

# '94

BY JACK KENNY

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As supervising attorney for the Legal Advice & Referral Center (LARC) in Concord, NH, L. Breckinridge “Breckie” Hayes-Snow JD '94, monitors compliance with the regulations and directives of the Legal Services Corporation, maintains a web site and database, participates in the supervision of LARC's “hot line” and referral services and participates in the training of guardians ad litem. Aside from that and a dozen or so other things, her workdays are rather uneventful.

“We're such a small organization that over time people just take on tasks that need doing,” Hayes-Snow explains. “So I wear many hats. The nonprofit agency refers income-eligible people to attorneys with New Hampshire Legal Assistance or the Pro Bono Program of the New Hampshire Bar Association. There are a lot more people in need of legal services that they can't afford than there are lawyers available to help them.”

“Most low-income people with legal problems aren't going to get an attorney,” says Hayes-Snow. So LARC provides “brief services” to help pro se litigants through the legal hurdles. “If somebody receives a document from the opposing party that they don't quite understand, they can send it over to us to find out how they should file a response. We provide a lot of public information and education assistance to people who have to represent themselves.”

Hayes-Snow believes the legal system, both nationally and in New Hampshire, is moving toward more “transparent and functional” procedures. One reform she is promoting for New Hampshire is the adoption of National Public Automated Documents Online, a system that processes the required information and produces “an acceptable, legally crafted document” to submit in court. “It's a big step forward from ‘Here's the form, go out in the hall and fill it out,’ where people have no idea what they're doing.”

Hayes-Snow decided to pursue a career in law after earning a BA in education from Boston University. “I had a really difficult time when I was student teaching. By the time I was done with that, I wasn't sure the classroom was where I belonged. I found myself out of college with no idea what I wanted to do when I ‘grow up.’ And I thought law school would be interesting. And it was. It was very interesting.”

She recalls with special fondness classmates Julia Cohen JD '94 and David Bailinson JD '94, from whom she learned two life-changing skills. “Julia taught me how to study,” says Hayes-Snow. And Dave taught me how to play darts. That's how I met my husband,” she laughs. “If I hadn't been in a bar, playing darts with Dave, I wouldn't be married.”

Hayes-Snow developed an interest in family law under the influence of Professor Ellen Musinsky, who taught in the Civil Practice Clinic. “It wasn't so much the subject matter,” says Hayes-Snow, recalling her former mentor. “She really taught me about my relationship to the work I wanted to do. Family law remains high on the list of my personal and professional interests. Helping someone sort out a family problem is more satisfying for me than helping someone sort out a contract dispute.”

So fourteen years after law school, Hayes-Snow is still studying the legal problems people confront in everyday life and still aiming at solutions with the precision she honed hurling darts in a Concord pub.

“If I had to say how I've made a difference in my career so far, I would say it's been in trying to use my degree and education to help people help themselves and to be a part of trying to make the system work better.”

*Hayes-Snow says she went into private practice for two years “before escaping to legal services because I am more interested in mission-driven services. I have really enjoyed my years at LARC.” She and her husband, Rick, live in Hopkinton with their children, Sarah, 9 1/2, and Arthur, almost 7. They love to ski, but they never pass up the chance to go fishing on the coast or hiking.*