



Boyd Briefs: November 20, 2015

From Dean Dan

I am delighted and honored that the Boyd School of Law today was recognized at the [Nevada Legal Services](#) Champions of Justice Award Luncheon. The annual luncheon honors local attorneys and organizations for their pro bono work.

The Boyd School of Law received the Collaboration Award, which recognizes the growing partnership between the law school and Nevada Legal Services. This past year, Boyd School of Law students and Nevada Legal Services worked together to offer tax education classes, record sealing classes, landlord-tenant classes, and family forms clinics in Pahrump, among other projects. Through this partnership, hundreds of Nevadans have been helped this year alone.

Boyd student Jessica Georgescu was named Nevada Legal Services' 2015 Law Student of the Year. Jessica has dedicated herself to Nevada Legal Services' many clinic outreach activities, teaching record sealing classes and family forms clinics in Pahrump. The clients she's assisted have given Nevada Legal Services terrific feedback, often saying how Jessica has helped make the legal process easier to understand and follow.

Thank you to Nevada Legal Services for the important work you do in our community, the hands-on opportunities you provide our students, and the honor of this recognition.

Boyd at Work in the Community: To highlight the great work Boyd students and alumni are doing in service to Nevada, each week we will feature members of our community whose efforts build upon our public service commitment.

This week, we recognize students Kory Koerperich, Matt Frauenfeld and Ronnie Boskovich for their outstanding work on *Reginald C. Howard v Brian Connett, et al.*, a Federal District Court 1983 inmate civil rights case.

Under the guidance of lawyer Travis Barrick of Gallian Welker & Beckstrom, L.C., the team obtained a favorable verdict, with punitive damages, at the conclusion of the seven-day trial. This collaborative effort was made possible through Boyd's Partners in Pro Bono program, in partnership with Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and the Federal District Court Pilot Pro Bono Program, which pairs local attorneys with law students to take on pro bono cases for the thousands of Nevadans who need an attorney but can't afford one. Special thanks to Associate Dean Christine Smith for directing the Partners in Pro Bono project at Boyd and to Travis Barrick for partnering with Boyd students on a number of cases and providing them mentoring and valuable experience.

Dan

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Michael Kagan

Michael Kagan is co-director of Boyd's Immigration Clinic and widely known for his research and published work in refugee and asylum law.

What's the most important thing you are working on? I'm concerned about the free speech rights of immigrants. We are in the early stages of a presidential election in which every candidate is talking about immigrants. But immigrants' freedom to speak for themselves is surprisingly precarious. This year, the Department of Justice actually argued that immigrants who entered the country illegally are not protected by the First Amendment. In my recent article available [here](#) in *California Law Review*, I discuss whether immigrants have freedom of speech. The short version is that they do, but it might surprise some people that *Citizens United* strengthens the argument that immigrants are protected by the First Amendment. I'm still working on this issue -- especially the question of whether immigrants should be able to make campaign donations.

How have your research and writing affected your teaching and community service? It's really the other way around. I've always written about the issues I see in front of me. I'm involved in a multi-year project researching how federal courts decide immigration appeals. I'm doing that with my Immigration Clinic Co-Director, Fatma Marouf, and Rebecca Gill, from UNLV's Political Science Department. That project began with a case Fatma and I worked on in our clinic. Basically, we lost the case, and we were upset about it -- and we started this research to understand why it happened.

What book or film has made a difference in your life? I paid my way through law school as a teaching assistant in film classes at the University of Michigan. In one of the classes, the professor showed *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, an old John Ford western about the founding of a state a lot like Nevada. Jimmy Stewart is a lawyer, but in the beginning of the story he's robbed and beaten up by Lee Marvin, who rips up his law books and laughs at him. "I'll teach you law," he says. I thought about that scene a lot when I worked in the Middle East. Law is so fragile. It's just ideals -- the crazy idea that rules in a book should be stronger than a man with a gun. We take rule of law for granted here, but we shouldn't. Whether it's conflict in the Middle East or an immigration case in Las Vegas, the alternative to following the rules is that *might makes right*, and I don't want to live in a world like that.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Gil Lopez

You have been a law student by evening while working with college students by day. What has that toggle between roles been like? Working full time during the day at Nevada State College as a **GEAR UP** ambassador and attending law school at night has been challenging and rewarding at the same time. Quickly weekends became more about getting my reading for classes done. I feel a special connection with my fellow evening students -- we all know we have lives outside of school, so we have tried to help each other out when needed.

I was fortunate to be selected as the Nevada Hispanic Legislative Caucus extern last spring; with the credit hours I was able to earn, I will be graduating a semester early.

Tell us about your longtime, ongoing work with the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and other local service organizations. I have been very active in the community and have a special connection to the Latin Chamber of Commerce. My involvement started in 2004 when I attended the Latin Chamber Career Day. There I met a friend who introduced me

to the Latino Youth Leadership Conference, with which I have worked the last 10 years.

You have mentioned that attending law school is something you have done in large part for your son. How so? It was after Delano was born when I decided to take the LSAT and apply to Boyd. There is a troubling lack of Latinos with professional degrees. I want to be a great role model for my son and let him know he can achieve anything he wants.

What's next, Gil? Education is near and dear to my heart. I would like to continue working at the Legislature around education policy and how to improve our K-12 and higher education systems.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Venicia Considine '08

Venicia Considine '08 is a staff attorney in the consumer rights project at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. Venicia found her dream career advocating for the rights of the little guy -- even if the little guy cannot afford an attorney. She represents clients against predatory or usurious practices by banks, mortgage companies, and payday and title loan lenders.

Before law school, she was an academic advisor at UNLV, helping undergraduates decide on their future careers. Barbara Williams-Rollings, class of 2002, and Venicia's history mentor, Dr. Willard Rollings, encouraged Venicia to apply for law school and helped keep her sane during her first year at Boyd.

She attended the part-time evening program and is grateful Boyd has a part-time program for working adults. Her classmates came from all walks of life. Their knowledgeable opinions and real-life experiences added depth and dimension to class discussions and late night study sessions. Venicia would not have made it through law school without Associate Dean Frank Durand and her classmates Kelley Jones, a Clark County public defender, and Randall Forman, staff attorney for the Clark County District Court.

Venicia fondly remembers Professor Tuan Samahon's Elmo impersonations, Professor Keith Rowley's Diet Dr. Pepper addiction, and the expectation that Professor Terry Pollman would turn into a winged fairy and gently glide out of the classroom on her ethereal voice.
