



Boyd Briefs: April 17, 2014

## From Dean Dan

This week at Boyd we are thrilled to be hosting an important collaboration between UNLV and the University of Nevada School of Medicine, exploring one of the most urgent questions facing health law and public policy. The law school, in partnership with the UNLV School of Community Health Sciences, the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Nursing, and The Lincy Institute is working with the UNR School of Medicine to offer an interprofessional, collaborative symposium on "Exploring Health Care Disparities in Nevada." The symposium will highlight research opportunities and explore solutions for health disparities among women and minorities, individuals with mental health conditions, and aging populations in Nevada. Panelists will include physicians, lawyers, dentists, and public health professionals. Boyd Professors Stacey Tovino and Fatma Marouf are among the panelists who will present at the symposium. Professor Tovino will speak on "Legal Approaches to Combating Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation," and Professor Marouf will speak on "Access to Mental Health Care for Immigration Detainees." For more information about the symposium, including the agenda and panelists' bios, visit our website [here](#). Special thanks to Associate Dean Christine Smith and Prof. Stacey Tovino at UNLV and Dr. Melissa Piasecki and Dr. Deborah Kuhls at UNR. We look forward to building on this excellent interdisciplinary symposium to promote ongoing collaboration in health law and other topics across UNLV and between UNR and UNLV.

Dan

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## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Leslie Griffin

The relationship between law and religion is attracting an increasing amount of attention. Yet Professor Leslie Griffin has been deeply engaged in this vital area of interdisciplinary inquiry for decades. Further, her formal training and expertise is genuinely interdisciplinary. First, Professor Griffin earned her Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Yale University and taught for four years in the Theology department at the University of Notre Dame. Thereafter, she attended Stanford Law School, clerked for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, joined the legal academy, and became one of the preeminent scholars of Constitutional Law. As judges, politicians, professors, pundits, and citizens examine the fundamental role that religion has played—and should play—in shaping law and society, Professor Griffin's voice is the unique product of training and expertise in both law and religion.

Professor Griffin is one of Boyd's most prolific and most respected scholars. She is the William S. Boyd Professor of Law, and she is in very high demand. This semester she is a visiting professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Law. She has also visited at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and the University of

Alabama; she has also held research fellowships at Harvard University and Emory University. In addition to publishing scholarly books and articles, she writes amicus briefs, testifies before legislatures, lends her expertise on panel discussions, and maintains a [blog](#). And her students would add that she is an effective, respected, and popular classroom teacher.

This week Professor Griffin is participating in [Intersections in Reproduction](#), an invitation-only conference sponsored by Yale Law School's Information Society Project. The workshop explores the relationship between abortion and assisted reproductive technologies. Griffin will present her paper, *Whose Morality Should Govern Reproduction?*, which argues that Constitutional norms, rather than religion- or philosophy-based laws, must provide the foundation for state and federal laws governing reproduction. She writes that "[a] citizen who begins [instead] with God's morality may dismiss or devalue equality, or view it differently from what the Constitution demands." The paper will appear in a special issue of the "Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics," a peer-reviewed journal published by the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics.

Professor Griffin exemplifies Boyd's ideal of scholarly excellence.

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Alissa Cooley

Making one's way through four years of law school on a part-time basis while working full time is an arduous trek. Along with the folks she greeted at the beginning of their journey in August 2010 (who quickly became her comrades in arms), Alissa Cooley is about to reach the destination of graduation, and a heck of a memorable and successful ride it has been.

Alissa found herself intrigued with the idea of law school following her work on the 2008 presidential campaign of Hilary Clinton. While politics and government work were in her immediate thoughts, her mind was open to all the options a law degree made possible. But how she went about earning her law degree was non-negotiable. Alissa values hard work, self-sufficiency, and financial stability. And so Boyd's part-time evening program was clearly the way to go.

While holding down jobs as a server at a restaurant on The Strip and a law clerk with a local firm, Alissa set about the long-distance run of part-time legal education. While excelling in her studies, she assumed a leadership role among her peers, serving two-year stints as president of the Organization of Part-Time and Non-Traditional Law Students and as president of the Criminal Law Society. Additionally, Alissa was a student attorney in the [Immigration Law Clinic](#), an avid participant in our Street Law Program and Partners in Pro Bono Program, and an extern for both the Clark County Public Defender and the Federal Public Defender.

"While I still have political fire left inside me, I no longer have presidential aspirations," says Alissa with a grin. "Because of my experiences in law school, especially my criminal procedure course work and externships, I plan to dedicate my career to protecting the constitutional rights of criminal defendants."

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Margo Chernysheva '09

A graduate of the Class of 2009, Margo Chernysheva was the first in her class to be offered a partnership in a law firm that was not owned by a family member. Three years later, she opened her own firm, MC Law Group-- a full-service immigration law firm. Margo concentrates on business and investment immigration visas. She also practices in front of the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Administrative Appeal Office (AAO), the U.S. Department of Justice Immigration Court, and federal district court.

Before starting her professional career in the United States, Margo experienced firsthand the difficulties many new immigrants face. She arrived in the United States in 1992 with no proficiency in English and very little money. Despite these initial difficulties, Margo and her husband both completed secondary graduate degrees while raising three children. She unquestionably believes that her experiences as a newly arrived immigrant makes her a more competent and compassionate advocate for her clients.

Margo graduated from Quinnipiac College in 1998, with a B.S. in International Business and Economics, summa cum laude. She soon began a career with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, advancing from a buyer to a Global Contract and Sourcing Manager in the span of 15 years. Her responsibilities involved acquisition contract negotiations for large pharmaceutical companies.

In addition to authoring chapters in immigration books, she is a frequent speaker at AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) events, as well as a committee member for AILA National and the Nevada Local Chapter. She volunteers for Legal Aid of Southern Nevada, Project Real, Mediators of Southern Nevada, and Neighborhood Justice Center of Southern Nevada. As these activities amply demonstrate, Margo is committed to volunteer service.

Margo enjoys raising her 1-year-old son, hiking in Red Rock Canyon with their German shepherd, and traveling to at least one new destination each year. She also has two daughters currently attending colleges in California.