

## **Meet the School's New Faculty Member: Jacqui Greene**

I'm excited to introduce Jacqui Greene, the School's new Assistant Professor of Public Law and Government specializing in **juvenile justice law**. Jacqui relocated with her family from Albany, New York on August 19<sup>th</sup> and started with the School the very next day. I sat down with Jacqui and interviewed her for this post as a way for you to meet her.

### **Why did you apply for the position since you lived in New York?**

UNC Chapel Hill is my undergraduate alma matter, and Chapel Hill is a place I have always loved. I was amazed when I read the job description that the work was so squarely framed around the work I've done over the course of my career. It offered an amazing coming together of the skills and experiences I have, the work I enjoy doing, and a place I love. I was not looking for a new job but when I read the job position, I thought it was my dream job.

### **How does a high school senior from New York wind up at UNC Chapel Hill for college?**

My father got his PhD at UNC Chapel Hill, and I grew up rooting for the men's basketball team. When I was a child, we used to take empty toilet paper rolls and yell "Boo Duke!" through them during the games or at other times as an activity at our house. I've taught "Boo Duke!" to my own children. Because I grew up watching UNC basketball, I was interested in the ACC for colleges, which at the time was only in the south. I looked at different schools and fell in love with Chapel Hill. It also has a strong journalism program, which is what I thought I would study.

### **How did you transition to law?**

As an undergraduate student, I worked at the Sports Information Office (now I believe it's Athletic Communications), which was the university media relations office for athletics. I loved going to the games but I didn't love the culture of journalism and realized I didn't want to be a journalist.

I spent my first year after graduation in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Virginia. I worked with a 17-year-old client whose mom had died a year earlier. My teen client was a mom herself. She was homeless after the utilities were shut off because she was unable to pay the bills after her mother fell ill and then passed away. My role was as a social worker, and I unsuccessfully worked with utility company for months to get the utilities turned back on. Eventually, I went with my client to legal aid, who immediately got the utilities turned back on. I realized then that I wanted to be a lawyer and do that type of work.

### **Where did you go to law school?**

Harvard. I loved living in Boston and I was intellectually challenged by wonderful professors, but the law school experience was not the most enjoyable period of my life.

## **What did you do after law school?**

I had a Skadden Fellowship at Covenant House New Jersey providing legal services to young people between 17-21 years old who were homeless in Newark and Atlantic City. Newark is the most dangerous place I've ever lived, and Atlantic City was the most discouraging because of the discrepancy of money on the boardwalk and those without off the boardwalk. It was amazing to provide services to my clients where they were living because I got to know them better. They would be in and out all day; I ate meals with them; and I was part of a team that worked their cases. My work focused on eliminating barriers to independence and stability, including access to education, employment, housing, and public benefits for young people with significant disabilities. The experience gave me a real education in the reality of my clients' lives and the barriers they faced.

After two and a half years (staying six months past my fellowship), I had the opportunity to move back to the Albany area to work for the legislature on the issues that I had been practicing in. I also worked part time on the law guardian panel representing kids in family court, which in New York hears custody, abuse and neglect, delinquency, and persons in need of supervision (in North Carolina that would be undisciplined juvenile) proceedings.

## **When did you switch to juvenile justice and what did you do?**

Juvenile justice was part of my committee work for six legislative sessions. I drafted and reviewed legislation and negotiated the State budget on all Children and Families and Social Services issues, including juvenile justice. I then had an opportunity to move to the Executive Branch to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, which is the state agency that operates juvenile placement facilities and oversees locally administered juvenile detention, child welfare, and child care. I started working on New York's Raise the Age issues in that role. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services then created a new position for the state, the Director of Juvenile Justice Policy, and I was hired to do that job. In that position, I administered the federal funding under OJJDP. I was also involved in policy work around probation (which in New York performs front end juvenile court work similar to North Carolina's juvenile court counselors) enhancing juvenile intake and diversion processes, especially for children with mental health issues. I negotiated and drafted several major juvenile justice reform issues for the Governor's office including the "Close to Home" program, which focused on placing juveniles from New York City in programs operated within the City rather than in placements that were hundreds of miles away and detention financing reform that allowed for local flexibility to fund either the use of detention facilities or community-based supervision and services. Finally, I served as the Executive Director of the Governor's Commission on Youth, Public Safety, and Justice, which was the body that designed the Governor's proposal for New York's Raise the Age. New York's Raise the Age legislation passed in the 2016 session and like North Carolina has a ramp up to implementation, taking effect in October 2018 to phase in 16 year olds and October 2019 for 17 year olds. After the Commission released a report on Raise the Age in January 2015, I had the opportunity to move out

of state government to Policy Research Associates (PRA), which operates the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. My primary focus there was on school justice. I worked with jurisdictions across the country to assist them in identifying and responding to mental health needs of students in place of using exclusionary discipline practices and arrests for minor school infractions. That work included a focus on restorative practices in schools to hold the students accountable. I was there for three years and then came here.

**What are you looking forward to the most in your new position?**

Understanding what the needs are of the client groups I'll be working with and figuring out how to shape my work to meet those needs. Having been inside government both as a lawyer in court and an employee of state agencies, I know those professionals are always pressed for time and resources. I'm excited to be a resource and do the background work and deep thinking that they don't have time to do day to day.

**What do you think is going to be the most challenging aspect of this position?**

I have a lot of learning to do on state specific law and practice since I've never practiced in North Carolina. It will be challenging to start at square one here after being two decades into my work in the northeast.

**What's it like to be back in North Carolina?**

It's wonderful to be back. I love coming to campus every day and the energy at the School. It's fascinating to see the growth and changes here, but even with the changes there are certain core things that stayed the same - the bell tower is chiming; places I've lived and went to as a student are still here; there are football Saturdays and basketball games to attend. I feel very lucky to be here. It's like a coming home again for both me and my husband who I met while an undergrad here.