



Boyd Briefs: October 30, 2014

From Dean Dan

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution this Saturday will present an event titled "Making Peace with Your Enemy: Nelson Mandela and His Contributions to Conflict Resolution."

The Saltman Center provides critical support to the community and promotes cutting-edge research. A special thank you to [Michael and Sonja Saltman](#) and Professors [Jean Sternlight](#) and [Lydia Nussbaum](#) for making the UNLV Boyd School of Law a nationally recognized center for dispute resolution.

The 10th anniversary celebration will be a great event, and we invite the community to join us in honoring one of the signature successes at the law school. [Andrea Schneider](#) from Marquette University Law School, [Carrie Menkel-Meadow](#) from Georgetown University Law Center, [Robert Mnookin](#) from Harvard Law School, [Richard Goldstone](#) from Stanford Law School, and [Penny Andrews](#) from Albany Law School will join us to honor Nelson Mandela and celebrate the Saltman Center's many accomplishments.

The Nov. 1 event will begin at 3 p.m. inside the Thomas & Mack Moot Court at the Boyd School of Law. To learn more and RSVP, visit law.unlv.edu/SaltmanCenter10YearAnniversary.

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Sara Gordon

Legal scholarship is increasingly interdisciplinary -- drawing insights from economics, sociology, history, rhetoric, and psychology, for example. Although this interdisciplinary turn is celebrated by those who recognize that law is not an autonomous discipline, others worry that legal scholars have abandoned solving real world problems and instead engage in abstract interdisciplinary theory. Setting aside for now the critical importance of even the most abstract theoretical scholarship, one must appreciate that complementary disciplines are often invoked by legal scholars with the express purpose of prescribing improvements to our legal system. For example, in the past year, Professor [Sara Gordon](#) has published [three articles](#), drawing upon her expertise in psychology and the social sciences, that prescribe improvements for the process of jury decisionmaking.

Professor Gordon's most recent piece is titled "[All Together Now: Using Principles of Group Dynamics to Train Better Jurors](#)." Gordon reviews all of

the major scientific studies that examine training in group decisionmaking and applies them to the unique context of jury decisionmaking. Implicit in our Constitutional commitment to a jury system is the notion that the diverse range of experiences and knowledge represented in the group will lead to more informed decisionmaking. Yet Gordon's careful review of the relevant literature documents the "variety of problems [that] are associated with group decisionmaking, from loss of motivation in groups due to social loafing and the free-rider effect, to the vulnerability of groups to various cognitive biases and errors. Group dynamics also play a role; it can be difficult for an individual to stand up to the group when her opinion is in the minority or when she believes that she has a lower social status than others in the group."

Professor Gordon proposes that jurors receive some elementary training in group collaboration and group decisionmaking. This training would address the pathologies of group decisionmaking that the social science literature has revealed. Gordon's proposals would better ensure the jury's thorough discussion of relevant ideas and information, reduce the tendency for information to be lost, maximize participation, and reduce social conformity. This is scholarship with impact from one of Boyd's most prolific scholars. Professor Gordon is part of a cohort of faculty members who write about law and psychology.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Amanda Stevens

The fourth and final year of law school for our part-time students represents the homestretch, requiring that final kick to the finish line to complete what has been a long, demanding run. Peeking over her shoulder as she hits that homestretch, Amanda Stevens sees the considerable ground she has covered that has made her race simultaneously strenuous and exhilarating.

It's tough to find the time to get immersed in the wide array of extracurricular goings on at Boyd while working a full-time job by day and carrying a not insubstantial load of courses by evening. But it can be done. And Amanda has done it ... with gusto. She has served as president of Boyd's Gaming Law Society, chief information officer of the Financial Law Society, vice president of the Organization of Part-Time and Non-Traditional Law Students Association, and treasurer of the Real Estate Law Society. Amanda was a teaching assistant for Professor Lori Johnson's Lawyering Process courses and an extern to Judge James C. Mahan. She currently serves as class representative on the Student Bar Association Board of Governors. And during the 2012 winter intersession, Amanda studied abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina taking a course entitled "Legal Dimensions of Doing Business in Latin America."

Business is in Amanda's blood, background, and future. She has worked full-time in the finance industry throughout her time at Boyd. Amanda earned both her MBA and B.S. in Business Administration, Finance, and International Business from UNLV. After law school, Amanda plans to continue to draw upon her business experience and credentials in commercial litigation practice.

"Law school has been such a wonderful experience," says Amanda. "I have made friendships that will last a lifetime and feel prepared for the next chapter because of the support and guidance I have received from the faculty and staff."



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Danielle Oakley '06

Danielle Oakley is a proud member of Boyd's '06 graduating class. After graduation, Danielle joined the Newport Beach office of O'Melveny & Myers LLP, where she has happily remained ever since. Danielle is a financial services attorney, representing bank and non-bank financial-services providers in class action litigation and regulatory enforcement actions. Danielle also provides regulatory compliance advice to her clients.

She is originally from Southern California, by way of Seattle. She attended UNLV undergrad, majoring in hotel administration while working at both on-strip and off-strip resorts, and she remained in Las Vegas for law school. While at Boyd, Danielle was actively involved in the Nevada Law Journal, the Society of Advocates, the Center for Academic Success, and the externship program, having externed for both the Honorable Roger L. Hunt of the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada and the Honorable Jay S. Bybee of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Having now been on the hiring end of nine years' worth of new associates, Danielle has grown even more confident that Boyd's first-rate faculty and programs, particularly the lawyering process program, excellently prepare Boyd students to practice law.

Having returned to Southern California to be near family, Danielle now lives in Laguna Niguel with her husband and two sons, ages 6 and 2.