

Business, health, and law all rolled into one

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Layout Editor

Waiting in a drop-add line can be maddening for almost anyone, but to Stephen Schanz it was the opportunity to find the shortest line possible and the beginning of a diverse work field ahead of him.

Schanz was at the approximately 25 thousand student Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo, Mich.) when he took his first law class as a freshman. He didn't want to stand out in the middle of the athletic field any longer than necessary, so he found the shortest line and signed up for the upper level class.

Schanz started with aspirations of being a college athletics coach of some type before acquiring his bachelors of science degree in business administration three and a half years later. Schanz hoped to use the degree to launch himself towards his "visions of a mahogany office" somewhere in Kalamazoo's business arena.

"The best way to get the feel of a company is to see it from the ground up," said Schanz as he remembered what his first boss told him upon hiring.

Schanz's employer gave him that opportunity when he hired Schanz into the janitorial staff of the company. "It's what you make of it," said Schanz. And he made plenty of that opportunity as he moved up the corporate ladder as an account executive in the company's public relations/advertising department six months after his first day of

work.

After being at the company for almost two years, Schanz went to law school at the Pepperdine University School of Law (Mailbou, Calif.), where he earned his Juris Doctorate (J.D.).

Schanz began his teaching career as an adjunct professor at Western Michigan University while practicing law in Kalamazoo. He became a full-time professor in 1985 while teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses at his alma mater.

During that time, Schanz found his element in health law. He closely followed the many changes to the Medicare system and its effects on the retired persons of America. Schanz decided he wanted to have the most knowledge of the situation possible, so he went back to school again.

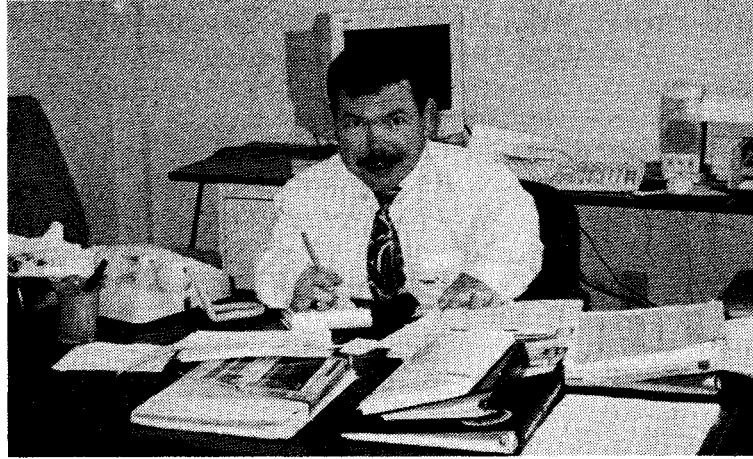
Schanz was still working in Kalamazoo during the day, but traveling two and a half hours across the Michigan/Illinois state line into Chicago, where he took evening classes at the Loyola University School of Law. He soon earned his Masters of Law (L.L.M.) in health law in 1993.

For Schanz, the new degree was a natural choice since health care is "big business" and "holds

all the key components of society's law and the business world's formality."

"One of the greatest aspects that anyone in health care can learn is to see everything from the patient's perspective," said Schanz. "You have more insight into the field."

Schanz held this perspective



Dr. Stephen Schanz came to Meredith College in November to head the Masters of Health Administration program for the John E. Weems Graduate School.

PHOTO BY ALYSON FLOOD

throughout his life as he was born with a physical disability. Still today, Schanz stands tall and proud at approximately three feet.

"As I get older, I appreciate more and more what my folks did for me. They always held strong to the philosophy 'where there's a will, there's a way,'" commented Schanz.

As a child, Schanz attempted many feats, such as wrestling and ice skating, that some said impossible. Schanz also earned his pilot's license and was certified by the F.A.A. for several years.

"Looking back, the biggest asset any child can get from his parents is [the idea] that you can do anything you want as long as you put your mind to it."

"My parents always told me I could do something, but I had to recognize that there were limitations," Schanz continued.

For Schanz, health law is a comfortable area. He had seen it from the patient's view. Schanz is now bringing his vast knowledge to Meredith College as professor and administrator to the Master of Health Administration program within the John E. Weems Graduate School.

Schanz and his family moved to the Raleigh area in 1994 to find a warmer climate than what they had experienced in Michigan for so long. He began the new year as the health care staff attorney for the North Carolina General Assembly.

At the end of 1994, Schanz retired from the assembly to enter private practice again as off-council for a local firm. At the same time, he began his own legal-medical information company that produced newsletters concerning legal-medical topics.

Once settled in Cary, Schanz added adjunct professor to his

career list once again. He taught evening classes in the MBA and MHA programs at many of the satellite campuses of Pfeiffer College around the area and taught in the MBA program at Averett College.

It was in the fall of 1997 that Schanz learned of the opening at Meredith for a professor in their newly developed MHA program. After speaking with Dr. Becky Oatsvall, head of the Department of Business and Economics, Schanz became the leader of Meredith's MHA program.

"It's a natural extension from the already strong MBA program here," commented Schanz.

Schanz tells prospective MHA candidates to look at what type of environment they are in now, versus what type they want. He also asks the student what kind of change they are seeking.

"Look at both your strengths and your skills in business. Look at your likes and dislikes. And in the MHA program, you can find a marriage of the two," said Schanz.

Stephen Schanz brings to Meredith a past full of education, practical knowledge, and personal experience. Combining these three qualities together, Schanz will guide both graduate and undergraduate students towards the ever-growing health care field.

"I am very biased because I think it's a dynamic environment here. So anyone who has interest in the program, feel free to call, stop by my office, or stop me in the hallway. I'd love to talk to them," concluded Schanz.

CHAT at lunch

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