

UW's BLSA Named Chapter of the Year

This has been a banner year for the University of Wisconsin Black Law Students Association (BLSA): the organization was named Chapter of the Year for 2004-2005 at the Midwest Regional BLSA Convention in January, and went on to win second place for best chapter nationwide at the BLSA National Convention in April.

"Our number one priority was to impact the Madison community," comments BLSA president Gozie Onyema. More important than the accolade of the award, Onyema says, is the involvement the organization has had with the community this year.

BLSA has made community service their focus, hosting blood drives at the University and assisting the Madison and Milwaukee communities with election protection and voter registration efforts. Several BLSA members participate in Big Brothers Big Sisters, mentoring local middle school students in Madison area public schools. In addition, BLSA hosted monthly workshops geared towards equipping young male juvenile delinquents with decision-making skills and career advice.

BLSA has also focused on mentorship within the



BLSA students serve a Thanksgiving meal to families at the Early Childhood Learning Center in Madison.

organization, matching 1L students with 2L and 3L mentors and offering mock interview sessions and summer job workshops to assist the 1L members in the educational transition.

The UW chapter garnered an additional important honor when two members, Alexis Highsmith and Randy Reliford, won the Best Brief Award at the BLSA National Frederick Douglass Moot Court Competition.

"We are proud that BLSA has brought national recognition to the UW LEO program," Onyema says.

Yes, That Was the Law School on National TV

If you missed the UW Law School's half-time appearance on national television during Badger Big Ten men's basketball games this year, you can now watch the spot on the Law School Web site, at www.law.wisc.edu. [Click on the words "Clinical Programs" in the Quick Links section of the home page to find the video link.]

The Neighborhood Law Project (NLP) was chosen by the University of Wisconsin to represent the university's community-based educational and service programs during this year's basketball broadcasts. NLP exemplifies the

Wisconsin Idea and Law in Action — both important concepts that put theory into practice to benefit the world beyond the classroom.

The half-time spot shows NLP students working with clients in their community office on South Park Street, as well as in the Dane County Small Claims Court. An interview with Dean Kenneth B. Davis, Jr., is also part of the video.

"It was really gratifying to be selected to represent the University," says Clinical Professor Juliet Brodie, Director of NLP. "The Neighborhood Law Project is very well-suited to tell the story of the Law School's commitment to experience-based learning, to Law in Action, and to the justice

mission of the legal profession."

NLP is a community-based poverty law clinic, in which law students provide legal services to low-income people in the Madison area. NLP serves hundreds of clients each year, principally in landlord-tenant, unpaid wage, and welfare matters. Students are responsible, under close supervision, for every aspect of client representation, from initial interview, through fact investigation and legal research, client counseling, negotiation, and formal court and administrative proceedings.

For more information on the Neighborhood Law Project, go to www.law.wisc.edu/lfr/ejl/neighborhood/index.htm.