

Abigail Abraham, '92

Abigail Abraham, '92, caused some consternation during her first year at the Law School when her classmates began noticing that she was packing a gun to class. She was authorized to do so, being a detective sergeant with the Illinois State Police, for whom she had worked since 1980. She kept her police job for most of her first year, and worked for the inspector general of the Chicago Housing Authority during her second and third years.

Today, she's still bringing evildoers to justice, although her employer has changed, and she's still a sharpshooter, although it's with a bow and arrow, not a revolver.

This June she started a new job, Senior Counsel for Investigations, at America Online, where she's responsible for advancing criminal prosecutions against those who threaten AOL's network or make threats using the network. She packages cases for prosecution against hackers, phishers (who attempt to fraudulently acquire personal information by masquerading as trustworthy entities), and other miscreants, and serves as a liaison with the law enforcement officials who are pursuing the cases. "AOL has a very strong interest in keeping its network free of problems, and its commitment to defeating the bad guys, whether it's through brilliant technology or forceful prosecutions, is phenomenal," she says.

Her current job arises naturally from expertise she began developing before she started law school. Beginning in 1986 she created and then ran the computer crime unit for the Illinois State Police. After graduating and clerking for Judge Danny J. Boggs on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, she went to work for the Cook County State's Attorney, where she helped build that agency's capacity to prosecute computer-based crimes.

The State Police asked her back to help revitalize the computer crime lab she had started, so she did that for a while before returning to the office of the State's Attorney. In 2004 she went to work with

the Attorney General of Illinois, in the high-tech crimes bureau. "That was a very successful operation," she says. "Our conviction rate in internet and child-predator cases was one hundred percent."

She has been a lecturer at the Law School since 1998, covering a range of cyberlaw topics. "It is such a great place, the Law School," she says. "The students are brilliant, engaged, and fun to be around, and the faculty and administration are wholly committed to providing what those students need to make the most of their talents. I feel beyond fortunate to have been able to continue my relationship in this teaching capacity."

She no longer brings a weapon to class, but she still can launch a projectile with the best of them. As of this writing she was training for the first round of the Olympic trials in archery, which takes place in late September. Given the impacts that moving and starting a new job have had on her practice regimen, she's reluctant to forecast immediate success. "Beijing in 2008 might be out of reach," she says, "but I fully intend to be a competitor to be reckoned with in the Trials leading up to the 2012 Olympics in London."

You can go to a website to find out how she fared in the September archery trials. What website? It's listed at the bottom of this profile, but you might want to create a mini-Law-School experience for yourself and see whether you can find it online on your own. That would be like the assignment Abraham often gives to her Law School students – to "cyberstalk" her and dig up as much information about her as they can from online sources. Practically all of her students scour those sources so well that they even wind up including aerial photographs of her home in what they submit. There's a lot of information out there in cyberspace, which can be a good thing or a bad thing. Abigail Abraham is working to preserve what's good, and she's taking dead aim at eradicating what's bad.

www.usarchery.org
