



Education and commitment are two words that best describe Michael W. Rafter, a third-year student in Mercer's Walter F. George School of Law.

Rafter's undergraduate degree came from Mercer University's College of Liberal Arts where he was a history and philosophy major. He had a 4.0 cumulative grade point average, and he earned top honors including the University's highest undergraduate award — the Louie D. Newton General Excellence Award, and the Outstanding History Major award.

He feels well-prepared for the future, having studied under Mercer's Great Books Program, which gives broad exposure to the thoughts and ideas that underlie Western Civilization.

Rafter was also involved in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at Mercer, where he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in June 1992. Upon graduation, he took an educational leave to attend law school under a full tuition scholarship. Upon graduation, he expects to go on active duty in the Army's Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps, leaving sometime later this year.

While at the Walter F. George School of Law, he has received the Price-Campbell Foundation Scholarship and three American jurisprudence awards for torts, contracts and civil procedure. He has been a member of the Mercer Law Review since 1993, and is now serving as leads development editor for the publication. His article, "Note, *Nobelman v. American Savings Bank*; Chapter XIII Residential Mortgage Strip Down: Controversy Resolved," was published in 45 *Mercer Law Review* 881. In addition, Rafter was a member of the 1994 Georgia Intrastate Competition Team and was on the 1994-95 National Moot Court Competition Team.

Although his success in both undergraduate school and in law school can certainly be attributed to hard work and study, some of it might be attributed to a little magic — magic he says he experienced through the Boy Scouts program.

"In terms of scouting, it's kind of an unusual way in which it influenced me, and probably has more of a

direct bearing on my coming to law school," said Rafter. He had participated in what he calls the "regular Boy Scout thing," was a troop member, advancing in ranks all the way up to eagle scout.

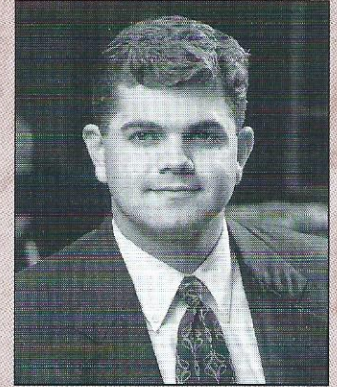
In high school he dropped out for a while to play ball. When he returned to scouting it was in a leadership role, developing troop programs and planning.

Then someone convinced him to apply to the summer scout camp staff, and that, he says, was an eye-opening experience. "The camp director at this particular camp had been around for a number of years and recognized one important thing, that the summer scout staff member is not necessarily the perfect boy scout. Typically, staff members are 16-21 year-olds who like to do the things that people in this age group like to do, and that is have a lot of fun. But the camp director's idea," said Rafter, "was that while you were at scout camp, the younger scouts see you as the ideal boy scout, so what you're doing is something like what a Disney World employee does. You're making the magic."

In order to make the magic, not only were the staff members to refrain from doing things they might ordinarily do when the younger scouts weren't present, but they were also asked to perform skits and sing songs for the young campers. They took it a step further, working hours and hours learning how to sing funny songs with big hand gestures. They actually had professionals come in to train them. Then, Rafter and the other staff members were expected to get up on a stage and become larger than life to an audience of young boys. They made magic.

For Rafter, this is the same magic you need to make it as a top-notch litigator. Instead of singing songs on stage, you are communicating with a jury in a courtroom. "But you are communicating," said Rafter. "That is the important thing."

Recently married to another third-year law student, Carmen Rojas, Rafter says he sees himself in private practice one day. His main area of interest is in civil litigation with an emphasis on business-related law.



## Rafter's Immediate Plans Include JAG Corps