



From Dean Dan

As we reflect on this past year, we are grateful to our community partners and all the work our alumni, students, faculty, and staff do to help underserved Nevadans. Since Boyd opened its doors in 1998 we have partnered with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada to offer free legal education classes to more than 62,000 Nevadans. This year, Legal Aid led the charge on a remarkable community-wide record sealing project that helped more than 300 Nevadans, and Boyd students, faculty, and staff were glad to support this project as part of the [7th Annual Community Law Day](#). This is just one of the many examples of the legal community coming together to help those who need us most.

In November the law school was honored to be named one of the Pro Bono Collaborators of the Year by Nevada Legal Services at the annual Champions of Justice Luncheon. And, as always, we are very proud of our students and alumni recognized each year at the Legal Aid Center's Pro Bono Luncheon. This past year 293 Boyd alumni volunteered for Legal Aid Center's many pro bono activities. Jeff Lavigne '15 volunteered more than 300 pro bono hours, demonstrating an exceptional commitment to public service. Boyd alums made up 28% of the attorney volunteers for Legal Aid Center's pro bono activities.

Let's not forget our outstanding students - [Ryan Efros](#) was named the Student of Distinction by Nevada Legal Services, and [Jonathan Chung](#) was recognized as the Pro Bono Student of the Year by Legal Aid. For her dedication to Boyd's Kids' Court School, [Beatriz Aguirre](#) was selected as the Richard L. Brown Community Service Scholar. Ryan, Jonathan, and Beatriz exemplify "Service Above Self."

Thanks to everyone for continuing the Boyd tradition of service. All the best in the new year.

Dan

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Faculty Spotlight: Christine Smith

Christine Smith is Boyd's Associate Dean for Public Service, Compliance and Administration. She created the law school's Community Service Program when the law school was founded in 1998, and has overseen it ever since. Together with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, Dean Smith also created, and still oversees, the Partners in Pro Bono program, which pairs law students with experienced practitioners.

What is it about your job that most inspires or motivates you?

The students. They are so amazing and so committed to helping the underserved citizens of Nevada. The opportunity to work with the students in our free legal education and Partners in Pro Bono programs is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career at Boyd. The students blossom from the orientation program to the end-of-semester reflection meeting. They tell me the best part about teaching the free legal education classes is learning an area of law, helping people, developing their oral presentation skills, their analytical skills, their people skills, their listening skills, and their practical legal skills. Watching our students continue their commitment in the Pro Bono Honors program and beyond law school means so much to me.

What new projects have been going on within the Community Service Public Interest Program? This past August we tried something truly innovative for the 7th Annual Community Law Day. With the help of our community partners -- Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and Nevada Legal Services -- Barbara Buckley, County Commissioner Lawrence Weekly, law students, faculty, staff, alumni, attorneys from several state agencies, and staff from many state, county and city offices and the Doolittle Community Center came together to change people's lives and eliminate barriers to employment by sealing their criminal records. The collaboration enabled more than 300 Nevadans to get their records sealed in a fairly short period of time compared to the complex, time-consuming process that people must usually navigate to get their records sealed. Everyone learned a lot by conducting this program and we hope that what we learned will translate to legislative changes to streamline the process. It always surprises me how people in this state come together to make a difference. My time in Nevada has shown there are amazing people here who will work together to make anything possible.

What is the most significant issue you presently face in your public interest work and the next project you'd like to tackle? This past year I was privileged to serve on the Commission to Study the Administration of Guardianships in Nevada's Courts. The Commission members reviewed the processes for creating guardianships and conservatorships, stakeholder accountability, court documentation and tracking, judicial training, and resources available or needed to assist Nevada's courts in administering guardianships. After several months of work, the Commission's final report was filed with the Supreme Court of Nevada in September 2016. As the Commission's recommendations become policy and are implemented, I hope the Boyd School of Law and our community partners will continue to be involved in educating people on the guardianship process and in ensuring protected persons under guardianship are educated on their rights and are treated fairly.

 **Alumni Spotlight** Alumni Spotlight: Jeffrey Lavigne '15

Head Litigation Attorney, The Law Offices of Kristian Lavigne & Associates, Las Vegas

Jeff, tell us about what motivated you to contribute more than 300 hours in pro bono service. To be honest, I never set out to hit a certain number of hours; it just sort of happened. I started my career as an associate at a large law firm where I was part of a legal team and did work in a piecemeal fashion -- a motion here, a memo there -- but I never got to manage my own cases. I yearned for more direct experience and when I learned pro bono cases were a great way to do just that, I dove right in. My employer was very supportive of my efforts and even let me count my pro bono hours towards my minimum billable hour requirement. I am very fortunate that my current employer is equally supportive. Also, I know it might sound cliché, but I have so much to be grateful for in this life. My gratitude speaks loudest when I take the time (rather than money) to help those in need.

While in law school did you have a passion to know that public service would become such an important facet of your law practice? I always liked to think I would use my law degree to help people. I cannot say I had a specific plan for pro bono work, but I can say that I intended to be of service in some capacity. That is because I know that if I spent all my time doing things strictly for myself, those things would lose their meaning. However, I know I am not the kind of person who naturally is always thinking of other people. Service work is just something I fell into and I like the way it makes me feel -- so, I keep doing it. Plus, when I am doing something for another person, I do not focus on my own problems.

What is your favorite thing about living in Nevada? It's Nevada (not Nev-aw-da). Nevadans may disagree on a lot, especially the north vs. the south, but we can all agree on correct pronunciation for our state. I love how Nevadans will never hesitate to correct the poor souls who mispronounce it.

 **Community Spotlight** Community Member Spotlight: Cynthia Alexander

Dickinson Wright, Chair of the Public Interest Law Advisory Board at the Boyd School of Law

Tell us about your decision to serve on the Public Interest Law Community Advisory Board and what makes UNLV Law's mission meaningful to you. I strive to serve my community in a way that makes a positive impact. It's something I'm passionate about. The Public Interest Law Community Advisory Board provides guidance to the Boyd School of Law's Public Interest Law Program, as it expands its offerings to the students and the community. I am thrilled to be a part of the growth of the Program. Although I did not attend UNLV or Boyd, I feel a bit like a Rebel!

What was your first or most memorable job? My first job was delivering the Free Press, one of the daily papers in Detroit. In junior high school, I wanted spending money for clothes, so my parents encouraged me to get a job. The paper had to be delivered by 7 a.m., so most mornings I did deliveries in the dark while riding my bike. My mom would give me a ride in the car when it rained or snowed -- but she would charge me for gas!! I learned early on to work hard and keep expenses low.

What advice would you give to current UNLV Law students? My advice would be to set goals. Without focus, your efforts won't go as far.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? I enjoy reading cookbooks and trying new recipes.

Tell us about something you've read that's made a real difference to you. I read books that relate to business, time management, or motivation. Some of my favorites that I re-read every couple of years are *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, and *The Effective Executive*.

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