



Meet Josh Clem



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November is the month set aside to recognize, honor and thank our veterans. University of Arkansas School of Law 1L and Marine Corps veteran Joshua “Josh” Clem is one of many students, faculty, staff and alumni who have served our country. Clem is an excellent addition to the School of Law family, adding a wealth of experience and perspective.

Clem, a 2009 honors graduate of Cave City High School in northeastern Arkansas, left for boot camp one month after his 18th birthday. He joined because he relished the idea of testing himself against high expectations.

“To say my time in the Marine Corps redefined me as a person would still be understating and oversimplifying my experiences there,” Clem said. “Every moment, from basic training in Parris Island, South Carolina, to returning from eight months in Afghanistan, and eventual departure from active duty, was one life-changing experience after another. During my time there, I grew from a ‘boot’ with no relatable

experience into a deployment-ready, qualified maintainer within the airframes division.”

During active duty, Clem was assigned to the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 161 (VMM-161) as an airframe tiltrotor mechanic (MOS – 6156). As such, he initially performed routine maintenance and repairs on the MV-22 Osprey at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in California and then in Afghanistan. He credits great mentors and supervisors with his success in qualifying quickly as a mechanic, a success which eventually gave him the opportunity to “trade a wrench for a flight suit.”

While in Afghanistan, he provided aircrew personnel with airframes-specific guidance while participating in combat flight operations as an aerial observer. He was also a collateral duty inspector responsible for the organization of his airframe division’s daily maintenance, a task that included supervising workload completion requirements. Clem separated service in 2014 at the rank of sergeant.

In addition to testing himself, Clem was aware of the G.I. Bill and that serving in the Marine Corps would eventually make college a financial reality. Upon separation from service, he entered Williams Baptist University in Walnut Ridge. While earning a Bachelor of Arts in Christian ministries, with a minor in English, he was active in several organizations. He was treasurer of Sigma Tau Delta and was a non-sworn member of the WBU Office of Police and Campus Safety.

He had a long-held interest in law school so was pleased when the school’s administrators responded positively to a petition asking permission to establish the Williams Baptist Pre-Law Society. Clem served as the inaugural president and helped organize speakers from law school admissions departments and brokered support for students to attend admissions fairs. The society continues to serve students at WBU.

Law school at the University of Arkansas made sense for Clem. He knew that, compared to other schools, the University of Arkansas School of

Law offers an excellent education at an affordable price. He and his wife, Savannah, hope to live and work in Arkansas, so building peer networks here was logical. Savannah, a native of Walnut Ridge, teaches first grade at Grace Hill Elementary in the Rogers School District.

As the first semester of his 1L year draws to a close, Clem is leaning toward a career in criminal law. He is enthusiastic about the subject as taught by professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development Laurent Sacharoff.

“Criminal law is an area that has interested me for a long time,” Clem said. “The opportunity to phrase and interpret statutes to find the elements of a crime; the ability to apply those elements to a given fact pattern; the possibility that those findings can mean the difference between conviction and acquittal; these aspects of criminal law are like a puzzle, but with high stakes and lasting consequences, which appeal to my competitive nature.”

As is true with most School of Law students, Clem has been nurtured and

supported by the state’s bench and bar. While at WBU, Clem worked as a student intern and runner for the firm of Waddell, Cole and Jones PLLC in Jonesboro.

“Although my time with the firm was brief, their advice and examples certainly broadened my understanding of the various possibilities in the practice of law,” Clem said. “They gave me opportunities to see the daily grind in the context of a busy firm. I enjoyed the pace, professionalism and precision that they exercised every day. Despite the volume of work, they often stopped by the copy room to ask me about my plans and to offer insights gleaned from their own varied experiences in law. Their advice certainly reinforced my desire to attend law school.”

Clem is one of the 2020 recipients of the Marion W. and Mary Alice Hazel Endowed Scholarship created by Mary Alice Hazel in 2003 to honor the memory of her husband, Marion W. Hazel, a 1941 graduate of the School of Law.

Clem looks forward to next summer and hopes it will provide an

opportunity to work in an environment centered around the practice of criminal law.

“Most importantly, next summer will mark the successful completion of the 1L year, which has, so far, not failed to live up to the hype.”