



Boyd Briefs: April 24, 2014

From Dean Dan

This week at Boyd we are pleased to launch a terrific partnership with the law firm of [Eglet Wall Christiansen](#) to help promote our trial advocacy program. The firm has built one of the premier moot courtrooms in the country, with exceptional technological capability, and has offered this space when available to host moot court and trial competitions. This week we are thrilled to be hosting the 16th Annual Clark County Moot Court Competition, with the final rounds taking place at the Eglet Advocacy Center in downtown Las Vegas. This important annual event provides students a terrific opportunity to develop oral advocacy skills while taking part in friendly competition. The format is an appellate argument before the Nevada Supreme Court. All participating students will compete in the first round on Friday, and then advance to the semi-finals and finals on Saturday. The competition is the result of a wonderful partnership between the [Clark County Bar Association](#) and Boyd's Society of Advocates. Very special thanks to the local attorneys who have volunteered to serve as judges during the competition, as well as event sponsors [Bank of Nevada](#) and [BARBRI](#). We are grateful to [Robert T. Eglet](#) and the firm for welcoming us, and for providing the opportunity to our students to develop their advocacy skills in such outstanding facilities in partnership with outstanding trial lawyers.

Dan

Dean & Richard J. Morgan Professor of Law
daniel.hamilton@unlv.edu
[facebook.com/DeanDanHamilton](https://www.facebook.com/DeanDanHamilton)



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Mary Berkheiser

A special debt of gratitude is owed to the cadre of founding faculty who, 15 years ago, created the strong and durable foundation that has allowed the William S. Boyd School of Law to grow and thrive. Professor [Mary Berkheiser](#) is especially deserving of our thanks. Professor Berkheiser joined Boyd as an Associate Professor and as Director of our clinics. But she needed to do more than *direct* the clinics; she had to *develop* them. That mission was accomplished. Often ranked among the top clinical programs in the nation, our [Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic](#) provides students with practical legal experience as they represent and advocate for clients in need. Our clinics have been a model for other law schools around the country. Indeed, one of Professor Berkheiser's challenges as Director was that her clinical professor colleagues were often recruited away from Boyd to start clinics at other law schools; her legacy thus extends not only to the students who have completed a clinic at Boyd, but also to the students at many other law schools who are learning to practice law from clinicians who, in turn, learned from Professor Berkheiser how to be an effective clinical professor.

Professor Berkheiser continues to direct the [Juvenile Justice Clinic](#), where students represent children who have been charged in juvenile delinquency proceedings. The success of this clinic is realized in run-of-

the-mill cases, as students learn to become successful, ethical professionals, and their clients enjoy the privilege of thoughtful legal representation. And the success of this clinic is realized in seminal moments when, as described [here](#), policy changes dramatically affect the legal landscape.

Professor Berkheiser is a role model—and not only for students. She has enthusiasm for learning, passion for fairness, and profound respect for the potential of law. And all of this has been embedded in the Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic, which is now an integral part of the history *and future* of Boyd.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: AJ Hames

While looking forward to what lies ahead, those approaching graduation can anticipate that the occasion will prompt reflection on what all they have seen and done the last few years. For AJ Hames, that over-the-shoulder glance will fall upon a formidable record of accomplishment.

AJ was born and raised in northern Nevada and graduated from Galena High School in Reno. Higher education at Brigham Young University beckoned, but first AJ made his way to Trujillo, Peru to serve a two-year mission for his church. He returned from his service and took full advantage of his opportunities at BYU, serving as a research assistant, a new student orientation leader, and president of his residence hall. AJ graduated BYU with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology magna cum laude.

At our convocation ceremony in May, AJ will receive the James E. Rogers Award for outstanding overall scholastic accomplishment. He has performed consistently strong in his doctrinal, writing, and skills courses and has earned multiple CALI (Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction) awards. He is a member of the *Nevada Law Journal*, serving this year as its Nevada Law Editor, as well as a member of Society of Advocates (Boyd's moot court board), the Public Interest Law Association, and the J. Reuben Clark Law Society.

So how about some reflection, AJ? "Looking back, I didn't have any idea just how great my time at Boyd would be. My classmates have been friendly and helpful. The professors are approachable and knowledgeable. My favorite thing about Boyd, though, is that it offered me numerous opportunities to not only learn the law, but also try my hand at practicing it."

A la Back to the Future, AJ will depart Boyd and return home to become an associate at the [Fennemore Craig](#) law firm office in Reno.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Sarah Bassett '06

Sarah Bassett is an associate with the Las Vegas office of Cotton, Driggs, Walch, Holley, Woloson & Thompson. She practices primarily in the area of commercial litigation.

Born in Spokane, Washington, Sarah attended the University of Notre Dame on a golf scholarship. During her senior year of college, she externed at the South Bend Juvenile Detention Center. Working at the Detention Center encouraged her to attend law school; as well as perform community service. Upon graduation in 2006, Sarah accepted a position with Teach for America and was placed in Las Vegas. From 2006-08, she taught kindergarten students at a Title I school, while attending night school to earn a master's degree in elementary education.

After working with the Teach for America program for two years, Sarah attended the William S. Boyd School of Law. During law school, she was the social chair for the Black Law Students' Association and tutored junior high students from Title I schools. Upon graduation in 2011, Sarah was the law clerk to the Honorable Linda Marie Bell at the Nevada Eighth Judicial District Court.

She credits Boyd's strong academic programs -- especially the Lawyering Process Program -- and the mentoring from Boyd professors and staff for helping her attain a clerkship with Judge Bell; and eventually an associate position with her current firm. In addition, the connections made with other students at Boyd help to make Las Vegas feel like home and the place where she wants to build her legal career.

Sarah remains committed to community service and currently serves as a pro bono attorney for the Children's Attorneys Project for the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada.