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Alumni Profiles



A DOUBLE CALL TO SERVICE

Elizabeth Beiring Kim '94 helps protect the oceans through her work with EPA

Elizabeth Beiring Kim '94 renewed her ties with the University at Buffalo when she spoke about her work at the Law School on April 23, in a lecture sponsored by the Baldy Center for Law and Social Policy.

But her connection to UB runs deep, because she holds not only the J.D. but also a doctoral degree in marine ecology from the University. The accompanying essay on her life at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. – where she is an environmental protection specialist with the EPA's Oceans and Coastal Protection Division – was written for UB's Honors Program, in which Kim was a

standout student.

Now, as the head of the EPA's programs on cruise ship discharges and ocean dumping management, Kim says she finds her legal skills and her ecological knowledge working together.

"I am not an attorney," she says. "The legal work I do is more on a policy level. I am writing and reviewing legislation to submit to Congress, and sometimes dealing with international law."

For example, she says, she might lead a U.S. delegation at an international treaty meeting, and in that capacity develop negotiating positions or work on language for the documents involved. Recently she has been

working on a new treaty that regulates ocean dumping, and writing language that will enable its implementation once the treaty is ratified.

At UB Law School, Kim says, "I did a lot. I was on Law Review, and I started the *Buffalo Environmental Law Journal* as its first editor in chief. My partner and I won a national environmental law moot court competition at Pace University. In the environmental clinic, we won a great case against a farmer who was spreading sewage sludge. It was just such a fantastic time for me.

"The most important things I learned were about statutes and administrative law. Case law does not figure prominently into the work I do on national and international policy.

"Writing is the key skill here, everything from bulletins, to memos for the highest-level boss, to legislation. Also negotiation – being able to work with all sorts of different people and find the nub of the issue. Going through Law School and seeing the back-and-forth of the cases, being able to think on both sides of any issue – to me, that is thinking like a lawyer. You think in a different way. I suspect that is the basis of being a good negotiator, that ability to see the other person's position."