

Jonathon Marley '84

I don't think it is an overstatement to say that HumBio has had a massive and ongoing impact on my life. Perhaps most importantly, the person with whom I have chosen to spend my life -- Carolyn (Hurst) Marley -- also graduated in 1980 from the Human Biology program. In some ways, we are like a mini-experiment in HumBio genetics, sociology, anthropology, etc., raising two HumBio-type offspring (one of the male gender and one female) and living our lives together over the past 27 years influenced by Stanford and all the amazing people and experiences we encountered. On a professional level, HumBio has had an enormous effect on my career. It was because of the multidisciplinary approach to studying the human organism in the Core and subsequent HumBio coursework that I decided to pursue a degree in Health Policy & Management at the Harvard School of Public Health a year after graduating from Stanford, and a fellowship in Community Health Administration at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene & Public Health after that. Looking at how we, as a society, support and promote the health of the most disenfranchised members of our communities is a wholly HumBio concept, and I was delighted to carry lessons I learned from my professors and classmates into my work at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, La Clinica de la Raza in East Oakland, and the Over 60 Health Center in Berkeley. It is the broad perspective of what "health" means -- just as we were encouraged to understand the wider, interdisciplinary meaning of "biology" in HumBio -- that helps me know that I am still engaged in advancing community health in my current work at the East Bay Community Law Center, where we provide free legal services to low-income individuals, families, and neighborhoods as they struggle to survive and thrive and achieve empowerment. I frequently think back to lectures from folks like Sandy Dornbusch and Donald Kennedy and Bill Durham and John Rick, not to mention the words of wisdom passed along by Lorraine Morgan, and appreciate all that I received from the Human Biology program. I arrived at Stanford not knowing anything about HumBio and left knowing that it was the perfect fit for me, and something that has become an integral part of my identity.