

The following article appeared on pages 10 and 11 of the 2006 Chicago-Kent Dean's Report:

Heather Nelson '96

Mentoring

A chance meeting during law school landed Heather Nelson '96 an internship with an entertainment law firm. Hesitant at first, she “fell in love with entertainment law” and began her quest to talk to as many entertainment lawyers as possible about her career plans. But almost no one returned her calls.

“I made a conscious decision then,” recalls Heather, “that when I became an attorney, I would not turn my back on anyone asking for help.”

After law school, former Chicago Bar Association president Donald Hubert hired Heather as an associate and taught her “the importance of being a good lawyer.” In 1998, she opened The Law Office of Heather Nelson, which serves artists, producers and music entertainment companies. Entertainment lawyer Jeffery Dillard, an early mentor, sent her real estate and entertainment work, and an early caller became her first intern.

Since the firm took off, more than 15 students have interned for Heather while countless others have benefited from her sage counsel. “I first met Ms. Nelson when she spoke at the Black Law Students Association career fair,” says Asian Udoh '06, who interned for Heather last summer. “The intern experience was wonderful and rewarding. I learned more than I could hope for about the workings of the entertainment industry.”

Resumes, phone calls, e-mails asking for help — plus frequent requests to speak at law conferences, music-industry workshops and universities — are quotidian

happenings at Heather's firm. "I encourage people to figure out what they're looking for — and why. Then I help them understand the steps for getting there."

Heather's burgeoning speaking schedule increases her visibility and, predictably, the number of people calling her for advice. "Life is about giving back," she says. "Even a few moments in time can make a difference."

CAPTION: Heather Nelson (left) has mentored nearly 100 young lawyers and law students, including 2006 Chicago-Kent graduate Asian Udoh.