From Dean Dan

Last Friday the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (LVNBA) hosted a wonderful event, its 27th Annual Scholarship Gala. Formed in Las Vegas in 1981, the LVNBA is an affiliate of the National Bar Association, the nation’s oldest and largest association of predominantly African-American lawyers, judges, law professors, and law students. Through its annual Gala the LVNBA awards scholarships to law students committed to serving minority, low income, and other underserved communities. This year, we’re delighted and thankful that the LVNBA awarded $12,000 in scholarships to six Boyd students:

Justice Douglas Scholarship: Marckia Hayes
Justice Rawlinson Scholarship: Keith Hightower
Judge Guy Scholarship: Seleste Hamilton
Judge White Scholarship: Monique Jammer
MGM Grand Scholarship: Jocelyn Murphy
Presidents Scholarship: Caleb Green
The Gala was also an occasion to honor and celebrate the contributions and achievements of so many of our friends in the community. Justice Douglas received the lifetime achievement award in recognition of all of his contributions to Nevada jurisprudence. Boyd alum and incoming Speaker of the Nevada Assembly Jason Frierson (2001) was named Attorney of the Year and Colin Seale (2012), the founder of thinkLaw and a three-time recipient of the LVNBA scholarship, was honored with the Community Service Award. And, of course, in other good news, we want to congratulate our good friend and adjunct professor Aaron Ford on his election as majority leader of the Nevada Senate.

We are so proud of our law students, alumni, and friends and all of their ongoing commitment to public service, as well as of our relationship with community organizations such as the LVNBA. Our own Professor Rachel Anderson and adjunct professor Judge Richard Boulware have served as past presidents of the LVNBA. Many thanks to current president Karl Riley for all his work and to the LVNBA leadership for such an outstanding and inspiring event.

Dan

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Faculty Spotlight: Lydia Nussbaum

Lydia Nussbaum is the subject of our second profile featuring professors who teach and write about dispute resolution. Professor Nussbaum is Director of the Mediation Clinic and Associate Director of the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution.

What are you working on right now? My latest project on ADR
and public policy focuses on efforts to reform K-12 school discipline in the U.S. Harsh school disciplinary practices are one of many policies contributing to a "School-to-Prison Pipeline." Research studies show that school suspension and expulsion practices are associated with poor educational and life outcomes for American children, and that low-income, minority children are punished disproportionately to their white peers. One proposal for dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline is to replace zero-tolerance discipline, or mandatory suspension and expulsion, with practices based in "Restorative Justice." These restorative practices include informal ADR processes like mediation, problem-solving conferences, and talking circles, all of which are designed to create space for dialogue and individualized amends after a harmful incident has occurred at school. I am writing about how advocates are using a variety of legal tools - - lawsuits, legislation, and regulation -- to institute restorative justice in schools and sharing my recommendations for how they might better achieve their policy goals.

When students ask you what they should read outside their required textbooks, what do you suggest? Good fiction. Stories about complicated people. At base, the job of being a lawyer is all about people -- the people we represent and whose stories we tell, the people we oppose or appeal to, the people whose lives will be impacted by our advocacy. It can be easy to forget or overlook the human players and get caught up in legal doctrine and the competition of argumentation. A novel with complicated and compelling characters teaches us what good storytelling looks like and helps us develop skills of empathic understanding. And, finally, there is the simple pleasure of getting drawn into a good tale, of turning off the analytical mind and activating the imagination.

What have you read that has influenced you or your work? Speaking of learning from fiction, there is one story that I often keep in mind, particularly when teaching law students about mediation, client counseling, or how to develop a theory of a case, and that is Ryūnosuke Akutgawa’s short story The Grove, on which Akira Kurosawa’s film "Rashōmon" is based. The story recounts a horrible crime as told through the first-person, eyewitness accounts of a number of different characters. Each character’s retelling of the events they witnessed or participated in is different, simultaneously providing new information about the crime and also contradicting elements of the other characters’ stories. For me, as a lawyer and a mediator, the moral of the story is that the objective “truth” about past events is filtered through our fallible human perception and, more often than not, unknowable.

Student Spotlight: Sara Schreiber

Before starting at Boyd this year, you worked in forensics for the City of Henderson Police Department. Did that rouse or douse your interest in criminal law practice? Working in forensics did rouse my interest in criminal law. I’ve been fortunate enough to attend forensic conferences around the country, and at those conferences I’ve met a handful of attorneys who were learning about forensics in order to better help their clients. I always admired their dedication and felt that my background could be an asset should I decide to pursue criminal law.

You also have been a volunteer tour guide at Las Vegas’s famed Neon Museum. Was that as fun as it sounds? Yes! I am fascinated by Las Vegas history, so I had a great time talking with people about the city’s past. My favorite memories are the Liberace stories people shared with me after my tour. I’m a huge Liberace fan, thanks to my grandma, and hearing those stories in such a special place was wonderful.

What’s your number one memory from being a member of the Notre Dame Marching Band
as an undergrad? When I was a sophomore in marching band, we had the opportunity to perform with [the band] Chicago. They were so gracious and kind. On game day, when my family here saw the half time show, they were completely taken by surprise! We rehearsed really long hours for that show, and it was so worth it.

**How goes your first semester of law school so far?** I am really enjoying my first semester. It's been a lot of work, but whenever I've reached out for help, there has always been someone willing to give me guidance. Leaving a career I loved was hard, but the strong community here at Boyd has made my transition much easier.

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Alumni Spotlight: Seaton Curran ’08

*Seaton is a shareholder at the Las Vegas office of Howard and Howard, PLLC. He is a patent attorney concentrating his practice on developing and executing targeted IP strategies for his clients in the areas of gaming, e-commerce, and consumer electronics, with a focus on mechanical, electrical, and computer software technologies.*

**What brought you to Las Vegas?** My wife was born and raised in Las Vegas. We originally met while I was living in Southern California; however, after we were married, we decided to move back to Las Vegas to raise a family. We both come from large families with most of mine still a short drive away in California. Her parents and most of her siblings still live in town, so the move was easy to make with all the support we would need to raise a family.

**Tell us about your decision to attend the Boyd School of Law.** I decided to attend Boyd because of the quality of the professors and the flexibility of the part-time program. While attending Boyd, I continued to work as a professional civil engineer, and my wife and I began our family. At times the balance was difficult, but my professors were wonderfully skilled at keeping the classes interesting and engaging, and my wife was incredibly supportive, which encouraged me to persevere through the hectic schedules.

**What is the best moment of your career so far?** One of my first clients was a woman who invented a wheelchair accessory that helped better support her adult son in his wheelchair. I was able to secure a patent on her invention and was grateful for the opportunity to meet this family and to give them an advantage beginning their business venture.

**What’s the best business advice you’ve received, and who did it come from?** My father was a nuclear engineer in Southern California and he would often say, "If everything's going right, then you don't know everything that's going on." He would constantly remind me that the details matter, which has been great advice in my patent practice.

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Community Member Spotlight: Senator Richard Bryan

*Director at Fennemore Craig, Former U.S. Senator, Member of the Dean’s Council at the Boyd School of Law*

**Tell us about your decision to serve on the Dean’s Council and what makes UNLV Law's mission meaningful to you.** I've known Dean Hamilton since he came to Boyd. I've been involved with the law school since Dean Dick Morgan came to Nevada. I was impressed with what Dean Morgan had accomplished in such a short amount of time by getting the law school approved and accredited. Over the years, I have made presentations, lectured,
and been invited to participate in a variety of law school activities; so when Dean Hamilton asked me to serve, I told him I did indeed have an interest, and I would be happy to do so. I think UNLV Law is an important addition to the community and a vital addition to UNLV.

What was your first or most memorable job? Other than mowing lawns, my first job was at Bonds Jewelers in downtown Las Vegas, after school and on Saturday. I was a janitor at the store, sweeping the sidewalks, cleaning the windows, etc. The most interesting aspect of the job was that I was a postal clerk, as well. Bonds would send packages to their home office containing jewelry. They had a post office box in the old post office that today houses the Mob Museum. I was able to learn the difference between registered mail, insured mail, and regular parcel post. At Christmas, my boss told me to bring a coat and tie because after I finished my chores, I could go out onto the floor and be a salesman. Overall, it was really a fascinating job, and I loved it.

What advice would you give to current UNLV Law students? I would say the most important thing is to make good use of your time in law school. Obviously in today's competitive environment, it is important to do well academically; however, if you intend to practice or pursue a career in Southern Nevada, you should also use this opportunity to meet as many members of the bar as you can, as well as local community and political leaders. When you graduate from law school, you want to have people in the community who you are familiar with and who know you. I would also say that your career has already begun before you've even left law school, so treat your colleagues in law school with great respect. You never know which of your colleagues may influence your career. So, burn no bridges.

Where is your favorite travel destination? I have been to so many different places. I'm an anglophile, so I have thoroughly enjoyed my trips to London. I'm also a Europhile. I'm fascinated by the history of the continent and the capital cities. I have seen many of the historical sites in Europe and England, and I would have to say those have been my favorite trips.

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