



Boyd Briefs: November 8, 2013

From Dean Dan

At every law school, the work and reputation of the faculty are a critical measure of a school's success and its contribution to legal education. While it too often goes without saying, the Boyd faculty is among the best in the nation. One measure, imperfect but still important, is how often the scholarly work of a faculty is cited by other scholars, and in a recent "scholarship impact study" we learned that Boyd ranks 45th in the country. This puts our law school in great company nationally and among the most cited schools in our region. While we of course don't engage in scholarship for cite counts, a ranking like this does show how highly those in our profession regard Boyd and how much our faculty has achieved. A nice story about it in Bloomberg, mentioning Boyd by name, is [here](#). The SSRN version is [here](#).

Dan

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Bret Birdsong

[Bret Birdsong](#) is on leave this year while he serves as the Deputy Solicitor for Land Resources for the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. His work in this capacity is a reminder of (1) the importance of public service; (2) the distinguished national reputation of our faculty; and (3) the value of having engaged, knowledgeable and respected faculty teaching our classes.

Professor—and now Deputy Solicitor—Birdsong is a scholar whose research has focused primarily on federal land and resources management. At the Department of the Interior he provides legal advice to the Bureau of Land Management regarding the management of nearly 250 million acres of public land. The Boyd School of Law is proud of the fact that when the Department of the Interior needed someone with deep knowledge in this field, and also the ability to put that knowledge into practice and to manage a team, Professor Birdsong was their choice.

As the Boyd School of Law undertakes to make each of its graduates a successful, ethical professional, we put a role model in every classroom. Since he joined the faculty in 2000, Professor Birdsong was exactly that; and we look forward to his return following this extended stint in public service. Professor Birdsong is part of an important cohort at the law school: he is among the most senior faculty members who *started* their academic careers at Boyd. That he is now a leader not only at Boyd but also in Washington is an important milestone for our school.

Some of Professor Birdsong's scholarship, including a recent essay that outlines a series of proposals for addressing the climate impacts of food production, can be viewed [here](#).



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Melissa Corral

It's not easy being a part-time law student. Along with moments or periods of frustration, stress and self-doubt associated with law school, most part-time students must deal with moments or periods of frustration, stress and self-doubt associated with their full-time job. Melissa Corral has struggled with it all, unapologetically. She will graduate next May, propelled forward by personal and professional growth through opportunities she seized as a part-time evening student at Boyd.

Like many of her colleagues, Melissa's first evening of law school, following a full day's work in the hectic reservation operation at a local hotel and casino, set the stage for a formidable task and raised some tough questions: Am I up to four years of this? Do I have what it will take to manage it all? Additionally, Melissa hoped to oppose her usually shy nature and become active in the law school community. A conversation with a certain law school official spurred her to run for the 1L part-time representative position on the Student Bar Association (SBA) Board of Governors. She won... and a progression ensued.

In her second year, Melissa was elected SBA Vice President for the Evening Division. And in her third year, she assumed the mantle of leadership as SBA President. It was a particularly weighty undertaking given that Melissa was also to serve that year as President of La Voz, Boyd's Latino law student association, and Vice President of the Organization of Part-Time and Non-Traditional Law Students. In this, her final year at Boyd, Melissa remains active in SBA as 4L part-time representative and represents clients in the law school's Immigration Clinic.

Coming to the United States from Mexico at age 12, Melissa was intent on taking advantage of the new opportunities before her. She certainly has made the most of her time at Boyd.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Kristina Holmstrom '04

Kristina (Novotny) Holmstrom moved to Phoenix after graduating from Boyd in 2004. She began her career at Meyer Hendricks and Bivens, a boutique commercial litigation firm. In 2005, she was lured by a fellow Boyd graduate, Sonya (Parrish) Boun, to Lewis and Roca. There, Kristina gravitated toward insurance-related work, developing a particular niche in life, health, disability and ERISA cases. Today, Kristina is proud to be a litigation partner at Lewis Roca Rothgerber (the firm's name changed following a merger in 2013). She focuses on all aspects of insurance litigation, including ERISA and coverage work. Kristina practices regularly in Arizona and Nevada and enjoys working with the many other Boyd graduates at Lewis Roca Rothgerber.

Despite having moved away from Las Vegas, Kristina still feels like a part of the Boyd community. She maintains close contact with her classmates and Boyd faculty. She even sports a William S. Boyd School of Law sticker on her car. Beyond basic legal excellence, Boyd taught Kristina the importance of collaboration and the value of community service. Both have been core values in her professional career. Among the reasons she chose Lewis Roca Rothgerber was its commitment to pro bono, most famously illustrated by its pro bono case, *Miranda v. Arizona*. She continues to take multiple pro bono cases per year, typically involving civil rights and immigration. She also contributes to the legal community through leadership positions in local and national bar organizations, including the Defense Research Institute, American Bar Association, and Arizona Association of Defense Counsel.