

LAWYERS JOURNAL

Creo teaches mediation techniques to international litigators

By Lisa M. Wolfe

For The Lawyers Journal

Jamaican lawyer Deidre Powell has never been one to shy away from a challenge. For instance, in 2004, Powell launched Pcamonline, Jamaica's first online legal research website.

"With Pcamonline, at the click of a mouse, research is done for you within seconds," said Powell. "Attorneys will have a complete list of cases on which you can rely, with all the work done for you."

Not one to rest on her laurels, she aspires to expand Pcamonline to the rest of the Caribbean.

However, Powell is currently in the early stages of planning her next groundbreaking project, bringing alternative dispute resolution into the forefront of the Jamaican legal system by opening a center focusing on mediation and arbitration.

Despite the fact that mediation and arbitration are not popular in Jamaica at this time, Powell is currently studying for an LLM focusing in the areas of arbitration and intellectual property at Queen Mary, University of London.

Powell realized that she would need more than an LLM in order to establish a successful mediation practice. She knew that she would need to gain some practical, hands on experience in alternative dispute resolution. This is where Pittsburgh attorney Robert Creo entered Powell's life.

"I was in Singapore for a World Intellectual Property Organization conference in order to receive training on how to handle international disputes, when I realized I was attending a conference full of people who would be familiar with successful U.S. mediators," Powell said. "I wanted to have a U.S. mediation experience during my March break, so I began asking people at the conference who I should contact."

"Bob Creo's name was recommended to me. I sent him the details of my program and asked if he would allow me to shadow him, so that I could get some practical experience in mediation. Bob didn't hesitate for a second and told me to 'come right over.'"

Creo did more than just tell Powell to "come right over." Creo went above and beyond, hosting Powell in his home for the duration of her five-week stay.

Powell arrived in Pittsburgh on March 25 to begin her "crash course" in American mediation.

In the weeks that followed, Powell attended mediations

throughout Pennsylvania and spent a day guest lecturing in front of Creo's law school class. Powell also assisted Creo with the book he is currently writing by checking citations. She was even able to spend time shadowing Ingrid Lundberg, an attorney with Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote.

"I often work to arrange internships for LLM students who are studying in Pittsburgh. Every summer I take a student from the Master's program at Pitt law school. I also work to arrange trips for students who wish to travel to other locations to observe mediations. For instance, last summer I arranged a three-week internship in California for a student," said Creo.

"However, I have to say I was a little surprised to be contacted by an attorney from Jamaica who was studying for her LLM in London. Deidre was something special though, because she stayed with me for five weeks. She was really able to immerse herself into the Pittsburgh mediation community."

Powell enjoyed her experience in Pittsburgh so much, she extended her stay in America an extra week in order to attend *Dialogue at Harvard*, a mediation conference Creo was putting together.

"I had heard about *Dialogue at Harvard*, which mediators from around the world attend," Powell said. "My professors will probably kill me for missing classes, but after spending a month with Bob and learning so many practical mediation skills, there was no way I could miss this conference."

"I enjoy hosting interns. It doesn't take much time away from my practice because they are coming to observe and learn mediation and arbitration skills," said Creo. "We talk about mediation styles, techniques, and how the case unfolded while we travel to and from the cases."

"Generally, my students find that going to cases and observing what occurs is very helpful to them. They enjoy being able to view an entire case from a neutral perspective."

During the course of her stay, Powell learned a great deal about how to start a private mediation practice from the seasoned professionals she spent time with.

"I have invited many of the people I met during my trip to come and visit me in Jamaica to see how my mediation program progresses," Powell said. "I encourage others to host aspiring mediators and arbitrators from other jurisdictions. It gives both the mentee and the mediator a chance to learn about different cultures and get different perspectives on things. It's quite a learning experience to see the evolution of mediation through another person's eyes." ■