

The Knauss Fellowship

I remember walking back to the hotel having just finished negotiating my placement as a Knauss fellow. I was with two other new Fellows, and we excitedly chatted about the offices in which we would be working and of our future projects. The air was unusually warm for December, and twilight was setting on the city. We watched the moon rise over the U.S. Capitol and paused at its base in awe of its beauty and impressive stature. This was the first time we realized the amazing adventure upon which we were about to embark.

The Knauss fellowship provides graduate students with a rare opportunity to enter the hub of the policy-making process. Hill staffers often must demonstrate years of hard work and loyalty to receive the types of responsibilities that are immediately bestowed upon Knauss fellows. In my first few months of work, I drafted legislation to reauthorize the Coastal Zone Management Act, met with officials in the administration, and debated other staffers on the best solutions to natural resource problems. The educational curve was very steep, and I had to quickly adjust to the political environment. I learned how to draft talking points and

floor speeches, as well as how to communicate the Senator's policy positions with letters, editorials, and hundreds of phone conversations. I learned how to immerse myself in new issues, gather information from all available sources, and then brief the Senator - all in less than an hour! When I had a spare moment, I toured the Capitol to learn of its history or grabbed a quick lunch with my fellow staffers.

The Knauss fellowship was an invaluable experience. Without the fellowship, I never would have learned how the Hill works, nor would I have been exposed to the social and political networks that make this town function. The fellowship offers an up-close opportunity to witness how laws are made and how federal public policy evolves. I will always be thankful that I had this opportunity to complement my academic learning with practical experience.

Jena Carter
former Dean John A. Knauss
Sea Grant Fellow - 1999-2000
National Governors' Association
Washington, DC USA



Dr. Knauss (center) surrounded by a number of Knauss Alumni. Ocean Policy Development Day sponsored by the House Ocean Caucus on Capitol Hill, July 18th, 2000.