More Society, Phi Alpha Delta, and the Federalist Society, have helped those in need through food, clothing, and blood drives.

For several years, one of the most active organizations has been the Inner-City Youth Outreach Tutoring Program. Each weekday, Boston College Law School volunteers travel to Boston's Dorchester neighborhood to provide academic support for seventh- and eighth-graders at St. Patrick's and St. Kevin's parochial schools. Working either one-on-one or with two children apiece, the law students offer after-school tutoring in specific academic subjects or preparation for the SSAT entrance exam for challenging parochial and public high school programs. In addition, through an evening program, the law students tutor high schoolers readying for college entrance exams.

All of the students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and most are members of minority groups. The younger children are particularly

curious about the law school experience and just by being present, say 1993-1994 program co-coordinators Roxanna Campbell '94 and Leigh Watts '94, the law students serve as role models.

The law students also mentor these children. As "Big Buddies," they take the children to sports events, museums, and theaters. In addition, they host activities such as a year-end picnic for the children.

The program involves a core group of approximately 15 to 20 law students and 45 junior high school students; the numbers participating in the high school-level tutoring are lower. Says Watts, who works with the younger group, "We tend to tutor the same kids each time. An ongoing relationship isn't forced; it just happens that way."

Campbell adds, "I think they like the individual attention. And they ask about things you take for granted, but you have to be able to explain it all to them."

Many of the law students who participate in the program have worked with children previously. Three this year were former teachers. Campbell and Watts are representative of the volunteers: Campbell had tutored while an undergraduate at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia, and Watts worked in a group home for abused children prior to law school.

The program has evolved over time — the mentoring portion initially was separate from the tutoring and has been enhanced — and both Campbell and Watts would like it to serve even more



Roxanna Campbell '94 tutors a young student in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood

inner-city children in the future, as long as the ratio of tutors to children can be maintained. They also are pleased that the program has been well received by the students and Parish officials alike. Campbell says of the Parish response, "They encourage us and want to expand it as much as they can."

And the law students have found their interactions with the children satisfying. Watts says, "You see that you can make a difference. You get a high out of the kids' excitement." ■

Students Association (BLSA) and the ABA Law Student Division. As a second-year student, Williams was the Law School's representative to the First Circuit of the Law Student Division. She also wrote the resolution that regained the national BLSA organization its official recognition by the ABA Law Student Division after it had been rescinded because of BLSA's policy of excluding non-Black students from officers' positions. BLSA since has honored Williams for her efforts.

As a Circuit Governor for the ABA Law Student Division, Williams had an impact as well. As Chair of its Women and Minority Issues Committee, she was involved with projects such as an informational pamphlet on discriminatory job interview questions and a diversity panel for high school students addressing the importance of greater representation of women and minorities in the legal profession. Williams also was responsible for the organization's public service programs, which ranged from having law students serve meals to the homeless to encouraging them to become volunteers with City Year, a program that originated in Boston and assists with a variety of urban needs.

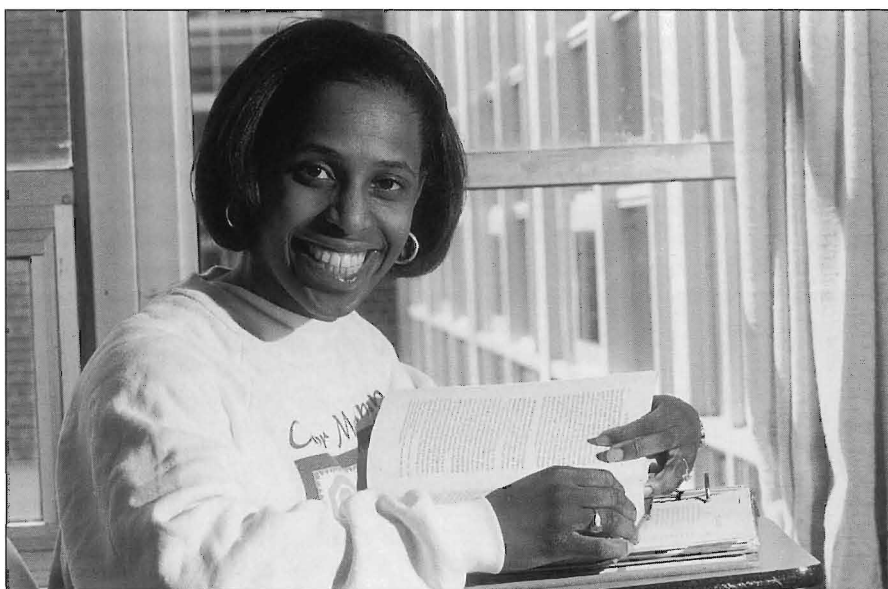
Williams' position required her to represent not only the interests of Boston College Law School students but also of those attending the dozen other schools within the First Circuit. She was in constant communication with them, both in person and on the telephone. Her work with these schools and the ABA Law Student Division gave her an opportunity to showcase the strengths of Boston College Law School as well. She says of her role, "You put your law school on the map. People came to understand that Boston College Law School produces quality graduates, that we produce leaders."

In addition, Williams was able to disseminate that message beyond the law student population — and to demonstrate it through her own actions — in her capacity as liaison to the ABA Commission on Minorities in the Profession. She says of her interactions with prominent members of the practicing bar, "It was a humbling experience. I was very fortunate to be elected to be among these people and to talk to them on the same level and be respected. I learned that they care about law students, and I made some friends."

Now Williams has completed her J.D.

degree and will become a practicing member of the legal profession. She is returning home to Atlanta, Georgia, to join IBM as an in-house counsel. But she expects service to remain a part of her life.

"Everything I did before was in addition to law school, so I wouldn't be surprised if I do service outside my work," says Williams. "IBM has a strong public service program, and I look forward to getting involved. My motto is to give as much as I can. If I have something to give in any capacity, I will."



Yolanda Williams '94, the first woman and first Black student to be named a Circuit Governor of the American Bar Association Law Student Division

JAMES CANTWELL

As an aide to a Massachusetts State Senator before he entered Boston College Law School, James Cantwell '94 noted, "There were times when government could only do so much for the social good. The people who could bring change were those with legal backgrounds."

While a law student, Cantwell used his burgeoning legal skills to promote change in his hometown of Marshfield, Massachusetts — also the residence of the noted American lawyer and statesman Daniel Webster from 1832 to 1852. By 1990, Webster's 1,800-acre estate had dwindled to 18 acres, and the town had approved plans to build condominiums for the elderly on the site. But Cantwell, who admired Webster greatly and had attended summer camp on the property as a child, wanted Webster's estate to be appreciated

for its history. At the same time he was applying to law school, Cantwell also was founding the Daniel Webster Preservation Trust, a non-profit organization seeking to buy the property from the prospective developer and turn it into a museum.

Cantwell's growing knowledge of law soon played an important role in the preservation effort. As part of a Boston College Law School independent study project related to environmental law, Cantwell examined the fragile nature of the Green

Harbor River area of Marshfield, which included the Webster site. He drafted a legal brief that addressed the issue of aquifer protection and explained that the condominium permit should be revoked for public safety reasons.

Cantwell proved successful. He now says, "I didn't want to sit idly by. In my mind, there was an injustice, and I wanted to lend my skills to correcting it. I've learned the legal tools to apply to the emotions. Through the Planning Board process, we were able to defeat the condominiums. Now if the site does get developed, it will be sensitively done."

Cantwell and others involved with the Daniel Webster Preservation Trust, including the Marshfield Historical Commission, continue in their attempt to raise sufficient funds to purchase the estate. Cantwell says, "I want to put the property in the public domain and allow people to

have a close connection to what Webster meant to our country.”

Though he has devoted significant amounts of time and energy to saving the Webster Estate, Cantwell does not view his efforts as extraordinary. He only says, “I’d like to be seen as someone who tries to contribute.”

Cantwell has contributed to many other organizations as well. As a Boston College undergraduate, he was Senate President; in law school, he was President of the Law Students Association. After completing

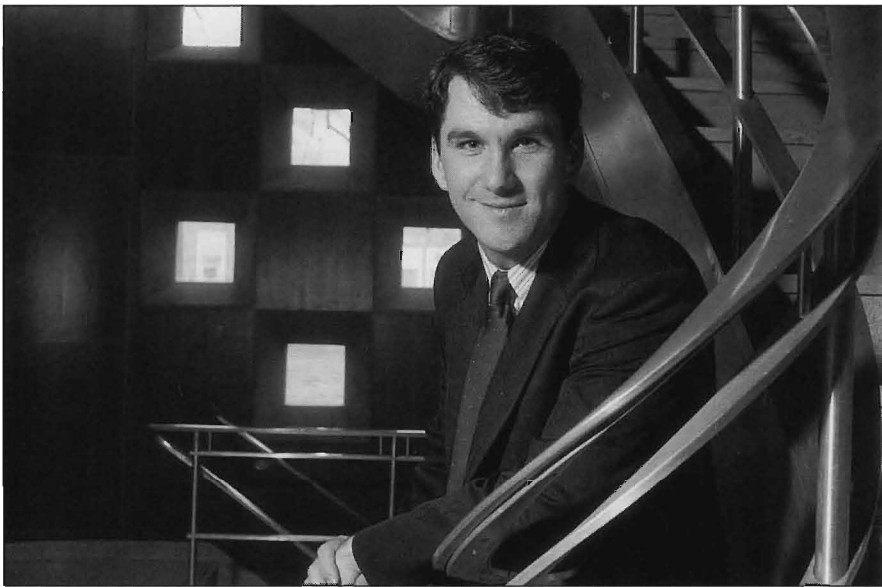
the Daniel Webster Estate and adding, “People want to do good things. You just have to show them why doing public service, giving to the community, helps others.”

LISA TAVARES

“D uring my first year of law school, I put a lot of things on hold. I hope to get more involved in community service again,” says Lisa Tavares ’95.

Scout troop, worked with abused young boys living in a group home, and raised money for the United Negro College Fund. She also has been involved with Habitat for Humanity, an organization that helps poor families build homes for themselves, and has served as a Big Sister.

Tavares gives her parents credit for her dedication to community service. As a child, she was encouraged to collect food and clothing for the needy. Later, Tavares helped younger students — the first in their families to consider higher educa-



James Cantwell '94 founded a non-profit organization to save the Daniel Webster Estate in his hometown of Marshfield, Massachusetts



Lisa Tavares '95 has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to community service

his bachelor's degree, Cantwell became involved with the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Foundation, which helps develop the leadership skills of Massachusetts high school students through annual five-day workshops. For ten years, he has organized a baseball marathon benefitting the Easter Seal Society. And this year, Cantwell was elected to the Democratic State Committee and now promotes Democratic Party ideals and candidates in nine Massachusetts towns. Yet Cantwell expresses surprise that he was included among the handful of young leaders invited to participate in a recent panel sponsored by the Political Discussion Group of the Kennedy Library in Boston.

“In my family, it was taken for granted that we’d act in a public capacity,” Cantwell says. He indicates that others often do likewise, noting the extensive support he has received for his work with

Tavares’ statement might appear reasonable if her activities since starting law school were ignored. But Tavares already has organized a regional convention for the Black Law Students Association, served as Community Service Coordinator for the Boston College Law School chapter of the Phi Alpha Delta law fraternity, and helped residents of Boston’s Mission Hill housing project with landlord-tenant problems. Tavares also continues as Community Service Director of Inroads, an organization that assists minority students with job opportunities and requires public service of them; Tavares had participated in Inroads as an undergraduate at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Tavares’ efforts during law school only seem reduced when compared with her earlier work. While an underwriter with the Chubb Insurance Company in New Haven, Connecticut, Tavares led a Boy

tion — with the college admission and financial aid application process.

“I don’t come from a hard background, but my parents never let me forget what other people go through,” says the Norwalk, Connecticut, native. “Going to a Black college only further instilled in me what I have to do for my community.”

Tavares is uncertain whether her legal career will involve public service; this summer, she is working in the Providence, Rhode Island, office of the law firm Edwards & Angell. But she notes, “I’ve always integrated work with community service, and I plan to do that in the future. There is much more for us to do than just be lawyers. I think my education can be useful to my community as a whole, not just to me. And life is too short to always think about money. The opportunity to do the limited amount of community service I do is what makes me happy.” ■