



Boyd Briefs: October 16, 2014

From Dean Dan

Since we opened our doors 16 years ago, Boyd alumni have succeeded in ways that improve the practice of law throughout the state and region. Boyd alum Chris Hicks '01 will soon be the next district attorney in Washoe County. We have alumni who are succeeding around the country, including Danielle Oakley '06 at O'Melveny and Myers in Los Angeles, Evie Lee Nichols '06 at a leading nonprofit in Washington, D.C. (see below for profile), and Kendra Kisling '13 at Perkins Coie in Phoenix. And of course we have a powerful presence in the bar in Southern Nevada. This last week I am delighted to read that 41 alumni and two adjunct professors were recently named top lawyers in Southern Nevada in the October issue of Desert Companion. To view the news item, click [here](#).

And this weekend we are holding our first ever all-alumni weekend, complete with a golf tournament, pancake bash, and dinner. At the dinner, we are honored to welcome Senator Richard Bryan for remarks, and we will hear from your classmates and faculty as well. It should be a great night, and I hope all alumni can make it. Please RSVP online at law.unlv.edu/registration-AlumniWeekend2014. This is one way we are working to make sure this accomplished and growing group of rising lawyers stay in touch with their law school and with one another.

Dan

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Elizabeth MacDowell

The genius of the law school's [Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic](#) is that it provides urgently needed legal services to our local community while also advancing Boyd's national reputation as a leader in legal education and as a center of scholarly excellence. The clinician-scholars at Boyd supervise students, win cases, receive grants, teach classes, write articles, and present at conferences; they also run the clinic as a law office and participate in the governance of the school. Our clinics are a role model for all public law schools: we provide services to the local community that supports and needs its law school while also developing a national academic reputation of which that local community can be proud.

[Elizabeth MacDowell](#) is the director of our [Family Justice Clinic](#). Students in this Clinic provide a broad range of family law representation to low-income clients for whom access to justice is limited. As evidence of her strong national reputation, Professor MacDowell is one of several of Boyd's clinician-scholars to be named a Bellow Scholar, a distinction that recognizes especially deserving law school clinical faculty members who

are involved in anti-poverty work or increasing access to justice.

Professor MacDowell's research focuses on intersectional issues of race, class, and gender, domestic violence, access to justice, and the impact of criminalization on low-income families. MacDowell's most recent article, *Reimagining Access to Justice in the Poor People's Courts*, presents an extensive intellectual review of the pathologies of "poor people's courts" (which include family, housing, small claims and other consumer courts that serve a large number of low-income people). The article reveals how many contemporary access to justice initiatives miss the mark or can even make matters worse: for example, efforts to provide counsel to poor people often fail to appreciate that advocates in poor people's courts are sometimes part of the problem; other well-intentioned initiatives can be implemented without regard to court cultures and practices that put litigants at risk of losing their substantive rights or experiencing dignitary harms. MacDowell's article proposes a new theory of access to justice. With reforms that range from the incremental and modest to the ambitious and radical, MacDowell envisions a transformation of systems through empowerment, mobilization, and democratization. Informed by first-hand experience and by scholarly inquiry, MacDowell calls for a profound reimagining of what is needed to address the needs of low-income litigants in poor people's courts.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Ryan Reynolds

What does [Ryan Reynolds](#), a second-year student at Boyd, have in common with the heart-throbby Canadian actor of the same name? Each has his own Wikipedia page!

Boyd's Ryan Reynolds, you see, had himself quite a run as a football player. Success in youth football was a prelude to an exceptional high school football career, first in his native Lake Havasu City, Ariz., and later here in Las Vegas at national powerhouse Bishop Gorman High School. Logging playing time on defense as a linebacker and safety and on offense as a tight end and fullback, Ryan earned recognition as one of the top high school players in the country – he was named a *USA Today* first team All-American, a U.S. Army All-American, and a *Parade Magazine* All-American. Following his final season, the *Las Vegas Sun* named him Nevada's Defensive Player of the Year.

Heavily recruited by programs far and wide, Ryan took his talents to the University of Oklahoma to play for Coach Bob Stoops. Among his teammates was his fellow Bishop Gorman alum, and now Dallas Cowboys running back, DeMarco Murray. Ryan was a four-year letterman, was twice named to the All Big 12 team, and served on the university's Student Athlete Advisory Committee. Following his playing days, he served a two-year stint as a graduate assistant coach for the Sooner program.

Much as he loved football, however, Ryan determined that his true professional calling would take him elsewhere, initially the Oklahoma City University School of Law. After completing his first year there, Ryan found himself thinking back on his time at Bishop Gorman and of his family in Arizona and decided that Las Vegas was the place to be. He applied to transfer, was accepted, and now calls Boyd his home field.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Evie Lee Nichols '06



Currently, Evie Lee Nichols '06 is assistant general counsel at International Medical Corps in its Washington, D.C. office. International Medical Corps is a global, humanitarian, nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training and relief and development programs. Evie's varied litigation background and government contracts experience allows her to handle the myriad of legal issues that impact the four headquarters offices worldwide; navigate federal law and regulations that impact federal grant recipients and nonprofits; and tackle unique legal issues that arise with an international humanitarian organization. "The emergency response nature of our work requires that I think on my feet and quickly make decisions," she notes.

Originally from New York, Evie earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Michigan in 2003. In 2006, Evie graduated from the William S. Boyd School of Law. During law school, Evie clerked at the Las Vegas office for a construction and government contracts law firm based in Atlanta, Ga., with other offices nationwide. As an associate there, she traveled to the firm's Washington, D.C. office to assist with government contracts matters; a corporate fraud investigation; and construction law litigation.

While working at another litigation firm in Las Vegas, her former employer contacted her and asked if she had any interest in joining their Washington, D.C. office. Intrigued by the opportunity, she recalls when she made her decision, "I enjoyed government contracts law and wanted to be in the middle of the action." In Washington, D.C., Evie represented government contractors, federal concessioners, leaseholders, and other plaintiffs in government contracts litigation before the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the Federal Circuit, and the Boards of Contract Appeal. The experience deepened her knowledge of government contracts law and congressional appropriations law, expanding the experience and knowledge that led to her current position with International Medical Corps.