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May 2011 E-newsletter Faculty Spotlight: Andrea Dennis

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Faculty Spotlight: Andrea Dennis

News @ Georgia Law May 2011 Faculty Profile

Name: Andrea L. Dennis

Title: Associate Professor of Law

Courses taught: Criminal Law, Evidence, Criminal Procedure

Hometown: Silver Spring, Md.

Law school/graduation year: New York University/1997

Other degree(s)/institution(s)/year(s): B.S./University of Maryland at College Park/1994



1. What influenced your decision to go to law school?

- I was interested in many different disciplines, including psychology, engineering, history and public policy. I choose law school once I learned that being a lawyer afforded me the chance to explore and possibly meld a diversity of interests.

2. What did you do before entering the legal teaching academy?

- I practiced in a variety of contexts. After clerking for a federal district court judge, I worked at Covington & Burling as an associate on commercial, patent and white collar litigation matters, as well as antitrust matters. While at Covington, I also completed a stint as a special prosecutor handling child abuse and neglect cases for the D.C. government. After several years, I left Covington to become an assistant federal public defender in Maryland. Between practicing and entering academia, I did policy and programming work for the National Office of Job Corps.

3. How did you choose your legal specialty when you practiced law?

- Having worked in a variety of different areas, ultimately I settled on criminal defense because I found it to be interesting, challenging and fulfilling.

4. What did you enjoy most about this area of law?

- Giving voice to my clients and getting to know my clients as individuals, not simply defendants.

5. What made you decide to become a professor?

- Being a professor combines the best of all worlds: the chance to shape a new generation of lawyers, the luxury to research issues in depth and the option to work on cases.

6. What do you enjoy most about your job? What is the most rewarding aspect of being a professor?

- Working with students and exploring my own interests.

7. What are you currently researching?

- I am collaborating with a social scientist on a piece investigating the impact of criminal history on the legal experience of female intimate partner violence offenders.

8. How do you stay up to date on legal issues and trends?

- By talking with my colleagues here and elsewhere, talking with students, and reading electronic resources such as online newspapers, legal blogs and legal news aggregators.

9. What book/resource do you find yourself referencing the most?

- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

10. What advice would you give to current law students?

- Revel in this time you have to learn without borders.

11. What is your favorite thing about living in Athens?

- The vibrant community.

12. What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What are your hobbies?

- Playing tennis.

13. If you could share an afternoon with anyone, with whom would you choose to spend it?

- Arthur Ashe (professional tennis player and international humanitarian).