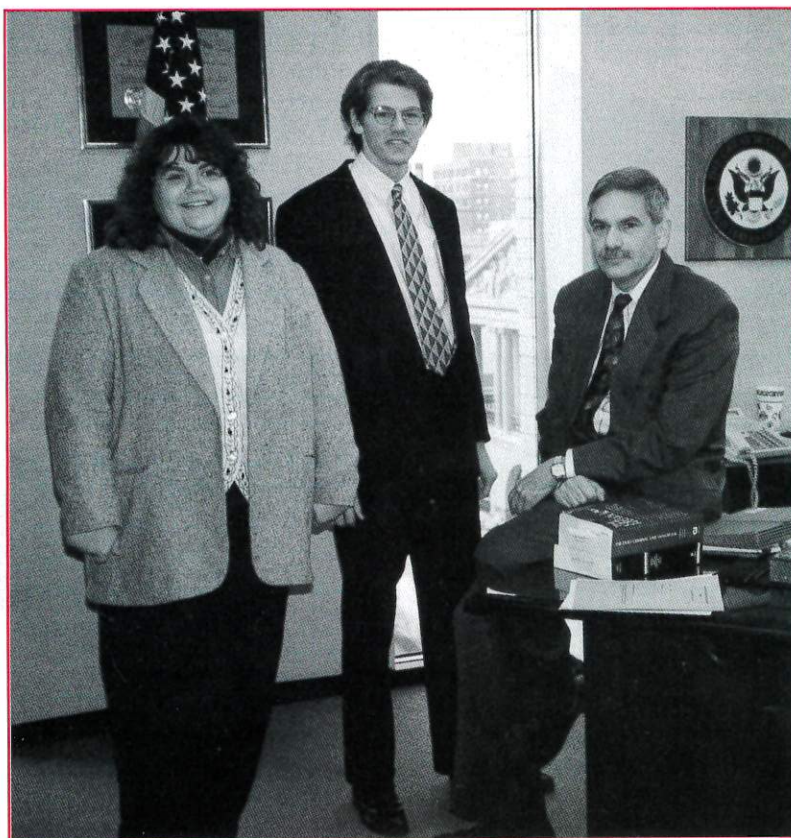


# NO ROOM AT THE INN

Pre-law majors help Stark County Prosecutor's  
Office deal with prison over-population



**Y**ear after year, criminals in Stark County are turned away from the county prison and told, "Go back home. We don't have enough beds in this facility."

For years, such felons have consistently been turned away without serving a single day of their sentences. But this year — thanks to the help of two Mount Union students — things will change. Felons *will* serve their sentences, but in a rather non-traditional manner.

This spring, Kerry Agins and Jason Marr, pre-law majors at Mount Union, had the opportunity to work with Stark County Prosecutor, Robert D. Horowitz.

As part of an internship program spearheaded by Mimi Carter of the Center for Effective Policy of Washington, D.C. and Dr. Tim Bynum of Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice, the Mount Union duo was charged with the task of determining how a new crime bill, House Bill 2, would affect Stark County prison populations.

Because the new legislation mandates that felons serve their full terms in state prisons, the county will now have to accommo-

date those who will no longer fit into the state system. "Approximately 150 Stark County felons who are typically sentenced to state prison will now remain in the community," Horowitz said.

*"WE LIKE WORKING WITH MOUNT UNION STUDENTS BECAUSE THEY ARE CAPABLE AND HAVE DONE SUCH A GOOD JOB WITH US IN THE PAST."  
— STARK COUNTY PROSECUTOR,  
ROBERT D. HOROWITZ*

date those who will no longer fit into the state system. "Approximately 150 Stark County felons who are typically sentenced to state prison will now remain in the community," Horowitz said.

"The role that the students had is important, but not very glamorous. Kerry and Jason have sorted through case files, looked at jail records and at county court records. Their task was to research felon charac-

teristics and to help develop appropriate sanctions and programs to deal with prison overpopulation created by the crime reform bills."

Marr explained that the project involved three stages. The first was the collection of general data about crimes committed in Stark County and the second was viewing pre-sentence investigation reports to determine the types of people who have committed felonies.

"We looked at who the person was, his or her family history, and prior convictions," added Marr. "This was the most interesting part;

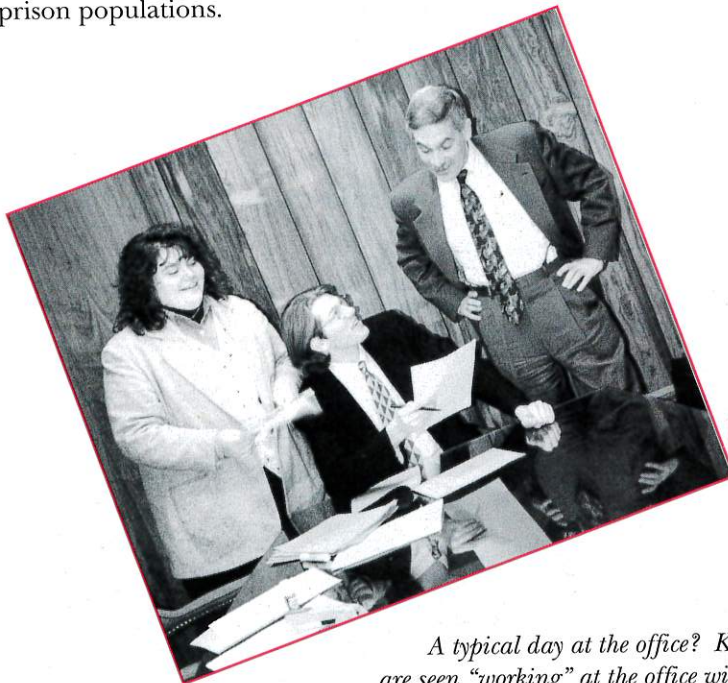
it was like a hands-on course in criminology. We were able to see what kinds of people make up the criminal aspect of our society."

The third phase involved implementing programs for low-level felons. According to Marr, the research group concluded that a Day Report Center was a necessity.

"Instead of a felon going to jail, he or she would, instead, be sent to a center and spend eight hours each day completing work in the area in which he or she needed the most help," he said.

Agins explained that, based on their research, sanctions such as community-based work projects, home arrest sentences and the creation of local treatment centers are the most probable solutions to improving the overcrowding situation.

"I have gotten a first-hand glimpse of the complexity of the legal system," Agins said. "By looking at the actions of the felons, I realized that every little move has a ramification."



*A typical day at the office? Kerry Agins and Jason Marr are seen "working" at the office with Stark County Prosecutor Robert D. Horowitz and University of Akron law student, Kristine Travaglini.*



*Jason Marr is dedicated to a career in law, but also has a passion for acting. Above he is pictured in his role as King Lear, which he performed while studying abroad at the University of Essex in England last Fall.*

The efforts of Agins and Marr won't materialize until this summer when funding is made available for such programs. The two don't mind, though, because they have plenty of other pursuits in the works.

Marr, while serious about a career in law, is equally dedicated to another passion: acting. This summer he accepted an acting position with the North County Theater Arts Company of New Hampshire.

"I'm torn between pursuing a career in acting and law," Marr said. "I think it is fair for me to try both — I've done two law internships and now it is time to try acting."

"This is the first time I am being paid to perform," said the Canton native. "Every step of the audition

process, I was thinking, 'I probably won't make it,' especially since most of my competition has been with other college students. This competition was open to professional companies as well."

Although Marr hasn't competed with professional actors, he is no newcomer to the stage. Besides performing in a handful of College productions and at local theatres, Marr has performed overseas.

In the fall of 1995, while studying at the University of Essex in England, he landed the lead role in the famous Shakespearean play, *King Lear*. "I was quite surprised when I checked the cast list and flattered to be an American playing the lead role in a Shakespearean play in England," he said.

Despite his sincerity toward an acting career, Marr is keeping his options in the legal profession open. Before he left for New Hampshire, he took the LSAT for law school.

"I am pursuing two careers right now," he said. "By the time I graduate from Mount Union, I should know which to choose. I think this summer will point me in the right direction."

Agins, too, had some decisions to make about her career in law. A graduate this May, she has decided to take a year off and work before attending law school.

"Due to financial reasons, my plans are to attend law school next year," said Agins. "I want to get involved in a combined degree program, earning my juris doctor in law and a master's degree in either public administration or public policy at the same time."

"It has been a dream of mine — since about fifth grade — to become a lawyer. I would eventually like to become a judge or other city official."

Indeed, the skills Agins has developed from campus leadership positions will aid her in achieving that goal. She cites "organizing events" as one of her hobbies. "In several of the organizations in which I am involved, I've taken on the role of organizer."

This past year, Agins held leadership positions in Student Senate, the Pre-Law Society, Delta Zeta sorority and the History and Political Science Club. She, like Marr, also spent time in the arts as a member of the Wind Ensemble, Clarinet Ensemble, Mount Union Marchers and the Mount Union Players.

Despite the tough decisions which the two must make, they agree on one thing: their internship experiences in law have been fulfilling.

Prosecutor Horowitz agreed, "We like working with Mount Union students because they are capable and have done such a good job with us in the past." And, according to the prosecutor, Marr and Agins have been no exception. ■



*Kerry Agins, who held several leadership positions during her time at Mount Union, is seen congratulating another leader — Congressman Ralph Regula '48 along with President Kolenbrander.*