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Great Expectations

*SBA president leads by example,
and issues a challenge*

William F. Trezevant has it all worked out. There's the color-coded daily planner, crammed with hour-by-hour notations of classes, meetings and employment. There's the big blackboard in the tiny kitchen of his house, a week's schedule and a month's budget in constant adjustment. There's a daily routine that makes time for an hour and a half of TV news and an hour of pleasure reading.

All this, and a '93 graduate of the Law School, too.

Trezevant, 24, just completed a term as president of the Student Bar Association — the first multi-cultural student to hold the position. And he wants UB Law School's alumni to know that if he can find the time to work to strengthen the school, they can, too.

"If we as students and alumni don't care about the school, there's going to be no one else who cares about the school," Trezevant says. "If we can just strengthen those bridges to the alumni and the community, this can be a much better place."

Trezevant points out that the SBA works hard to do their share. Thirty or so student organizations are funded by the SBA whose budget swells to roughly \$160,000. Such groups as the Domestic Violence Task Force, the Prison Task Force, Buffalo Public Interest Law Program and the Black Law Students Association bring students' training to bear on real-world problems in Western New York. "We do what's necessary to help those groups shine," he says.

For Trezevant, the commitment to community has deep roots. Back to



1902, to be exact. That's when his great-grandmother bought the two-story house on Lopere Street, on Buffalo's East Side, in which Trezevant now lives, surrounded by his family's antiques from throughout the century.

He never spent much time in Buffalo before coming to law school, though. Trezevant grew up in Washington, D.C., where his mother, Pauline Nowak, worked for the Department of Health and Human Services. The family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where Trezevant attended high school. A year at Whittier College in Los Angeles followed, but Trezevant had to leave school to care for his ailing grandmother and great-uncle in Buffalo.

That lasted only about a semester, but when he returned to college — at Fordham University, in New York City — he found he had lost all but 11 credit hours. So he buckled down, took heavy course loads, gave up on summer vacations — and graduated within 2 1/2 years.

Ms. Nowak had attended UB Law in the early 1960s, and Trezevant credits his mother for his choice of law schools — and with the activism he sees as inherent in practicing law.

"She took an activist approach to the people around her," he says. "She always demanded the best from everyone she associated with, and I learned from that."

Trezevant says his mother — who still works in Washington, but hopes to return to Buffalo — helped him see that the law can be a force for the good.

"For me," he says, "there was never any question that the law can be used as a dynamic tool. The law is the way of defining the society that we live in."

That activism carried over into Trezevant's two-days-a-week internship in the office of Buffalo Council Member David Franczyk, where he dealt with constituents' concerns (often involving neglect by absentee landlords).

He also is active in the East Buffalo Community Ownership Project, a land trust that helps residents buy their own homes and thus renew a sense of community in an area fighting to overcome threats from drugs, poverty and crime.

His community work was one reason he was chosen last fall to receive two honors: the John L. Hargrave Legal Scholarship, awarded by the Erie County Minority Bar Association, and the Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber Scholarship, a \$2,500 award intended to encourage minority law students to practice in Buffalo after graduation.

Which is just what Trezevant plans to do.

"If we as students and alumni don't care about the school, there's going to be no one else who cares about the school."

"I don't think there's anything wrong with Buffalo that 10 good years can't fix," he says. "As we move away from the go-go '80s into a more quality-oriented lifestyle, Buffalo is a great place to be. It's just a fantastic town."

As well, he says he feels a responsibility to the city where he has learned the true importance of the law.

"A large part of the shape of my education has been in Buffalo," Trezevant says. "I feel I have a responsibility to return and share my experience and knowledge with the people here."

"I'd really like to leave this community in better shape than it was when I came." ■