From Dean Dan

Congratulations to students Will Carter and Connor Saphire who placed first in this past weekend’s 18th annual in-house client counseling competition. Will and Carter will go on to represent Boyd and the Society of Advocates at the ABA Regional Client Counseling Competition at the University of Wyoming College of Law in 2018. Congratulations also to second place winners Landon Littlefield and Theresa Guerra, third place winners Marc Kustner and Jocelyn Murphy, and honorable mention winners Margaret Higgins and Ariana Reed.

The client counseling competition provides an opportunity for students to conduct an interview with a person playing the role of the client, elicit facts, advise about the relevant law, provide options for proceeding, and assist the client in making informed decisions. The competition promotes knowledge and interest among our students in preventive law and develops interviewing, planning and analytical skills.

Many thanks to the event organizers -- the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution, Society of Advocates, and the Clark County Bar Association -- as well as to the many volunteers who served as clients and judges during the competition. Special thanks to Nevada Supreme Court Justice Michael Cherry who served as a judge in the final round and, for their continued support of the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution, Sonja and Michael Saltman.
Laura Vlieg is a research librarian and assistant professor at Boyd's Law Library. She graduated from William & Mary Law School, practiced with an administrative law firm in Virginia, and will soon receive her M.L.I.S. from the University of Arizona.

What is the most significant issue facing modern legal researchers and how should it be addressed? As legal researchers transition their attentions primarily to screens rather than print materials, the biggest hurdle to overcome is understanding the nuances of the source material. When you consider a student who has never seen or touched a loose-leaf binder, a reporter, or a periodical, it is easy to see how the complexities of their content and organization can be conflated -- everything looks relatively the same on a screen. To some extent this issue will naturally resolve itself as online publishing companies and databases grapple with formatting issues and finding aids; yet, educators and researchers need to be cognizant of the challenge, and teach and practice diligence in evaluating source authority.

What is it about being a law librarian that inspires or motivates you? Students inspire me. Faculty members inspire me. Public patrons inspire me. Acting as a mediator between the vast amounts of legal information that is available in myriad formats and the people who need it most is an incredibly fulfilling task. Helping arm a student with the research skills he or she needs to be an effective lawyer later in life; helping a law professor dig up details to supplement her argument in a forthcoming publication; helping a member of the public find the sources that will help that public patron understand the law or even win a court case -- all of these things I experience on a weekly basis, and all of these things inspire me to continue improving my own research skills so I can continue to pay it forward.
What have you read, listened to, or watched recently that has influenced you or your work?

Documentaries are my passion right now. We have an incredible collection of documentary films here in the law library, and I've been trying to highlight those films through our new weekly Pop-N-Doc series ( Thursdays at noon in the law library). The mission of documentaries aligns perfectly with that of a law school: to educate about the past, and inspire action in the future. Two particular films that we've recently screened -- Crime After Crime and The Massie Affair -- really enlightened me as to the functions and failings of the criminal justice system.

Student Spotlight: Jessica Georgescu

Your interest in environmental issues began a while back as an undergrad at UNLV, did it not? Yes. I was an apprentice union electrician for five years and spent most of my time working with energy and environmental control systems at local wastewater treatment plants. Upon graduating, I went into management and helped build my employer's solar division. I became Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) certified and sought to create additional opportunities in the local market for renewable energy and sustainable construction.

And that led to related graduate study prior to law school, yes? Yes. After kicking off the solar division, my VP suggested a master's program at the University of Colorado, Denver in Global Energy Management. This new program -- I was in its sixth cohort -- was funded by oil and gas companies to educate the next generation of energy leaders. The program covered many aspects surrounding energy technologies and provided in-depth exploration into energy and environmental law.

Tell us about some of the cool opportunities you've had to gain experience in the environmental field while at Boyd. I helped design, permit, and execute a 32 tons-per-day/3MW municipal solid waste-to-energy plant for a nearby military base. During this project I worked closely with local and California state regulatory agencies preparing and working through environmental measures and documentation. Recently, I began working with federal regulatory agencies to commission a new gas line for another military base, again preparing environmental permitting documentation and working with agencies to create a compliant and seamless process.

What's the plan following graduation next May? I plan to work in-house for a large energy company. I am familiar with the energy project process and participate in some legal activities already, including environmental permitting, contract development, negotiations, and project execution.

Alumni Spotlight: Kfir Levy '03

Partner at Mayer Brown, Washington, D.C.

Tell us about your decision to attend UNLV Law. The choice to attend UNLV Law was much more of a decision to go to law school at all. It wasn't anything I had thought about, but my wife (Anne Levy, class of 2001) was at Boyd and would bring her studies home. We would talk about the issues she was studying, and it was fascinating. By the time she started her second year, I was taking the LSAT and planning to attend Boyd, too. I couldn't
have known then how it would turn out, but knowing what I know now about the Boyd community, it wasn’t a risky move at all.

You’re a member of the Alumni Leadership Circle. Why do you feel it is important to donate to the law school? Also, in what capacity do you feel your membership in this group impacts the school? Simply put, I want the Boyd community to thrive so that others get the same opportunities that were given to me. The Boyd community changed my life. It opened doors and created opportunities for me and my family that are difficult to quantify. From Boyd’s inception, the legal community has been extremely supportive of the law school and the students. Judges made special efforts to hire clerks from Boyd, and local law firms eagerly hired Boyd alumni. The school’s administration and professors were just as helpful. I remember numerous conversations with professors and Dean Dick Morgan about how to get a clerkship or find just the right job. Each of them took a personal interest in my future. From conversations with colleagues who attended other law schools, it is clear that this “Boyd community” is as unique as it is wonderful. When asked to help the community thrive by giving time and money through the Alumni Leadership Circle, it was easy to say, “yes.”

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? It is unfortunate that work can take over your life, which is perhaps doubly true in law. In today’s legal market, clients can and do make unreasonable demands on your time, from lots of travel and time away from home to weekends spent at the office. That makes spare time a precious commodity, but I’m blessed to have such a wonderful family with whom to spend it. I love the everyday stuff, whether it be spending time with my family at the pool or at the park, participating in school activities, or coaching the kids’ soccer teams. If I have remorse about anything, it might be having had a few too many discussions about which Transformers would defeat which other Transformers if it came to a battle.

Community Member Spotlight: Jan Jones Blackhurst

Executive Vice President for Government Relations & Corporate Responsibility at Caesars Entertainment, Member of the Gaming Law Advisory Board at Boyd School of Law

What was your first or most memorable job? My first job when I graduated from Stanford University was as a cocktail waitress, which obviously thrilled and delighted my parents, but I was making $180 a night. After working there for six months, the company expanded and asked me to be a part of their corporate team. I acted as the Director of Human Resources, and it allowed me to take my first steps into a real business environment. Although the position came with a pay cut, the experience taught me that sometimes you have to take a step back in order to take a couple of steps forward. The reason I made this decision was because I did not want to be a waitress; I wanted to work in business.

What is your favorite travel destination? I loved Istanbul and Asia. When you step off the plane into those countries, you can really see the difference in culture. I’ve never been to India, but I cannot wait to have the opportunity to travel there.

Did you face any challenges being the first female mayor of Las Vegas? Of course! People had certain perceptions about a woman mayor, but the good news was that I was the Mayor and chief executive of the city; they had to listen to me! I’m a person who likes to study everything. The first six months I was in office, I was learning everything I could about the city and how the different departments function as well as how that affected the services you could bring into the community. It was an extraordinary time and a wonderful opportunity to be mayor of a city as dynamic as Las Vegas.

What is something about yourself that would surprise others? Well, I’m a terrible singer, but that probably wouldn't surprise anyone. I guess I would say that I actually can be shy. I’m
very comfortable speaking in front of a crowd, but if I'm in a group where I don't really know anyone, I can be shy.