y colleague, Text Dattle, asked me one day if I liked hiring a legal aid lawyer who works with law students. I said I did, but that I have surprised myself (or maybe God surprised me): I didn’t think I would, when, six years ago, I asked the dean to let me work with students in the Notre Dame Legal Aid Clinic instead of teaching law in the classroom. It has been a sort of conversion for me—a conversion to good and unexpected things: I have, in C.S. Lewis’s phrase, been surprised by joy.

I like the conviviality of 1991 in my 50th year and in the 50th year of my being a full-time classroom law teacher. Jonathan Kroad came to campus to talk about longshoremen. He brought to the law school octogenarian labor unionists who were there. I met many young old friends and met others. Tom Broady, 60, J.D., we are not so young anymore, was the featured, so to speak, among our group of colleagues on the street or in one of Minor Koad’s New York welfare books.
Surprised by Joy Street

by Thomas L. Shaffer '61 J.D.
Robert and Marion Short Professor Emeritus of Law
I was, in their phrase, teaching on down the tidy farm, cultivating a little money in the missionary store, and occa-
sionally offering to people like Koel. Liss-
or, as people like Koel was like going in church during the week.

When Tom mentioned his own work, after the Koel lecture, I thought of how we was doing, since our young-,
ner went to kindergartens in 1970, which is what Tom was telling about doing with young-timers in 1970. She has been an advocate for legal-aid offices in California, Virginia, and Indiana, and in the United Reli-
gious Communities in South Bend, for 30 years. She recently qualified as a Court-
Appointed Special Advocate for children. She is very great in helping people —
the, purposeful, hardly ever fully indefi-
nant, never judgmental. She is just a heav-
ese.

The central reality in Tom Boxer’s ministry — and这么 you — is that it is riven in contradictions. Tom and Nancy have been married in people who need help, and who sometimes need advocates, by and by resolved, and do not have them, and they have been minimizers to students and friends (doing nothing) who otherwise would know nothing about what they need in the newspaper to hear from part-time chairs in the Law School.

Very few of our students have much to do with the poor when they are at Notre Dame, and, even then, we get involved in a range of helping lawyers for low-income people. The typical law graduate leaves us with some $30,000 and $100,000 in debt that has to be paid off from low-prac-
tice income, and legal-aid lawyers make less than a part-time school professor.

Even if our legal graduates led relatively, most of them could not find work in our kind of practice, and there’s no high-
salary job available for them — in or out all the time.

The smart moments in my life with Jesus, the conclusion, which came to me slowly, was quiet and different and bright.

I went downtown to the homeless of the law-
building to see if the little young mothers who created our American Legal Aid Clin,
ch, Edna Eames (’37, J.D.), and Barbara,
Sowden, could see my help. And then I
talked to my classmate and alumnus, Pete, Ner
38, 46 J.D.,

Some time, thanks to these sisters and broth-
ners in the Lord, I have spent thousands of my time as a "supervising attorney" in the largest law office in northern Indiana. I use the word "office" to "be," but without the little job, pe, much money being a legal-office lawyer. Edna, Barbara, and I had two part-time colleagues —
Chief Attorney Verner (’41, L.L.M.), 70 J.D., a South African lawyer who has thoroughly beared at Notre Dame to earn our first ex-
graduate degree, in law, and Steve Morse (’44, J.D.) who joined in 1994 from the larger law firm I worked for in the 1980s. Last
summer, we added two full-time partners —
Judy Roe, 70 J.D., who joined our organiza-
tion has worked in a variety of legal-aid
offices in southwest Michigan, and
Sara Bolona Cerveso, S.A.N.D., a Massa-
chusetts lawyer and former professor. We
work with a range of about 20 students during the school year, 12 or 20 during the summer, and take on about 10 cases a year for clients who cannot afford lawyers.

We work in an old, comfortable, glass-
building on Grand Street, where the
University bought for a French mechani-
s, away from what used to be the Notre Dame Bois, in the high-crime area between campus and St. Joseph’s Hospital. The University is generally enjoying its rela-
tionshere. Some of our editors are also our neighbors. Some of our neighbors, who drop in for a cup of coffee, are not our editors.

Our greatest contribution to the clinic has been visiting Linda Harrison, who has worked for the Law School for 27 years, becoming the clinic’s office manager. She is the — most — of lawyers — who
held the place together. We are practicing lawyers have the secretaries, Becky Garff, whom we stole from the law lib-
rary, and Mike Schlueter, an under-
graduate student who helps, as part time, under the work-study program.

I mention these women, and should mention in any, all of our legal insti-
tutions, women, not only one of necessity, but also because one being aware of the amazing expertise of women in a familiar place, of dealing with legal issues from a feminine perspective, as sharing traits —
sometimes as a kind of gaining women in the remarkable story Edna, Barbara, and Judy have in being mothers of young child-
s and at the same time being involved lawyers.

Involvement goes being fortunate in a way that would be around if legal insti-
tution. In one case, Barbara gathered to
organize a crew of law students and painted the inside of a client’s apartment. Twice
a week she leads a room of students — as many Spanish speakers as she can find, and others — for the sessions in the fall for the Hispanic community in South Bend, to
their complete involvement with the immi-
geration and Naturalization Service.

Edna blends her legal work with young mother protagonist, in her baby-
side, medical care, and garbage service for her clients; she urges with police-
officers on a range of questions that few made lawyers.
would think of as part of their job description. 
Sometimes walk-ins come, and a typical situation for the first step is to take up a case and from there to discuss it with the lawyers and see if anything can be done. 

For the first time, I met the lawyer and discussed the initial plan of action. The lawyer was friendly and seemed to be interested in the case. He explained that the case was quite complex and would require a lot of work. He outlined the steps he planned to take and asked for my advice. I had some ideas and suggestions, and we discussed them for a while. The lawyer seemed to be pleased with my input and thanked me for my time. Overall, the experience was positive and I felt that I had made a good impression. 

at the bottom of the economic and social
problems. It is now clear, in its final
manifestations, that a large propor-
tion of the people in our society who
work in factories, are not working in
our factories, but in the factories of
other countries. So we are faced with
a problem that is much more complex
than we thought it was before.

More than this, and in its ori-
nature, this is what Tom Brokaw was
talking about, and what Nancy's life with
her clients and with her children is a
story of — one that is not easy to
remember, but one that is unforgettable.

In its nature, this is also puzzling,
a mysterious human process. It is not
something that we can predict or con-
trol. But it is something that we can
understand. It is something that we can
learn from. And I believe that we can
learn from the stories of these people,
the stories of their lives. Because these
stories tell us something about our own
lives, about the lives of those who are
around us, about the lives of those who
are not around us.

I don't pretend to know how it works.
But I do know that we have a similar
problem that is more complex than
what we thought it was before. Our
society is divided into different groups
that have different interests. And these
groups are in conflict with each other.

One group is concerned with the
needs of the economy. They want to
make sure that our economy pro-
ceeds as smoothly as possible. Another
group is concerned with the needs of
the people. They want to make sure that
our people are treated fairly and justly.

These two groups are in conflict, but
they are not divided by differences in
their interests. They are divided by
differences in their values. And these
differences are not easily resolved.

But I believe that we can learn from
the stories of these people, the stories
of their lives. We can learn from the
mistakes they have made, and we can
learn from the successes they have
achieved. And I believe that we can
use these stories to help us understand
our own lives, and to help us find a way
to move forward. The past is not just a
series of events that have happened,
but it is also a series of lessons that we
can learn from. And I believe that we
should take these lessons seriously.
Occasionally students neglect their
classics (and I have to be severe about this).
More often the problem is not neglect, but
the fact that each of these students is with
us for so short a time, and the law grinds slowly.
At the end of every semester I have
20 or 30 cases that have to be handed on to
new student interns, or that I have to see
over and continue by myself. Once in a
while, I have to go on court alone.
Before my clinic days, I usually went to court
alone; now I feel incomplete when I have
to do it.

These transients are unsettling for
students; they tempt me to cool down the rela-
tionships our student lawyers have with clients,
as favor of a clearer dependence on
me -- free our practice become a matter of
exploiting clients in order to provide educa-
tion for students. The turnover problem is
uncomfortable to work through, but I still
myself that it is inherent in a ministry that
goes out in two directions. Maybe it is out
of those things, to use philosophical lan-
guage I learned from my old friend and
colleague, Professor Frederick J. Clonon,
that is more a mystery than a problem.

Another thing to puzzle over is the
number of clients we turn away (about five
out of every eight who apply). Like any
lawyers anywhere (or, for that matter, pas-
tors or physicians anywhere), we have to be
concerned that we not give ourselves so
much to do that we dont do any of it well.
That requires some discipline; it provides
a painful concern, especially in the endures of
telling a person you do not have time to help
her. (An interesting part of our pro-
gram of training is that we give this un-
pleasant task to the student lawyers or
Linda.) This is a crisis more made compul-
sing as the federal government takes an-
other swipe at legal services for the poor,
and more clients, turned away from the
local federally funded legal services office,
come to us.

Another difficulty is how to get about
serving the lawyers who teach in the
classroom at Notre Dame and, beyond
them, the University community and the
compeer institution. Notre Dame operates
the clinic at a financial loss. Our student-
faculty ratio is one of the lowest on campus.
The individual attention we give to our stu-
dents costs money, as do our physical facili-
ties and our non-lawyer staff. In this
respect, the clinic is analogous to the South
Bend Center for the Homeless, which the
University began supporting in the 1980s,
and to the Center for Social Concerns.

We have recently become aware of
our opportunity to serve private lawyers
in the community who probably do
more for people who cannot pay fees. We
are trying to figure out how to involve our-
sele and our classroom colleagues in
a broad campaign, mounted by the Indiana
Supreme Court and the Indiana State Bar
Association, to encourage "pro bono" ser-
vie by practicing lawyers and law teachers.
Young lawyers in the community who have
been student lawyers in the clinic -- typi-
cally young women -- will, more often than
not, take these cases.

And, finally, there is the possibility
that the kinds of law we do could be made
simpler, less expensive, more available to
people at the bottom of the legal pile, and
better. Indiana's system of small-claims
courts, for example, was set up to provide
simplified justice to people who do not
have lawyers, but it has become an engine
of oppression -- an agency of government
where lawyers exist, wealth and hunger
the workings of the poor.
The law's system (for granting divorce (or, as
Indiana has come to call it, "divorce")
cries out, especially as we meet it in the
lives of the children of our clients, for
less cancer and complexity. The federal Social
Security system operates in application pro-
cedures as a way to refuse help, rather than
to give it. If there is bureaucracy more dis-
gusting than the Immigration and Naturaliz-
ation Service, I havent heard about it.
I am tempted to babble. I get angry at
the way the "system" steps on our clients;
I nod in agreement with the latent Marxism
I read in Latin American liberation theol-
yogy. And then I am tempted to feel super-
rior to the bureaucrats and judges who
administer these systems, and to the lawyers
downtown who have to live on what their
clients can pay them. I suspect the wonder-
ful work I work would not nod at my
crocheting ofbabble. Maybe they would
say, "It's a gory thing.

The lord has not, for that, dealt wise
my later by giving me grief, balk and pro-
vice (as he did with Job), or denied me the
Promised Land (as he did with Moses). He
has let me stay with Nancy, and that helps
a lot. I am tempted to irate about the way
the legal system we work with dumps on our
clients Nancy, who also works with
people who dont have enough money or
time or energy in the ways of the world, al-
ways finds a way to do something.

This is not like the phrase "poor people."
I guess this is a question of focus. We
lawyers cannot ignore the "system," if only
because it is the system and often has the power to change it. But
the sensitive, the humble skills our students
bring to us, the common-sense way Nancy
seems to know what can be done -- all of these
influence in my life, my clients' law
teacher help me understand what Esther
John Dune may have meant when he
wrote (in The House of Wisdom) "I can
find God in my heart only by turning some-
how to life." I have written in my books,
and I am learning, slowly, in my work with
students in the clinic, that lawyers law
more about people than it is about problems.

It is useful, and a shade humbling, to
be made to remember (by Nancy and by
Steve and the women we get to work with)
that the most important thing about our cli-
ients is not that the system does not give them
very much, but that, as one of the earliest
American feminist ideas said, it is the
sufferings worth of God.