



Boyd Briefs: May 7, 2015

## From Dean Dan

As the semester winds down, several student organizations have been celebrating another successful year and recognizing the achievements of their members.

The *Nevada Law Journal* held its year-end celebration and gave the inaugural Judge Elissa Cadish Award for Outstanding Student Note to Walter Fick for his article "Home Rule in Nevada: Is Greater Decentralization the Cure to Nevada's Ailing Local Governments?" The next night, the *UNLV Gaming Law Journal* held its year-end reception and gave the second annual Anthony Cabot Award for Best Student Note to Haley Lewis for her article "Unlikely Consequences: How Medical Marijuana is Affecting Nevada's Gaming Industry." This was followed up the next week with a celebration by the *Society of Advocates*, which gave the second annual Franny Forsman Award for Excellence in Advocacy to Cory Fielding.

Finally, students committed to public interest work gathered to recognize the work of our Public Interest Fellows and the Public Interest Law Association (PILA) summer grant recipients. The graduating Public Interest Fellows are Bailey Bortolin, Tanya Fraser, Shaina Plaksin, and Brian Vasek. The PILA grant recipients and the organizations they will work with this summer are: Heather Armantrout (Nevada Legal Services), Matthew Cook (Nevada Legal Services), Angel Getsov (Southern Nevada Senior Law Program), Chelsea Jensen (Office of the Nevada Attorney General), Brianna Lamanna (Clark County District Attorney's Office), Haley Lewis (Office of the Nevada Attorney General), Wynn Tashman (Kids' Court School), Michael Viets (ACLU of Nevada), and Steven "J.T." Washington (UNLV General Counsel).

Congratulations to all the award winners, and special thanks to Judge Elissa Cadish, Anthony Cabot, and Franny Forsman for attending the award presentations.

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We look forward to hosting tomorrow a CLE program titled "Beyond Medicine -- The Legal Implications of Medical Marijuana in Nevada." The program will feature panels of experts exploring Nevada's current law and the legal implications of medical marijuana in Nevada. Panel topics include: Enforcing the Boundaries of What's Legal; Risk, Reward and Regulation; and The Medical Implications of Medical Marijuana. A question and answer session will follow.

It's not too late to register for this informative session. To see a full schedule, including a list of panelists, and to register, click [here](#). Special thanks to Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice for co-sponsoring this event.

[CLE: Beyond Medicine -- The Legal Implications of Medical Marijuana in Nevada](#)

Friday, May 8, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Thomas & Mack Moot Court

This event has been approved for 4 CLE credits

Dan

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## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Jennifer Dorsey

As an attorney, Jennifer Dorsey earned a sterling reputation as one of the bar's preeminent writers and advocates. Appointed as a federal district judge in 2013, her extraordinary writing ability and professionalism fortified our exceptional federal bench. Motivated by an ethic of service, she now also teaches future lawyers and future judges how to be better writers and advocates. Indeed, we are immensely grateful that she is teaching two writing classes at Boyd this year. Although [Judge Dorsey](#) jokes that her agenda is to eradicate rogue apostrophes and to preserve the serial comma, her students (like her judicial colleagues and attorney colleagues before them) appreciate that she is a master of our profession's most important and nuanced skill, to wit, effective written communication.

Judge Dorsey is a Las Vegas native. She graduated from Chaparral High School and attended UNLV where she received her bachelor's degree cum laude in communication studies. Dorsey was the first member of her family to graduate from college. UNLV did not then have a law school, and Dorsey attended Pepperdine. Dorsey returned to Las Vegas after law school, and ultimately became the first female partner at [Kemp Jones & Coulthard](#), one of the city's most respected civil litigation boutiques. Then, as now, her generous spirit knows no bounds. For example, she was a co-recipient of the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's Vince Consul Memorial Award for her countless hours of pro bono service.

Judge Jennifer Dorsey, like other outstanding judges and lawyers who contribute to the success of our law school, are like our adopted alumni. Judge Dorsey also has the distinction of being an alumna by marriage. Her husband, [M. Daron Dorsey](#), was a member of Boyd's charter class of 2001. The school is deeply appreciative of this couple's commitment, generosity, and leadership.



## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Mike Branum

It's become something of a politically ingratiating/expedient cliché, but it is in fact true -- we all owe a debt of gratitude to our first responders, those who run toward the dangers and disasters from which the rest of us instinctively flee. We have among us here at Boyd an individual who continues his full-time career assisting others in peril while about to complete his first year of study in our part-time program. He is Mike Branum.

"I have spent nearly my entire adult life as a public servant in the emergency services field," Mike tells us. "My experience includes volunteer and paid positions in the fire service, emergency medicine, law enforcement, and emergency management." Among those positions have been firefighter, paramedic, hazardous materials technician, flight nurse, and emergency medical services unit manager. Mike's work has taken him throughout the nation, from Colorado to North Carolina to Alaska. Prior to relocating to southern Nevada a couple years back, Mike served as chief of the Fort Mojave Mesa Fire Department in Arizona.

His venture into law school does not necessarily signal a career change for Mike, who holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from North Carolina State University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina. "I went to graduate school and attempted to make career

decisions that would position me to become a fire chief, which in turn would allow me to give something back to a profession I have so enjoyed for over a quarter century. Pursuing my legal education is an extension of my professional objectives. Whether I return to fire service administration after law school or practice law in the public safety arena, a JD will better equip me to make a difference in fire service at a local, state, and national level."

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Heidi Almase '01

Judge Heidi (Nagel) Almase, a member of the 2001 Charter Class, currently presides over Las Vegas Municipal Court, Department 3. Judge Almase was elected in 2011 to her first six-year term. Judge Almase is a member of the Judicial Council for the State of Nevada and an Alternate Member to the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline. Within the Municipal Court, Judge Almase presides over adult drug court, the Habitual Offender Prevention and Education (HOPE) Court, also creating a habitual traffic offender program and implementing Las Vegas Municipal Court's first Mental Health Court with her colleague, Judge Cedric A. Kerns.

While at Boyd, Heidi was managing editor of the *Nevada Law Journal* and won the Dean's Service Award upon her graduation. After law school, Heidi clerked for the Nevada Supreme Court for two years. A former Nevada state peace officer, Heidi worked as prosecutor for the City of Las Vegas City Attorney's Office and the Nevada Office of the Attorney General, Special Prosecutions Unit. During her tenure as a prosecutor, Heidi had the opportunity to practice and argue before the Nevada Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 2008, Heidi joined her husband, Caesar Almase, in private practice. A long-time advocate of pro bono service, Heidi volunteered as a CAP attorney with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (LACSN) and served as pro bono counsel to the Women in Need (WIN) specialty court in Las Vegas Municipal Court for two years. Heidi is a recipient of the "50 Hours Club" for her pro bono service.

When not working, Heidi is an avid hot yoga enthusiast and enjoys spending time with her husband and three wonderful children, 17-year-olds Nina and Hannah and 7-year-old Alessandro.