

[ PROFILE ]



Lizzle Singian '02 interviews safety Kevin Ellison, recently drafted by the San Diego Chargers, after the 2008 Ohio State game at the Coliseum.

## Game Face

BY RIZZA BARNES

Some days call for a suit. She may spend hours in the office, in court, or at a client's place of business. Negotiations are made. Documents are drafted. Court appearances are scheduled.

Other days call for jeans and a sweater. She may spend hours watching the USC Trojans football team practicing at the Howard Jones/Brian Kennedy Field. Interviews are conducted. Videos are shot. NFL Draft Day coverage is planned.

Meet Lizzle Singian '02: part solo practitioner who has a general practice in Pasadena, and part managing editor, general counsel and reporter for ESPN affiliate WeAreSC.com, a site dedicated to USC sporting news.

"It's kind of crazy, this balancing act," she says one April afternoon, while navigating through the crowded sidelines of the USC football practice field. "Is it easy? No. But it's rewarding and exciting, and it keeps me refreshed."

As a reporter for WeAreSC, Singian's highlight reel includes interviews with USC football great Anthony Davis (who offered on-air lessons on how to stiff-arm an opponent) and recent stars Mark Sanchez (who once showed her how to properly chalk her face before weightlifting) and Rey Mauluga (who jokingly donned Singian's pink parasol during Pro Day).

"She's small but mighty," says Sanchez of 4-foot-11 Singian, who once stood on a bench to interview the recent NFL draft top-five pick. "She does a great job of staying updated and always knows exactly what's going on. She's also very personable. She gets her story while respecting the athletes' privacy."

Singian tackles sports reporting in much the same way as her legal career.

"It's all about knowing your stuff," she says. "Just like in law, you research your subject thoroughly. Whether I'm interviewing a Heisman Trophy winner or arguing before a judge, the rule is simple: Be prepared."

To help keep her two lives separate, Singian goes by "LQ" while conducting WeAreSC business. In fact, when she

began writing for the site in 2005, she adopted a pseudonym partly because she wasn't sure how the audience would react to a female sports reporter.

It turns out there wasn't much to worry about.

"Lizzle is a great ambassador for our company because she interacts so well with everybody," says WeAreSC publisher Garry Paskwietz. "I have no fear of putting her in any setting. The players love and respect her. And who else can get Rey Mauluga to hold a pink parasol while being interviewed?"

Prior to branching out on her own, Singian was an entertainment and fashion attorney with a Sherman Oaks law firm. Her love for USC football led to a chance meeting with Paskwietz and the opportunity to become a contributing writer. When WeAreSC became affiliated with ESPN in 2007, Paskwietz proposed that Singian take a more involved role with the company.

"It was a risk, but I'd be doing myself a disservice if I didn't take chances," Singian says. "I really enjoy what I'm doing."

Some of her attorney-client meetings, in fact, happen on the practice field, since many of her clients are former USC athletes — like Darrell Rideaux, a member of the 2003 Orange Bowl championship team and former Indianapolis Colts player.

Rideaux, an ESPN Radio commentator and WeAreSC contributor, knew Singian as a writer long before he learned she also is an attorney.

"When I needed legal counsel, I turned to Lizzle. She's a pit bull when it comes to representing her clients — just relentless," says Rideaux, who also runs a private equity firm.

That tenacity extends to the field.

"Often, it can be difficult for a young woman to assert herself in an environment dominated by men," Rideaux notes. "But she holds her own, and commands a great deal of respect from her peers and the athletes."

[ PROFILE ]

## Change Agent

BY LORI CRAIG

Ari Nathan '85 is fond of change, a temperament that has served him — and his clients — well. Since enrolling in USC Law, he has worked and lived in 10 different countries, including the one he helped bring into legal existence.

As a United States Department of State foreign service officer, Nathan travels the globe working on diplomatic issues. Currently, he's stationed in Iraq, helping to manage an economic team with \$100 million in projects that include refurbishing hospital equipment, installing water tanks in remote villages and bringing the public and private sectors together.

"You have to like change in this job," says Nathan. "Every two to three years you uproot yourself and your family and move to a different country with a brand-new job."

Nathan enjoyed time abroad even as a law student. During his 1L summer he studied international law in Paris. Following his 2L year, he took a hiatus from law school to live in Australia. After graduating from USC Law, he practiced in San Jose and Los Angeles before heading to the island nation of Palau, the last United Nations trust territory, where he spent five years working as the Palauan president's legal counsel and, at times, attorney general. His main task was helping Palau become an independent country.

"Palau was great," Nathan says. "In addition to having one of the world's most amazing marine environments, for a lawyer it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help create a new country. Working in Palau made me realize that what I wanted was a career where I was doing international work and living abroad."

After Palau and still "not quite ready to get a real job," Nathan returned to

school, completing a master of arts in law and diplomacy and a Ph.D. in international relations at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Boston. During two summer breaks, he worked for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, setting up voting in Bosnia and writing for two international environmental think tanks.

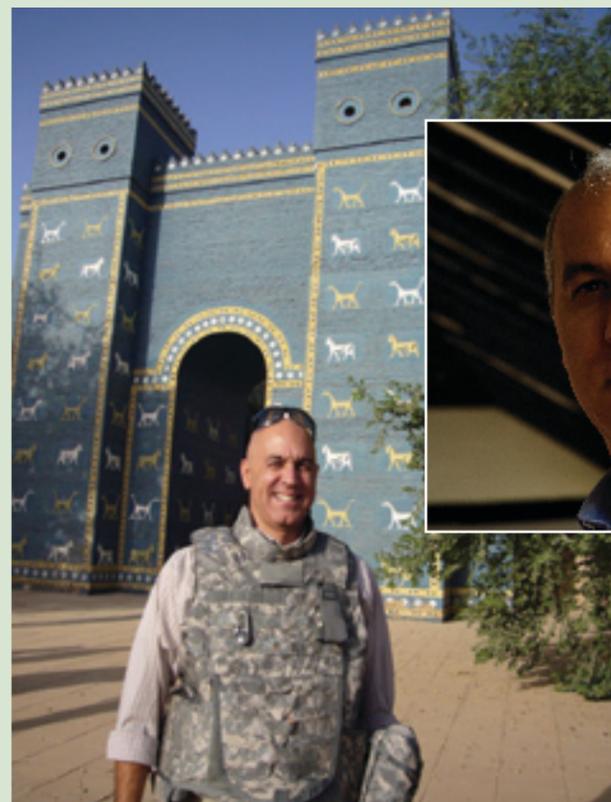
After graduation, Nathan worked for a year at the Environmental Protection Agency before joining the U.N. in the Philippines, where he helped organize an 11-country marine environmental protection agreement. He subsequently joined the State Department, first serving in Tijuana where his twin daughters Lily and Clara were born, and then in Bogota, Colombia, where his daughters and wife, Monique, still reside while he works in Iraq. Next stop for the family is Madrid, where Nathan will serve as the environment, science and technology officer for the U.S. embassy.

George Soneff '84, a USC Law classmate who remains close to the Nathan family, says he's not surprised his friend found success as a diplomat.

"I think the keys to Ari's amazing international career have been his insatiable curiosity, fearlessness and extreme flexibility," Soneff says. "I don't know what the word 'genius' means, exactly, but I've never met anyone who can synthesize information like Ari can."

Although he no longer works as a lawyer, Nathan says what he learned at USC Law has made a huge difference in his career.

"Law school taught me to think critically and analyze carefully," he says. "Almost every day, throughout all the jobs I've held, that ability has served me in good stead."



Ari Nathan '85 at the replica Ishtar Gate in Iraq

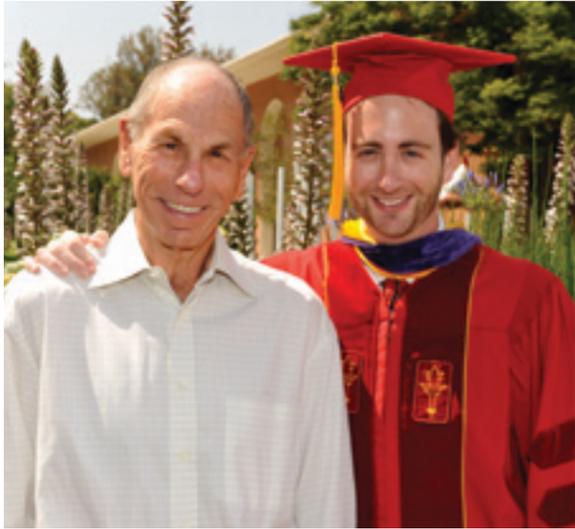
LELAND WATERS

MONIQUE KOVACS NATHAN

## Law in the Family

Alumni make USC Law a family affair

BY DARREN SCHENCK



Robert Gerst '59 with his son Michael Gerst '09 at USC Law Commencement



Members of the Loo family, from left: Cynthia '90, Tom '68, Wendy '94 and Lori '90

As Robert Gerst watched his son Michael stride across the stage in the middle of the USC campus on May 15 to accept his diploma, he was filled not only with familial but also institutional pride: 50 years ago he, too, received a USC Law degree.

A retired attorney, Gerst '59 represented professional athletes such as Jerry West, Vida Blue and Tommy Davis early in his career. He then became a founding partner of Weissburg & Aronson, which developed into one of the largest law firms devoted to health care. (Today it is the national firm Foley & Lardner.) Gerst and his wife, Court of Appeal Justice Judith Ashmann-Gerst, are proud of their son, who is the third to become a lawyer, but the first to graduate from USC Law.

"Michael has done a great job," says Gerst. "He's had a wonderful education."

When he enrolled at USC, Robert Gerst became the first in his family to go to law school. Little did he know that he was starting a family tradition.

"I read a book about Clarence Darrow when I was younger, and from that point on I was fascinated by the law," he says. "I thought it would be a field where I could have a positive impact on people."

As a USC undergraduate, Gerst played third base for the USC Trojans baseball team, then played semi-professional ball in Canada. He says ultimately he figured he had a better chance of being a lawyer than a major league baseball player.

"USC Law was always my top choice," he says.

Michael Gerst shares his father's passion for USC, but he wasn't always certain he wanted to be a lawyer.

"My parents had told me don't go to law school unless you really want to be a lawyer, but all my conversations with their friends resulted in comments like, 'You think like a lawyer,'" he says. "When I graduated from Penn in '05, I realized I wanted to be a lawyer, but I worked for a year just to be sure."

After a stint with USC's undergraduate admissions office, Michael started his legal education.

"I had always wanted to come to USC for grad school," he says. "I grew up a huge 'SC fan and wanted to have some connection to USC."

As for the next generation of Gersts: "I'll start brainwashing my nephew," he says.

The Gersts are only the most recent family to boast multiple USC Law alumni. The children of several USC Law graduates are enrolled in the law school, and some alumni families can trace their law school roots back three generations.

Then there are families like the Loos, in which not just one child but all of them followed in the parent's footsteps to USC Law.

The Loo sisters — Cynthia '90, Lori '90 and Wendy '94 — can't credit their dad, Tom '68, for steering them to law school: he wanted them to become accountants.

"I have no recollection of talking with them before they made the decision about going to law school," says Tom, who co-founded a law firm in the 70s and today is co-managing partner at Greenberg Traurig.

"But I can remember several conversations about accounting!" says Lori, a partner with Brot & Gross, LLP specializing in family law.

Asked why he urged his daughters to go into accounting, Tom reveals a story his daughters had never heard.

"In those days, good Asian boys usually did what their fathers said. He gave me a choice of two schools, Berkeley or USC, because the probability of meeting an Asian girl was higher," says Loo, whose father never went to college but was a successful businessman. "My father said his two uncontrollable costs were his accountant and his lawyer. He said, 'You do your undergraduate in accounting and then you go to law school.'

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## Legal Careers Commence

BY LORI CRAIG

Swathed in cardinal or black and set against the backdrop of hundreds of cheering friends and family members, more than 300 law school graduates concluded their USC Law education at a rousing May 15 commencement ceremony. Delivering the keynote address, California Attorney General Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown told USC Law's Class of 2009 that they have the ability to lead the country from breakdown to breakthrough.

"Your studies in the law have taught you how to think, how to unravel legal problems," said Brown. "You've also learned how to learn, how to reframe a problem, how to know when there is no problem. Go forth with the confidence that you can transform this society."

Brown addressed the 209 juris doctorate recipients, along with 95 foreign graduate students receiving master of laws degrees and two receiving master of comparative law degrees. Among the many family and friends attending the ceremony were Vice President Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, who were on hand to celebrate the USC Law graduation of a family member. Dean Rasmussen acknowledged Biden, to resounding applause.

"Mr. Vice President, I invite our graduates to take inspiration from you as someone who has used the great gift of a legal education to launch a lifelong career of distinguished public service," Rasmussen said.

Student Bar President Alyson Parker '09 addressed her classmates and called them "a team of superstars." Third-year Class President Paula Mayeda '09 also acknowledged her classmates as "the most independent, headstrong, determined and, yes, stubborn group of individuals I have ever had the honor of meeting."



California Attorney General Jerry Brown, flanked by (left) USC Provost C. L. Max Nikias and USC Law Dean Robert K. Rasmussen



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6 | Faculty in Focus



8 | Student Scene



10 | USC Law Life



12 | Cross-town Challenge