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Feature: The Roots of the Executive Branch

University of Michigan Law School

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the roots of the executive branch

When President Barack Obama needed a top adviser and steadfast sounding board, he turned to a Michigan Law alumna who has been called the “First Friend” and “the other half of Obama’s brain.” When he considered appointees for the role of Secretary of the Interior, he chose an alumnus he called a “champion for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.”

Valerie Jarrett, Senior Adviser

By Sheryl James

After Valerie Jarrett, ’81, spent 20 years with the Obamas in the thick of Chicago politics and Barack Obama’s Senate and presidential campaigns, it’s no surprise the Obamas ate their first family dinner outside the White House at her Washington apartment. “I am a sounding board,” she told The New York Times recently. “I know them both well. So I kind of know what makes them who they are.”

But friendship alone isn’t why the Obamas chose Jarrett for their inner circle, as White House senior adviser and chair of the White House Commission on Women and Girls. Her credentials date back—way back. Indeed, how many 5-year-olds do you know who speak Farsi, French, and English?

Jarrett’s family was hardly typical, especially for African Americans in the 1960s, and it set the template for her approach to life, work, and politics.

Her great-grandfather Robert Robinson Taylor was the first African American to graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her grandfather Robert Taylor was the first African-American chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. Her great-uncle is Vernon Jordan, a nationally recognized political power broker. Her father, James Bowman, was the first African-American resident at St. Luke’s Hospital (now Rush University Medical Center) in Chicago.

It was his career that landed the family in Iran, where he helped run a hospital for poor Iranian children as part of a U.S. government program. He was there in 1956, when his wife, Barbara, a child psychologist, gave birth to daughter Valerie. The family remained in Iran for five years, followed by time in London, and then Chicago.

Valerie Bowman went on to a New England boarding school, Stanford University, and then Michigan Law. (She married William Jarrett in 1983 and divorced in 1988; the couple’s daughter attends Harvard Law School.) This kind of pedigreed upbringing freed her, Jarrett has said, from the “burden” of “a personal history of prejudice,” one reason she and Obama connected.

They did so when Jarrett was working for Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. In 1991, she lured to city government one Michelle Robinson, who at that time was engaged to a guy named Barack Obama. The Obama-Jarrett friendship was mutually beneficial from the get-go. Jarrett was upper echelon and knew folks the Obamas did not—until Jarrett introduced them. She was sophisticated and, despite her tiny frame and what one journalist calls a “sing-song” voice, she was a tough, skilled negotiator. Years working in Chicago’s city government had assured that.

Her great-uncle Vernon once said, “what Valerie developed is the art of telling people to go to hell and making them look forward to the trip.”

Well, she’s made her own trip, now, to the White House, where she weighs in on major decisions but retains the personal touch that any First Couple needs. As Michelle Obama remarked recently, Jarrett is “never afraid to tell you the truth,” and that Obama counted on her to “take my hand and say, ‘You need to think about these three things.’ Like a mom, a big sister, I trust her implicitly.”
Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior

Kenneth Salazar, ’81, has an extraordinary family history, and it is the “foundation,” he said, of everything he is and does. His ancestors have operated farms and ranches in the West for 12 generations. Twelve. They came to this continent in 1598. “This was before Jamestown and Plymouth Rock,” Salazar, secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, said in a recent telephone interview from his office in Washington, D.C. “My ancestors were in northern New Mexico for 250 years before that area became the United States.”

This makes more interesting the fact that Salazar grew up with seven brothers and sisters on a ranch in the San Luis Valley of Colorado that had no electricity or telephone service. That he went through high school and college with no electricity or telephone service. That even by 1981, when he returned home at age 26 after earning his degree from Michigan Law, things had not changed at the ranch. But they were about to.

“As soon as I graduated, I went to work for a big firm in Denver, and also that summer, I went to the utility company…and helped force them to provide electricity and telephone for the ranch.

“That’s the first gift the University of Michigan gave me.”

Notice the choice of words. Salazar gives credit to U-M, not himself. People wonder if Kenneth Salazar is “too nice,” in the words of one New York Times article, to be the nation’s environmental watchdog. Unanimously approved in January as President Obama’s interior secretary, Salazar’s confirmation met with tepid applause from some on the right and left. He didn’t always vote their ways, and he seemed to negotiate with the enemy too nicely, too often.

But nice guys can get it done, as a young Salazar showed in 1981. “I’m a problem-solver,” he said. “I think most conflicts are subject to solutions.” He demonstrated that nice guy, get-it-done attitude throughout his career as an attorney, Colorado’s attorney general, and U.S. senator. Since taking over the enormous $16.8 billion-budget, 67,000-employee department that handles controversial topics such as water rights, energy policy, and Indian Affairs, Salazar has shown he’s up to the task.

“I’m living the dream,” Salazar said of his appointment. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to be part of President Obama’s cabinet and part of the change he is bringing to this country.” As for controversy, “with every issue that comes before the department and gets to my desk, I ask a simple question: ‘What is the right decision?’ We then stand on that principle and we move forward. Some of the decisions we make are controversial and we take a lot of incoming fire from people who are not happy with our decisions, but it’s all very good.”

Noticeably amiable, Salazar recently appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart wearing his signature cowboy hat. He’s known as a “hat guy,” but these are not adornments. He owns 10 hats, he said, and they reflect his life riding mowers, tractors, horses—his work. “Hats are for me the equivalent of putting on my boots every morning. It’s a special part of who I am.”

—SJ
For the rest of her life, Melody Barnes, ’89, will think of 2009 as a good year. A very, very good year. In January, Barnes started working in the West Wing of the White House for the nation’s first African-American president. Five months later, she got married in a highly visible ceremony in the nation’s capital. West Wing, White House, Washington, wedding. It doesn’t get any better.

As fairy tale as this all seemed, though, it was just a capstone experience for Barnes, a woman who lives, reigns, and often rabble-rouses in the real world—key reasons President Obama tapped her for his inner circle.

As director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, Barnes has substantial input on major domestic issues ranging from health care reform and embryonic stem cell research funding to stimulus packages and energy policy. She has the political experience to do the job.

Often known as a policy wonk, Barnes’ resume includes stints as chief counsel for the late Senator Edward Kennedy; assistant counsel to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights; and executive vice president for policy for the Center for American Progress. She lobbied to help pass the Voting Rights Improvement Act of 1992, and also has lobbied for causes such as gay rights, reproductive rights, government investment in urban education, and much more.

She has the requisite fire in the belly for the president’s team. “It’s about changing the world, changing the country,” Barnes told C-SPAN in 2007, according to The Washington Post. She remarked in a December 2008 NPR broadcast that “what I want everyone to remember is that we have elected a different kind of president. … We’ve talked about the need for humanity and the absolute need not to let up.”

Barnes grew up in a traditional Southern, Christian, work-ethic kind of family, the only child of Charles and Frances Barnes, who still live in Barnes’ hometown of Richmond, Virginia. Charles is retired from the U.S. Army; Frances is a retired teacher.

Barnes first was inspired to public service by a high school trip to Washington. “I was just excited about it. I guess there’s something in your DNA,” one article quoted.

She got some practice politicking while attending Michigan Law, when she helped push for diversity on campus. After graduating, she worked for a private New York law firm, then dove into political policy.

In her first months at the White House, Barnes—a dynamo at just 5-foot-2 and known as one of Washington’s best-dressed women (“I love a beautiful suit,” she once remarked)—has worked seven days a week, organized a health care reform national summit, attended uncounted meetings, and represented the president on key strategic domestic battlefields—all while preparing, with the help of a wedding planner, for her marriage to Marland Buckner Jr., a lobbyist. That, her close friends have told journalists, is what really completed her life.

“He’s my friend,” Barnes told The New York Times, “my home base, the person I love and trust, respect, and admire completely.” —SJ
Faced with an economic crisis unmatched since the Great Depression, President Barack Obama wanted new approaches to the way financial regulation is developed in Washington.

That’s why Daniel Tarullo, ’77, was the president’s choice to fill an open seat on the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. His term began in January, at a time when nearly all economic indicators were going from bad to worse to downright scary, and his job is to help right the ship during a new era of tighter regulation.

Part of the foundation for Tarullo’s interest and expertise in financial regulation was built at Michigan Law. Two classes in particular—Edward Cooper’s antitrust course, and Joseph Vining’s Enterprise Organization—broadened Tarullo’s understanding of economic factors and bridged the sometimes divergent worlds of finance and law.

Since then, “I’ve always tried to blend the two,” says Tarullo.

That has made him something of an anomaly in both realms. Most Fed governors, for instance, have had backgrounds in banking, business, or the academic study of economics, rather than in law.

Tarullo’s path has passed through academics, as a professor of law at Harvard and Georgetown, and through government, including as a member of the Clinton administration as deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and assistant to the president for international economic policy.

“I haven’t had a conventional legal career,” he notes.

Now, Tarullo is one of a small cadre of people with tremendous influence over the future of the nation’s financial stability. The spectacular failure of banks and lending institutions, as well as other elements of the global financial crisis, are vivid indications that more regulation is needed, he says.

“In the financial regulation area, I would advertise myself as a reformer,” notes Tarullo.

Many observers think Tarullo will play a vital role in shaping financial policy in the next few years. “He’s probably the least-noted member of Barack Obama’s new financial regulatory police, but Dan Tarullo may end up having the most impact,” asserts a Newsweek article.

Vining recalls that Tarullo excelled in his Enterprise Organization course. One of the themes of the class was the legal nature or purpose of an American business corporation, and whether in legal fact agents for a corporation could or must take into account interests other than just wealth maximization for shareholders, such as worker or consumer safety, wider systemic concerns like financial stability, antitrust and open competition, or environmental impacts.

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“Now the issue has appeared again in the financial crisis, and Dan, who all along has been defending the relevance of systemic concerns and public values in corporate decisions, will have a major part to play in its resolution,” says Vining, the Harry Burns Hutchins Collegiate Professor Emeritus of Law.

“When he was appointed, there was certainly a jump in my own confidence in the future shape of the national and international economic system.” —KV
Aaron Lewis, Counsel in Office of the Attorney General

Aaron Lewis’s influences within his family and his experience at law school instilled in him a sense of duty to work toward the public good. It’s a journey that has led him to a position in the Department of Justice (DOJ), where he is a counsel to the attorney general.

Lewis, ’05, previously an associate at Covington & Burling LLP in Washington, D.C., is one of the lawyers who advises Attorney General Eric Holder on national security issues, including DOJ’s role in the effort to close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, and on issues regarding several of the Department’s components, like the Civil Rights Division.

“One of the proudest moments of my life is to serve this attorney general, and this president,” Lewis says. “It is a thrill beyond belief.

“My family has a particular interest in public service. Growing up, it was expected that we would seek out opportunities to serve.”

Lewis’s family has a long and storied history at Michigan Law—indeed, it’s easy to understand why he initially was reluctant to attend. After all, it could have been difficult to emerge from the shadow of his family’s long and illustrious legacy at the School, beginning with the 1902 graduation of his great-grandfather, Oscar W. Baker.

Among other connections to the School, his late grandfather, former federal judge and U.S. Solicitor General Wade H. McCree Jr., taught at Michigan Law. Grandmother Dores McCree, a retired student services associate for the Law School, was well-loved by students and faculty alike. Lewis’s father is David Baker Lewis, ’70, the well-known founder, chairman, and CEO of Lewis & Munday, and his mother was the late Kathleen McCree Lewis, ’73, a prominent lawyer and nominee to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

“I wanted to avoid comparisons to my family. … But then I visited, and it felt like home. It felt right,” says Lewis. “My natural love for the law was nurtured by my classmates and my professors.” —KV

Robert S. Adler, Commissioner, Consumer Product Safety Commission

Building on a career that has focused on issues such as product liability and regulation, Robert S. Adler, ’69, is now a commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

President Obama nominated Adler to the post, and the Senate approved the nomination. Adler, who also served on Obama’s transition team and coauthored the agency review report on the CPSC, is a professor of legal studies and the Luther H. Hodges Jr. Scholar in Law & Ethics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Adler has served as counsel to the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce. He has been elected six times to the board of directors of Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports magazine.

In addition, Adler was deputy attorney general for the Pennsylvania Justice Department, where he headed the southwest regional office of the Bureau of Consumer Protection, and then an attorney-adviser to two CPSC commissioners.

“I am well aware that the product safety challenges are not necessarily the same as when I left” the CPSC previously, Adler noted during his confirmation process. “To pick just one example … roughly 85 percent of current CPSC recalls involve imported products.”

Adler is joining CPSC at a time when more must be done with fewer resources. The agency has “gone through some turbulent times and regretfully has emerged as a far smaller agency—though with the same large mandate,” Adler stated.

“While I am extremely encouraged by the recent hiring of a number of talented new agency staff, I note that even with the infusion of new funding in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, the agency’s authorized staff level remains more than 40 percent below that of 30 years ago.” —KV
Lisa Konwinski, Deputy Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs

Lisa Konwinski, ’91, was a recent graduate working on banking litigation at Moore & Van Allen in North Carolina when she grew addicted to C-SPAN during long sleepless nights. Her love of the wonky cable network made her realize that her future was not in private practice.

She was far more attracted to drafting laws than doing litigation, and “I knew my interests really lay with government,” she recalls.

After starting as a senior legislative assistant to Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) in 1994, Konwinski steadily moved up through the ranks of government. From 1997 until earlier this year, she held the high-profile job of Democratic general counsel to the Senate Budget Committee.

Her knowledge of both chambers of Congress caught the attention of the White House, and in January, she was named deputy assistant to the president for legislative affairs.

Her job entails making sure members of Congress feel like they have sufficient access in the White House, and working with members of Congress and their staffs to coordinate meetings with Cabinet members and White House officials, according to whorunsgov.com. In one of her most high-profile tasks, Konwinski took the lead on pushing for passage of the Congressional Budget Resolution.

The Lansing, Michigan, native works on the second floor of the West Wing, along with fellow Michigan alumnae Melody Barnes, ’89, and Cecelia Muñoz, who earned her BA from Michigan.

Now that she’s living a C-SPAN existence, rather than just watching the channel, she knows she made the right choice when she left private practice. Konwinski expects that she will continue working in the public sector for many years to come.

“I don’t know what the future holds,” she says, “but this is definitely the kind of job that opens doors.” —KV

Luis C. de Baca, Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking

Luis C. de Baca, ’93, learned from professors like Yale Kamisar and Jerry Israel that he shouldn’t focus on his prosecution rate. Another number, de Baca believes, is far more important than the percentage of people he has helped to convict: the number of people he has helped to save from forced labor on farms, in factories, in the sex trade, or as domestic servants.

In de Baca’s case, that number is more than 600. His dedication to securing the freedom of slaves around the world inspired President Barack Obama to nominate him as the new ambassador-at-large to monitor and combat trafficking in persons at the State Department. The U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment in May.

De Baca notes that there are more slaves today than at any point in history, though many people are unaware that slavery remains so pervasive. Estimates from federal and worldwide agencies, as well as nongovernmental organizations, range from more than 10 million to 27 million.

“The numbers are shocking to people,” de Baca says. “Compelled service is sadly alive and well.”

Prior to the new appointment, de Baca was counsel to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, on detail from the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division. He has been given the leading honor by the national trafficking victim service provider community, the Freedom Network’s Paul & Sheila Wellstone Award, and has been named the Law School’s Distinguished Latino Alumnus.

De Baca is not the only Michigan Law grad working to combat human trafficking. Others include Rebecca Story, ’95, who has worked on the issue in the general counsel’s office at the Department of Homeland Security; David Abramowitz, ’86, chief counsel for the House Foreign Affairs Committee; and Bridgette Carr, ’02, who has started the Law School’s new Human Trafficking Clinic (see related story, page 5).

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Karol V. Mason, Deputy Associate Attorney General

Karol V. Mason, ’82, always knew that she wanted to work in public service. “It just took me 27 years to get there,” says Mason, a deputy associate attorney general in the Department of Justice (DOJ).

After Law School, Mason spent a year clerking, followed by more than a quarter of a century at Alston & Bird in Atlanta, where she was a partner. For two years, the bond lawyer worked as a volunteer on the Obama campaign’s national finance committee and voter protection efforts.

With her new portfolio at the DOJ, she assists Tom Perrelli, the associate attorney general, with grant-making programs, which include the Community Oriented Policing Services Office, the Office on Violence Against Women, the Tax Division, and special projects. “My typical day consists of a lot of trouble shooting and problem solving,” she notes.

While many people begin working in government earlier in their careers, Mason says this is precisely the right time for her. She is using her years of experience in an effort to maximize the success of the administration. “All I care about,” she says, “is helping the president be successful in implementing his policies and programs.” —KV

David Sandalow, Assistant Energy Secretary for Policy and International Affairs

Well-known for his energy expertise and his 2008 book Freedom From Oil, David Sandalow, ’82, was President Barack Obama’s choice to be assistant secretary of energy for policy and international affairs.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, Sandalow said, “I believe that clean energy technologies have the potential to transform the world in the next 25 years as much as information and communication technologies have in the past 25.” His nomination was confirmed in May.

Previously, Sandalow was a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution; assistant secretary of state for oceans, environment, and science; senior director for environmental affairs, National Security Council; associate director for the global environment, White House Council on Environmental Quality; and executive vice president of the World Wildlife Fund.

Sandalow’s pragmatism has won him fans and friends on both sides of the political aisle. Many Democrats and left-leaning organizations praised the selection when Sandalow was nominated, as did some Republicans.

“David brings innovative thinking to this complex problem. . . . He understands that enhancing our energy security can go hand in hand with combating the threats of climate change,” Republican Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana said when he introduced Sandalow at his confirmation hearing.

“He has a proven ability to look over the horizon to formulate policy solutions that meet current challenges and avert future crises.” —KV

Michael B. Simon, HHS Regulatory Analysis Officer

After graduation, Michael B. Simon, ’08, served as director of President Obama’s campaign in Michigan, then as the director of the campaign’s Targeting Program in the Chicago headquarters.

In July, he was appointed to serve as the Department of Health and Human Services’ Regulatory Analysis Officer, one of the two political appointees in the department’s Executive Secretariat. He is responsible for preparing all decisions that reach Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on regulatory matters, and ensuring that Obama’s and Sebelius’s views are represented in all regulations and policy documents issued by the department.

Simon focuses primarily on health care reform and Medicare. He interacts regularly with the White House and leaders of the agencies that make up the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

“I sought a job that utilized my legal training and allowed me to work on the most significant public policy priorities of this administration, and I feel blessed to have been able to have been afforded that opportunity,” notes Simon. —KV
Transition Team: Katzen Dyk and Van Putten

Before the Obama administration officially took the reins in Washington, the Transition Team was hard at work to ensure the smoothest possible changeover in power.

Among the members of that team were many of the appointees profiled elsewhere in these pages. Two other prominent alumni also had noteworthy roles in the transition.

Sally Katzen Dyk, ’67, was a member of the Obama-Biden Transition Project’s Agency Review (AR) Working Group, with responsibility for the Executive Office of the President and government operations agencies. She worked from August 2008 to February 2009, even while teaching at Michigan Law, on gathering information to help new appointees with the governance challenges they would face.

Before the November election, all of this material had to be pulled from public sources because candidate Obama and his team had no special access at that time. After the election, Katzen and her team members were given access to agency employees and information, with a goal of completing the projects by the inauguration. She also helped to review last-minute regulations and all executive orders issued by the Bush administration.

“It was intense, it was exhilarating, it was challenging, it was exhausting,” Katzen says. “It was very important to have an efficient transition and to have the new administration up and running as smoothly as possible. . . . My particular mantra was, ‘no surprises.’”

Katzen previously held high-level positions in the Clinton and Carter administrations, including as deputy director for management in the Office of Management and Budget from 1999 to 2001. She has served on National Academy of Sciences panels and is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. She is now the executive managing director of the Podesta Group in Washington, D.C.

Mark Van Putten, ’82, served on the Department of Interior Agency Review Team during the transition. The team was responsible for identifying important and immediate policy issues that would confront the new administration. Van Putten was the team’s leader on Endangered Species Act and Fish & Wildlife Service issues and coordinated the team’s interactions with stakeholder groups. During the campaign, Van Putten served on the Obama Energy & Environment Coordinating Council, cochairing its Key States Team.

He says he was honored by his appointment to the Transition Team and pleased about the administration’s focus on environmental issues. “Environmental issues are more important than ever, and it’s exciting to have a president and administration that are making these issues a top priority.”

Van Putten’s interest in the environment led him to the Law School to study with Professor Joseph L. Sax and, while in Law School, he was co-coordinator of the Environmental Law Clinic. His subsequent career path has taken him to leadership roles in the environmental movement and in the private sector.

The founding director of the Environmental Law Clinic at Michigan Law, Van Putten also served as president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation, the largest membership-based environmental group in the country. He now is the president of the Washington, D.C.-area consulting company, ConservationStrategy LLC. Van Putten also serves as a public interest/public service faculty fellow at the Law School, teaching a class in environmental policymaking during winter terms. —KV
Susan Crawford, Special Assistant to the President

Some observers might find irony in a speech by Michigan Law Professor Susan Crawford on the troubles facing newspapers. She is, after all, now a special assistant to the president for science, technology, and innovation, and an internationally recognized authority on the Internet.

Which, it is widely believed, is killing newspapers.

But not so fast.

Crawford gave the speech at the Free Press Summit on Changing Media, held at the Newseum—a Washington institution famous for displaying the country’s newspaper front pages every day. She acknowledged that times are tough for journalists and for people who love good reporting (including, she said, her new boss, President Barack Obama). But she focused mainly on the way information will be delivered in the future.

Not surprisingly, broadband—and, more important, really fast broadband—is central to that delivery. That’s why Crawford wasn’t happy ticking off numbers from abroad: In Tokyo, data transfer speeds are 100 times greater downstream and 1,000 times greater upstream than the average speed in San Francisco—at half the price. In London, service with speeds of 8 Mbps runs about $9 per month.

In the United States, 4.9 Mbps averages $53 per month.

“It’s the new essential infrastructure,” Crawford said of broadband, and, while Americans started out strong, “we have been thoroughly surpassed by our European and Asian counterparts.”

That’s what prompted the Obama administration to begin drafting its National Broadband Plan, due to be submitted to Congress next February.

“Access to broadband doesn’t guarantee economic success,” said Crawford, who is also on the president’s National Economic Council and is currently on government leave from her duties at Michigan Law. “But lack of access to broadband will guarantee economic stagnation and decline.”

Still, all is not lost, she added. And even the worried journalists in the crowd got some good news.

“The president mentions broadband all the time. But he’s also mentioning newspapers all the time these days, and these two futures, I think, go together,” she said. “I think there’s some light at the end of the tunnel for both of them.” —JM

Michael Barr, Assistant Treasury Secretary

As the Department of the Treasury’s assistant secretary for financial institutions, Michael Barr develops and coordinates the department’s policies on legislative and regulatory issues affecting financial institutions.

In other words, he is one of the main people charged with turning around the country’s biggest financial upheaval in decades.

Barr is very aware that he and his colleagues must remain cautious about predicting a timetable for a financial turnaround. “I think all of us are very sober about the current situation,” says Barr, who is on leave from his faculty position at the Law School.

Still, he sees some positive signs on the economic horizon, and he thinks Treasury Department officials and other advisers to the president are making progress toward improving the fiscal landscape for businesses, organizations, and families.

That has long been Barr’s goal: to find ways of helping people live better lives through changes in the way money is spent, borrowed, lent, and regulated. He previously served in the Clinton administration in a variety of financial-adviser roles, and was a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter. He also was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and the Brookings Institution.

His eight years at Michigan Law—where he cofounded the International Transactions Clinic—“have given me a lot of time to think in a contemplative way about financial regulation and financial services.” He notes, though, that “I’ve always known I wanted to return to public service.”

The demands of his job are so great that Barr has, wisely, decided not to keep track of how many hours he works each week. “I have assiduously avoided adding it up,” he says. —KV