

Judge Hala Jarbou: Higher Education Warrior

“I was the first in my family to go to college, let alone graduate from high school.”

Judge Hala Jarbou’s personal background has greatly influenced her involvement in a young, but growing program at Wayne State University called the Warrior Vision and Impact Program (VIP), named for the school mascot.

Having served on the Oakland County Circuit Court since 2015, and an alum of the Wayne State University School of Law, Judge Jarbou understands the importance of a good education. But even more importantly, she understands the need to remove barriers toward achieving that goal.

And when childhood friend, Michelle Hunt Bruner, Director of Wayne State’s Academic Success Center, encouraged Judge Jarbou’s involvement in a new program the university was developing to support first-generation students and underrepresented populations in higher education, Judge Jarbou was on board.

“I was very enthusiastic about wanting to help with this program,” she said. “As a very young immigrant to this country, I understand the challenges faced by the students it tries to reach.”

Warrior VIP works with outside partners to ensure the students’ successful transition into college, foster their positive engagement in the university setting, and prepare them to challenge themselves as leaders beyond graduation. The program provides them with academic, career, research, financial literacy, and mentoring support to achieve these goals.

“As a judge who oversees both civil and criminal cases, I unfortunately see a lot of young defendants come through my court with limited educational backgrounds. Obtaining a GED and furthering your education are goals I stress in every sentencing that I pronounce,” explained Judge Jarbou. “The Warrior VIP provides a great foundation for success for students who might otherwise not have any mentors or resources to rely on.”

Judge Jarbou has been involved as a speaker and mentor in the Warrior VIP, which introduces students to professionals in a variety of fields to help them get a closer look at a variety of career paths, learn more about a particular industry, and receive career advice.

Judge Jarbou says that she has gotten as much out of her efforts as she has put in.

“Judges see a great deal of conflict and negativity in court on a regular basis,” she shared. “Being a part of a program such as this helps bring positivity to my day-to-day routine and reinforces how I can help improve my community.”