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## Student takes on another goal

31-year-old runs for state Senate position while still attending John Marshall

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Friends say this 31-year-old law student at The John Marshall Law School — who just won a primary campaign for the Illinois state Senate — is hard to discourage in whatever he undertakes.

Not long ago, Michael E. Hastings, decided to be a lawyer, said Cook County Associate Judge Frank Castiglione. Hastings already found success as a medical device salesman for Johnson & Johnson.

Despite his determination to become a lawyer, Hastings initially did not get into a Chicago law school.

"He said he was going to go to (Thomas M. Cooley Law School in Lansing, Mich.), Castiglione said.

"You're doing pretty well," the judge advised him. "Do you really want to do this?"

"Yes, sir," Hastings said.

Hastings calls a lot of people sir. A 2003 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he played center on the Army football team. He served in the Iraq War in 2006 and 2007.

"I worked with this kid the whole time he went to Cooley," said Leonard F. Amari, president of the John Marshall Board of Trustees. "He got a B-plus average and transferred to John Marshall."

Castiglione picks up the story. "He goes at it full steam and does really well" at John Marshall. He continues to get good grades, Castiglione said.

"Then he comes up with this Senate idea," Castiglione said.

"I said, 'Mike, we keep having this conversation. That's a lot to bite off.'"

"When he told me he was going to run for the Senate, my first impression was, 'This kid doesn't know what he's doing,'" Amari said.

Hastings surprised both of them by winning the Democratic primary in the 19th District. And Hastings continues to earn good grades at John Marshall.

"He won 78 percent of the vote," Castiglione said, (77 percent according to unofficial returns). "That's astounding!"

"He has fantastic energy," Amari said. "He's a credit to law school, credit to the military. He's going to be a wonderful state senator. ... I like him to death."

And "he always calls me 'sir,'" Amari said.

Hastings graduated in 1998 from Andrew High School in Tinley Park where his campaign biography says he was an all-state football player and president of the student council.

"I was recruited to play football" at West Point, he said. The 9/11 attacks on America took place while he attended West Point.

He said when he graduated, then-Vice President Dick Cheney told him at the ceremony, "Son, good luck. Keep your head down."

Hastings is one of six children of Kyle and Mary Hastings. His father is the longtime mayor of Orland Hills and Michael still lives there.

Asked why he wants to be a lawyer, Hastings said, "It trains you to have some ammunition with words. ... It makes you more ef-

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Michael E. Hastings

ficient when you go into a business situation or a legal situation, enhances your capabilities when you go into battle.

"It also reinforces some of the things you learned earlier in life with regards to the Constitution and the way the country works."

Hastings is also a member of the school board of High School District 230.

Asked how he does it all, Hastings said, "I'm not married. I don't have any kids. ... I have a good, core group of support. It first starts in my family. My friends and I have this energy level. We believe in being relentless in achieving our goals."

He admitted, "doing all these three things (law school, school board, state Senate campaign) is very difficult."

For now, Hastings has no Republican Senate opponent. As a full-time student, he's scheduled to graduate from John Marshall next year. But he said if he becomes a state senator, "I'll go part time."

He said American Bar Association rules do not allow a person to go to law school full-time and have a full-time job.

"I'm so proud of him," Castiglione said. "He kind of renews

your faith in the American system."

*ABA allows law schools to skip salary data for graduates*

The ABA announced this week that the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar approved reforms that require law schools to publish detailed data on jobs obtained by graduates.

The reforms could go into effect after a period for public comment.

But the ABA said it declined to require publication of graduates' salaries because less than 45 percent of graduates report this.

David N. Yellen, dean of Loyola University Chicago School of Law, is a member of the ABA committee that recommended the full reforms.

"I am disappointed that the council rejected our proposal to require disclosure of school specific salary data," Yellen said. "But the more important point is that they approved the rest of our proposal, requiring schools to disclose much more detailed job information as well as information about retention of scholarships. This will lead to an unprecedented level of transparency, which will be good for our students and for legal education."

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