

BOB RASHID



## Haben Goitom '08

Born and raised in Madison, Haben spent her college years in Philadelphia at the famed Wharton School of Business. Now the UW Law School has drawn her back home to supplement her business expertise with a grounding in law.

**Hometown:** Madison, Wisconsin

**Undergraduate Institution:** Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania

**Undergraduate Major:** Economics

Growing up in her hometown of Madison, Haben Goitom was involved in multiple activities, from playing cello to community service to rowing with the Mendota Rowing Club.

One area that did not claim her attention was business and finance. But when she went off to do her undergraduate work, she headed for the Wharton School of Business, at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

"I applied to the Wharton School because I went to a summer program there when I was in high school," she explains. "It was a month-long business institute. I had no particular interest in business at that time; it was the leadership aspect that attracted me."

In addition, Goitom "wanted to try the East Coast," and she also had an athletic goal: "I also knew I wanted to do crew, and Penn has a great program." She joined the Penn varsity women's crew team as its coxswain.

Goitom also kept up her practice of volunteering. "I like to be involved in the community I live in," she says. "When I moved to Philadelphia, I tutored high school students and did training for the Job Corps."

Goitom majored in economics with a concentration in marketing, and enjoyed the challenge. "Wharton was pre-professional, rigorous, intense," she says. In addition to the business and finance courses, she minored in French and studied abroad in Lyon.

After graduation, Goitom worked for a Philadelphia firm doing consulting for pharmaceutical companies. Meanwhile, several of her friends in Philadelphia had gone on to law school, and she visited some of their classes. She recalls, "My friends would say, 'You should do this, too.'" Goitom agreed.

"I applied to a number of law schools — and the people here at Wisconsin really reached out," she says. "I felt that here I would be at home a lot more than at other schools I applied to."

Now a second-year student, Goitom has once again become involved in numerous areas, both academic and otherwise. "I've been taking a variety of courses, and I'm on *International Law Journal*, Mock Trial, and Moot Court this spring. For my third year, I'm interested in doing a judicial internship. I love that this school offers so many opportunities. It's hard to choose."

Goitom is also academic chair for the Black Law Students Association and a member of the Student Bar Association's Public Service Committee.

Despite all this activity, Goitom has not lost her academic focus. "I have truly enjoyed all my classes," she says, "particularly the variety of courses from Civil Rights Litigation to Business Organizations."

In a few months, Goitom will be on the move again: she has accepted a summer position with Jones Day in New York City. Her love of seeing new places may be a result of childhood trips: "My family is not from the U.S. — we're from Eritrea," she says, "so we used to travel to see relatives in other places."

For her post-graduate future, Goitom looks forward to a career that will combine her professional training in both law and business. "I am really not sure how I plan on putting things together," she says. "I see it as an ever-evolving process."

Miles Gerson came to Wisconsin for a very specific reason: stem cell research.

His interest in this field arose when he was an undergraduate at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, majoring in neuroscience. From the beginning, Gerson intended to combine his knowledge of stem cell research with a law degree. “I was very excited about stem cell research,” he says, “but I also saw some challenges for the protection of it and the funding of it.” He reasoned that a law degree would help him to meet those challenges.

After his undergraduate work, he stayed on at Wesleyan for a master’s. “There was a high-intensity lab there focusing on the regeneration of brain cells, which I found to be captivating.”

He then moved to Los Angeles to teach high school biology for a year before applying to law schools.

“I loved working with kids,” he says, “and I had always been a coach of sorts — baseball, track, gymnastics.”

But during that year, Gerson’s life changed completely. “I became diabetic,” he says. “I ate a bad sandwich.” His analysis is that food poisoning interacted with environmental factors, such as the flu he contracted later that week, and a possible genetic predisposition, to cause his body to attack his own pancreas.

Gerson speaks openly about his condition. “I prefer to share that with people,” he says. “Type One diabetes is often misunderstood. It’s an autoimmune condition in which the body destroys its own insulin-producing cells, and it can occur at almost any age.”

By this time, Wisconsin’s cutting-edge work with stem cell research was widely known, and Gerson decided to head for Wisconsin. “I came here precisely because of the stem cell activity,” he says.

Gerson was accepted at the Law

School but was not well enough yet to begin. “I didn’t think I could handle law school and figure out my health at the same time,” he says. He spent a year “gaining useful, in-house experience” as legal coordinator for Epic Systems, a health-care software company, and deferred his law school admission.

By the time Gerson enrolled at the Law School, in fall 2005, not only was he ready to hit the books, but he was working 30 to 40 hours a week coordinating events for the newly created Diabetes and Wellness Foundation, of which he is executive director.

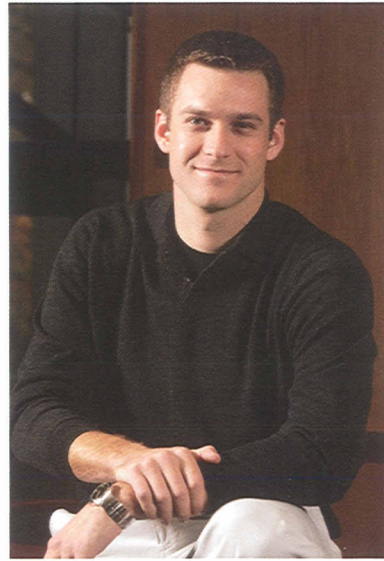
“We recognize and really support the many organizations that raise money for a cure,” he says. “But our focus is to help people enjoy their lives to the fullest in the meanwhile.”

A major event to “help kids be kids” (the Foundation’s informal motto) is a snowboarding camp, which enrolled about 30 young participants in February 2006 and about 100 in February 2007.

Gerson handles communicating with resorts, hotels, participants, medical staff, and volunteers. He also tackles “the biggest challenge — managing corporate sponsorships.”

An enthusiastic cyclist, Gerson has overcome the initial fear of having his blood sugar drop dangerously in the midst of a ride, and is “back on the bike.” He is excited about upcoming classes in patent law, bioethics, and biotechnology, and finds time to participate in Moot Court and serve as the State Bar representative for the Intellectual Property Students Organization.

Gerson’s career goal is quite clear. “I would really like to be involved in the biotech market,” he says, “helping to guide and foster emerging companies in a socially responsible manner.” His original interest in stem cells as a scientist has evolved into his focus as a lawyer.



BOB RASHID

## Miles Gerson '08

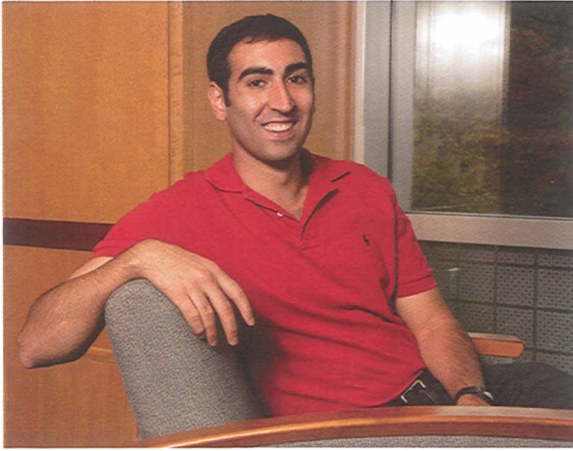
Fascinated with stem cells since undergraduate days, Miles plans to combine his science background with his law degree to work with intellectual property issues in the emerging biotechnology field. As a full-time law student, he also runs a foundation dedicated to helping children with diabetes.

**Hometown:** Boulder, Colorado

**Undergraduate Institution:** Wesleyan University

**Undergraduate Major:** Neuroscience and Behavioral Studies

**Graduate Degree:** M.A., Neuroscience and Behavioral Studies, Wesleyan University



## Jerry Marogil '07

Jerry's family ties in the Middle East took on new significance for him after September 11, 2001. He has experienced violence in both Iraq and Israel, and is working on a plan 'to try to prevent further instability in the countries my parents are from.'

**Hometown:** Grand Rapids, Michigan

**Undergraduate Institution:** University of Michigan

**Undergraduate Major:** Organizational Studies

Jerry Marogil was born and raised in a "traditional white suburb" in the American Midwest. His parents, who had met and married there, came from lands that were far less peaceful.

"My parents have an interesting background," Marogil says. "My mother was a Palestinian refugee from the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which expelled her from her home when she was six months old." Her family, Palestinian Christians, came to Grand Rapids with a refugee program when a church there sponsored them.

Marogil's father, a physician, is an Iraqi native from Baghdad, who came to Grand Rapids as an adult to pursue his career.

For their American son, life took a new direction after September 11, 2001. "My beliefs were really being tested at that point," Marogil says. "I was driven to be more interested in my history."

Marogil, who had graduated from the University of Michigan by that time, found himself drawn to the Middle East, and went to study at American University in Beirut. While he was there, the U.S. entered Iraq.

As a response, Marogil and a friend launched the first English-language newspaper in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein. He was able to check on family members in Iraq at the same time. "They were okay," he says. "Well — they weren't okay. It was depressing and promising at the same time."

For Marogil, it was a life-changing experience. "There was no government, no law. Seeing the amount of destruction in the country and witnessing a number of violent situations — having my life in danger a number of times — I understood the relevance of law in culture, government, security, stability."

Marogil's thoughts turned

toward law school, and Wisconsin was a top choice. "I had friends here who really liked it," he says.

As a second-year law student, Marogil was able to take advantage of a study-abroad opportunity in Israel at the University of Haifa. He studied international law and general courses with Israeli classmates (everything was taught in English), and also created a model solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which he is still refining with contacts in Israel.

"It's a huge, ambitious undertaking," he says, "but the more I've done politically, the more I see how possible it is for one individual to have an impact on the world. There is no reason why I shouldn't devote some of my energy to this problem."

While Marogil was in Haifa, he found himself once again in the midst of violence: the war between Hezbollah and Israel broke out, and three Hezbollah missiles shook his apartment. "Needless to say," he comments, "all this has motivated me to try to prevent such further instability — all this war and destruction in the countries my parents are from."

As a 3L back at the Law School, Marogil tackled a new area: clinical work at the Remington Center. "I liked the challenge of something new," he says. "A knowledge of criminal law is so beneficial, and the opportunity to work with people in prison was an amazing experience. I was able to get a client paroled — that was very meaningful to me. You really do touch and impact people's lives."

Marogil credits both students and faculty for the quality of his experience at the Law School. "There are so many interesting people here — so many perspectives," he says. "I feel that this is a place where you can come and test preconceived notions."