



Boyd Briefs: January 9, 2014

From Dean Dan

As Boyd gears up for a new semester, I want to congratulate our students and alumni who were recently honored by the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada for their pro bono work. Boyd alums Paola Armeni, Laura Deeter, and Amber Robinson as well as student Shannon Phenix were all honored and show the dedication and impact of the Boyd community on the larger legal community.



Paola Armeni '03 was awarded the Myrna Williams Children's Pro Bono Award for her work on behalf of abused and neglected children. Laura Deeter '07 received the Louis Wiener Service Award for her commitment to representing domestic violence victims. Amber Robinson '06 was honored with the Ask-A-Lawyer Community Commitment Award for her work week after week to make the Ask-A-Lawyer Program possible. The LACSN offers a variety of Ask-A-Lawyer programs for unrepresented individuals to receive free consultations with volunteer attorneys. Shannon Phenix was named the Public Interest Law Student of Distinction. The award recognizes a law student who has made a substantial contribution to the community through public interest law and the promotion of access to justice. Shannon is the latest Boyd student to win this award and was seated at a table with past award winners from Boyd, including Randall Forman '08, Isaiah Jerez '09, Jessica Perlick '13, Brian Ramsey '10, and Alexandra Varela '13. It was a great honor to sit with the parents of our alum James Griffin '08, also an award winner.

Our partnership with the LACSN is thriving thanks to our shared commitment to helping provide effective and free legal representation to those who need it most. Congratulations and appreciation to all.

We have two terrific events coming up and hope to see you there:

Jan. 24: [Alumni Gathering in Northern Nevada](#)

Feb. 1: [Alumni Pre-game Buffet and UNLV Basketball Game](#)

Dan

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Ian Bartrum

Since joining the William S. Boyd School of Law in the fall of 2011, Ian Bartrum has been one of the faculty's most prolific young scholars. Highly regarded for both the quantity and quality of his work, Professor Bartrum is developing a national reputation in one of the most exclusive specialties in the legal academy: theories of constitutional interpretation.

One of Professor Bartrum's most recent works is titled *Constitutional Value Judgments and Interpretive Theory Choice*. In this article, Bartrum does not advocate for any particular interpretive methodology; instead, he offers insight about the process by which we choose any one of those methodologies over another.

In this particular article, Professor Bartrum draws on the work of Thomas Kuhn, an American scientist and philosopher of the latter 20th century. Prior to Kuhn, scientific progress had been depicted as linear and cumulative—with each new discovery adding a figurative brick to an ever-growing edifice. Yet Kuhn told a cyclical story of half-built scientific houses abandoned on flawed foundations and of construction begun elsewhere on new, hopefully sounder bases.

Professor Bartrum finds Kuhn's work illuminating because Kuhn argued that when new theoretical paradigms are introduced, the competing scientific theories (much like competing interpretive approaches) are incommensurable. Incommensurability means that the resolution ultimately requires a choice. By drawing an analogy to Kuhn's work on the value judgments that underlie scientists' choices between competing theoretical paradigms, Bartrum offers innovative perspective on the process by which we choose between incommensurable interpretive approaches in close and difficult cases requiring constitutional interpretation.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Virgilio "Bing" Longakit

By evening, Virgilio "Bing" Longakit is a second-year student in Boyd's part-time evening program. By day, Bing oversees the Unclaimed Property Division of the Nevada State Treasurer's Office. He is a Certified Public Accountant and a Certified Public Manager.

It all sounds pretty pro forma and bland, right? Well, let's dig a little deeper.

Bing was born and raised in the Philippines, primarily in the small rural town of Pinamungajan on the island of Cebu. A quaint area, it was hardly up to date in terms of conveniences and amenities. "Paved roads did not arrive until the late 1970s, followed by electricity in the 1980s, and finally telephones in the 1990s," Bing recalls. "While it may seem like I was deprived growing up by Western standards, I never felt a sense of lacking anything."

But hard work on the family farm was a central theme of Bing's childhood. One of his distinct memories is that of plowing cornfields, an endeavor requiring him to handle the reins of a carabao, a mammoth water buffalo. Young Bing took pride in mastering control of the beast of burden and other farming tasks, but recognized that there was something in which he found greater satisfaction and joy: studying.

Completion of his secondary education necessitated three-hour bus rides over treacherous roads to the more urban Cebu City where he would spend the week, often homesick for his family. But from that experience, Bing took away great motivation to pursue higher education. He first earned a B.S. in business administration (majoring in accounting) from the Philippine School of Business Administration and later an MBA from

Ateneo de Manila University Graduate School of Business.

Bing came to the United States in 1999, but his homeland and upbringing were by no means left behind.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Siria L. Gutiérrez '10

Siria L. Gutiérrez '10 is a third-year associate at the Las Vegas firm of Phillips, Spallas & Angstadt. She is admitted to practice in Nevada and California. Her focus is in the area of tort litigation defense, specializing in premises liability. After graduating from Boyd, she clerked for the Honorable Valorie J. Vega in the Eighth Judicial District Court of the State of Nevada.

In addition to her career at Phillips, Spallas & Angstadt, Siria is active in her community. She is a founding and current member of La Voz's award-winning mentorship program Huellas ("Footprints"), established in 2008. Huellas is a four-tier pipeline mentorship program designed to encourage minority students to enter the legal profession. The program teams up students in high school, college, and law school with an attorney and is designed to have each level help guide the next level toward their education goals. Every year since its inception the program has grown and has provided young people with guidance in achieving a legal career.

Siria along with Sylvia Tiscareno, Leslie Nino '09, and staff from the Nevada Lawyer worked together to create the September 2013 Special Edition Nevada Lawyer in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. This issue commemorated the achievements and contributions of Hispanic members of the Nevada Bar. She was thrilled to work with such an enthusiastic and distinguished group and to be able to honor the Hispanic attorneys and judges in whose footsteps she hopes to follow.

Siria will take office as President of the Las Vegas Latino Bar Association in 2014. She looks forward to working with the State Bar of Nevada on a campaign to educate the Latino community regarding the issue of the unauthorized practice of law by "notarios."

In her spare time, Siria is involved in Soroptimist, an international volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and children throughout the world.