



### From Dean Dan

We kick off the new year with some exciting news in the Thomas & Mack Legal Clinic. We are proud to announce the creation of the Edward M. Bernstein & Associates Immigration Clinic Children's Rights Program. Edward M. Bernstein & Associates is donating \$250,000 to enable the law school to represent unaccompanied immigrant children in Nevada, as part of Boyd's Immigration Clinic. The children represented by this Program are fleeing some of the most dangerous parts of the world. We are very grateful for members of the legal community, and thank Ed and Claudia Bernstein, who recognize this issue and are motivated to take action. For more on the history of this Program, and the generous gift from Edward M. Bernstein & Associates, please see the recent write up on [Desert Companion's blog](#).

This week, the law school is presenting several informative programs on immigration issues in both Northern and Southern Nevada. This afternoon, in partnership with the University Nevada, Reno and Washoe Legal Services, we are hosting a forum entitled, "[Undocumented Students and DACA: Immigration Policy Going Forward](#)" on the campus of UNR. Volunteer attorneys organized by Washoe Legal Services will be available for brief consultations with attendees at the conclusion of the forum.

Boyd Law Professor and Immigration Clinic Director Michael Kagan is presenting a [CLE](#) on immigration law from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. today at the National Judicial College on the campus of UNR. Professor Kagan will also be presenting the first of a three-part CLE tomorrow, January 20, at the law school. This CLE, entitled "[Representing Victims of Persecution in Immigration Court \(Intensive Training\)](#)" is presented in partnership with Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada.

Finally, we hope our alumni and friends in Northern Nevada will join us for our first reception of the new year, at the Twisted Fork in Reno from 5:30-7:30pm tonight. Let us know if you are coming by clicking [here](#).

Dan

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### Faculty Spotlight: Michael Kagan

*Professor Michael Kagan is the director of Boyd's Immigration Clinic. In addition to teaching and supervising the clinic, he is a prolific scholar focusing on the tension between immigration law and civil rights.*

**What's the most important thing you are working on right now?**



I want Boyd to have one of the most dynamic immigration clinics in this country. I want to make sure that as many Boyd graduates as possible have direct experience with immigration law before they graduate. And this isn't just to benefit our students. More than one in five residents of Clark County is foreign born, and yet there is little institutionalized pro bono legal defense available for people who are targeted for deportation by the federal government. Our community has a deportation defense gap. The Immigration Clinic can't represent large numbers of people, so we try to take on the hardest, highest stakes deportation defense cases that we can find. We are very fortunate that Edward M.

Bernstein and Associates has just given us a five-year, \$250,000 commitment to support our Children's Rights Project defending unaccompanied children who are threatened with deportation. And we are making sure that our students get to be at the front line in these cases. I think they set an example of what can be done here in Nevada.

**How does your research and scholarship influence your teaching and service and vice versa?**

As a professor, my research focuses on the intersection of immigration and civil rights. I tell my students that the civil liberties revolution in the courts that expanded constitutional rights in the 1950s and 1960s is only just starting for immigrants. That makes this an exciting time to think about immigration law. I've done a lot of work on free speech rights for immigrant activists (you can read that here: [When Immigrants Speak: The Precarious Status of Non-Citizen Speech Under the First Amendment](#), 57 B.C. L. Rev. 1237 (2016)). And I've written about the Fourth Amendment problems inherent in the way immigration law is enforced right now (you can read that here: [Immigration Law's Looming Fourth Amendment Problem](#), 104 Geo. L. J. 125 (2015)). I'm now working with one of my former students, Gil Kahn, on trying to reconcile administrative law deference to the executive branch with the need for the courts to scrutinize executive actions that impair physical liberty—which is always the case when the government tries to detain and deport someone.

**What is it about being a law school professor that inspires or motivates you?**

In the Bernstein & Assoc. Children's Rights Program we have clients from Central America who are the same age as my kids. They have to appear in court to testify about gang murders, about violence all around them. They have to prepare for asylum interviews the way my kids prepare for math tests. But a few weeks ago, at an asylum interview, the government officer tried to break the ice with one of our clients—a 13-year-old girl. The government officer asked our client what she wanted to be when she grows up. Our client said, "I want to be a lawyer, so I can help children." When I heard that, I thought: That's enough for anyone to be glad to have gone to law school.

**Student Spotlight: Yu Meng**



**You were born in Beijing and attended elementary school there. What do you recall about your transition to life in the United States ?**

The one thing that I can still vividly remember is how nervous I was on the first day of school in the U.S. The first class I had that morning was algebra and I honestly could not understand anything that the teacher was saying. Luckily, I played basketball and I was able to adapt through the language of basketball. I certainly do not want to go back to that day though!

**How did you enjoy your externship with United States District Court Judge Andrew Gordon and Judge Jennifer Dorsey?**

It was absolutely FANTASTIC! Judge Dorsey and Judge Gordon are great judges and even better people. I learned so much about legal writing, civil procedure, and the judicial decision-making process. Both judges and the people working for them taught me the meaning of being a good human being before being a lawyer. To this day, I still work with their clerk, Joe Regalia, on pro bono projects. I have no doubt that spending time with judges like Judge Dorsey and Judge Gordon is the best thing a 1L can do during the first summer of law school.

**You've been active in many Boyd student organizations. What experience stands out for you?**

Student organizations at Boyd offered me the opportunity to give back to the community with my law school buddies. It is an amazing way to meet new people while making a difference using the knowledge acquired in law school. Student organizations definitely made my law school experience much more memorable.

**How do you envision your career path?**

My dream has always been to become a capable trial lawyer who can make a difference in the world.

**Alumni Spotlight: Tierra Jones '06**



*Tierra Jones is a Deputy District Attorney with the Clark County District Attorney's Office.*

**What do you wish you would have learned at the beginning of your career?**

When I first became a lawyer, I believed that this was going to be so much fun and that the beginning was just a chance to get my feet wet and test the waters. One of the things that I wish I would have learned earlier in my career is that the reputation that you build as a young lawyer will follow you for the rest of your legal career. One of the main things people will know about you is your reputation. Once that is cast, it is very difficult to change it back. So, it is very important to begin your career by building a good reputation and maintaining it during your entire career.

**What drew you to the DA's Office and what do you like most about your work there?**

When I first started practicing law, I was a public defender. The reason that I wanted to be a public defender was my desire to help people and change lives. After five years of pursuing that goal, I wanted to make a change. While contemplating a career change, I spoke with a mentor who actually said to me, "If you really want to help people, why wouldn't you be a prosecutor, where you actually have the power to help people?" That statement really made me start thinking. Consequently, I became a prosecutor to have that power and be able to use that power to actually make a difference and change lives on a daily basis. Having practiced on both sides of the fence, I learned that having the power to help people is an important thing. And being a prosecutor gives you the ability to utilize that power to help seek justice while making positive changes in the lives of many people.

**You're involved in a lot – volunteering, mentoring, etc. Why are these things important to you?**

My volunteer activities are extremely important to me. I believe that these activities make positive changes in the Las Vegas community and allow me to take an active role and be a part of these changes. I believe that, as an attorney who has been very fortunate professionally, it is incumbent upon me to help to pave the way for those that will follow. The mentors and professionals who were a part of my law school life were very important to me. I want to give back to them by serving as a mentor and example for other students and future attorneys. It is also important to give back to the community as a way to keep my life balanced and organized. The law can become a big part of your life--but adding in other activities creates an important balance, too.

**Community Member Spotlight: Judge Nancy Allf**

*Department 27, Eighth Judicial District, Member of the Public Interest Advisory Board at the Boyd School of Law.*



**Tell me about your decision to serve on the Public Interest Law Advisory Board and what makes Boyd Law's mission meaningful to you.**

I was actually asked to serve on the Public Interest Law Advisory Board, which thrilled me as I had followed the PILA student group's activities for several years and attended the PILA auction. The group is mission driven, which appeals to me, and makes a difference in a community I care so much about.

**When did you know working in the legal field was for you?**

I was in junior high, and my dad was an FBI agent. I went to court to watch him testify in a trial, and I fell in love with the courtroom. I knew I wanted to pursue a legal career, but at that time women didn't really attend law school, so to be a lawyer at that point was a big stretch for a young woman. I maintained this burning desire since junior high to be involved in the field in some way, so to get this opportunity to be a judge is truly a dream come true.

**What was your first or most memorable job?**

My first law job was as a law clerk in law school. I sat in a six-week federal criminal trial that was featured on the show 60 Minutes. It was a "little ABSCAM" case in eastern Kentucky.

**What advice would you give to current Boyd Law students?**

Take advantage of the many opportunities afforded to you by the Boyd School of Law. Explore the community to see where you can best serve.

**Tell me about something you've read that's made a real difference to you.**

The book *To Kill a Mockingbird* inspired me to be a lawyer, but recently, I've enjoyed historical fiction set during World War II, including *The Nightingale*, *The Book Thief* and *All the Light We Cannot See*.

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