

# LAW IN ITS BEST LIGHT

BY KIMBERLY KOSSICK '06



When my non-law school friends and acquaintances asked me what I was doing for the summer their reactions ranged from: “Ooh, scary,” to “Why would you want to do that?” and “That is so great!” Actually, during my experience working for the New Hampshire Public Defender’s Office all of these thoughts crossed my mind.

For many, the area of indigent defense conjures visions of people who must be guilty, because after all they were arrested, as well as scary people, dangerous people... people you would not want to meet in a dark alley. Working this past summer at the New Hampshire Public Defender’s Office helped me dispel many of those visions. This experience introduced me to some people who, frankly, were scary. However, many of our clients were very similar to the people that made the above remarks. For some, the only difference was the balance in their checkbooks.

As an investigator intern, I was responsible for interviewing witnesses and gathering information about the clients and the cases in general. I was also able to work closely with the attorneys, attending case conferencing, accompanying them to court, and providing litigation support. I visited incarcerated clients and helped arrange treatment interviews for them. The work was exciting, interesting, and, in more than one case, heartrendering.

It may be a cliché, but this internship made me feel that I was making a difference. When clients thanked me for working on their case, or when there was a satisfying solution to a problem, it made the entire day worthwhile. I feel that the Public Defender’s Office shows attorneys in their best light; people working to insure the rights of others.

My experience solidified my desire to work in the field of indigent defense. For someone who is considering criminal work, the work at the New Hampshire Public Defender’s Office is an invaluable glimpse into the workings of the system and a real life lesson for anyone entering the legal profession.

*Kimberly Kossick '06 was one of 13 students to be awarded a Public Interest Coalition Fellowship to perform pro bono legal work at a nonprofit agency or organization during the summer of 2004.*

*Support the Public Interest Coalition year-round. Donations can be made at [www.piercelaw.edu/pic/pichome.htm](http://www.piercelaw.edu/pic/pichome.htm).*