

Class Reunion

In her 20 years as an adjunct professor in energy law, Sheila Slocum Hollis had the opportunity to teach hundreds of students who passed through the doors of GW Law School. And while they've all been dear to her, alumnus **James W. McTarnaghan, JD '83**, always stood out—first as her student and now as her colleague.

Hollis and McTarnaghan are partners at Duane Morris LLP and work together in energy and regulatory law. Both are passionate about the implementation of sound policy to improve the nation's security and address the world's burgeoning energy needs. GW Law School, they say, shaped the course of their careers.

When Hollis first began teaching law at GW in 1979, she had just helped establish the Office of Enforcement of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and was serving as its first director.

"I had an interest in energy law and regulation, so I signed up for Sheila's class," McTarnaghan says. "Having a chance to learn from such accomplished adjunct instructors, in addition to the great full-time faculty, was a terrific opportunity provided at GW Law. The beauty of such courses was learning from someone with a very active practice and special skills and expertise."

Hollis found many benefits to her own legal career working as an adjunct professor, including teaching on the lecture circuit and co-authoring two books on energy law.

"Teaching the class helped me crystallize my thoughts and led to a structure for the books," she says.

Hollis estimates she taught 400 to 500 students during her two decades at GW Law. "It warms my heart when I get to see some of them succeeding," she says. Of McTarnaghan, she adds, "I remember Jim being a bright, outstanding student. Certain individuals stand out, and Jim was one of them."

Hollis and McTarnaghan almost became colleagues in the 1990s when Hollis says she tried to hire him. It wasn't meant to be until 2006, when McTarnaghan joined Duane Morris' San Francisco office. Hollis, who is chair of the Washington, D.C., office, founder of the firm's Energy and Environment Practice Group, and a member of the firm's five-person Executive Committee, says she appreciated the roads they took and was amazed at "how we finally came together."

"There's never a dull day in this field. It is a very, very vibrant field and it affects every single living being on this planet," Hollis says as she and her colleague discuss the rapidly changing regulations and laws.

"There's so much work to be done in renewable energy now," adds McTarnaghan, who has helped form Duane Morris' Renewable Energy group. "You help shape policy and show how doing the right thing environmentally can be both profitable and lead to sustainability."

Both lawyers see a need for more immediate action to address energy security and global climate issues, but they remain positive about the future.

"We have to focus on this. Former Vice President Gore has been speaking about these issues for years and, through *An Inconvenient Truth*, has brought awareness of the energy/environment nexus to the public consciousness," McTarnaghan says. "I remain positive about finding energy solutions using renewable and alternative energy sources, perhaps including technology we've not yet seen."

Hollis agrees.

"This is a tough challenge and a transitional time," she says. "We will get through the demands of the next 25 years for more reliable energy and environmental solutions must play a key role."

For most of the past 33 years, Hollis has had the opportunity to teach developing legal minds and learn from them at the same time. She credits Professor Arnold Reitze and (former adjunct) Judge Richard D. Cudahy of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit with bringing her to GW Law in 1979.

"Sheila is a very talented person, one of the most accomplished energy lawyers in D.C.," Reitze says. "In addition to being a very great lawyer," Reitze adds, "she's a really nice person."

McTarnaghan notes that his greatest tribute to GW is the fact that his daughter will be a freshman next year in the Elliott School of International Affairs, where she hopes to learn how to make our world a better place. It's a pursuit she no doubt picked up from people like her father, who in turn was guided down his path by Hollis—a teacher, colleague, and friend.

—Claire Duggan

Former GW Adjunct Professor Sheila Slocum Hollis and her student James W. McTarnaghan, JD '83, now work together at Duane Morris. "I was a law student learning about energy law in the wake of the National Energy Policy Act of 1978, and 25 years later, we're dealing with the same core issues of a need for energy and a concern for the environment," McTarnaghan says.



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