

# November 2012 Networking Event Recap

The evening kicked off with informal introductions and handshakes as we greeted our esteemed attorneys and alumni currently enrolled in Law School.

Avram Segall, Associate Professor, Political Science and Law, took the podium to offer a warm welcome and updates on the status of the this fledgling group. Avram noted we are working to finalize protocol and procedures for the Attorney Alumni Mentor Program (AAMP) for the mentoring aspect of the group's mission. Avram encouraged everyone to participate as mentors for our current students, alumni in law school and recent law school graduates. Following Avram's welcome, Marilyn Tayler offered greetings from the department and provided updates about the program and, student successes. Marilyn spoke about the importance of remaining connected, the benefits of networking with each other and the importance of offering help to colleagues and students. Marilyn specifically asked that our attorneys consider offering internship opportunities to current students if at all possible.

Following the welcomes and greetings, Avram introduced our guest speaker, the Honorable Catherine Langlois '74, J.S.C. (retired). The following are Judge Langlois's remarks:

Thank you very much for the invitation and opportunity to become part of this new Alumni in the Law Networking organization.

I have not returned to New Jersey – for any “legal” reason – since my retirement in 2009. Many trips to see family and friends, of course, but this visit is a true home-coming to the Law.

When I read about this group, at last November's meeting, and the generous donation for scholarship by Steven Resnick, I contacted Avram and Marilyn to reconnect and particularly to thank them for so many years of hard work and success here at Montclair in the Legal Studies, now Law Department.

I also felt inspired – by Steve Resnick – to bring something back to this University – the place where I – as a young mother – relocated and without completing college – was able to enroll – fulfill core requirements, and obtain a Major in Political Science. Montclair was affordable – it offered flexibility in class schedule – it was diverse and lively – it had great professors.

I was particularly lucky to have Harry Balfe as a professor and mentor as I decided to pursue law school, then with 2 young children. Attending Rutgers Law School in Newark in the first evening classes offered, was challenging – yet I felt quite prepared after my studies and coursework at Montclair.

I returned as an Adjunct Professor in the Legal Studies Department in the 1980s. It was quite a job to prepare for – instruct – grade – legal writing and research classes. Back then – it was library time – books, not internet – case citations by a Blue Book – research in card catalogs and indexes.

Those were hard courses – and the students impressive in the time, energy they spent to complete the assignments. Again – a reflection of who Montclair students are – those who juggle job – family – school – who commute all week – who work hard to succeed and do more.

In 1993, I was appointed to the Superior Court. I was interviewed for an article in the MSU newspaper, as one of five alumni serving on the bench. Judge Francine Schott '76 and I were two of not so many women on the bench at the time. Both of us enrolled at Montclair State because it was affordable – best among local colleges, and flexible for our work and home environments. As Judge Schott said – there are so many MSU graduates who have achieved in many professions and fields – accomplished and well-known – whose experience is as ours – “They would never have had their first opportunity if Montclair State hadn’t given it to them.” We come here for practical reasons – and we leave with an appreciation of an exceptional faculty – an open comforting environment – and the academic challenges.

You are the Montclair State success stories. All of you here tonight!

It is good that with this alumni in the law group – we can re-connect and re-commit to Montclair – and to the students who are part of the Department of Law. We can support students who – like us – juggle family, work, money, commuting, and getting an education.

We can advise – as these men and women seek entry into law school and our profession.

We can provide an ear/sounding board as these new lawyers deal with the day to day practice of law. It helps to talk to someone who is NOT in the same workplace yet who also understands the demands and distresses of practice.

We can direct as careers change and new jobs are pursued.

We can connect these men and women to our own contacts and network.

We can encourage participation in bar associations and community organizations.

We can cheer successes and advancements. Because a mentor is one who sees the potential and future in those who cannot yet see it in themselves.

We can contribute time and support to assure the program itself expands and draws greater numbers.

Lawyers are good talkers and adversaries. We are also – despite common belief – good listeners – we ask questions – we inquire – we consider alternatives – we see different options – we know compromise. We can adapt all those qualities to the mentoring of new students and new professionals.

Every September for 16 years, I welcomed – and watched with renewed enthusiasm – a new Law School graduate become a law clerk for me in Superior Court. (Steven Resnick was one of them). I can attest to the reward that flows in return when you mentor – teach – listen – advise – and cheer.

Let us all, then, cheer one another on. We have a common goal – of sharing our success in the law and legal profession – with those young men and women from Montclair State University. I have time (now in retirement and I do recommend retirement) – and ask all of you to give the time you can – to help make this network larger – stronger – and successful.

We have the support of Dr. Tayler – and the dedicated professors – who continue to educate those who want to be part of our profession.

We have a great challenge ahead – however, great results are ours to see.

Thank you.

