

Brian J. Christensen didn't always know he'd end up in international relations. "When I was a freshman, I had numerous questions about the direction my education should take," said Christensen. "I have fond memories of conversations with the late Professor Richard Vetterli discussing my education and career choices. He took the time to learn of my passion for international matters and then guided me to a degree in international relations. Because of his influence and the influence of many other excellent professors and mentors, each phase of my education and career has contained an international component."

Since attending BYU and graduating from the Kennedy Center in 1990, Christensen went on to law school. In 1993, while at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law, Christensen competed in the International Moot Competition, in which he was the top oralist and brief writer. With a law degree in tow, Christensen felt his international instincts calling, joined the U.S. Navy, and moved abroad.

"Following graduation from law school, I joined the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG)," explained Christensen. "Because of my background in international relations, I was selected for a position in Sardinia, Italy, that included responsibilities as the international law coordinator for the western Mediterranean area. I also served as a U.S. vice consul. Prior to traveling to Italy, the Navy sent my family and me to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, where I learned Italian."

Now, Christensen utilizes his international know-how in his position as head of the litigation group at H&R Block, Fortune 500 financial services company. Though the company is headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, Christensen explained, "H&R Block has more than seventy subsidiaries. Many of these subsidiaries operate internationally, periodically facing litigation and engaging in transactions outside the United States. The training I received and the perspective I developed while at BYU have served me well in this capacity."

Overall, Christensen's post-undergraduate experiences have been positive, and he is still grateful for the guidance that led him to an international focus. "I consider myself fortunate to enjoy a career focused in part on my passion for international relations," he said. "The experiences I had at BYU and the Kennedy Center provided the foundation that has enabled my wife, Nicole, and me to enjoy many unique and fascinating experiences."

No Events