

Today's Charlotte Woman

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Letter Of The LAW



**Charlotte School Of Law's
Victoria Taylor Carter Cultivates
Academic Excellence**
BY ROBIN A. EDGAR

THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE RECENTLY GOT something it's never had before—a law school. Charlotte School of Law (aka CharlotteLaw) is part of the Law system of independent law schools. After establishing schools in Jacksonville, Fla., and Scottsdale, Ariz., Infilaw conducted intense research and selected Charlotte for its third location.

CharlotteLaw will welcome its inaugural class this fall. It's a heady time for all involved with establishing what educators, administrators and students hope will become another solid pillar in the Charlotte education community. No one is more enthused than Assistant Dean of Admissions Victoria Taylor Carter.

Like Father, Like Daughter

Carter grew up listening to her father, civil rights attorney Herman L. Taylor, discuss his cases at the dinner table. Although Carter did not jump into law school immediately, she was destined to follow in her father's footsteps.

Carter attended North Carolina Central University School of Law in Durham, which was the catalyst for a 10-year journey that led to her present position. After graduating in 1997, she landed her first job as director of recruitment at her alma mater. Carter's subsequent involvement with the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools led her to love the field of education.

By 1998, she was working as an adjunct legal writing professor at NCCU Law. "My father taught as well, so it was a natural step to move

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CharlotteLaw's Victoria Taylor Carter

into the classroom," says Carter. Three years later, Carter applied for a job as assistant dean of admissions at UNC Chapel Hill School of Law. Although at the time she thought it unlikely that someone with her limited experience would be considered for the position, she was hired. "It was a big jump," Carter says, "but I was very passionate about education, and maybe that just came across."

Corporate Mommy

Taking yet another plunge, she married Jim Carter in 2001. After giving birth to their daughter, Milan, in 2002, Carter left Chapel Hill to be a stay-at-home mom, like her own mother. After only three months, Carter was itching to get back to work. She took a consulting job at Omnicell Gymnazium Charter School in Durham, and resumed teaching as an adjunct professor at the schools of business and law at North Carolina Central.

The following year, Carter heard that Wachovia was looking for a recruiter with a law degree. Although she didn't get the job, Hector McEachern, executive VP of the bank's human resources department, invited Carter to join a fast-track program in upper-level management. "Her incredible enthusiasm and high energy hit you when you first meet her," says McEachern. "Then you

begin to see how knowledgeable Victoria is, that she has a tremendous desire to provide a service, as well as an interest in meeting the needs of people."

Although McEachern was said to lose her, he says Carter is highly qualified for her new position because she knows how to organize, get things done, and convince people of the value of what she is doing. "I believe my academic background, coupled with my corporate knowledge, will serve the school and our students well," says Carter.

School's In

CharlotteLaw's focus on serving diverse and underserved communities resonated with Carter. Although the percentage of minority students enrolling in law school has been decreasing nationwide, Carter believes minority students can relate to her, and that she can inspire them. "Infilaw has a creative program to help increase the bar pass rates of its minority students," Carter explains. "I feel I can serve as a role model and mentor as a member of a minority group who pursued a law degree."

To further her goal of minority participation in law and other fields of higher education, Carter serves as a volunteer and mentor for INROADS of Charlotte, a nonprofit organization that develops and places talented minority college-aged youth in corporate internships. She was also appointed to the Charlotte City Council's Community Relations Committee in 2005.

Carter's current responsibilities include setting up the admissions office, planning and organizing recruitment efforts, and assisting in public relations, marketing and publication development. She will also assist with the American Bar Association accreditation process. "Victoria brings a wealth of expertise in business, law and education to her role as assistant dean of admissions," says CharlotteLaw Dean E. Eugene "Gene" Clark. "Perhaps even more important is her passion for legal education and her embrace of CharlotteLaw's mission."

As CharlotteLaw continues to accept applications for the fall 2006 program, Carter and the admissions team are charged with creating a school that is, first and foremost, focused on the students. Offering an attractive program for people of diverse backgrounds, as well as serving the needs of the Charlotte community, Carter continues her father's legacy as she leads others in his footsteps. "I look forward to not only meeting our mission pillars," she says, "but working with my team to develop the highest quality academic program, and set the best practices along the way." **TCW**

Legal Alternatives For Women

According to Victoria Taylor Carter and Gene Clark, opportunities are on the rise for women who currently comprise 50 percent of the students at most law schools. "Not all lawyers go to court," says Carter. "Skills and knowledge attained through a legal education are in demand in areas such as human resources, compliance, risk management and entrepreneurship. I'm a perfect example of someone with a JD degree who has never stepped into a courtroom."

"The new models of legal practice allow for alternative and viable pathways to careers in law," Clark concurs. "New technologies are making it easier for women to work from home."

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FAQ's Of CharlotteLaw

- CharlotteLaw offers a Juris Doctor degree. In addition to full-time enrollment, students can attend either part-time day or evening programs to complete the degree. Part-time students enroll in nine to 12 credit hours per semester, and can complete the program in four years. The program requires the completion of 87 credit hours for graduation. To learn more, visit www.charlottelaw.org.
- As of early April, CharlotteLaw had received in excess of 850 applications for its 2006 inaugural class. The final number of acceptances is to be determined. Communications Manager Sharon Shaw says the school is focusing on quality rather than quantity. "We're not really concentrating on numbers," she says. "If an appropriately qualified student's application comes to us—even last-minute—we are going to try to find a place for them."
- CharlotteLaw is in the process of negotiating a site for their classrooms. "It's taken longer than we've expected," Shaw admits. "But we believe the delay will result in a facility that's even better for our students."
- Charlotte School of Law received licensure approval from the University of North Carolina's Board of Governors in 2005. The school will seek provisional approval from the American Bar Association, a process that can take 24 to 36 months at the earliest opportunity. The school will be eligible to apply for ABA certification in August of this year. The ABA will conduct a site visit the following fall, and make its recommendation.