

## Velazquez-Aguilu Wins 2005 AWL Scholarship

LEA TURPIN



Lola Velazquez-Aguilu

Third-year student Lola Velazquez-Aguilu has been named winner of the Virginia A. Pomeroy Memorial Scholarship

from the Association of Women Lawyers (AWL). The \$2,500 scholarship, named in memory of a former AWL president, is given

in recognition of academic excellence and outstanding service to the Law School community and the community at large.

Velazquez-Aguilu, a Madison native, earned a B.A. in political science at UW-Madison before entering law school, and she has been active in political campaigns for several years. In the 2004–05 academic year, she served as president of the Latino Law Students Association.

Velazquez-Aguilu is editor-in-chief of the *Wisconsin Law Review*

and the author of the article “Not Poor Enough: Why Wisconsin’s System for Providing Indigent Defense is Failing,” forthcoming in 2006. She was a summer associate at Winston & Strawn, LLP, in 2005, as well as a summer intern at the Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center in Chicago.

AWL is a 350-member bar association based in Milwaukee that promotes the welfare, interests, and professional development of women lawyers.

## Mock Trial Program Trains Future Trial Lawyers

The Law School’s Mock Trial Program is rapidly evolving into a vital part of the trial advocacy curriculum. The program is the trial-level equivalent of the Moot Court Program, the Law School’s long-standing and prestigious mock appellate advocacy program. The Mock Trial Program trains students as trial lawyers so that they are ready to successfully try lawsuits in regional and national competitions. Students are divided into teams and given a complete civil or criminal file for the case they are to try in competition.

The program began in 1996, when Clinical Professor Krista Ralston agreed to coach interested students. A year later, the UW team won the regionals of the American Trial Lawyers’ Association competition and went to the nationals. In 2003, after seven years of coaching, Ralston turned the program over to the Law School’s Communication and Advocacy Program, directed

by Clinical Professor Susan Steingass, a former Dane County Circuit Court Judge and seasoned litigator. Two experienced colleagues, criminal defense attorney Ellen Berz and civil litigator Rhonda Lanford, expanded the coaching effort.

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— Susan Steingass

Mock Trial experience benefits students in many ways, whether they intend to pursue a litigation career or not, Steingass says. “The mock trial program teaches organization, analysis, and communication skills. It teaches people how to work in teams and instills confidence in all forms of legal presentation. It’s an experience that mirrors real litigation careers.” Participating

second- and third-year students earn academic credits, and the program regularly sends student teams to several national competitions during the year.

Students begin preparing for competitions six to eight weeks beforehand, and as the competition nears, preparation intensifies to include daily practices and full-blown trial scrimmages between teams. The instructional method is entirely learning by doing. Participants move from students to trial-ready attorneys in a comparatively short period of time.

In the past two years, the number of students involved in the Mock Trial Program has grown from 12 to 25. In September, participants elected their first board of directors. A total of 75 new students (first-through third-year) competed for spots on the team, and new members were announced at the end of September.