

2018



## News and Current Issues



IMMIGRATION CLINIC

USC community members seek immigration advice.  
Photo courtesy of Aurelia Ventura, La Opinion

## GOOD CITIZENSHIP

New naturalization workshops help immigrants apply for U.S. citizenship



By Gilien Silsby and Anne Bergman

USC Gould's Immigration Clinic recently kicked off a series of free citizenship sessions to help students, staff, faculty, and community members complete and file their naturalization applications.

More than 200 members of the Trojan Family enrolled in the workshops, which were held on both the University Park campus and the Health Sciences campus in East Los Angeles. The initiative was funded and sponsored by the USC Provost's Office.

Paula Brown, a postdoctoral fellow at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and a native of Mexico, was excited and relieved when she heard about the citizenship workshops. "I tried to handle this process on my own, and it is very intimidating," said Brown, who attended the first workshop, and was counseled by Jean Reisz of the Immigration Clinic. "It was stressful for me to complete the paperwork. And it's expensive to get attorney assistance."

In January 2017, the Immigration Clinic also started offering free naturalization assistance to the general public. The program already has gone "on the road" to Huntington Park, El Monte,



Prof. Niels Frenzen, director of the Immigration Clinic.

Mountain View and the Vermont Square Branch of the L.A. Public Library.

Though fear is a motivating factor, many say they want a say in how their government is run. "It really moves you to see some of these folks deciding, 'I'm 86, and it's time for me to become a citizen,'" said Prof. Niels Frenzen, director of the Immigration Clinic. "People now want a voice, to exercise their right to vote. That's a real thing."

[Read Personal Immigration Stories on Page 3](#)

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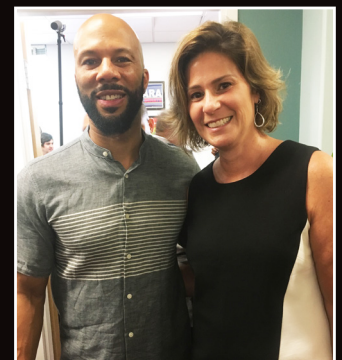
## PCJP AND COMMON HELP SHINE A LIGHT ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILLS

By Gilien Silsby

USC's Post-Conviction Justice Project Director Heidi Rummel joined the rapper Common to help shine a light on criminal justice bills – including SB 394, which USC law students helped draft and promote.

They met with state lawmakers in Sacramento in conjunction with the Imagine Justice concert on the Capitol mall grounds featuring Common, J.Cole, Goapele and Los Rakas.

"It was powerful to see so many people come together to support a different vision of justice and send a message of hope," Rummel said.



Common with Prof. Heidi Rummel

USC's PCJP currently represents dozens of youth offenders, serving adult life sentences, and seeking release under criminal reforms passed in the last several years.

[Read Juvenile Justice Story on Page 6](#)



# WIN-WINS FOR THE WORKPLACE

Students tackle high-level employment disputes.

By Christina Schweighofer

When a financial industry employee filed a sexual harassment complaint against her boss, two USC Gould Advanced Mediation Clinic students were there to help. After a day of mediation, the complainant walked away with a new goal: go back to school. Although the settlement award was less than she had hoped for, it was enough to cover tuition in a degree program that would advance her career.

Sosnick appreciated the expediency of the mediation process, which allowed the parties to “settle in one day,” thereby avoiding a lengthy and expensive court process.

The new program works in partnership with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH)’s Dispute Resolution Division, which referred the sexual harassment case Miller and Sosnick mediated to the Mediation Clinic. Last



Students in the Advanced Mediation Clinic help resolve cases by looking beyond the letter of the law.

Clinic Director Lisa Klerman. “These cases involve dramatic and colorful underlying fact patterns,” she said, noting that the law is continually evolving as new legislation and case decisions augment employee protections in the workplace.

Two USC Gould alumni, Caroline Vincent ’78 and Martin Sullivan ’10, lead the Employment Mediation Program. They provide training, coaching and hands-on supervision, either as co-mediators or observers and instructors. In both DFEH and EEOC cases, students contact and prepare the participants in advance of the mediation, conduct the mediations, help draft settlement agreements and follow up if the case doesn’t settle at the hearing.

Vincent, a mediator and arbitrator with ADR Services in Los Angeles, is pleased with the students’ work.

“We have resolved about 70 percent of the DFEH cases that we mediated. It is truly a win-win for the students and the DFEH,” she said. Almost every employment case goes through mediation at some point, notes Sullivan, an employment litigation defense attorney with Ogletree Deakins in Los Angeles, so mediation experience is very valuable.

“I was a Mediation Clinic student while at Gould nearly a decade ago,” Sullivan said. “Looking back, I know now that I started my career with a distinct advantage. This new Employment Mediation Program will be even more useful to tomorrow’s graduates, who will have navigated the thorny legal and interpersonal barriers to settlement. By the time these students graduate, they will have the skills to be highly effective mediators and better lawyer-advocates.”

*The facts of the sex harassment case were modified to protect confidentiality.*

**WE HAVE RESOLVED ABOUT 70% OF THE DFEH CASES THAT WE MEDIATED. IT IS TRULY A WIN-WIN FOR THE STUDENTS AND THE DFEH**

Caroline Vincent  
USC Employment Mediation Program

Profs. Klerman, Sullivan and Vincent plan the new federal employee mediation program with Supervising Administrative Judge Diane Gross of the EEOC.

Third-year law students Matthew Miller ’18 and Benjamin Sosnick ’18 felt satisfied with the outcome. The students had come to the case through a new Employment Mediation Program offered through the Mediation Clinic.

Resolving the case meant looking beyond the letter of the law, factoring in relationship issues while paying attention to the centrality of jobs in people’s lives. “Work often builds identity,” Miller explained. “We tie our work and our value as human beings together.”

term, the clinic also formed a partnership with the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, allowing student mediators to act as settlement officers in wage and hour disputes. In the spring, it began mediating Federal employee cases with the Los Angeles office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

“These government connections give USC Gould students a chance to work on high-level employment disputes,” said USC Gould professor and Mediation



# HAVE DOCUMENTS, WILL TRAVEL

Immigration Clinic opens new frontiers for USC staff and students.

By Anne Bergman

Monique Magbuhos wanted to see the City of Lights. The only problem was, she didn't know if she could travel to Paris, France without a U.S. passport.

Born in the Philippines, Magbuhos immigrated with her family when she was only 2 years old, but had never undertaken the process of becoming a citizen. She knew it was complicated and expensive.

So, when she learned that USC Gould's Immigration Clinic was offering free assistance to members of the university community seeking U.S. citizenship, she didn't hesitate.



The program, which was launched in 2017 thanks to funding and support from USC Provost Michael Quick, was widely publicized on campus and in the USC communities, and immediately grabbed Magbuhos attention.

Magbuhos, who works in the USC Gould Budget Office, met with one of the 35 volunteers who in recent months have helped some 200 Angelenos complete their naturalization documents and citizenship applications. Immigration Clinic co-directors Professors Niels Frenzen and Jean Reisz oversee their efforts.

Ana Chavez was another recent client. The USC junior emigrated from Guatemala when she was a toddler. She says she appreciated the clinic's "specific and deep guidance for each question that needed to be answered.

USC Gould Prof. Niels Frenzen and Immigration Clinic students and staff guide members of the USC community through the process of becoming U.S. citizens.

I think it would have been difficult to navigate otherwise." Chavez is pursuing citizenship with her mother. They have completed the biometrics requirement. Up next will be the interview portion of the process.

Aga Paul, a native of Poland, had already investigated the process of becoming a U.S. citizen on her own, but was put off by the cost of hiring an immigration attorney. "Receiving this professional assistance for free is like receiving a \$3,000 gift from USC," said Paul, a staff member at USC's International Academy, Global and Strategic Initiatives.

She met with clinic students twice. When the paperwork was complete, her documents were sealed in an addressed envelope. "All I had to do was mail it," she said. She, too, now awaits her immigration interview.

Gould students find the experience and volunteering in the clinic not only boosts their professional lawyering skills, but also feeds a need to give back.

"Being a U.S. citizen is forever. No one can take that away from you," said Ariana Sanudo-Kretzmann, a third-year USC law student in the clinic. "People are excited to feel American—especially people who have been here a really long time."

In the case of Magbuhos, clinic volunteers delivered some unexpected good news. Because her parents had become U.S. citizens before her 18th birthday, it turns out she had become a citizen automatically. With that hurdle out of the way, clinic staff member Jennifer Macias helped her complete the U.S. passport application.

But what made the 40-year-old Magbuhos really "feel American" was registering to vote. "I felt like a foreigner before," she said. "Now I feel like I belong somewhere. And I know that being American means that voting is my responsibility. Now I won't have any excuses to not vote, and I'm looking forward to my first election!"

*Magbuhos' future travel plans include France and Japan*





# LOW BUDGET? NO WORRIES

**IPTL Clinic helps filmmakers focus on creating meaningful work.**

By Anne Bergman



When award-winning independent film producer Karen Johnson started what she describes as her latest low-budget “labor of love,” she knew just who to contact for copyright help: USC Gould Professor Valerie Barreiro, director of the Intellectual Property and Technology Law Clinic (IPTLC).

Johnson had previously worked with the clinic on another project, so she understood how valuable Barreiro and the IPTLC students can be to a dollar-conscious documentary filmmaker. Documentaries often rely on copyrighted material—whether it’s news footage, part of a song, or TV and movie clips. The challenge comes when the filmmaker requests permission to use the work and runs up against exorbitant licensing fees.

That’s when Barreiro and her students step in. “We provide guidance to documentary filmmakers regarding the fair use doctrine, which allows filmmakers to use clips from other media at no cost to tell their stories, provided the use is fair and reasonable,” Barreiro said. “They seek legal guidance from us with their finished work, or when they are in the process of editing their film.”

Johnson’s latest project, “Nerd Girl Nation,” is a series of 12 webisodes aimed at older teens and young college women. Intended to spur their interest in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields, the series was inspired by the work of Tufts University education dean Karen Panetta, a computer engineer and

proponent of women in STEM. In addition to Panetta, Johnson’s creative partners include Oscar- and Emmy-nominated director Paola DiFlorio and writer-producer Peter Rader. Funding comes from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

For an episode on the science of sound featuring Taylor Swift’s sound engineer and a film sound designer, Johnson wanted to show behind-the-scenes footage from the pop diva’s music videos.

After consulting IPTLC supervising clinical interns Taryn McPherson ’19 and Kate Hahm ’19, Johnson knew how to work the footage she needed into her documentary in compliance with fair use, thereby avoiding the licensing fee.

“Taryn and Kate were incredible,” said Johnson. “Their work helped keep our budget down, which, in our case, means less money that we need to raise from a foundation or grant. We can use the clips less restrictively and everything is easier.”

*“I want my students to learn how to develop relationships with clients, so they can understand what it takes to find creative solutions to meet their clients’ needs.”*

Prof. Valerie Barreiro, director of IPTLC

McPherson and Hahm applied the lessons they had learned in the classroom and clinic, following Barreiro’s “common sense approach” to copyright and fair use standards.

“We analyzed each clip and employed the four fair use factors to advise the producers how to get into the safe zone,” McPherson said.

With 20 active clients, including game developers and entrepreneurs, IPTLC exposes students to a wide range of legal issues. “What we’re learning in the clinic can carry over to so many other things, such as contracts, trademark work, or privacy policy,” said Hahm. Having the IPTLC students interact with clients also deepens their learning experience, Barreiro believes.

“I want my students to learn how to develop relationships with clients, so they can understand what it takes to find creative solutions to meet their clients’ needs,” she said. “By serving as experts in this area, they are further developing leadership skills they will need throughout their careers.”

Johnson is grateful for the free legal advice. But she sees a larger societal benefit to IPTLC’s services.

“Documentary filmmaking is less commercially supported than other filmmaking,” she said. “We are focused on social issues of one kind or another and the clinic, by making sure our work stays within the boundaries of fair use, ultimately helps us reach our audience.”



USC law and cinema students collaborate on documentary films in post production.



# SAFE HAVEN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

## A model for attorneys representing asylees

By Christina Schweighofer

In their respective home countries, Anna and Rachel stood up for other women — until they too became victims, targeted specifically for their human rights activism. Both women fled to the United States, where their applications for asylum were approved thanks to the work of four students in the International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) at the USC Gould School of Law.

Both Anna and Rachel (whose real names are withheld for their safety) are what the United Nations defines as Human Rights Defenders.

In Uganda, Rachel had raised funds for and been a key adviser to a female friend running for political office on a women's rights platform. Abducted by the military, she endured two years of torture and rape in captivity before she managed to escape in 2015.

In El Salvador, Anna worked as a government human rights lawyer. She had been investigating a sex-trafficking case when she was stopped on her way home one night. Two men got out of a car and shot her six times. Anna survived the attack and fled to the United States in 2016.

"Two IHRC legal teams represented Anna and Rachel in their applications for asylum, logging hundreds of hours of pro-bono work. The students interviewed the women to document their refugee claims. They gathered corroborating evidence, wrote legal briefs and represented the clients in interviews with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services asylum officers in Anaheim, California. One of those briefs is now used as a model by Human Rights First, a national human rights organization, to guide other attorneys representing asylees."

Henna Pithia '15 and Ana Luiza Sousa '16, two students on Rachel's team, spent weeks establishing trust with their client. "The last thing you want for a person who has experienced trauma is for them to feel they have no control over the case," said Pithia, who became an asylum officer in her first post-law school job.

After asylum was granted, the two human rights defenders commended their IHRC advocates for their compassion and skill.

"I give the students 100-percent credit," Rachel said.

Speaking warmly of her experience working with Justin Bongco '18 and Roza Petrosyan '18, Anna described their relationship as "more person-to-person than just professional-to-client."

Anti-immigrant sentiment in America casts refugees as criminals or terrorists, observes IHRC founding director Hannah Garry.

*"In fact most refugees are vulnerable women and children. Providing safety for these human rights defenders is in line with American values of upholding freedom, democracy and human rights."*



Prof. Hannah Garry with IHRC students and a client





# STRIVING FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

PCJP's first juvenile life without parole resentencing client released from prison.



Photo Courtesy of Nancy Mullane

By Gillen Silsby

Nearly every week, Prof. Heidi Rummel received a phone call from Ruben Ruiz's mother. The anxious woman would describe her son's plight and plead for USC's Post-Conviction Justice Project to take his case.

"She talked and I listened, and then I would explain that our Project did not have the capacity to take any new resentencing cases," Rummel said. "But Mrs. Ruiz is not one to give up, and in the end, we said yes."

At the age of 17, Ruben Ruiz was involved in beer run turned fight at a liquor store where a clerk was beaten to death. Convicted of special circumstance murder, he was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

"When I started contacting Heidi and PCJP, Ruben was in his 30s," recalled his mother. "I just kept ringing the bell."

The calls began in 2012—a time when the legal landscape was shifting for juvenile offenders. The U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that sentencing juveniles to life sentences without the possibility of parole, or LWOP, had serious constitutional implications.

Meanwhile, California passed the Fair Sentencing for Youth Act that allowed juveniles to petition the courts for resentencing to life terms *with* the possibility of parole. USC's PCJP was a co-sponsor of the Fair Sentencing for Youth Act and several subsequent juvenile justice bills that give young people a second chance.

"Ruben made a terrible mistake as a teen," said Rummel, who directs PCJP. "But he spent more than half his life in prison, and he worked to better himself and make amends without any hope of release. California's recent reforms were created with someone like him in mind."

PCJP students worked tirelessly on his case, and Ruben Ruiz was resentenced in 2014 under the Fair Sentencing for Youth Act. They worked another three years to convince the parole board and California Gov. Jerry Brown that he had been completely rehabilitated and should be released.

Following the governor's 2015 reversal of parole, PCJP achieved victory in November 2017.

Ruiz became the PCJP's first juvenile resentencing client to be released from prison.

"He changed so much from the gang-involved teenager he was when he entered prison," said Elizabeth Ligon '17, one of three PCJP students who worked closely with Ruiz over the years.

Ruiz had grown accustomed to disappointment.

"I have had a lot of legal representation, but nothing compared to the representation I received from USC law," Ruiz said. "They never gave up on me. They spent hours with me on my case. I would not be out of prison if it wasn't for the students."

Ruiz, now 42, earned 31 educational certificates in law, business and other subjects while in prison and is committed to making amends to his family and community.

His nearly 25 years behind bars—including a decade in solitary confinement—made him "grow up and truly take responsibility," he said. "Those years in (solitary confinement) were the hardest of my life, but I'm grateful I was put there. It truly made me reflect and become a better person."

Ruiz began studying the law through journals from the prison library. "I spent my days reading case law and teaching myself," he said. "I filed appeals, but was never successful. The (passage of) the juvenile justice bills gave me hope. Before that, I was certain I would die in prison."

Ruiz's knowledge of the law and his commitment to his own rehabilitation were inspiring, said his team of USC law students.

"I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to help him. It was definitely the most meaningful and interesting work that I did in law school," said Ligon.

Jihyuk Song, a second-year student, came to admire his client. "Ruben is brilliant, humble, and very self-motivated," he said. "I have learned so much from his growth and maturity."

"Representing a client is like taking a journey together," Song added. "The value of going through numerous denials in order to eventually achieve our goal together—parole—is something I would not have learned inside a classroom."

Julia Deixler '14 was a second-year law student when she began working with Ruiz. She was so convinced he should be resentenced that she continued to represent him after she was hired as an associate at O'Melveny in Los Angeles. She was the first USC law student to meet with Ruiz, and continued to do so on a regular basis as they prepared for his resentencing hearing.

"The entire process of working on this case—from gathering evidence, preparing his family members to testify, and working with Ruben to get ready for his hearing—was such a privilege because I really believed wholeheartedly that he should be released," said Deixler.



Ruben Ruiz, 17, (center) with his parents.



Prof. Heidi Rummel, client Ruben Ruiz and law student Jihyuk Song '19



# EAT, FILE, LOVE

Students in the Small Business Clinic savor the pleasures of food startups.

By Diane Krieger

Food is fun! That's one of Claudia Lin's big takeaways after two semesters working in USC Gould's Small Business Clinic.

The third-year law student helped the founders of Cocabella Creamery LLC, a vegan ice cream parlor, put together their initial formation documents, file articles with the California Secretary of State and draft their Operating Agreement.

Lin also got to personally sample their products— she loved the blueberry cheese-cake flavor. She found the coconut milk-based frozen concoction “very creamy.”

It's always a treat for SBC students to work with food startups, said Michael Chasalow, program director and clinical professor. Somehow, these businesses feel especially real.

In December, Lin got to visit the trendy Hollywood scoop shop she'd helped birth.

“It's really cute. They wallpapered each wall a different color. Alice told me they did it all in one night,” Lin said.

Alice Cherng is one of Cocabella's founders. A CPA by profession, she and Cordon Bleu-trained pastry chef Belinda Wei shared a vision of making “dairy-free delicious.”

## Attorney Feeds

Working for a food-based client comes with special perks for transactional lawyers.

“They bring us treats,” Chasalow said. He and clinic students have personally sampled designer brownies, fresh-baked artisan breads, cashew and pine nut brittle, gourmet hot sauces and Chinese health food.



Alice Cherng is one of Cocabella's founders.

Griffin Drake, another third-year student who just completed his SBC experience, helped set up Nom Noms Inc., a meal kit business with a sustainability twist. The company buys “ugly produce” from supermarkets at a deep discount and packages it with proteins and other recipe ingredients.

The work has been educational for Drake. “I had no idea ‘ugly produce’ was even a thing,” he said. The term refers to small or misshapen fruits and vegetables that flunk supermarket grades for appearance, but are otherwise perfectly good.

As he dug deeper, Drake was intrigued by the unique legal issues he encountered while drafting Nom Noms' terms of use and its privacy policy. Disclaimers had to cover potential health risks introduced by customers themselves once the food kits had left the premises.

## Coming Back for Seconds

Kaitlin Mogentale recalls breathing a sigh of relief when she first walked into the clinic in 2015. “I knew I could trust Michael and Serena Patel, the intern who helped me,” she said.

The clinic helped Mogentale set up Pulp Pantry, a web-based company that makes organic snacks from fruit and vegetable pulp generated by local juiceries—tons of nutritious goodness that would otherwise go into landfills.

After an initial consultation, Chasalow and Patel '17 assisted Mogentale to structure Pulp Pantry as an LLC with an S-corporation election. “That decision alone probably saved us almost \$1,000 up front in corporate filing fees and renewals,” said Mogentale.

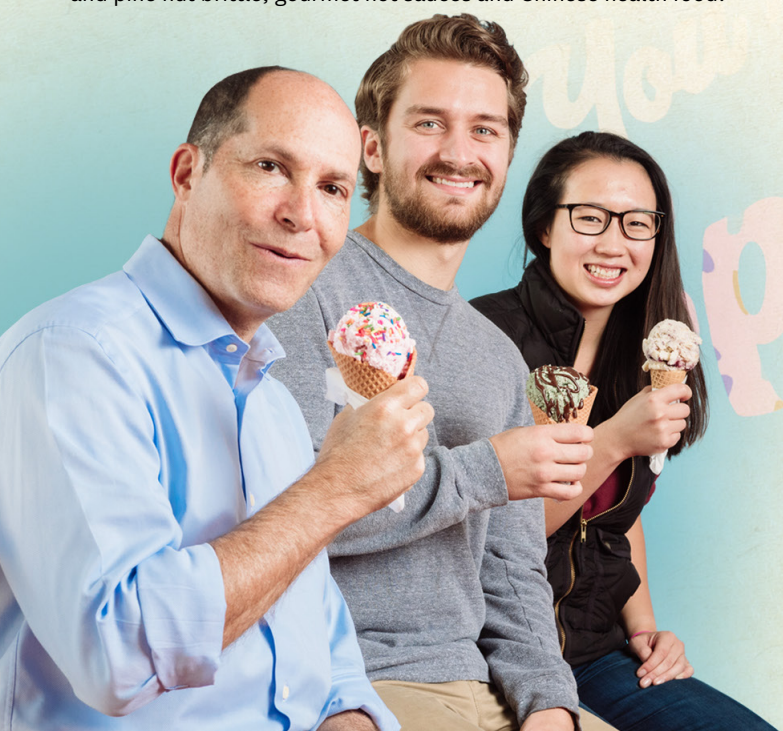
Recently, Mogentale reconnected with the clinic as she strategizes to “take Pulp Pantry to the next level.” First order of business: drafting a non-compete contract for Pulp Pantry's expanding roster of juicery partners.

## Quid Pro Quo

The exchange benefits everyone, noted Chasalow. Clinic students gain valuable experience working solo with clients, logging between 15 and 50 pro-bono hours from first-hello to final-handshake. At a rate of \$400 per hour, that can come to a \$20,000 value. Of course, the SBC's services are free.

“We provide a great service,” Chasalow said. “Most of the students go on to firms that bill their time at a very high rate.”

That certainly is true for Lin and Drake. After graduating, Lin will return to her hometown of Seattle, where she'll work at Davis Wright Tremaine. Drake, who comes from Indianapolis, will stay in LA and join Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom. Patel, who graduated in 2017, is now an associate at Sidley Austin in Los Angeles.



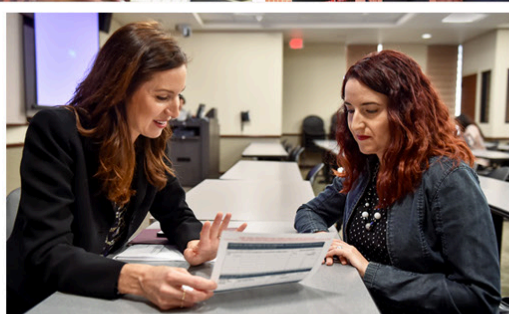
Kaitlin Mogentale (left), owner of Pulp Pantry



# USC Gould

School of Law

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Dear Friends,

It is an exciting time in legal education. Our profession is constantly evolving. In addition to providing law students a world-class theoretical foundation, we want to train the next generation of attorneys, advocates, leaders, and change-makers in service to the community, both local and global. This dynamic blend of knowledge and practical application, while representing clients who would otherwise have no access to legal resources, is a hallmark of our law school of which I am supremely proud. I hope you will enjoy seeing the tremendous impact our students are making and learning about clients whose lives they are transforming. Now, more than ever, I am grateful to our Trojan Family for sharing the vision of the highest level of legal education paired with delivery of top flight legal services. We are able to deliver on both of these commitments thanks to our remarkable and innovative clinics, as described on these pages. To support our clinical education efforts, please contact us at [alumni@law.usc.edu](mailto:alumni@law.usc.edu).

USC Gould Dean Andrew Guzman