

Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity

THE FBI MOTTO RINGS TRUE FOR BRAD ARENA '14

By Lisa Murray, Editor

Brad Arena '14 is going places. He is a bright, focused young man who is passionate about criminal justice issues. Couple that with an ability to seize the moment and capitalize on opportunities, and he is unstoppable! Brad graduated in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and headed straight to a job with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Boston.

THE PATH OPENS

Brad became interested in criminal justice at a young age because his neighbor was a Boston Police Detective and encouraged him to explore the field. At Franklin Pierce University, the Career Center staff starts working with students from the day they step onto campus to start thinking of career paths. Brad took advantage of the career panels that the Center offers each academic year; he attended one during his sophomore year that would alter the course of his life.

It was at that career panel that he was introduced to John T. Burke Jr. '66, who spoke of his life as an FBI agent, along with several other alumni who spoke about their chosen professions in various fields. Brad had been interested in the FBI before, but had not been sure whether that was the track he wished to pursue versus pursuing a career as a local police officer. "I never knew anyone who was in the FBI until that career panel," Brad says. "I learned so much." Among other things, Brad learned about the process of applying for a position with the FBI, which often begins with a stint as an intern. John encouraged Brad to apply for an internship, which he did. Then John got on the phone to the Bureau to offer his personal recommendation for Brad.

"I credit everything to him," Brad says humbly. "If he wasn't at that career panel and hadn't picked up the phone, I wouldn't have applied or gotten the interview. On paper I looked like everyone else. Getting that recommendation was key. It got my application to the top of a stack of hundreds." Brad called John several times throughout the interview process to give him updates, and John continued to encourage him.

STEEP CLIMB!

The road to becoming an FBI intern is an arduous one. Brad was interviewed by three special agents, followed by an oral board interview, drug test, and polygraph. Then came a substantial background investigation.

Agents went to Franklin Pierce, Brad's former employers, high school, neighbors, family, and friends. The process took an entire school year. "It was very stressful," says Brad. "The interviews were pretty hard – very intense." He found out at the end of his junior year that he was accepted for an FBI internship in their Boston office. The internship began June 1, 2013.

Brad interned at the Boston office Monday through Friday throughout the summer, and then every Wednesday at the Bedford, N.H., Resident Agency throughout the following academic year. He was assigned to the bank robbery task force and performed such tasks as background checks and assessing geographic areas that were hardest hit by robberies. Brad also had the opportunity to do paperwork on two major trials – Whitey Bulger and the Boston Marathon – where he got to witness the trials and meet a few Assistant United States Attorneys.

MEANINGFUL MENTORS

Brad credits much of his success to the individual attention he received in his Criminal Justice program at Franklin Pierce. "Every professor knew all of our names and wanted us to succeed," says Brad. "They go the extra mile. We did a lot of mock interviews, and I learned how to present myself. It was so helpful."

But John Burke stands out as the paragon of mentorship in this young man's life. "I want to do this for someone else, since he did this for me," says Brad. "I'm very thankful to him."

