BYU-Idaho graduate receives award for pro bono legal work

As students move on from their four-year BYU-Idaho degree, instructors hope they go on to accomplish bigger and better things. This is just the type of news Samuel Clay, chair of the Department of Psychology, received when one of his former students informed him she now has her juris doctorate degree.

That student, Camille Borg, has always wanted to help people. While attending BYU-Idaho and pursuing her psychology degree, she volunteered at multiple service organizations in her hometown of Plano, Texas—everything from a battered woman's shelter to a children's advocacy center. In the process, she witnessed many people in need not only of counseling but legal help. "I kept thinking, 'I wish I knew a good lawyer,'" Borg says.

So after earning her degree in April 2005, she started working in a counseling and rehabilitation center. Though she only attended court a few times, she got her first real exposure to the court system. Working for only six months at the counseling center, she then decided to fully devote her time to the service of others by serving as a missionary in the Arizona Tempe Mission from November 2005 to May 2007.

When she returned from her mission, plans were underway for her to get a PhD in psychology. However, once she started applying it didn't feel quite right. "I asked the Lord what else he would have me do instead," Borg says.

Looking for a few months at the many different options available, she continued to think about all the people she worked with, the many clients who were abuse victims, and she thought about their legal needs. "Then I realized I could become that good lawyer that they needed," Borg says.

The application to graduate school moved swiftly and she was soon studying law at the J. Reuben Clark Law School at BYU. Despite the rigors of school, her service accelerated. Volunteering with many different organizations such as the Women's Law Forum Board, Public Interest Law Forum Board, and the Timpanogos Legal Center, the total organizations she has been involved with to date is 12. But even her involvement with different organizations isn't what sets her apart—it's the recognition she has received.

Since the beginning of law school, Borg has continued to be involved in service. But as a law student she was then able to render more specific legal services. In her three years at law school she has totaled roughly 1,300 service hours, with 750 of them occurring in the year 2011 alone.

Because of this pro bono work, she was the recipient of the Utah State Bar Pro Bono Publico Law Student of the Year Award. Borg was nominated by Janice Macanas, president of the Utah Minority Bar Association, and was backed by more than 10 other faculty and advisors. This is the sixth of seven awards she has received for her service since starting her law degree.

Recently graduated with her law degree, Borg is now working for the Utah Bar Association as the assistant to the pro bono coordinator to recruit lawyers to help with pro bono cases. Borg is just one of the many examples of graduating students who go on to use their talents.

"Camille exemplifies the ideal BYU-Idaho student by the way she sees obstacles, uses her talents, and relies on the Lord to overcome them," Clay says.

Of her BYU-Idaho experience and how it has helped her, Borg says, "BYU-Idaho offered me educational opportunities that stretched my perception of my ability to achieve. My success in the classrooms taught me to believe that I was capable of doing and becoming more."