

# Honorable News

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*“We’re once again struggling to explain what exactly it is that we are trying to say—or or what we are trying to ask in the first place”*

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## Honors Cycles: A Junior Perspective

—Gina Nordini, Class of 2016

Like the cycle of spring, which returns every year (often in typical Colorado fits-and-starts) the process of honors thesis writing has begun again.

The senior class is just finishing up those final pages, and beginning to practice their defense speeches. But as the end comes into sight for them, the junior class starts the process.

I’m going to ruin my spring metaphor here by admitting that the process actually began in January. All juniors are enrolled in a Thesis Research Seminar, team-taught by Drs. Howe and Kleier and librarian Martin Garnar. We meet once a week to discuss and develop our thesis plans. On day one, they asked us

about our ideas. By the end of February, we were constructing literature reviews and refining our questions.

Questions.

What does the writing process look like? Who should I pick to be my adviser? How much research should I be doing right now? What research am I missing? What exactly am I writing about? Why does it matter?

Will I be just as panicked and stressed as the seniors are now?

The professors tell us—repeatedly—to plan ahead, to not wait until the last minute. And yet we’ve still found ourselves in conversation with those seniors who have a crazed look in their eyes (maybe the result of staring at that computer

screen for so long) and with notes scattered about them like fallen leaves. They are behind. They don’t know when they’re going to find the time to catch up. They don’t know how they’ll ever finish their thesis.

Somehow or another, they do. The seniors will all go on to defend their thesis projects in just a few weeks. They’ll be ready.

Even so, it’s enough to inspire fear in those of us that feel like we are just beginning the process. We too work in fits and starts. Some of us have composed rough sections, either mentally or on paper. Others wonder if we have ever written a word about this particular topic in our entire college career. One week we find a new essay, a new book, a new study that captures our interest and gives us a sense of direction. The next week, we’re once again struggling to explain what exactly it is that we are trying to say—or what we are trying to ask in the first place.

The honors thesis is daunting. But the cycle repeats—and there is success in it.





# A Pattern Emerges

—Molly Sullivan, Regis University alumnus

I decided I would give Regis University a chance on a fateful April day. I grew up in the Valley of the Sun—specifically Chandler, Arizona. The thought of going to a new state and leaving the comfort of friends I had known since the tender age of six terrified me, but not as much as the idea of enough snow that school could actually be cancelled.

My very first class at Regis in the fall of 2009 was the first Honors Seminar. I recently opened my beloved copy of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and as with most of the literature the Honors Program required us to read, the true meaning was lost on my 18-year-old self. “You look at where you’re going and where you are and it never makes sense, but then you look back at where you’ve been and a pattern seems to emerge.”

During my time at Regis, I was a Politics major with minors in Spanish and History. I was also fortunate to study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As difficult as my thesis project was, it was one of the greatest accomplishments of my life thus far. It taught me how to discern what was important, dedicate myself to a long-term project, and was an excellent segue into my legal career.

I’m currently in my second year of law school at University of Denver. Law

school is challenging (the nicest way to phrase it). It is designed to alter the way you look at problems, completely rearranging the way your brain works. The amazing liberal arts core, and especially the honors seminars, at Regis forced me to look at problems from all perspectives. Because of this, the transition was easier. I had been taught for four years that there was always another side to the coin, so it went without saying that I had to interpret the law from every angle! I truly believe the diverse education I received makes me a better law student and advocate for clients.

The last thing I ever expected to say was that I am going to be a family law attorney. However, when a friend of mine approached me last spring and said she was so swamped and needed an intern, I took a leap of faith and took the internship at a small family law firm here in Colorado.

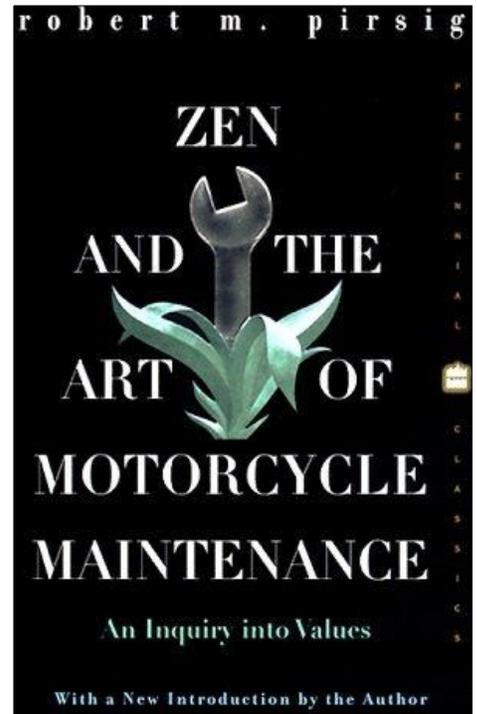
Family law encompasses divorce, helping families that want to change parenting time arrangements after a divorce, grandparent visitation, child support issues, and a variety of other topics. The law is challenging and incredibly fast-paced. My favorite part about this area of law is how much client interaction there is. It’s incredibly personal and difficult for individuals to deal with these issues and re-

quires a lot of patience and the ability to explain law to people that usually have not had any other experience with the courts.

The internship turned into a passion for family law, the energy I dedicated to my work turned into a job offer. I believe that the discussions, research, and idea of living a life in service of others instilled

at Regis have made me a better advocate for clients. I’ve been fortunate to help the company grow, take on significant roles at the firm, and expect to be far ahead of many other students in terms of how practice-ready I am upon graduation.

Regis instilled in me a deep belief that community matters. Specifically, doing what you can to improve your community, pride in where one lives, and taking the time to be involved, is part of a “golden ticket” to happiness. I fell in love with Denver and the State of Colorado during my time at Regis. Although my time at Regis taught me that I could handle any challenges, and that I can start over anywhere if I have to, but I’m proud to call Colorado



home. I look forward to a long and rewarding legal career in the Greatest State in the Union!

The pieces are still falling into place, but everything I learned at Regis has a funny way of rearing its head and reminding me of how far I’ve come since I moved into DeSmet that hot August day in 2009.

If anyone has questions about law school, please feel free to reach out to me. I am happy to help in any way I can. As much as things may not make sense now, take the leap of faith to stick with Regis, the Honors Program, and your thesis project... eventually it will all start making sense!

# Director's Note: February 2015

—Dr. Howe, Honors Program Director

February is always an interesting time of year in Honors. One end of the spectrum has seniors putting the final touches on their theses and they are beginning to think more and more about life after Regis.

On the other end, the Honors Advisory Council is reading applications from seniors in high school for admission to Honors. For me, as Director of Honors, looking at both sides of this span is interesting. I see in our seniors a maturity and sense of competence and

accomplishment. These years of college have given them much, with new skills and a broader, but also deeper understanding of the world.

All of this will be on display during the month of upcoming thesis presentations, which begins on March 18. I hope all of you will find time to come to as many of these presentations as possible. In those high school students applying to Honors, I see their excitement about what is to come. While they often write about the good work they've done in high school, almost always

there is on display a deep and appreciative anticipation of how college will open new doors—intellectually, socially, and professionally.

Their desire to join honors is rooted in wanting to become part a community of learners, genuinely in pursuit of knowledge and interested in large, pressing, and perplexing questions. Their applications are animated by a love of learning, the same love of learning that so many of you embodied when you came to Regis. It is always helpful to recall

this love of learning, especially in the middle of the semester, a time when we all feel stretched as we negotiate the many and varied demands on our time.

## A Modest Proposal

—Corey Holton, Regis University alumnus

I am a 2011 Regis grad, and Honors Program alum. After moving away for law school, I am back in Denver as a practicing attorney. While at Regis, one of the things I wished the school had was a mock trial team.

A mock trial competition is akin to what you see in an actual courtroom, albeit in a condensed format. Two teams compete head-to-head, each making opening statements, examining and cross-examining witnesses, and then making their closing arguments. Things change very fast, and you have to be ready to adapt. Competitors prepare their case so that they can anticipate questions the other team will

ask and the arguments they will make.

A mock trial team would give Regis students the opportunity to learn about the law, develop an ability to think on their feet, and practice their public speaking skills. Many other schools across the state have mock trial teams including the University of Colorado, the University of Denver, and the Air Force Academy.

I would like to help develop and coach a mock trial program at Regis. The program could involve local attorneys, judges, and Regis alums. Students on the team would not only compete amongst themselves, but against other schools in Colorado. If there is enough interest, there are

even regional and national competitions that students can get involved in.

If you are interested in starting a team, you can email me at [corey.holton@gmail.com](mailto:corey.holton@gmail.com)



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for further information.

## Upcoming Events!

### March

11th—Spring Fling in Main Hall 333 Light snacks provided

27th—Honors Lunch in Regis Room (Carroll 125)

### Senior Thesis Defenses!

Mondays and Wednesdays,  
March 18th—April 15th

All students are invited to attend! More detailed schedule to follow.