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10-2023

### Boyd Law School: Transforming Nevada's Legal Community for 25 Years

Leah Chan Grinvald

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# Boyd Law School

## Transforming Nevada's Legal Community for 25 Years

BY LEAH CHAN GRINVALD, DEAN AND RICHARD J. MORGAN PROFESSOR OF LAW, WILLIAM S. BOYD SCHOOL OF LAW AT UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

**This academic year (2023-24) marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year of legal education for the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Our “silver” anniversary provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the impact that Boyd Law has had on the Nevada legal community, as well as celebrate the collective accomplishments that have gone into creating and sustaining Boyd Law. A listing of events that will be held during this celebratory academic year can be found at [law.unlv.edu/25th-anniversary](http://law.unlv.edu/25th-anniversary).**

### The Law School 25 Years in the Making

Boyd Law’s opening in August 1998 was the culmination of 25 years of discussions, advocacy, and feasibility studies. Prior to 1998, Nevada joined with Alaska as one of two lone states without a law school. The lack of a law school in Nevada had been felt as far back as the 1970s, when the first feasibility study had been commissioned. This first study concluded that a law school would be feasible, and that Nevada would benefit from having a law school. Two later commissioned studies concluded with similar findings, but it was not until June 1995 that the Nevada Legislature (through the efforts of Assemblyman Morse Arberry Jr.) approved \$500,000 to support the planning of a law school.

President Carol Harter, the newly appointed UNLV president at that time, was able to use those funds to put together a planning committee and hire consultants to develop a plan for the law school. First on the list was securing funding. Among the very early financial supporters for the law school was Bill Boyd with his foundational pledge. Harter worked with other community leaders to secure additional pledges. All of this support from the community (with such leading names as Jim Rogers, the Thomas and Mack families, and Mike and Sonja Saltman) showed the Legislature that the community backed this law school, and in 1997, the Legislature appropriated the funds to operate the law school.

### From Paradise Elementary to Being Nationally Ranked

Finding space on UNLV’s campus for the first class of the law school proved slightly challenging, but Paradise Elementary School was identified as the place. And, led by the entrepreneurial team of Dean Dick Morgan, Associate Dean Christine Smith, Professor and Library Director Rick Brown, Director of Admissions Frank Durand, and Dianne Fouret, the elementary school soon became home to its first group of students, primarily graduates of University of Nevada, Reno

and UNLV, as well as professionals who finally had a chance to study law in their own state. Those recent graduates were joined by a group of distinguished faculty, including Annette Appell, Mary Berkheiser, now-Judge Jay Bybee, Shannon Bybee, Rob Correales (who is still teaching today), Thomas McAfee, Terry Pollman, and Carl Tobias, together with four librarians (not including Brown) and four professional staff members. Thanks to, among other things, the jungle gym study breaks – not to mention the junior-sized bathrooms – and the overall warmth and feeling of community that the school fostered, Paradise Elementary – now the William S. Boyd School of Law – provided a unique and memorable law school experience. The move to the “new” building – the former main library on UNLV’s campus – was a welcome one, although it meant losing prime parking right outside of the classrooms at the elementary school.

More importantly, though, Boyd Law was fully accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 2003, a record five years after opening its doors. And it became a top, nationally ranked law school within a few years after that, along with some of its programs, such as legal writing, dispute resolution, and the part-time program. Boyd Law’s faculty, staff, students, and alumni have all contributed to making Boyd Law one of the top 50 public law schools it is today.

### Transforming Nevada and Beyond

From day one, Boyd Law’s commitment has been to providing a transformative professional opportunity to those Nevadans who could not get into the profession otherwise, as well as those from other states who see opportunity in the fast-growing and third most diverse state in the U.S. The benefits of this transformative education can be seen all around Nevada, as our 2,700-plus alumni now grace every corner of the state and beyond. From leadership roles in both houses of the Nevada State Legislature; to the judiciary; to private, government, and nonprofit practice; Boyd graduates are playing leading roles in making Nevada an even better place for all.

In the words of Judge Philip Pro, who had been part of the efforts to bring a law school to UNLV since 1974, “Have Boyd graduates made a difference? Hell yes.”

**DEAN LEAH CHAN GRINVALD** became the dean and Richard J. Morgan Professor of Law at the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV in July 2022. Previously, she served as associate dean for academic affairs and professor of law at Suffolk University Law School in Boston. Grinvald is an internationally recognized intellectual property law scholar, whose research focuses on the enforcement of intellectual property law and the potential negative impacts of related laws on small businesses and entrepreneurs. Before joining academia, Grinvald served as the global corporate counsel at TaylorMade Golf Co., and as a corporate associate at Latham & Watkins LLP and at Clifford Chance US LLP in their San Diego offices.