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Law Grads Give 4,000 Pro-bono Hours

05.09.2007 | Service and Giving, Law, Students The 187 University of Dayton School of Law students graduating at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 12, in University of Dayton Arena already have logged 4,000 hours of free legal services locally and nationally during their law school careers.

Thirty-five graduates will receive the School of Law's Pro Bono Commitment to Community Award for donating at least 50 hours of service.

Torchio Feaster stands out among them for the way he puts others before himself. He returned to his home near Flint, Mich., last year to care for an ailing father and help manage his family's business interests. UD School of Law officials worked with Feaster so he could finish his final year as a visiting student at Wayne State University in Detroit.

While at Wayne State, Feaster worked at a law firm in a Detroit suburb the first semester and traveled to his parents' home on the weekends. Hernia surgery also sidelined him for two weeks. The second semester, Feaster worked as a legal extern in the Genesee County Prosecutor's Office. He drove the nearly 140 miles round trip between Detroit and Flint daily.

Before finishing his UD degree at Wayne State, Feaster founded two UD law societies dedicated to human rights and community law. He mentored local high school students, worked with a national organization charged with protecting voters' rights at the polls and is a part of another organization that encourages law students and lawyers to give to the community through service.

"Service has been the link unifying all of our law students," said Lori Shaw, UD School of Law dean of students, noting that students have worked for local organizations such as Legal Aid and the public defender's office. A group of nearly 30 law students gave up their spring breaks to travel to the Gulf Coast region to help hurricane victims.

Service is a key component of the School of Law's award-winning Lawyer as Problem Solver curriculum. The program helps students apply their legal knowledge to help solve problems for their clients, communities and the world. UD ensures students will have those skills by requiring an externship — a semester of work with a licensed attorney. UD law school officials believe UD is just one of a handful that requires an externship for graduation.

Andrew S. Effron, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, will deliver the commencement address.

For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391.