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York County native played role in Kagan hearings

LAUREN WHETZEL *The York Dispatch*
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Amanda Lavis thought she had enough on her plate as she prepared for the bar examination upon graduating from law school three months ago.



Amanda Lavis

But when the opportunity for the Villanova grad to work with the Senate Judiciary Committee on the Supreme Court nomination of Solicitor General Elena Kagan arose, "it was an opportunity of a lifetime that I couldn't pass up," she said.

During the nomination process, Lavis compiled research on Kagan's background, publications and speeches to prepare questions and witnesses for the hearings.

The York County native worked for Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., through an internship-type program from August to December last year. Sessions was the ranking minority member on the committee for Kagan's nomination.

"Sen. Sessions said he saw how hard I worked during my time working with him; he gave me the opportunity to work with him on the (Kagan) hearings," she said.

At the end of the process, Lavis said, she admired Kagan's accomplishments, but doesn't believe she belongs in the high court because she lacks judicial experience and dodged questions during the hearings.

The Senate voted last Thursday to confirm Kagan's appointment to the Supreme Court.

Once in a lifetime: Lavis, 25, took the bar exam earlier this summer and put the situation in perspective by telling herself that "the (bar) exam can be taken again, the opportunity to work on a committee of such significance is something most practicing attorneys, especially law students, may never get again."

Lavis said the work was a great learning experience for her because she was able to see law practiced from a different angle.

"Law students don't get that type of exposure and hands-on experience, regarding the real litigation process, in a classroom," she said, noting she learned the importance of teamwork during the nomination process.

She graduated from York Suburban High School and went on to earn her bachelor's degree at Messiah College.

She won't find out the bar exam results until October but believes she passed.

New goal: Although Lavis said she "isn't sure how anything could top the experience she just had (with the committee)," her focus is now placed "on a path to partnership" with Rhodes & Sinon law firm in Harrisburg.

She worked with the firm while she attended law school.

"I'm putting my efforts into the firm, and I see great things happening with them," she said. "I'm a product of, "If you balance your time right, you have more than enough time for everything."

-- Reach Lauren Whetzel at 505-5433 or lwhetzel@yorkdispatch.com.

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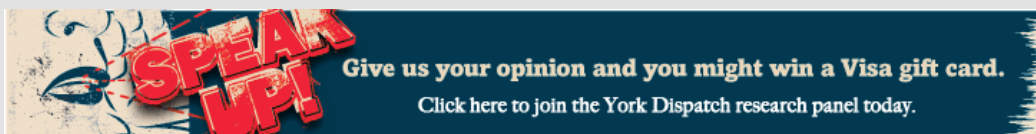


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