



Boyd Briefs: March 5, 2015

From Dean Dan

I am pleased to announce the Kids' Court School at the Boyd School of Law will be celebrating a milestone on March 13: helping its 1,000th child. The event will begin with an overview of the Kids' Court School and a demonstration of the program, including a mock trial. A reception will follow.

Special thanks to [Dr. Rebecca Nathanson](#), founder of the Kids' Court School and James E. Rogers Professor of Education and Law; Professor [Anne Traum](#), associate dean for experiential legal education; and our dedicated staff for making this event possible.

The keynote address, "The History of Child Witness Research and Its Link to Practice," will be delivered by special guest [Dr. Karen Saywitz](#), a professor at the UCLA School of Medicine and an international expert on the capabilities, limitations, needs, and well-being of children involved in the legal system.

A 2012 Harvard University Bright Idea Award winner, the [Kids' Court School](#) is a nationally recognized program that educates children and youth about the judicial process and teaches strategies to reduce system-related stress. Judges, lawyers, mental health professionals, and others who work with children and youth involved in the judicial process are encouraged to attend this exciting and educational event.

Kids' Court School Milestone Celebration: Helping 1,000 Kids

March 13, 2:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Thomas & Mack Moot Court

I am also pleased to announce that [Jean Sternlight](#), Director of the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution and Michael and Sonja Saltman Professor of Law at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, is the recipient of the 2015 American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution's Award for Outstanding Scholarly Work. The award is given to individuals who make significant contributions to the dispute resolution field through scholarship. Professor Sternlight is recognized for her scholarship, teaching, and law reform activities nationally and internationally. Please join me in congratulating her on this terrific accomplishment. To read the complete announcement, click [here](#).

Dan

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Jennifer Roberts

Our law school is fortunate to be located in a city with a font of distinguished practitioners. In no subject area is that more true than gaming law. Much to the benefit of our law school community, many of these practitioners graciously lend their time and expertise by teaching



courses. Their contributions enable us to offer a rich array of gaming law courses. And of course our new [LL.M. program](#) in gaming law will strengthen and broaden the law school's national and international influence and reputation.

[Jennifer Roberts](#), formerly of Lionel Sawyer and now a partner at Duane Morris, is a prominent gaming law expert who has taught as an adjunct faculty member at the law school for many years. The students appreciate that she knows how to integrate her vast experience into effective teaching. Typical student course evaluations report that she is "Very knowledgeable," and "[c]learly [has] a ton of real experience." She "[g]ave real life experiences to help engage the material" and "[c]ared about our understanding of the material."

Our students benefit in innumerable ways from access to such great practitioners. Inside the classroom, the study of doctrine is enriched with discussion of context and practice that only practicing lawyers can provide. And of course the relationships between students and professors that form inside the classroom can lead, in turn, to friendships, mentorships, and jobs. In this vein, one student recently reported that s/he was especially appreciative of the fact that Professor Roberts "[c]onnected me with several attorneys who were able to help me with my capstone writing project dealing with gaming law." The ties that bind the law school to the Nevada Bar are strengthened daily, and we are proud of this affiliation.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Dawn Nielsen

Dawn Nielsen unashamedly turned 50 this year. How exactly does she intend to commemorate this milestone? She's going to run 50 miles. While that may sound horrifying to some of our readers, it's right in Dawn's wheelhouse.

The genesis of her zeal for physical challenge came about following a critical time in her life. As a mom with two young sons, Dawn received the daunting news that she had a brain tumor that would require surgery. "I knew that I had a choice -- I could succumb to the fear or I could move forward. I made the decision to dig deep and be as positive about the situation as possible." The operation was a success, no further treatment was necessary, and her life, it seemed, would resume its course. Or would it?

"As my life returned to normal, I found that I had a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude for so many things I previously took for granted. One of the things I was grateful for was that I had taken care of my body before the tumor was discovered. I credit my good overall health for my quick recovery, and this is one of the reasons I decided to take my physical fitness to the next level with endurance sports. Within a few years, I had competed in triathlons of varying lengths including a half Ironman distance, run half and full marathons, and completed a 100-mile bike ride." So on March 8, Dawn gleefully will run a mile for each of her years.

Predictably, Dawn has channeled her determination into her legal education. Among her many activities at Boyd, Dawn is currently a Research Fellow for Professor Sara Gordon; their project has them reviewing and recommending changes to Alaska statutes governing the treatment of Alaskans with mental illness.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Maryann Furman '06

Maryann Furman, class of 2006, is the owner of her own law firm, The Nurse Lawyer, P.A. Her practice focuses solely on personal injury litigation and trial work where she lives in New Port Rickey, Fla.

Born in Philadelphia, Maryann attended Thomas Jefferson University, receiving a bachelor's degree in nursing. Maryann worked as a nurse for two years before beginning law school at the William S. Boyd School of Law, working as a nurse full time while attending the part-time evening program at Boyd.

During law school, Maryann discovered her passion when she took trial advocacy with Professor Thomas Pitaro. The mock trying of cases, combined with Professor Pitaro's training and subsequent mentorship after law school started Maryann's career path as a trial lawyer. She received the CALI award for the highest grade in trial advocacy.

Maryann and her family wanted to relocate to Florida after graduation. Fortunately the guidance counselors at Boyd assisted Maryann to enroll as a visiting student at Stetson University College of Law in St. Petersburg. While completing her last semester at Stetson, she interned for the Pinellas County Public Defender's office. After passing the Florida Bar on the first attempt, Maryann accepted an attorney position at the Public Defender's office. She spent two years there, representing assigned clients in numerous jury trials, including misdemeanors and felonies from simple battery to attempted murder.

Maryann wanted to use her medical background as a nurse, but continue as a trial lawyer. So, she left the Public Defender's office to work for a private personal injury firm in Tampa. During her four years there, Maryann tried many civil cases from minor car accidents to wrongful death, achieving several multi-million dollar verdicts.

In 2012, Maryann set out on her own and opened her own law firm, The Nurse Lawyer, P.A. She has now tried more than 50 jury trials and achieved many multi-million dollar verdicts. She was rated one of Super Lawyers Rising Stars for the years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Maryann is a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum and the Multi-Million Dollar Advocates Forum. Maryann was also named one of the Top Lawyers of Tampa 2014 by *Tampa Bay Magazine*.
