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### **GWU Alumna Added English Major to Prepare for Career as a Lawyer**

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# GWU Alumna Added English Major to Prepare for Career as a Lawyer

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Office of University  
Communications

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## *Larissa Bixler Stein '03 Helps Clients with Estate Planning*

While majoring in music at Gardner-Webb University, Larissa Bixler Stein '03 of Charlotte, N.C., began to question her future

Larissa Bixler Stein

plans. "I love playing the piano and loved learning to appreciate music on a deeper level through studying music theory and history," Stein revealed. "However, by my sophomore year, I realized that, much as I enjoyed music, I could not identify a music career path that felt like a good fit for me."

Contemplating her options, Stein thought about how much she enjoyed reading, writing, acquiring knowledge and solving problems. "Law appealed to me as a field in which I could constantly be learning and using my love of learning to help others," Stein assessed. "With my sights set on law school, I decided to add an English major to polish my writing and critical reading skills."

Her GWU English professors provided encouragement and helped her develop the skills needed for law school and in her practice. Stein graduated from UNC Chapel Hill School of Law with her Juris Doctor (JD) degree in 2006. She is an estate planning, probate, and elder law attorney in Charlotte. "I spend a good part of each day writing, whether it is drafting a will or trust or composing a letter to explain a complex legal concept to a client," Stein described. "Also, so much of my job—and most jobs these days—involves emailing, and an invaluable skill is the ability to dash off emails that are clear, grammatically correct, and appropriate in tone. I regularly have moments of gratitude for my English classes at GWU and how well they prepared me to be an effective communicator."

Additionally, English professor Dr. Janet Land demonstrated the visual aspects of writing by showing how the organization and formatting of the text can be just as important as the words themselves in conveying a message. "I call upon the concepts I learned in technical writing often as I craft a variety of documents," Stein offered. "My professors not only provided me with an excellent education but also truly cared about my future and me as an individual. I still keep in touch with some of them today—14 years later."