

## Scott Unger '96: Starting a Chain Reaction of Success

When Scott graduated in 1996, he got his first job because of one phone call. Scott had worked for OSU's Athletic Department during law school. A former colleague and assistant football coach called a friend in a Columbus law firm on Scott's behalf. Scott was invited to interview, and he was offered the job. Now, 10 years later, Scott is an accomplished commercial litigator and partner at Stark & Stark in New Jersey. He hasn't forgotten the importance of relationships, and he has made it part of his career to help other Moritz College of Law graduates find their first job.



The enthusiasm Scott has for his alma mater is contagious. He says, "I appreciate being accepted to the law school, I appreciate the Zendell Scholarship I received, and I feel I owe something to the next generation." Since graduation, Scott has been instrumental in helping many Moritz grads find their first job out of law school.

Scott sees his work with recent Moritz Law graduates as a part of a process, where he is just one link in the chain. He realizes that he "can't do this alone. I can't hire 200 graduates of Moritz, but I can tell them where to send resumes and whom to contact. It works because other people take the initiative when I send them a graduate's name," he says. Scott gives the example of Brian Burns '97: "I have young lawyers send him their resumes, and then Brian does everything he can to help. Brian was also instrumental in getting his previous firm, Cleary Gottlieb in New York City, to do on-campus interviewing at Moritz."

Ben Widener '04 is a prime example of how well this process can work. Ben was moving to New Jersey after clerking in the Eastern District of Texas. He happened upon Scott's name, sent an email to Scott, and received a reply almost immediately. Scott shared contact information for attorneys he knew in firms throughout the central New Jersey area, and also told Ben that Stark & Stark was hiring if Ben would be interested in interviewing there. Ben says, "Scott is a great ambassador for OSU law and OSU in general. He really went out of his way to accommodate me; he was very welcoming and inviting." He sent his resume to the contacts Scott provided, and he interviewed at Scott's firm. Ben relates, "One thing that is very telling about Scott is that he told me, 'You have to take the job that is right for you. Whether you come to work at my firm or not, I hope we can maintain a friendship – we're both Buckeyes!'" Ben eventually accepted a position at Scott's firm, and they now work across the hall from one another. Ben explains, "Scott just asks that, whenever I'm given the opportunity to help another Moritz graduate, I do the same things that Scott has done for me."

According to Scott, an important part of the process is making sure that each Moritz law graduate receiving his help knows that they are becoming another link in the chain. He explains it this way: "We enter into a contract where they promise that when the phone rings in six months and it is a Moritz graduate looking for a job, they will do what they can to help that person."



Scott, seated, with colleagues Ben Widener '04 and Jason Storipan '04

Scott was the recipient of the Zendell Family Scholarship, and became good friends with David Zendell '66. When he received a call from David, with the name of a recent graduate who needed assistance, Scott was ready to help. Jason Storipan '04 was looking for a job in New Jersey. Scott kept in touch with him, and was invaluable in helping Jason find the firm that would be the right fit. That firm ultimately ended up being Stark & Stark, where they are colleagues and friends to this day.

The Moritz pipeline feeds other firms as well; Jason has already helped Gina Lee '06 find a position clerking in Monmouth County, New Jersey, and is working with two more judicial clerks who also want to work in New Jersey. Jason says, "Scott introduced me to people and helped make my transition from law school to work a smooth one. I remember how hard it is to get a foot in the door, so I really want to help others whenever I can."

In addition to passing along names of attorneys and judges, Scott helps recent graduates by being a good listener and serving as a sounding board. He asks about their career aspirations, their goals for salary and work environment, their definition of success, and other issues that young lawyers need to take the time to consider. Scott says, "Many times they don't really know what they want. They are stressed

out and believe they will never find a job. I reassure them that they will, without a doubt, find a job - I don't know of any members of my law school class who are still looking for work! We talk about resume tips and interviewing techniques. But I always tell them to be thinking about their ideal career, because finding the right workplace is a lot like finding a spouse."

Scott says his work with students does not require a serious time commitment. "All lawyers know other lawyers, and a large part of what I do is giving students the names of lawyers in the area."

Scott came to the Moritz College of Law in October for his 10-year class reunion. Before arriving in Columbus, he arranged to give a presentation to students on job hunting techniques, focusing on the New Jersey and New York markets. Scott handed out an outline, discussed networking and interviewing, and met individually with students. He says, "I want to do my part to lay the foundation for Moritz Law inroads to the East Coast."

A Moritz student who attended Scott's presentation and stayed in touch with Scott afterward later commented to Moritz Law staff, "[Scott] has been nothing short of INCREDIBLE in helping me in my job search! Just thought you'd want to know what wonderful Moritz graduates are out there and what they're doing for current Moritz students."

Ben, Jason, and Gina are certainly testament to the significance of Scott's contributions to the Moritz College of Law and The Ohio State University in general. Ben explains, "'Pay it forward' really is his philosophy. After work, family, and friends, it's Ohio State for Scott."

Classmates wishing to get in touch with Scott can find him at [sunger@stark-stark.com](mailto:sunger@stark-stark.com).