

USC

MAGAZINE Law

FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF THE USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW | ISSUE 18 | SPRING/SUMMER 2021



LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP
spotlighting women of impact who
shape law, industry and society

USC Gould



I want to open this issue of our magazine by continuing to wish every member of our Gould Trojan Family, along with your loved ones, good health wherever you may be.

Reflecting on USC Gould's rich history, it is inspiring to see what our school has achieved. From the very beginning, women have played a vital role in the legacy and leadership of the law school. Their work and milestones are inextricably woven into the fabric of USC Gould.

In this issue, we spotlight a few examples of the women in our Gould community whose remarkable work impacts the legal field and benefits society in positive ways. We feature alumnae Nina Huerta (JD 2003), managing partner at Locke Lord LLP; Emily Yukich (JD 1999), managing partner at Holme Roberts & Owen LLP; Christianne Kerns (JD 1985), managing partner at Hahn & Hahn LLP; and Amber Finch (JD 2002), partner at Reed Smith LLP — highlighting not only their outstanding leadership, but also their commitment to service and diversity. Other stories in the opening section include profiles on: Thai Viet Phan (JD/MPP 2015), who helped develop Gould's Molina First Generation Professionals Program, and in November was elected as the first Vietnamese American and first Asian woman on the Santa Ana City Council; Amy Trask (JD 1985), who discusses how her Gould education offered a framework for her career as Raiders CEO, TV analyst and now Big3 chair; and Linda Louie (JD 1985), whose career hit the fast track as general counsel for the National Hot Rod Association.

The *USC Law Family* section highlights Sheryl Gordon McCloud (JD 1984) and Ellen Biben (JD 1992), who enact change from their high-profile careers on the bench, serving on the Washington State Supreme Court and the New York State Supreme Court, respectively. The section also features Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (JD 1956), a trailblazer in politics (from the L.A. County Board of Supervisors to the U.S. Congress) who has fought to better the lives of women, children and minorities; and Aulana Peters (JD 1973), past commissioner of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and a retired partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, who continues to give back through an educational nonprofit that mentors underserved youth. We also spotlight educators Lisa Kloppenberg (JD 1987), interim president of Santa Clara University, and Katherine Bonaguidi (JD 2002), who trains law students with the California Innocence Project.

In *Faculty Focus*, we cover: the addition of Assistant Professor Marcela Prieto to Gould's faculty; Professor Abby Wood's appointment to the Fair Political Practices Commission; Professor Hannah Garry's Fulbright grant to study international refugee law in Norway; Professor Jonathan Barnett's book "Innovators, Firms and Markets"; and the late Professor Ed Kleinbard's book, "What's Luck Got to Do With It?"

In addition, this issue features a special section on *Clinical Perspectives*. Among the stories, our Post-Conviction Justice Project won release for two clients sentenced to juvenile life without parole, who changed their lives and now help others in their communities; the IP and Technology Law Clinic represented clients seeking access to their medical device data and testified at a virtual hearing before the U.S. Copyright Office; and the International Human Rights Clinic worked through U.N. systems to fight systemic racism.

Last but not least, I encourage you to read notable stories on the nation's first-ever Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff (JD 1990); Meiram Bendat (JD 1998), who won a landmark judgment in mental health advocacy and is inspired by mentor Professor Elyn Saks; and our first-of-its-kind required course on Race, Racism and the Law.

In closing, I hope you enjoy a wonderful summer. Please take care, and fight on.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AG' with a stylized flourish.

Andrew T. Guzman
*Dean and Carl Mason Franklin Chair in Law,
Professor of Law and Political Science*



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Alum Yvonne Brathwaite Burke reflects on career comprised of “firsts”



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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LAW PATHWAY DAY ENCOURAGES COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN LAW SCHOOL

Southern California Law Pathway Day, a new event intended to reach prospective students, especially those from underrepresented communities, launched late in 2020 through a partnership with USC Gould School of Law, University of California, Irvine School of Law and Loyola Law School. The event, part of the Pathways of Law School initiative developed under the auspices of the State Bar of California in 2014, encourages California community college students to enter the legal profession.

More than 150 community college students attended the Dec. 11 event's three virtual sessions: Academic Success, focusing on acquiring the academic skills required in law school; Life Skills, emphasizing mental fortitude, tenacity and motivation; and a Student Life panel with students who came to law school through community college as part of their undergraduate studies. ✦

—Yulia Nakagome

PIONEER PROFILE: DOROTHY WRIGHT NELSON — THEN & NOW



In 1969, Dorothy Wright Nelson (LLM 1956) became the nation's first woman dean of a fully accredited law school. That year, she also earned the honor of being named the *Los Angeles Times*' Woman of the Year.

Ten years later, she went on to serve on the bench, having been appointed by President Carter to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, where she is now senior judge. To this day, the Hon. Nelson is still an active and engaged member of the Gould community, having spoken at numerous law school events, including a special "Conversation with the Deans" panel in 2019 (pictured above, at right). ✦

SEN. TAMMY DUCKWORTH HEADLINES DEPORTED VETERANS SYMPOSIUM

USC Gould School of Law and Center for Law and Military Policy in mid-March hosted the Deported Veterans Symposium, featuring a conversation with U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel. The three-day symposium raised awareness about



barriers and affirming a pathway to citizenship for service members. Laura Riley (JD 2010), assistant professor of lawyering skills who co-teaches the Veterans Legal Practicum at USC Gould, moderated the conversation with Sen. Duckworth, touching on the congresswoman's efforts to raise awareness of the plight of veterans deported after their military service. Sen. Duckworth highlighted the value of enlisting immigrants or children of immigrants who speak fluently in other languages and understand other cultures with troops around the world. "These folks come with specific skill sets that we need to keep America safe," she said. ✦

Q&A WITH JESSE WANG (CLASS OF 2022), AUTHOR OF “UNDERDOG: 12 INSPIRATIONAL STORIES FOR THE DESPONDENT LAW STUDENT”

What motivated you to write this book?

I, along with many of my classmates, came out of my first year of law school with grades that were far below my expectations, but I knew it was not the end of the road for me. I believed this because of a Chinese proverb my mother used to repeat to me: “The clumsy bird flies early.” Every proverbial bird, law student or young attorney is capable of finding success, so long as they put in the effort and practice. This book is a reminder to law students everywhere, particularly those who came out of their first year feeling disappointed or doubting their own capabilities, that there is always another opportunity for redemption if they keep fighting to improve. This mindset of prioritizing improvement and incremental wins above all else is an overarching theme repeated by the 12 incredible individuals I interviewed during my time at USC.

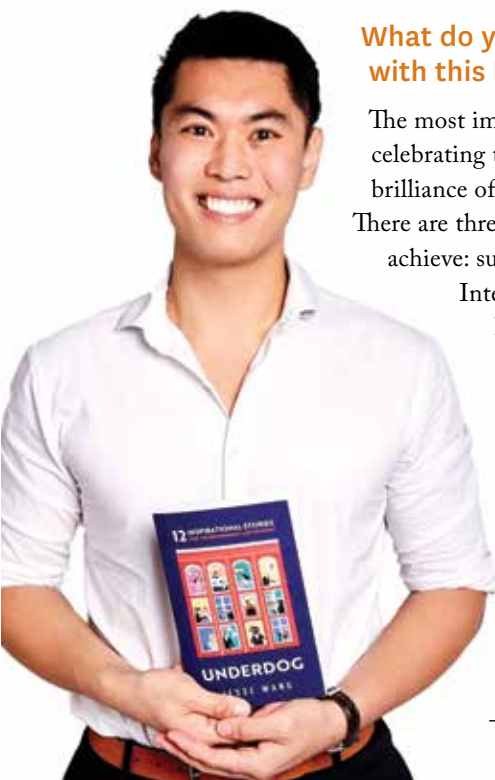
Can you describe the process?

I had been thinking about finding an outlet to express my thoughts on the topics discussed and how they could apply to my life. So, I took on the challenge of writing the book from scratch, which was an incredibly daunting task in the beginning. As I progressed through the writing process, it felt less like a job and more like a hobby. It was one of the most rewarding experiences in my life and I could not have done it without the support of my fellow Trojans — the USC alumni, professors and classmates that made up the majority of the 165 donors who helped fund the book’s publication and gave this book the legs to move forward.

What do you hope to accomplish with this book?

The most important accomplishment was celebrating the diversity, strength and legal brilliance of the USC student body and faculty. There are three main goals I hope the book will achieve: support the USC Barbara F. Bice Public Interest Law Foundation and the Small Business Clinic (profits will be donated to both organizations); encourage law students to be more creative and look within themselves to figure out their purpose for becoming a lawyer; and motivate law schools, law students and practicing attorneys to speak honestly about the importance of mental health and establishing healthy work-life boundaries in the legal field. 🍌

—Jim Lee



GOULD QUOTABLES



“It’s not always simple or easy for people to enforce their statutory rights, but even having a federal law that expressly protects those rights on the books, by itself will deter discrimination against LGBTQ+ people.”

DAVID CRUZ on the importance of the landmark Equality Act, *The Guardian*, Feb. 25, 2021



“This benefit is a step towards a child allowance, which has been proven over time and in many nations to be one of the most significant steps, if not the most significant step, in reducing child poverty.”

CLARE PASTORE on how the federal stimulus bill could cut California child poverty by half, *CalMatters*, March 10, 2021



“There’s a time for everything, including to tax and spend. Jeff Bezos gets it.”

ED MCCAFFERY in an op-ed addressing the Biden Administration’s plan to raise the corporate tax rate, *CNN*, April 7, 2021



PAULINE ARANAS (JD 1981), John Stauffer Charitable Trust Chief Information Officer, Emeritus and Law Librarian Emerita, was honored in January with the Association of American Law Schools 2021 Section on Law Libraries and Legal Information Award. The awards are designated by several of AALS' 103 sections to recognize outstanding achievement. This year, the awards reflected efforts to promote excellence in mentorship, scholarship and education during the pandemic. 📖

2021 HALE MOOT COURT COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

At the 2021 Hale Moot Court competition, held virtually for the first time in the program's more than 70-year history, 2L Reena Patel won the Edward G. Lewis Champion Award, with three other finalists, Rebecca Alch, Kate McClellan and Maura Reinbrecht, awarded the Judge E. Avery Crary Award.

"You are already well on your way to becoming great oral advocates."

The program provides students with an opportunity to develop their written and oral advocacy skills. This year, the competition covered an appeals case involving an alleged violation of a prison inmate's right to medical privacy, and an allegation of inadequate medical care.

Best Brief awards include: Privacy issue — Sophie Solomon (petitioner), Preny Sarkissian (respondent), and Joshua De Melo (runner-up) and Medical issue — Michael Butts (petitioner), Alaina Flores (respondent) and Rebecca Alch (runner-up). Other honors presented at the event in mid-March include Outstanding Participant Service Award — Patricia Mittelstadt, and Danielle Luchetta, Outstanding Board Member Service Award.

This year's panelists include Hon. Allison Eid, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit; Hon. John Owens, Ninth Circuit, and Justice Brian Hoffstadt of the California Court of Appeals. All three were impressed with the arguments, with Justice Hoffstadt noting to participants, "You are already well on your way to becoming great oral advocates." 📖

NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL CLERKSHIPS AWARDED IN 2020-21

Graduating 3Ls, as well as several 2Ls and recent alumni, were awarded clerkships in courts in California and around the nation, as well as internationally, at the Special Tribunal of Lebanon.

Justin Bongco '18 Hon. Richard Jones (Western District of Washington)

Jacqueline Concilla '20 Hon. James Selna (Central District of California)

Emily Cronin '18 Hon. Jacqueline Nguyen (Ninth Circuit)

Erick Franklund '22 Hon. James Robart (Western District of Washington)

Steven Friedland '21 Hon. Robert Klausner (Central District of California)

Samantha Hay '20 Hon. Karen Moore (Sixth Circuit)

Alexandra Highsmith '19 Hon. Peter Messitte (District of Maryland)

Tia Kerkhof '22 Hon. Sandra Ikuta (Ninth Circuit)

Nikki Long '21 Hon. Stephen Murphy (Eastern District of Michigan)

Monica Mahal '22 Hon. Michael Mosman (District of Oregon)

Riley Mailman '19 Hon. Mark Scarsi (Central District of California)

Jesse Mentz '21 Hon. Stanley Blumenfeld (Central District of California)

Alisha Nguyen '21 Hon. Maxine Chesney (Northern District of California)

Khoa Nguyen '20 Hon. Gregory Phillips (Tenth Circuit)

Pj Novack '20 Hon. Cecilia Altonaga (Southern District of Florida)

Andrew Ojeda '18 Hon. George Cannon (District of Virgin Islands)

Haley Tuchman '20 Hon. Timothy Dyk (Federal Circuit)

Paul Watanabe '17 Hon. Mark Scarsi (Central District of California)

Chelsea Wu '21 Hon. Ronald S.W. Lew (Central District of California)

Morgan Brock-Smith '21 for one year Special Tribunal for Lebanon, The Netherlands

Nicholas Maisel '21 for six months Special Tribunal for Lebanon, The Netherlands

LEGACY OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE: SCOTT BICE TO RETIRE IN 2022

This spring, Dean Andrew Guzman announced that Professor Scott Bice — former dean, beloved professor and Gould alumnus (JD 1968), whose name is synonymous with the Gould School of Law — will be retiring in January. He and his wife, Barbara, have been a guiding presence for countless members of the Gould community for more than 50 years.

Since joining the Gould faculty in 1969, following a clerkship with Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Earl Warren, Bice has made the law school a better place and played an active role in cementing our national prominence. His enduring impact includes transforming the law school educationally, economically, and physically. Under his leadership, the law school attracted and retained top interdisciplinary scholars, established dozens of new endowed faculty positions, expanded student scholarships, added new clinical programs and research centers, doubled the size of Gould's facilities, and significantly increased the endowment — among numerous other achievements. Equally important, Bice is an esteemed educator with a special knack for connecting with his students, guiding them inside the classroom and helping them launch outstanding legal careers. A few even became law school deans themselves.

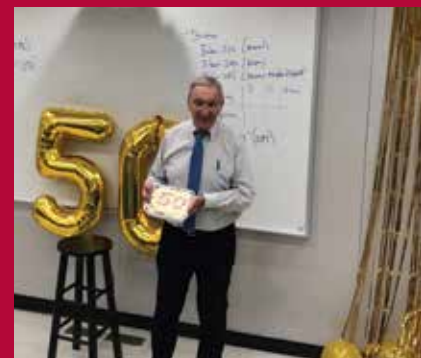
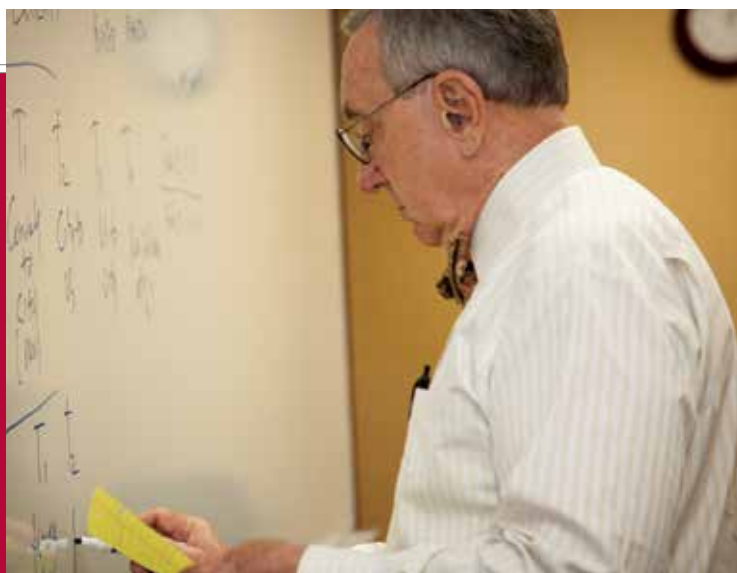
A celebration of Scott and Barbara Bice — and all they have done for the law school — is being planned for early 2022; more information on that event will be shared this fall. Following the celebration, a full tribute story on their impact and legacy will be published in the *USC Law Magazine* in Spring/Summer 2022. 📖

Top: Bice is a two-time recipient of the USC Associates Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Middle left: Bice served as law school dean from 1980-2000, cementing Gould's national prominence under his leadership.

Middle right: In 2019, students in Bice's Torts class surprised him with a cake and decorations to honor his 50 years as a Gould faculty member.

Bottom: Along with Scott, Barbara Bice's dedication and involvement has been vital to a range of successes at the law school.



USC DORNSIFE AND GOULD ANNOUNCE JOINT DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE LAW AND ECONOMICS

In response to the evolving global business landscape, USC Gould School of Law and the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences Department of Economics will launch a joint Master of International Trade Law and Economics (MITLE) degree in Fall 2021.

Full-time and on campus, the MITLE program offers an interdisciplinary, global perspective to navigate the legal, policy and business parameters that shape today's international trade and economics.

Students will explore the legal frameworks that drive global economics and understand how emerging policy issues shape multinational trade, and will be prepared for leading roles in international business.

The 32-unit program is open to candidates with a bachelor's degree in any field; however, applicants are recommended to have a strong foundation in economics, mathematics or another quantitative background. 📖

—Sarah Hazan



For the first time, **WINTER ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS** took place virtually, in January. More than 180 2Ls and 3Ls participated, and according to Associate Dean and Dean of Career Services Betsy Armour, hiring results from Winter OCI and related hiring activities were very strong with more than 50% of the class securing large law firm jobs through the program — comparable to pre-pandemic outcomes. “I’m so proud of the CSO team and our students especially for adapting swiftly and positively to this changed landscape,” Armour says. 🏠

REMEMBERING JULIE YI, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAMMING, CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION



Beloved Gould staff member Julie Yi passed away in March, following a brave five-year battle against cancer. Yi was an important member of the law school for more than 13 years, most recently serving as director of development and programming for Continuing Legal Education. Yi came from a family of Trojans, and she herself was a proud Trojan, earning her BA in English from USC Dornsife.

At Gould, Yi was instrumental in guiding CLE’s annual Intellectual Property Institute, Institute on Entertainment Law and Business, Trust and Estate Conference, Tax Institute, Real Estate Law and Business, and Institute for Corporate Counsel. She was an enormously dedicated team member, known

for always giving an extra effort and successfully partnering with over 300 committee members and 200-plus sponsors for the conferences each year.

Yi was respected and adored by those who worked alongside her. She received USC Gould’s staff appreciation award in 2019. Her CLE colleagues recall Yi’s selfless actions, work ethic and willingness to make things better. She is the primary reason that CLE events sustained their success over the years. Her positive attitude and helpfulness earned the admiration of her peers. While Yi’s presence at Gould will be greatly missed, her impact on the school’s CLE programs will be felt for many years to come. 🏠

Julie Yi receiving the 2019 staff appreciation award from Dean Andrew Guzman.

GOULD 3LS WIN PUBLIC INTEREST FELLOWSHIPS



Several Gould students won competitive public interest fellowships, including Ryan Eason, who was selected to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Attorney Honors Program, and Forest Lieberman, who accepted a two-year Housing Justice Fellowship at the nonprofit Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles.



Mirelle Raza was selected to the California Attorney General’s Honors Program, designed for recent law student graduates and newly admitted lawyers committed to a career in public service.



Sara Zollner was chosen for a Justice Catalyst/Public Rights Project Fellowship, and will be joining the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office. 🏠



From top: Ryan Eason, Forest Lieberman, Mirelle Raza and Sara Zollner

PROFESSOR, ALUM NAMED TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

USC Gould Professor of the Practice Clare Pastore and alum Alison Dundes Renteln, professor of Political Science, Anthropology, Public Policy and Law at the USC Dornsife College of Arts, Letters and Sciences, were both appointed to four-year terms on the California State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. The USCCR, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is an independent, bipartisan fact-finding federal agency involved with developing national civil rights policy and enhancing enforcement of federal civil rights laws. The State Advisory Committees investigate civil rights issues in their locales to advise the Commission. 🗡️



Clare Pastore



Alison Dundes Renteln

LEGAL RESEARCH 2.0+ OFFERS ADDITIONAL RESOURCE FOR 2LS AND 3LS DEVELOPING LEGAL RESEARCH SKILLS

A four-week legal research certificate class was created in late 2020 to help 2L and 3L students advance their legal research skills, while also helping them become more competitive in their job searches.

The Legal Research 2.0+ program, completed by 23 students in fall 2020, is the brainchild of Cindy Guyer, senior law librarian and adjunct assistant professor of law, with support from Associate Dean Diana Jaque, director of the Law Library.

Future Legal Research 2.0+ programs are under consideration. For more information, contact Professor Guyer at cguyer@law.usc.edu. 🗡️



2021 ANNUAL USC GOULD LAW AWARDS

WILLIAM A. RUTTER DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

Exceptional classroom teaching

Professor Emily Ryo

CLASS OF 2021 JD AWARDS

C. David Molina First Generation Professionals Program Student of the Year

Mentorship of fellow first-generation students and promoting the program's goals

Emily Bratt

Dean Dorothy Nelson Commemorative Prize

Improvement of the administration of justice

Sophie Sylla

Mason C. Brown Award

Commitment to public interest law and talent for trial work

Nina Rosser

Miller-Johnson Equal Justice Prize

Commitment to the cause of civil and social justice

Mirelle Raza

Edward & Eleanor Shattuck Awards

Contributions to the law school and potential to be outstanding members of the bar

Amanda Clark

Tyler Dobberstein

Danielle Luchetta

Qianru Kara Du

Forest Lieberman

Sara Zollner

CLASS OF 2021 GRADUATE & INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS AWARDS

Nominated by G&IP peers for their support of, and positive impact on, the student community

Itzel De La Torre (MSL)

Abdulrahman Hamdi (LLM)

FEAR NO BARRIER

Nina Huerta (JD 2003) takes on charge to diversify law profession

By Diane Krieger

“Dismal” is the word Nina Huerta (JD 2003) uses to describe Latino representation in the legal profession.



Nina Huerta
(JD 2003)

“I wish I could say the needle has moved over the last decade, but it has only changed fractionally,” says the co-chair of Locke Lord LLP’s national board of directors, one of the first Latinas to serve in that capacity at a major law firm.

According to the 2019 Report Card on the Diversity of California’s Legal Profession, in a state where 36 percent of the adult population is Hispanic, only 7 percent of lawyers fall in that demographic.

“There are so many systemic and economic barriers to getting smart, qualified attorneys through the legal pipeline,” says Huerta, a leading employment attorney and managing partner of her firm’s Los Angeles office.

FUNDRAISING FOR THE FUTURE

As executive board president of the Mexican American Bar Foundation (MABF), she is getting impressive results. MABF awards more scholarship money than any other organization of its kind.

A spin-off of the Mexican American Bar Association, the nonprofit funds Latino heritage students attending ABA-accredited law schools in Southern California. Under Huerta’s stewardship, MABF has boosted scholarship awards to as much as \$10,000 apiece. Last year, MABF distributed \$252,000 to 28 recipients. A handful typically go to USC Gould students, including one co-sponsored by the school (the MABF-USC Latino Alumni Association Scholar).

Huerta is also active in Just the Beginning, serving on the steering committee of the Chicago-based nonprofit’s weeklong immersive Summer Legal Institute for underrepresented high schoolers. More locally, she spearheads Locke Lord’s participation in the Verbum Dei Internship Program.


When she isn’t working on diversifying access to law school, Huerta is fully engaged in her legal practice. She’s active in the LA County Bar Association and the National Employment Law Council, and co-leads Locke Lord’s COVID-19 Task Force.

STRONG SUPPORT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Her most formative experiences at USC were working one-on-one with clients in the Employment Legal Advice Clinic and hanging out with classmates at Professor Jody Armour’s house. She chose USC Gould because of the small-school culture.

A strong support system was important to Huerta, who has deep roots in Arizona. She grew up on a ranch that had been in the family since her great-great-grandmother purchased it under the 1877 Desert Land Act. She was the only member of her family to move out of state, after graduating *summa cum laude* from Arizona State University.

Husband Mark Simone is an established film industry special effects producer. The couple has two daughters ages nine and three.

“I hate it,” Huerta says, “when people say: ‘You can be a good mom *and* a good lawyer — just not on the same day.’ My life isn’t split in fractions. I’m doing the best that I can, and I am pretty comfortable with that.” 

Making room for women

Emily Yukich (JD 1999) takes initiative to diversify professional organization

By Diane Krieger

Emily Yukich (JD 1999)

Emily Yukich (JD 1999) will never forget that sinking feeling as she stared into a hotel ballroom packed with men.

“It took such physical effort to step across the threshold,” she recalls. “All I wanted to do was turn around and leave.”

The men were all members of the Los Angeles Venture Association (LAVA), a forum where entrepreneurs, executives, investors, bankers and financial advisors meet and learn from each other.

At the time, Yukich was a newly minted corporate attorney attending at the request of a senior partner. Put off by the lack of women in the room and attendees “acting like they knew everybody and everything,” Yukich nevertheless forced herself to mingle, and found the panel discussion very useful.

She returned for more LAVA events, occasionally encountering one or two women.

“But it was never the same women, and I knew why — because like me, they never want to come back,” she says.

Spurred by these experiences, in 2011, Yukich founded Women in LAVA, one of a dozen special-interest communities within the organization. Participation among women has ballooned since then.

“It’s a much, much more vibrant and diverse group now, and I do take some credit for that,” she says.

FROM EDUCATION TO LAW

Born and raised in Ohio, a graduate of Kenyon College, Yukich intended to be an English professor but lost interest in academia and became a founder of a Montessori preschool and, later, executive director of a nonprofit early childhood education center in Boston. Dealing with teacher contracts sparked a latent interest in labor law, and at age 36, Yukich enrolled at USC Gould School of Law.

She worked up to a partnership at Folger Levin & Kahn LLP before moving to Holme Roberts & Owen LLP, where she was named a managing partner. Since 2012, she has been at Fox Rothschild LLP as managing partner for the



Los Angeles office and is on the Philadelphia-based firm’s executive committee. Yukich’s practice focuses on early- and growth-stage companies, and she serves as general counsel to several corporate clients.

As she rose in her profession, Yukich also raised two daughters — the first born just three weeks after she took the California bar exam.

Behind the scenes, keeping their Cheviot Hills home running smoothly, was Yukich’s husband, Donald Pechet (MBA 1999). A USC Marshall alum, he sidelined a career in real estate development to be a stay-at-home dad.

“Honestly, the only reason I’m able to do it all,” Yukich says, “is because I have a husband who *doesn’t* do it all — who takes care of the kids, cooks dinner, gets the dry cleaning.”

LEADING MORE WOMEN INTO LAVA

These days, LAVA’s membership is about a third women, and Yukich herself is part of the leadership — past president, current vice president and Women in LAVA co-chair. Four women serve on the 12-member LAVA board.

“I’ve stopped attending events where the organizers can’t come up with a single female speaker,” she says. “And sometimes I let the organizers know why. In this day and age, it’s just not credible to say, ‘Oh, we couldn’t find any female speakers.’” 🗨️



LEADING THE WAY

Christianne Kerns (JD 1985) rises to numerous challenges in busy law career

By Diane Krieger

Christianne
Kerns (JD 1985)

When Christianne Kerns (JD 1985) became the first woman to lead as managing partner at Hahn & Hahn LLP in early 2020, she could never have imagined what lay ahead.

“If you’d told me then that we’d be working remotely for a year and a half, I would have written it off as paranoid, sky-is-falling fear mongering,” she says. “I am very optimistic, and that kind of doom-and-gloom just wasn’t part of my mindset.”

As the de-facto chief executive of the 122-year-old Pasadena law firm, she found herself working 18 hour days seven days a week for months, putting out the pandemic-stoked fires facing her clients and her firm, down several attorneys due to recent retirements.

Hahn & Hahn is a certified woman and minority owned law firm, with a majority of women partners. Specializing in commercial finance, real estate, corporate and general business matters, Kerns advises corporate boards and C-suite executives. COVID-19 put her proven leadership skills to the test.

Kerns brought her firm’s 50 attorneys and staffers up-to-speed remotely with help from her IT manager and administrative director, securing computers, cameras, printers, scanners, remote system connectivity, lights and other office equipment.

“It was crazy, but we did it,” she says.

LAW SCHOOL OPENS DOORS

Growing up in a working-class family in Fullerton, Calif., Kerns sold children’s shoes at Nordstrom to put herself through California State University, Fullerton, studying sociology and business. Generous scholarships and financial aid from USC Gould made it possible for Kerns to attend law school, where she became editor-in-chief of the proceedings

of the USC Tax Institute as well as the *Computer Law Journal* (no longer in publication).

“USC Law School raised me to a level of professionalism that wasn’t previously available to me,” she says. “It opened doors that weren’t even apparent to me because I didn’t have a professional support network.”

Kerns gives back by mentoring USC Gould students and sitting on the First Generation Professionals Committee of the Board of Councilors.

Her law career began at Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, where she rose to partner in 1993. Kerns and husband, Charlie, an industrial/organizational psychologist on the faculty of Pepperdine University, settled down near Pasadena and started a family. She served as of counsel at Armstrong Hirsch Jackoway Tyerman & Wertheimer while raising her children, Jason, 31, and Lauren, 27. In 2003, she got back on a partnership track at Hahn & Hahn.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS A PRIORITY

Kerns’ other activities include four years as a commissioner of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and joining the board of Villa Esperanza Services, a Pasadena-based nonprofit working with developmentally disabled youth and adults. Through 2020, she also chaired the board of directors of Five Acres, a 133-year-old Altadena charity helping children and families in crisis, and since 2019, Kerns serves on the board of the Hastings Foundation, supporting pulmonary research at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

“I believe lawyers have a unique ability to help community organizations,” she says. “People like me, who are blessed in so many ways, really should be doing what they can to advance the causes they believe in for the collective good.” ✍️

Doing work that's 'good for the soul'

A leading litigator, Amber Finch (JD 2002) shines in her pro bono and D&I work

By Julie Riggott

For Amber Finch (JD 2002), a partner in Reed Smith LLP's Los Angeles office, every win is important. A member of the firm's Insurance Recovery Group since 2011, Finch has helped her commercial policyholder clients recover hundreds of millions of dollars in insurance proceeds. Those client successes have garnered attention across the industry and consistently landed the USC Gould alum on top lawyers lists for the past 14 years.



Amber Finch
(JD 2002)

From a *Southern California Super Lawyers Rising Star* in 2007 to the *National Law Journal's* Crisis Leadership Trailblazer in 2020, Finch never takes this leadership recognition for granted. "I text my mom, my daughter, my husband," she said. "It's still a very exciting and humbling experience for me."

But for Finch, a Black woman partner at a major law firm — one of fewer than 1% across the country — being

a lawyer is less about the spotlight and more about impact. For example, there is the pro bono case she argued about 10 years ago before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for a man faced with deportation after pleading guilty to burglary for leaving a store with less than \$50 worth of groceries that he had not paid for — despite living in the state of Washington for more than 30 years.

Finch successfully petitioned the court to vacate the removal order in its entirety. She remembers delivering the order to her client at the detention center where he had been held for two-and-a-half years.


"It's still one of the most important victories that I've ever had in my career," Finch says. "As a civil litigator, I deal with money all the time — and those successes are great, don't get me wrong — but being able to change someone's life, and do it at one of the highest levels in our court system, was huge. It didn't just impact his life, but it also essentially created precedent for any other litigant who was similarly situated and it became an order that others could cite."

Finch's pro bono work started at the USC Gould School of Law, where she got hands-on clinical experience in the Post-Conviction Justice Project. She has continued pro bono work through the Central District of California's Federal Pro Se Clinic and other organizations throughout her career.

"I'm from the community that I serve in those capacities," says Finch. "I have always had a desire to have some kind of impact in my community, to do something with the educational opportunity I was blessed with, to give back."

She also gives back as a member and past president of the Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles and board member of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. She aims to be an example and a mentor for young Black women. "I want to show them that it's possible to achieve their dreams, and also that giving back, doing pro bono work, being a volunteer is a good thing. It's good for the soul and good for our society," says Finch, who graduated from Stanford University and was a semi-finalist and board member of the Hale Moot Court Honors Program at USC Gould.

At Reed Smith, she has taken leadership roles in diversity and inclusion initiatives, most recently as partner chair of the firm's African American business inclusion group STAARS (Sustaining and Training African Americans at Reed Smith).

Her diversity and inclusion programming focuses on inclusion. "That means putting on programs that are informative and educational but also fun and interactive for *everybody*, whether you're a lawyer or staff, whether you're Black or white. My goal was to get as many people in the room as possible." 

FROM 'LAW SHACK' TO AMERICA'S FIRST SECOND GENTLEMAN

Doug Emhoff (JD 1990) on his first teaching gig, his role in the Biden Administration and his support of USC Gould

By Leslie Ridgeway

Apparently entertainment has always been in Doug Emhoff's (JD 1990) blood. As a student, he once took a break from the books to hit the stage as a singer and dancer in a student-produced musical extravaganza that lingers in his memory.

*Emhoff in the 1990
USC law yearbook,
Stare Decisis*



"I think it was called 'The Libel Show,'" Emhoff says with a genial chuckle, recalling his past theatrical performance. "We performed 'Law Shack' instead of 'Love Shack,' and this was, of course, in the late '80s. I somehow found my old yearbook and there were pictures of that show."

He grins with the memory. "That was a lot of fun."

Perhaps Emhoff missed a calling as an entertainer on the way to becoming a successful entertainment lawyer working at high-profile Los Angeles-based firms. Today, he has burnished

that distinguished career with a new position as a lecturer in entertainment law at Georgetown University Law Center, and with his most prominent role to date as the first Second Gentleman in American history.

But just as he's not above laughing at his amateur exploits on the stage, he's not interested in grabbing the spotlight for himself.

"I wouldn't be in this role if we didn't have our first female Vice President," he says, referring to Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he married in 2014.

As Emhoff embraces his role in the administration of President Joe Biden, he does so with the support of a solid foundation that he credits in large part to his time at USC Gould, where he fulfilled a childhood dream of becoming a lawyer.

"Maybe it was something I saw on TV, [but] I just knew as a six, seven-year-old, I wanted to be a lawyer," says Emhoff, who spent most of his youth in New Jersey and moved to the Los Angeles area as a teenager with his family. "But I also hated bullies as a kid. I always stuck up for other kids; I hated bullying, I hated unfairness. I picked



Page 13: Emhoff joins his wife, Vice President Kamala Harris, on stage

Page 14 (top): Emhoff performing as a law student

Page 14 (bottom): Emhoff remains actively involved with Gould mentor events

USC because I knew I wanted to stay in Los Angeles, and I knew I wanted to go to the best law school in Los Angeles, and I had an interest in entertainment. When you add it up all together, USC was the best choice I could have made.”

FROM STUDENT TO MENTOR

His gratitude for his education is evident. Emhoff has taken an active role through the years in mentorship, participating in the annual Mentor Luncheon, mock interviews, and recruiting new grads from USC “because they all make great lawyers.”

“They come out of USC and they’re ready to practice,” he says. “The network is so great and so huge. Every time I meet a fellow Trojan from the law school I make sure we stay connected. It’s been a long, 30-plus year relationship. [USC Gould] feels like such a big part of who I am and what I care about.”

“The strength of the Trojan Family, and the Trojan network,” says USC Gould Dean Andrew Guzman, “lies in the commitment of its members to supporting one another. Doug has illustrated that dedication

“The strength of the Trojan Family, and the Trojan network, lies in the commitment of its members to supporting one another.” —USC Gould Dean Andrew Guzman

through his decades-long — and still ongoing — involvement with USC Gould. All of us at the law school are very appreciative of the guidance he has given and the doors he has helped open for so many Gould students over the years.”



LESSONS IN LAW, PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE

Becoming a lecturer at Georgetown Law, where he teaches entertainment law, takes his enthusiasm for mentorship a step further, and he's grateful for the opportunity to realize his dream of teaching.

"I want to give back," he says. "This profession has been so good to me, and I've gotten so much out of it, and after 30 years ... I feel I have a lot to give back and hopefully impart to law students who are coming into the profession."

The class, taught on Zoom owing to the pandemic, is small, interactive and covers topics in entertainment litigation and disputes. Emhoff intends that it gives 3Ls practical experience that will help them transition from school into practice. A typical writing assignment or class discussion challenges students to explain how they would handle a case if it were assigned to them, he says. As of this writing, Emhoff was halfway through his first semester, and pleased with how things were going — "So far, so good," he says.

In case any of his students felt apprehensive or maybe even a little star-struck about their high-profile instructor,

Emhoff got that out of the way quickly — "We dispensed with the Second Gentleman business within a few minutes of the first class," he says. Emhoff keeps the focus on what he knows and how it can help his students become better lawyers.



"I want to give back. This profession has been so good to me and after 30 years ... I feel I have a lot to give back and hopefully impart to law students who are coming into the profession."

—*Doug Emhoff*

"I'm getting so much out of it, because so much in my world has changed and is different, but to be in this situation and be with law students, all third-years about to start their careers, and being right at that intersection to hopefully help them with some good advice and information as they start ... it's great," he says.

Emhoff is well aware that his place in national politics serves as an important signal of more open-minded attitudes toward gender roles in America, which he believes bodes well for women leaders.

"I have been talking about how we need more women leaders in politics, in the legal profession and all professions," he says. "For me to have this job, and for my wife to be Vice President, means we've come a long way."

In addition to teaching, Emhoff educates himself on issues important to Americans, and travels frequently in support of administration policies, such as the COVID-19 vaccination effort. In April, he traveled to Yakima, Wash., to visit a federal vaccination site, promote the federal American Rescue Plan and encourage more vaccinations.

"For me, it's an incredible honor to have the opportunity to be the first Second Gentleman, and I plan to really make most of this opportunity to lend my voice to issues and topics that need some illumination." ❖

Getting to “yes” in politics

New perspective lands Thai Viet Phan (JD/MPP 2015) on Santa Ana City Council



By Matthew Kredell

Thai Viet Phan
(JD/MPP 2015)

When Thai Viet Phan (JD/MPP 2015) applied for a grant as a second-year law student at USC Gould, one of the interviewers asked if she was interested in running for office. She quickly replied, “No, never!”

“I thought politics were a little bit gross,” Phan says, laughing.

Last November, Phan was elected as the first Vietnamese American and first Asian woman on the Santa Ana City Council.

“I’m proud and honored to be the first Vietnamese American on the dais,” Phan says. “I think it’s a great responsibility to make sure that, whatever I do, I keep the community in mind and provide services many of them have not been getting.”

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Phan grew up in Santa Ana and the Little Saigon community in Orange County, the largest community of Vietnamese people located outside Vietnam. She was born in Thailand near a refugee camp to which her family fled from Vietnam.

As a child, she routinely served as her mother’s translator and helped her submit paperwork for social services and government aid.

“That was a lot to do as a 10-year-old, but at the same time it’s also what I think helped me understand the needs of our community,” Phan says.

Phan studied law and public policy at USC. She found her job in government and regulatory law at Rutan & Tucker LLP by looking through a Gould Career Services list of firms employing graduates.

“USC was definitely instrumental in helping me find a really great job at a great firm,” Phan says. “A lot of that was the Trojan Network, being able to reach out and receive resources whenever I needed it.”

She, too, serves as a resource for current USC Gould students through the C. David Molina First Generation Professionals Program, which she helped develop during her last semester at Gould.

“I CAN DO A BETTER JOB”

At Rutan, Phan works as an assistant city attorney for the cities of Duarte and Menifee and provides legal counsel to cities and other public agencies throughout Southern California. She also gained governance experience as a member of the Santa Ana Planning Commission.

Meeting with elected officials changed her mind about politics. When redistricting opened the possibility of running in a predominantly Asian ward, she decided to take the leap.

“As city attorney, I saw how government is run in different places and what they’re doing to improve the community,” Phan says. “I looked at my city and said, ‘You know, I can do a better job.’”

Her top priority is removing the language barrier inhibiting many residents who speak only Vietnamese from accessing city services.

“We have a lot of folks who don’t speak English in our community, so language access is crucial for equity here. I’m never going to stop banging the drum until we get these services.” 📣

TO HER OWN SELF SHE'S TRUE

Amy Trask (JD 1985) uses Gould education as framework for career as Raiders CEO, TV analyst, Big3 Chair

By Leslie Ridgeway

Amy Trask (JD 1985) with late Raiders owner Al Davis

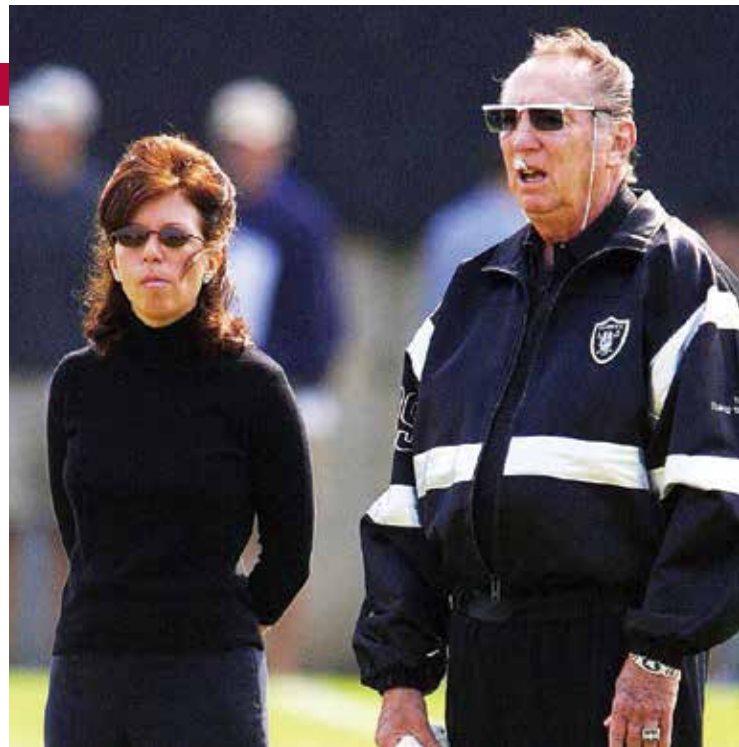
Amy Trask (JD 1985) never planned on a law career, yet she sometimes finds herself on national television raising a formal objection with one of her CBS Sports or CBS Network Sports co-hosts.

"I can't stand it when a question has assumptions baked into it," says Trask, who previously logged a 26-year career with the (now) Las Vegas Raiders, which includes being named the first woman CEO in the National Football League. "There are times where I'll say, 'Objection, assumes facts not in evidence.' For someone who swore she wouldn't practice law, there I am, throwing out objections on TV."

When Trask enrolled at USC Gould, she was considering professions ranging from veterinarian to astronaut to mystery novel writer, she says, but ruled out a law firm partnership or other legal pursuit. Whatever career she chose, she knew it would be enhanced by what she learned in law school at Gould — "and I was not disappointed," she says.

"The critical analysis and issue spotting I learned at Gould helps me now as a TV analyst," she says. "I find it also helps in writing (as a contributor to *The Athletic*). With the Raiders, my law degree helped me understand contracts, and of course my boss (the late Raiders owner and general manager Al Davis) was involved in a lot of litigation. The education I received in law school was extraordinarily valuable in my business career."

Her Raiders tenure started with an internship with the team she'd been rooting for since her undergrad days at University of California, Berkeley. With the Raiders, she took on any work that came her way, impressing Davis, whom she considers a touchstone in her career. Trask says she recognized her good fortune in working for a person like Davis. "[He] promoted me without regard to race, ethnicity or gender," she says.



TV ROLE PRESENTS GREATEST CHALLENGE OF CAREER

Trask says the TV analyst role is the most challenging to date, forcing her to confront lifelong nerves about being on camera. Recruited shortly after stepping down as the Raiders top executive, she was still weighing the decision at a gathering of friends when a woman next to her whom she barely knew quietly said, "Let it go." It was exactly what she needed to hear, and although she still gets butterflies on set sometimes, it's more enjoyable than she ever imagined.

"I've gotten far more comfortable, I'm facing my biggest fear ... and it's fun!" she says. "Sometimes I say to myself, 'I'm being compensated to sit here and talk about football and they do my hair and makeup?'" The best advice she heard about working on camera — "Be yourself" — echoes her mother's advice during childhood. "She said, 'To thine own self be true.' It wasn't until college that I learned that my mom didn't invent that, Shakespeare did."

Trask has also embraced her role as Chairman of the Board of Big3, a 3-on-3 basketball league launched in 2017 by hip-hop musician and actor Ice Cube and entertainment executive Jeff Kwatinetz. Though the pandemic forced the league to temporarily suspend its fourth season, teams are gearing up for 2021, and Trask is proud of the opportunities the league is bringing to a diverse group of professional athletes.

"We are leading by example, and sending a positive message," she says. 🏈

HER JOB IS A GAS

Linda Louie (JD 1985) hits the fast track as general counsel for National Hot Rod Association

By Matthew Kredell

At the National Hot Rod Association, Linda Louie (JD 1985) found that lawyering is never a drag — even though the races are.

Following an initial career as a business litigator, Louie made a home for herself as general counsel of the NHRA. She has worked at the premier sanctioning body for drag racing based in Glendora, Calif., for 22 years.



Linda Louie
(JD 1985)

She moved on from litigation when she found motherhood incompatible with big law firm life. After the second of her three children was born, she switched to working for companies with in-house law departments. She found the NHRA job in a newspaper ad after her third child was born.

“I find being in-house a more positive and constructive pursuit,” Louie says. “When you’re a litigator, you’re seeing things that already turned into problems. When you’re in-house, you can try to make sure they don’t turn into problems.”

“NO TWO DAYS ARE ALIKE”

Working for the NHRA, Louie faces all the regular issues any company would — for example, a wide variety of contracts, corporate governance, employment law, insurance and risk management, intellectual property, real estate and litigation

matters. But then she handles issues specific to racing, such as matters related to the rules that govern the sport, TV, live-streaming, digital and print content, licensing, on-track incidents, and issues related to live events (including during COVID-19).

“There’s a lot of variety and no two days are alike,” Louie says. “That makes for a fun job with a lot of professional challenges and opportunity for growth.”

And like many who have seen, or heard, hot rods launch forward at extreme speeds, she became a racing fan.

“You cannot help but get into it if you attend one of our races,” Louie says. “It’s like nothing else on the planet. When you’re there and there’s two cars with 11,000 horsepower each going well over 300 miles an hour in a few seconds, it’s pretty impressive.”

BAKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: IT’S A FAMILY AFFAIR

Her USC Gould class still keeps in touch after all these years. Following an online 35-year reunion during the COVID-19 pandemic, the class started a book group in which Louie participates, facilitated by Gould professors Rebecca Brown and Clare Pastore, as well as Adam Murray, CEO of Inner City Law Center.

With two of her adult children living at her home in South Pasadena during the pandemic, the Louie family sought to make a difference through baking. Her daughter Ari, a student at University of California, Berkeley, came up with the idea to raise money to support racial and social justice organizations, and Louie’s Bake for Justice was born (louiesbake4justice.org).

As Ari’s idea took off, the rest of their pandemic pod pitched in — Louie, her husband Chip, son Aidan and his girlfriend Kiera Salvo. Together they’ve made thousands of cookies and biscuits, hundreds of tubs of beans, hummus and falafel, and more. The effort has generated more than \$30,000 for a variety of community-oriented racial justice organizations.

“We never dreamed the bake sale would bring the community together the way it has,” Louie says. “When it started, many of the customers were old friends. It’s a team effort that takes the full attention of a lot of people here every weekend, but it’s been a really positive experience and I think we’re doing a lot of good.” 🍪

An education in racial reckoning

Race, Racism, and the Law is a first-of-its-kind required course among top law schools

By Leslie Ridgeway

The racial reckoning of 2020, from the Movement for Black Lives to the ravages of COVID-19, brought home to the USC Gould School of Law the continuing salience of race in the legal system and in society.

Faculty, students and administrators joined together to take concrete anti-racist actions in the law school community. As a centerpiece of that effort, the USC Gould School has developed Race, Racism and the Law, a unique required course for JD students, starting next academic year, for the Class of 2024.

“The Black Lives Matter protests as well as the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others all had an impact on our students and faculty. This moment requires that we ask about our obligations to the legal community, to society, and to the world writ large,” says Professor and Vice Dean Franita Tolson, who co-chaired the Academic Affairs subcommittee charged with developing the course. “The course will help students recognize that their obligation as lawyers, regardless of their specialty, is to understand that law does not always operate equally — that race is an enduring part of the legal profession and our everyday lives.”

USC Gould is the first of the top 25 law schools in the nation to add a required course on race and racism to its curriculum.


“It’s nice to be a trailblazer,” says Professor Ariela Gross, who also co-chaired the subcommittee. “A lot of schools are considering this. Colleagues at many other law schools have been contacting me because they are coming up with proposals.”

Support for the course reached a critical mass in June 2020, when Professor Camille Gear Rich wrote a memo advocating for a mandatory course on race and the law. Gross and other professors, including Stephen Rich and Sam Erman, were also working on a proposal for such a course during the prior year. An advisory committee was subsequently formed to study adding the course to the mandatory curriculum.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT DRIVES COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Student involvement was key to the course’s formation. The Student Bar Association nominated 2L Martina Fouquet, a member of the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) and an outspoken participant in school-wide Zoom conversations about systemic racism over the summer, to serve as student representative on the subcommittee. Fouquet was instrumental in drafting the proposal for the course, and 3L Katie Hill, the Academic Affairs Committee student representative, collected feedback from Student Bar Association representatives in all classes.

The new course adds an important and necessary dimension to law school education, Fouquet says.



“The course will help students recognize that their obligation as lawyers, regardless of their specialty, is to understand that law does not always operate equally — that race is an enduring part of the legal profession and our everyday lives.”

“It is possible, due to the rigor of law school, to graduate without a core understanding of the social context informing why laws are the way they are,” she says. “First and foremost, I hope this course helps students understand the historical context of race and the law ... how a law that might seem race neutral can have an application that is racially skewed.”

The subcommittee also included professors Scott Altman, David Cruz, Clare Pastore and Gear Rich.

NEW COURSE JOINS ADDITIONAL MODULES ON RACE AND LAW

Race, Racism and the Law joins a variety of electives focused on race, including Critical Race Theory, Racial Ambiguity Blues, and Race and Gender in the Law. To further strengthen Gould’s curriculum on race, the subcommittee recommended an optional one-credit yearlong offering on race and law that includes 10 topical modules in the first year of law school.

This offering closely tracks the proposal offered by Gear Rich in her June memo. “Many first year students are eager to start discussion of these topics early. The modular course will focus on foundational issues in the study of race that will greatly enrich the insights they bring to their other classes,” Gear Rich says.

Discussions about the race, racism and law curriculum gained steam in the fall as the proposal was vetted by the Academic Affairs Committee, the Student Bar Association, and Gould affinity

groups including BLSA, the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association, Latino Law Students Association, Middle Eastern and North African Law Student Association, South Asian Law Student Association, Womxn of Color Collective and OUTLaw, all of which signed a statement in support of the course.

A number of faculty are interested in teaching the course, which will be first offered as an elective in spring 2022, Gross says.

Dean Andrew Guzman, in a memo to the Gould community, highlighted the national events that underscore the imperative of educating law school students on the role of race in the law.

“From the COVID-19 pandemic, with its racially disparate impact, to the nationwide uprising of the Black Lives Matter movement in response to racialized policing and criminal justice, to the recent national election that featured racialized appeals by election officials as well as racially disparate voting patterns, race continues to be a dominant theme in American life,” he said.

Tolson points to the “awesome responsibility” lawyers have to deepen their understanding of the legal structures and institutions of law in order to make the system more equitable. She cites legal vanguards such as Associate Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg as models, noting that they committed themselves to the courageous work of challenging the status quo. “At Gould, we are now arming our students with the tools to do the same,” she says. ✍️

It's about service

Sheryl Gordon McCloud and Ellen Biben make an impact with high-profile careers on the bench

By Christina Schweighofer

Preparing in 1982 for her first court appearance, Sheryl Gordon McCloud (JD 1984) felt increasingly apprehensive. How would she do before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals? She confided in her USC law professor, Dennis Curtis, that speaking in public made her nervous. "It's not about you," said Curtis, who directed what was then known as the Prison Law Project and is now the Post-Conviction Justice Project at USC Gould. "It's about the client."

Almost 40 years later, the focus on others and on being of service has shaped and determined the career of Gordon McCloud, one of nine justices on the Washington State Supreme Court. The same is true for another high-profile

substance use, mental health issues, domestic violence and poverty with community-based social services that offer individualized treatment and programming.

"These are people who would otherwise serve state time but warrant rehabilitative efforts," said Biben, who, after a two-year clerkship and a stint in private practice, spent the bulk of her career as a prosecutor in New York. "When they put in the work, it is amazing and gratifying to see the success."

Gordon McCloud, a New York native like Biben, was elected to the bench in 2012 after a career as a public defender and private lawyer focusing on criminal defense and appellate work. The Washington Supreme Court on which she serves made history in 2018 when it struck

"I went to law school hoping to change the world. But my job is to serve justice and treat people fairly and with compassion. The impact I'm having is one life at a time. Change doesn't always need to happen on a global level."

—Hon. Ellen Biben

law school alumna on the bench, Ellen Biben (JD 1992). Appointed in 2015 to the New York State Supreme Court, she became the administrative judge of the New York County Supreme Court, Criminal Term in 2017.

Both women have already left lasting impressions on the legal system in their state. In 2019, Biben created a felony alternatives to incarceration court in Manhattan. The first of its kind in the nation, the court has so far served more than 200 individuals charged with felonies. It links participants who have co-occurring challenges like

down the death penalty because of its disproportionate impact on Black defendants.

Having worked for three decades with the people whose rights were most affected by court decisions, Gordon McCloud ran for the seat to fill a gap on the court. "I knew that the vast majority of my street-crime clients were men of color," she said. "And I had firsthand experience of trying to tell their story from their point of view — a point of view that is rooted in reality. I feel that I have tried to bring that voice to the court."

“I had firsthand experience of trying to tell their story from their point of view — a point of view that is rooted in reality. I feel that I have tried to bring that voice to the court.” —Hon. Sheryl Gordon McCloud

IMPACT AND CHANGE — ‘ONE LIFE AT A TIME’

Both Gordon McCloud and Biben credit their success, at least in part, to the lessons they learned and the opportunities they found because of USC

that went into their decision. Their compassion and mercy inspired her, and she now tries to follow the same principles in her own work.

“I went to law school hoping to change the world. But my job is to serve justice and treat people fairly



Left: Hon. Sheryl Gordon McCloud

Right: Hon. Ellen Biben

Gould, be it in clinics or as interns, externs and clerks. The takeaway from USC Gould that has sat with Biben most deeply is that a law education and the law profession come with an obligation to do service. “We have a responsibility to serve people who are vulnerable,” she said, “to be a voice for others.”

For both women, the importance that USC Gould places on experiential learning was critical. Biben points in particular to her internship during her first summer and her clerkship, both with federal court judges, as “eye-opening experiences” that put her on a path to criminal law. Spending hours in the courtroom, she saw the judges’ impact on each person appearing before them and the careful deliberation



and with compassion,” she said. “The impact I’m having is one life at a time. Change doesn’t always need to happen on a global level.”

Gordon McCloud said that her interest in appellate law stemmed from the clinic run by Curtis and Professor Bill Genego and from her argument before the appeals court. Curtis’ ability to engage with her emotions and the wisdom he imparted have stayed with her. Despite her extensive experience, she still gets nervous before court arguments. But when it is time for her to go out on the bench or, these days, join the other justices on Zoom, she says she takes a deep breath and reminds herself that it’s not about her. 📌

A CHAMPION FOR

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, a woman of many firsts in politics, has fought to better the lives of women, children and minorities

By Christina Schweighofer

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke worked to expand business and recreational opportunities and improve foster care during her time as County Supervisor

To mention the name Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (JD 1956) is to say, “first.” Serving the public from the 1960s onward, she was the first Black woman in the California State legislature, the first Black woman to represent California in Congress, and the first woman and first African American to serve on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. The list goes on. But to talk about the person behind the many firsts, is to talk about education, hard work and civil rights.

Burke was 16 years old and attending a friend’s birthday party at the home of his uncle, civil rights attorney Loren Miller, when she decided to ignore her mother’s push for a career in education and become a lawyer instead. The daughter of a union organizer and politically conscious, she was already well aware of the impact that Miller’s work to eliminate restrictive covenants had had on her own family. “It meant that we could move out of the little area in Los Angeles where we lived. To me, as a teenager, that was a big issue,” she said recently.

Seeing Miller in his library at the party changed her life. *That’s me, she thought. I will have all those books and be able to go into court and make things very different for people.*

When the time came for law school applications, Burke had one goal only. “I wanted to get into a good law school, so I could pass the bar.” She was the second Black woman admitted to USC Gould, then known as USC School of Law, after Helen Wheeler Riddle (JD 1927). “I got a first-class education,” Burke said.

CHANGING MINDS IN CHANGING TIMES

One of the most heatedly discussed topics during her time at the law school was educational integration. A fellow student at the law school who seemed persistently immune to Burke’s constitutional arguments for educational integration told her decades later that her perspective helped him win a high-



profile case regarding adoptions by interracial couples. “It just shows that you never know what impact you have on people,” she said about his turnaround.

Being a woman and Black, Burke faced a difficult road with regard to professional opportunities following law school. Burke was unable to get an interview with a law firm until 30 years after graduating. She began her career as a private lawyer with a focus on real estate and probate law while also serving as a hearing officer for the Los Angeles police commission.

Following the Watts uprising in 1965, she created a legal defense fund for people arrested in connection with what took place and was appointed by Gov. Pat Brown to serve on a commission to investigate the uprising’s origins. She first ran for office in 1966 at his suggestion. In 1972, she was the first Black woman to serve as vice chair of the Democratic

PRINCIPLES



Top: Burke with her fellow members of the Class of 1956

Bottom: Burke speaking at a Gould Zoom celebration in October

National Convention. In 1973, she started her first term in Congress, where she fought for legislation to better the situation of minority-owned businesses and of women entering the labor market. The first incumbent member of Congress to give birth, she returned to L.A. after running in 1978, unsuccessfully, for the position of Attorney General.

Burke made her biggest impact, politically, as a member of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors. Serving for one year after Gov. Jerry Brown appointed her in 1979 to fill a vacancy in District 4, she represented District 2 for 16 years starting in 1992. She helped to expand business and recreational opportunities in the community and to improve foster care. One of her programs included events that brought children from South Los Angeles to the ocean. “These are little things,” she said. “But many of the children had never been to the beach.”

CONCERNS ABOUT PROGRESS FOR WOMEN, MINORITIES

To this day, Burke is often in situations where she is the only Black person or woman. Serving on the Amtrak Board of Directors since 2012, she has consistently been the only woman in a group of seven, and sometimes she wonders whether things have changed much for women. “I am concerned about the business opportunities for women and minorities,” she said. “A few people have become presidents of organizations, and they move forward. But I don’t see minorities and women in the mainstream.”



Looking back, she has become increasingly aware of the support that she received from allies, sometimes without even knowing it. A women’s legal sorority that she joined as a first-year student, Iota Tau Tau, saw its association with the national organization terminated because they accepted her, a Black woman. When Burke first heard this story after graduating, she was shocked. She said she learned from the experience that “there are many people who are willing to make whatever sacrifice it takes to stand out for a principle.”

Burke has always dealt with racism by fighting it. “My reaction was to never accept discrimination,” she said. When a property owner in Sacramento wouldn’t rent to her because she is Black, she sued. When she was refused admittance to a social event in college, she sued. “The person that discriminates against you should have to at least know that they have discriminated against you,” she said. “I fought it in the law.” 🗡️

School's in for this alum

Lisa Kloppenberg (JD 1987) follows influence of Judge Dorothy Nelson to career in academia

By Matthew Kredell

Lisa Kloppenberg, right, with Judge Dorothy Wright Nelson, at the Conversation with the Deans panel in 2019

Lisa Kloppenberg (BA 84, JD 1987) didn't plan a career in academia when she enrolled at the USC Gould School of Law, but the seed was planted when she accepted a clerkship after graduation with U.S. Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit Judge Dorothy Wright Nelson (LLM 1956), a former dean of the USC School of Law.

Nelson urged her clerks to seek careers in academia, and her influence led Kloppenberg first to mediation and alternative dispute resolution, and eventually, academia — as a professor, law school dean, provost and now acting president of Santa Clara University.

Kloppenberg is returning the favor by writing a biography on Nelson, to be published in the fall by Oxford University Press.

"I'm so honored and humbled to write her biography because she's such a role model to people in education, on the bench and in conflict resolution," Kloppenberg says. "She's really known around the world."

THE PATH TO ACADEMIA

After clerking for Judge Nelson, Kloppenberg worked in litigation, arbitration and mediation with the firm Kaye, Scholer, Fierman, Hays & Handler LLP in Washington, D.C., then with Ken Feinberg, a prominent mediator. After Kloppenberg earned tenure as a professor at the University of Oregon, Judge Nelson asked if she could put Kloppenberg's name in a database for potential women law school deans being assembled at Georgetown Law Center. Kloppenberg became the youngest law school dean in the nation at the time when she was named dean at the University of Dayton (Ohio) School of Law at age 39.

She found her training in mediation beneficial for leading academic institutions.

"There's a correlation between conflict resolution and teaching in every administrative job I've ever done," Kloppenberg says. "I think a lot of it is really listening deeply to people, trying to solve problems, to help them solve their



problems, and getting different groups together to find some common ground and build a path forward."

TELLING JUDGE NELSON'S LIFE STORY

After she became dean at Dayton, Kloppenberg decided to write Nelson's biography, encouraged by her husband, Mark Zunich, whom she met while attending USC.

"We worked on it very gradually, and so many people at USC and on the Ninth Circuit were really generous to give me and Mark interviews," Kloppenberg says. "Judge Nelson gave us tremendous access to a lot of materials. It is part of her life and one kind of perspective on her life, but you could write 10 books on what she did."

Kloppenberg took over as dean of the law school at Santa Clara University in 2013, was named provost in 2020 and is currently serving as interim president.

Kloppenberg's goals for the university center around increasing access and affordability, transparency, collaborative governance, robust communication, strengthening engagement with Silicon Valley and becoming an anti-racist institution.

"Judge Nelson always wanted me to be a college president," Kloppenberg says. "She's forceful in her gentle way. I just feel like I'm here to serve because I was called upon and I want to be helpful. Running a law school is a lot like running a small university." ❧

Developing better students, better lawyers

Katherine Bonaguidi (JD 2002) finds fulfillment as attorney with California Innocence Project

By Leslie Ridgeway

Katherine Bonaguidi, California Innocence Project attorney

A phone call helped decide Katherine Bonaguidi's (JD 2002) law school career.

Newly graduated from Georgetown University, she was looking for a small law school in an exciting urban area. It came down to two in the Los Angeles area. One school stranded her on a phone tree when she called for more information. A live person answered at the other, and that's how she chose the USC Gould School of Law.

"I wanted friendliness and collegiality," says Bonaguidi, now an attorney with the California Innocence Project at the California Western School of Law. "The statistics, the data crunching . . . are you an application, a number, or a human? I didn't want to be a rat in the race."

GOULD PROFESSORS LEAVE LASTING IMPRESSION

Bonaguidi hoped to have a positive impact on people's lives, via criminal justice or legal aid. That led her to the Post-Conviction Justice Project, where Professor Carrie Hempel took her on her first visit to a federal prison, demonstrating the value of clinical work. In the classroom, Professor Erwin Chemerinsky showed her the balance between privacy and transparency, which she carried into criminal justice work as she navigated competing interests of community stakeholders. In Professor Tom Griffith's Special Topics in Criminal Law course, she saw that well-intentioned policies can have devastating and disparate consequences in practice.

Professor Mary Dudziak made a lasting impression with an anecdote she told in her civil procedure class illustrating the importance of substance over swagger, Bonaguidi said.

"She was quiet and petite, and said she was underestimated by some of her colleagues and opponents, but that turned out to be a gift," she says. "When it was her



turn to cross-examine, she really grilled the witness, who wasn't expecting it. You don't need to advertise that you're a tiger all the time. You can be gracious and amicable, and if and when the time comes, you can be a tiger."

ENERGIZED BY TRAINING STUDENTS

After graduation, Bonaguidi honed her legal skills at a civil law firm and eventually joined the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, where she stayed for 13 years enjoying the variety of assignments and offices she was assigned to around L.A. She eventually signed on to the California Innocence Project in San Diego, her hometown, and a role training law students in a clinical program.

Bonaguidi advocates for criminal justice reform, especially sentencing reform. Lengthy prison sentences don't protect the community and fail to rehabilitate offenders, she says. Though the journey to change is arduous, she sees reason for hope.

"I believe a lot of good people work in criminal justice. If we can harness that dedication and genuine concern, while being open to new voices and ideas, we will move in the right direction," Bonaguidi says. 🐾

SOLVING PROBLEMS ON A GLOBAL SCALE

Gould MSJ student Betty Thai earned fellowship that could lead to job as a U.S. diplomat



By Eric Lindberg

Betty Thai hopes to pursue a career in international affairs to help vulnerable groups around the world

Like many children of immigrant parents, Betty Thai grew up in the role of cultural navigator.

When it came time to enroll her in elementary school, her parents, who are from Southern China, asked her to research and decide which school to attend. She translated at parent-teacher conferences, pored over the complicated language of important government documents and pointed out expensive charges in household bills to her mother.

That responsibility at a young age made Thai deeply passionate about understanding cultural differences. It led her to USC, where she pursues undergraduate degrees in political science and East Asian languages and cultures at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, while working toward a Master of Studies in Law at the USC Gould School of Law.

The senior envisions a career devoted to exploring other cultures and advocating for vulnerable groups around the world. She studied abroad in China on a Gilman Scholarship in 2019 and recently received the prestigious Pickering Fellowship, which covers a two-year master's degree followed by an overseas posting in the U.S. Foreign Service.

"I realized there are a lot of deep-rooted issues, especially facing underserved communities and minorities," Thai said. "I want to get involved in politics to help solve those issues and address those structural barriers that people like my parents have to face."

FINDING PASSION FOR CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Thai, raised in California's San Fernando Valley, had a strong work ethic at a young age. Instead of watching cartoons like other kids, she studied Mandarin on Saturday mornings at Chinese language school.

While studying in China through her Gilman Scholarship, Thai became the de facto translator and navigator for her American classmates. In Chinese language class, she was the only student from the United States, and she joined in many conversations about life, politics and culture in the U.S. and China.

When Thai realized she wanted to pursue a career in international affairs, the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program became her top goal.

The fellowship covers tuition and fees at a two-year master's program in international affairs or a similar topic as well as a stipend to cover living expenses. Fellows complete two summer internships — first at the U.S. Department of State, then overseas at a U.S. embassy or consulate. In exchange, fellows agree to spend at least five years as a foreign service officer after completing their degrees. Thai didn't expect to be selected, not even telling her mom she applied until the acceptance letter arrived.

Thai's current goal is to become a political officer in the U.S. Foreign Service, analyzing politics in her host country and making recommendations to leaders in Washington, D.C. It would be the opportunity of a lifetime: "I could influence policies that can help underserved communities on an international scale." ✍️

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

High school principal Angela Harding (MSL 2019), PsyD, used her legal studies education to guide her school through the pandemic.

By Larissa Puro

Angela Harding,
Coast High
School principal

If anyone can emerge from a global crisis and view it as a learning opportunity, it's an educator. For Angela Harding (MSL 2019), PsyD, principal at Coast High School in Huntington Beach, Calif., the pandemic was a defining moment that not only tested her school's resilience but led to positive outcomes for both students and teachers.

"This past year the global pandemic has taken us, in almost every sense, outside of our comfort zones, and into our courage zones," she says.

Harding used her background in education management, as well as her own education in legal studies, to steer her school through each unfolding challenge.

Before joining Coast High, a college prep alternative school of choice, in 2016, Harding, who holds a master's in educational technology and doctorate in psychology, served as an assistant principal at Huntington Beach High School. A career in education interested her because "teaching and learning is all about connection," she says — and she finds it both challenging and rewarding.

Harding chose to pursue a Master of Studies in Law to enhance her expertise in human resources and employment law. "The MSL degree is the perfect complement to an established career that doesn't involve starting over, but rather, building upon," she says. And USC Gould's "sterling reputation," paired with a strong sense of community and connection appealed to her.

From diplomacy and problem solving to critical thinking and strategy, the skills she developed in the program made her more effective as a school leader, she says. "I'm now further empowered to serve stakeholders in equitable, inclusive and meaningful ways."

The pandemic presented the opportunity to put her education to work. Primary and secondary schools were hit hard, and Coast High was no exception. While the school was fortunate to already have a hybrid online platform in place, the administration had to navigate months of uncertainty and stress.

"Particularly relevant during the pandemic were the skills of active listening and consensus building taught through Employment Mediation," Harding says. "At its core, the class was really about how to treat people — with



warmth, wise compassion, a caring heart and a diplomatic spirit that preserves the dignity of all parties."

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, a few silver linings emerged.

Some students, including those who work to help support their families, flourished with the online format's flexibility. Moving forward, Harding says, the school is exploring a new online-only program, which could offer more opportunities for students to access the curriculum in ways that align with their learning styles and preferences.

Harding knows that even in normal times, nearly 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. With a pandemic to contend with, the outlook could mean even more lost teachers. To support them, Coast High prioritized their teachers' training in resilience and strengths-based leadership.

"Rising levels of student stress exacerbated by COVID-19 was negatively impacting student learning, and we needed to equip staff with leading-edge tools to meet student needs during times of prolonged crisis," Harding says. "Training our staff in the elements of well-being has enabled them to coach and model these skills for students."

Harding is proud of how her school worked through the challenges. "We overcame the 'politics' of the public health crisis by modeling the art of civility and mutual respect for divergent viewpoints," she says, noting the fortitude and growth demonstrated by the school's students, staff and families. "Kites rise highest against resistance." 🏹

A mind for social justice



Meiram Bendat (JD 1998) takes inspiration from Professor Elyn Saks to forge formidable career in mental health legal advocacy

By Leslie Ridgeway

Meiram Bendat (JD 1998) enrolled at the USC Gould School of Law with the goal of making an impact in social justice. After exploring many facets of the field, it was a suggestion from Professor Elyn Saks, made years earlier, that he says helped pave the way to a career as a boutique law firm owner with an impressive track record in mental health advocacy.

In 2019, Bendat, founder and president of Santa Barbara, Calif.-based Psych Appeal, won a landmark judgment in a federal class action lawsuit against United Behavioral Health, the largest mental health insurer in

“When I started Psych Appeal, there were no private law firms exclusively devoted to mental health insurance advocacy,” he says. “Insurance represents the promise of access and care, and I am sensitive to bureaucracies that fail to deliver, like the L.A. County child welfare system where I previously worked or behemoth insurance companies which I now sue. In times of greatest need, health insurers tend to run toward the hills. To me, that represents a massive betrayal that the legal system must cure.”

Bendat was invited to testify in mid-April at a hearing of the Congressional Education and Labor

“I feel like my achievements reflect my inner passions, and what I’m doing has real impact on the world around me. I know it is saving lives.” —Meiram Bendat

the nation, for wrongfully denying benefits to nearly 70,000 of its members. The seven-year case culminated in a series of 10-year injunctions requiring the company to make coverage determinations consistent with generally accepted standards of care; appointment of a special master to oversee the injunctions; and passage of California Senate Bill 855 in January, which Bendat helped to write, beefing up the California Parity Act and establishing California as the national leader for mental health and addiction coverage. The case was described as the “*Brown v. Board of Education* for the mental health movement” by former Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy, sponsor of the federal mental health parity law.

Committee Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions on improving access to behavioral and mental health care. Bendat’s testimony covered mental health benefits under the Employee Retirement Security Income Act (ERISA) and coverage gaps that pose significant barriers to benefits and treatment.

“To truly guarantee meaningful access to mental health care, I urge Congress to consider legislation that: conditions ‘medical necessity’ on adherence to generally accepted standards of clinical practice; eliminates the deferential standard of judicial review in health benefit cases; permits damages against health insurance issuers and claims administrators that discriminate against and



Meiram Bendat
with mentor
Professor
Elyn Saks

undermine access to mental health treatment; and protects access to open courts by exempting ERISA claims from binding arbitration,” Bendat said.

FROM CHILDREN’S ADVOCACY TO MENTAL HEALTH LEGAL ADVOCACY

Born in Israel to a family of holocaust survivors, a career in social justice was a priority for Bendat. After earning a bachelor’s degree in English at Columbia University, he chose USC Gould School of Law for its small size, urban location, “and I won’t deny the weather was a factor,” he says. After taking Professor Lee Campbell’s Children’s Legal Advocacy seminar, he was gravitating toward children’s advocacy when Saks, from whom he’d taken courses in civil and criminal mental health law, brought him to an open house at the New Center for Psychoanalysis in Los Angeles.

“When Meiram was a student in my Mental Health Law classes, his comments always struck me as right on point, subtle, and caring about consequences for people with mental health challenges,” says Saks, director of the Saks Institute on Mental Health Law, Policy and Ethics. “I suggested he might want to be trained in mental health to be a more effective advocate with these clients, to be more educated about many of the issues families with these disorders face.”

A few years after law school, having opted for children’s advocacy work, Bendat saw more clearly that connection with mental health and the suffering of the families he was representing, and remembered Saks’ suggestion. He enrolled in Antioch University’s Master in Clinical Psychology program and, simultaneously, the PhD program at the New Center for Psychoanalysis. After several years as a psychotherapist, his interest in mental health legal advocacy crystallized, specifically in fighting to help consumers of mental health and addiction services obtain benefits they were entitled to.


Bendat found that insurers had developed medical necessity criteria that often conflicted with generally accepted standards of care, in large part because quantifying the emotional and psychological suffering of the mentally ill was murkier than the relative ease in quantifying physical disorders, he says.

“As far as trying to decipher medical necessity, it was the Wild West,” he says. “There was no sheriff in town, the regulators were asleep at the wheel, the laws were anemic, and the tragedies kept piling up.”

LEGISLATION SETS SWEEPING STANDARDS FOR COVERAGE

Among SB 855’s achievements are creating a statewide definition of medical necessity for mental health and substance use treatment that all California insurers must abide by; mandating coverage of all conditions listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), the American Psychiatric Association’s authority for diagnosing mental health and substance use disorders; ensuring access to the entire continuum of mental health care, including intermediate services such as residential treatment; mandating the use of utilization review criteria exclusively developed by non-profit professional specialty associations; prohibiting insurers from limiting benefits or coverage to short-term or acute services; restricting insurers from pawning off commercially-insured patients to taxpayer-funded public entitlement programs to thwart their private obligations; and dispensing with the arbitrary and capricious standard of judicial review in ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) cases. Up until January, only nine conditions in the DSM were covered by the California Parity Act. Potential cost savings from the bill are considerable — for every dollar spent on mental health services, \$7 in medical costs are saved, Bendat says.

Bendat is currently working on 10 pending class actions against different U.S. insurers. He works in partnership with law firms specializing in litigation, enabling him to make the most of his hybrid skills as an attorney-clinician. He credits Saks for guiding him toward a rewarding and effective career.

“Her mentorship enabled me to chart a career I’m very proud of,” he says. “I feel like my achievements reflect my inner passions, and what I’m doing has real impact on the world around me. I know it is saving lives.” 

Service is in her DNA

Aulana Peters continues to open the way for the next generation

By Carren Jao

Aulana Peters (pictured here with Professor and former Dean Robert Rasmussen) was the featured speaker at a Conversation with the Dean event in 2012

Aulana Peters (JD 1973) has long felt called to serve. “It’s just been part of my DNA for such a long time,” she says, citing her parents’ influence, as well as her formative education as the source for her inclination to be of service. After rising through the ranks at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP and being named partner, in 1984 she got the ultimate chance to serve when she was appointed to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission by President Ronald Reagan. She was the first African American and the third woman ever appointed to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) — a position of service to the whole country. The experience left an indelible impression on Peters.

“I am of an age that I don’t use this word too often, but those four years in Washington D.C. were absolutely awesome,” she says. Still, she nearly took another path, and she credits her husband Bruce for persuading her to make law her career choice.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the College of New Rochelle in New York, Peters headed toward a career in education. “I was motivated by a desire to work in the Black community, with the disadvantaged, underserved youth of the community,” she says. “I had had a lot of opportunities in my life and done well and I wanted to do something to provide young Black people of today, who are good students, the same opportunities, so I thought teaching was the career for me.”

When it came time to apply for graduate school, Bruce suggested law, believing her temperament was not suited to working full-time in education, though she clearly had the motivation to make a difference. “He also persuaded me that with a degree in law I would be able to have a



bigger impact and broader imprint on the community that I wanted to serve,” Peters says. “As it turned out, he was correct.”

After the SEC, she returned to Gibson Dunn, working in litigation until her retirement in 2000. While at Gibson Dunn, Peters embraced service through the firm’s pro bono program. She has also served on a number of boards of directors for such companies as 3M Company, Deere & Company, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Mobil Corporation and Merrill Lynch & Co.

Peters continues to give back to the broader community, particularly underserved youth. She and her husband are mentors and financial supporters of Thrive Scholars, a nonprofit educational organization that guides and mentors high-achieving low-income students of color. In 2018, Peters and her husband created and endowed the Peters Pharis Foundation which makes financial awards to nonprofits providing educational opportunities to talented young people from low-income families.

“[My husband and I] both look back on our lives and are grateful for our good fortune. We want to do what we can to provide underserved young people the opportunity to fulfill their potential,” Peters says. 🍷

2020 BAR CEREMONY ACKNOWLEDGES GRADUATES' HARD WORK IN “HISTORICALLY DIFFICULT” YEAR

By Jim Lee

Recent Gould graduates were sworn in by Hon. Michael Amerian (JD 1999) and Hon. Julia Brand (JD 1985) at the virtual Bar Ceremony in February

The USC Gould Bar Ceremony recognizes the years of hard work and dedication of law school graduates, culminating in their passing of the California Bar Exam, an important milestone in their legal careers. The pandemic presented unique challenges to the 2020 exam, making the achievements of this year’s more than 35 graduates in attendance even more impressive.

The virtual ceremony was hosted by Dean Andrew Guzman with 3L Marian Slocum serving as bailiff. Hon. Michael R. Amerian (JD 1999) of the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles and Hon. Julia W. Brand (JD 1985) of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California swore the graduates in with the state and federal attorneys’ oaths.

Dean Guzman opened the event by congratulating alumni on their success.

“Today is special for lots of reasons. One of them is the fact that this year was historically difficult,” he said. “You overcame a lot. You faced unprecedented challenges, not only including your law degree, not only in passing the bar exam, but also including all areas of life, and through it all, you showed the determination to push through and succeed.”

Prior to administering the state oath, Judge Amerian reminded graduates to think about all of the love and support they got along the way, from those who cared about them most. He urged them to visualize their faces in the most difficult of moments.

“There are moments in your career that you will face inevitably difficult questions, ethical or otherwise,” he said. “Remember, you will always have other clients, but you will only have one state bar license. The people that you just envisioned are counting on you to make the right choice in those difficult moments. Trust that you will. I do. You are all Trojans, after all.”



Before stating the federal oath, Judge Brand noted, “You now get to embark on a path of lifelong learning as you start your careers and as you learn the law and its many aspects and how to be great lawyers.”

Judge Brand concluded her remarks with tips for professional success she learned in 25 years of practice and nine years on the bench, urging graduates to always prepare their best work, seek out role models, network early and often, volunteer, observe and learn from good lawyers in court, and to stay connected to the USC Gould community. 📌

Ronald S. Barak (BS 1964, JD 1968) published *JK's Code*, the fourth in his bestselling Brooks/Lotello thriller series. He was a partner and chairman of the real estate section and co-managing partner of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, and later a partner at Manatt Phelps & Phillips LLP. Barak competed in the 1964 Olympics as a member of the United States men's national gymnastics team and later served as head coach of USC's varsity gymnastics team.



Alicia Bartley (JD 2003) was named partner at Gaines & Stacey LLP in Encino, Calif. Her practice focuses on a variety of areas, including litigation involving property transactions, land use entitlements, and other real estate-related matters.

Hon. Catherine Bauer (Ret.) (JD 1985) recently retired as a bankruptcy judge and joined Signature Resolution as a mediator and arbitrator.

Tom Bradley (JD 1995) received the Assistant Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service from the criminal division of the U.S. Department of Justice for his efforts to reduce pretrial detention in West Africa. Since 2015, Bradley has been detailed to the State Department as the resident legal advisor at U.S. Embassies in Mauritania, Mali, and now Burkina Faso.

Christopher Braham (JD 2013) was named partner at McDermott Will & Emery, LLP. He is a member of the USC Gould Alumni Association's Los Angeles Committee.

Frank Gregory Casella (JD 2014) joined Electronic Arts as legal counsel in marketing and intellectual property. Previously, he served as an associate at Doniger/Burroughs PC.

Jennifer Cohen (JD 2014) joined Sklar Kirsch LLP as an associate in the firm's corporate department.



Jaclyn "Jacki" Combs (JD 2020) joined Maynard, Cooper & Gale PC's litigation practice in the firm's Mobile, Ala. office. Combs was a USC Gould Merit Scholar and a member of the Hale Moot Court Honors program.

Robert Dixon (JD 2008) joined Sanders Roberts as a partner in the firm's general liability and business litigation practice groups, and will be based in San Diego. Previously, Dixon was a partner with Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP. Sanders Roberts was founded by Reggie Roberts, Jr. (JD 2000) and Justin Sanders (JD 2000).

Kenneth Doran (JD 1981) chairman and managing partner at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP and USC Gould Board of Councilors lifetime member, was honored in January by Law.com The American Lawyer as the 2020 Distinguished Law Firm Leader as part of The American Lawyer Industry Awards.

Nicole Gates (JD 2013) was selected as the Private Company winner for the *San Diego Business Journal's* Leaders in Law Awards 2020. The awards recognize "outstanding legal professionals in the San Diego county law community." Gates is corporate counsel for Dr. Seuss Enterprises LP and a member of the USC Gould Alumni Association's San Diego committee.

Tamerlin Godley (JD 1996) joined Paul Hastings LLP as a partner in their litigation department. Previously, she was a partner at Munger Tolles & Olson LLP.

Christine Harding Hart (JD 2011) a member of Hand Arendall Harrison Sale LLC's litigation section, was selected for *Mobile Bay Magazine's* 2020 Class of 40 Under 40.

Jessica Hardy (JD 2006) was named partner at Walraven & Westerfeld LLP.

Michael Hartman (JD 2013) was elevated to partner in Ziffren Brittenham LLP's Film and Television Group.

Dana Howard (JD 2011) was named partner and **Emilie Zuccolotto (JD 2013)** named counsel at Larson LLP.

Nicholas Janizeh (JD 2015) was promoted to counsel at Tucker Ellis LLP.

Monique Jewett-Brewster (JD 2001) was elevated to shareholder at Hopkins and Carley in San Jose, Calif., where she is a member of the financial institutions and creditor's rights practice group, and co-chair of the firm's bankruptcy practice. Jewett-Brewster also serves as co-chair of the California Lawyers Association's Diversity Outreach Committee and is an outgoing member of the California Minority Counsel Program's Ambassador's Council.

Lauren McGrory Johnson (JD 2014) was promoted to counsel at Hueston Hennigan LLP.

Wendelyn "Wende" Nichols Julien (JD 2009) was appointed by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors as executive director for the new Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commission. In her new capacity, Julien will develop and oversee a civilian commission that will lead reforms in adult and juvenile probation, and manage the closing of juvenile halls and camps and the separation of juvenile probation from the adult probation department. Previously, she was CEO of CASA of Los Angeles.

Sidney Kanazawa (JD 1978) was the recipient of the USC Asian Pacific Alumni Association's (APAA) 2021 Leadership Award.

Jonathan Kwortek's (JD 2020) entry in the 2020 Beverly Hills Bar Association's Rule of Law Competition, "Guilty Beyond a Reasonable Vote: Challenging Felony Disenfranchisement Under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act," received an honorable mention prize at a special BHBF/ABA Law Day event this spring.

Lauren W. Linderman (JD 2011) was elected partner at Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, where she will serve in their business litigation practice group in Minneapolis, Minn.

Hovanes Margarian (JD 2002) is founder and lead attorney of the Margarian Law Firm, which obtained final court approval on *Kojikian et al. v. American Honda Motor Co., Inc.*, one of the largest class action case recoveries in the automotive industry.



Nicole Martinez (JD 2012) chair of the USC Gould Alumni Association's San Diego committee, was elevated to partner at Higgs Fletcher & Mack LLP.

Kelly McVey (JD 2017) was quoted in *LAist* about her new role as a staff attorney with the employment rights project at Bet Tzedek Legal Services.

Alexander "AJ" Merton (JD 2011) was named partner at the Washington, D.C. office of Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP.

Michael S. Neumeister (JD 2010) was promoted to partner in business restructuring and reorganization at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP's Los Angeles office. At the Gould School, he was a senior content editor for the *Southern California Law Review* and was elected to the Order of the Coif.

Sal Phillips (JD 2015) was named lead counsel, privacy incidents at Facebook in Washington, DC. Previously, he was an associate at Polsinelli's Chicago office.



David Pickett (JD 1999) has joined Brightline West in Las Vegas as associate general counsel to help construct a privately owned and operated high-speed electric passenger railroad between Southern California and Las Vegas. Previously, Pickett served as in-house counsel for Union Pacific Railroad and the Sacramento Regional Transit District.

Jarmal Richard (JD 1994) CEO of JDRLegal, is the subject of an upcoming documentary about long distance running, also known as ultra-running called "Run the Otways."

Deepak Singh (JD 2011) and **Shannon Raj Singh (JD 2011)** welcomed a baby girl, Safira Raj Singh in January. In November, Deepak was hired as assistant general counsel at Tekion, a technology startup in San Francisco, and Shannon recently joined Twitter as its human rights counsel.

Jeffrey Sklar (JD 2007) was appointed to the Pima County Superior Court in Pima County Tucson, Ariz. by Gov. Doug Ducey. Previously, he was a partner and commercial litigator at Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie LLP. He served as outside general counsel to the Metropolitan Domestic Water Improvement District and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. In addition, Sklar had been serving as a Pima County Superior Court Judge pro tem, where he handled civil and family law-related settlement conferences.

Abraham Tabaie (JD 2008) was elevated to partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom LLP and Affiliates in Los Angeles. Tabaie will serve in the firm's Palo Alto, Calif. litigation division.

Christina Trinh (JD 2015) joined Maschoff Brennan as an associate in the firm's Orange County office.

Staci Tomita (JD 2009) was named president-elect of the Japanese American Bar Association (JABA).

Serine Tsuda (JD 2012) is a certified family law specialist recognized by the State Bar of California. She is in a partnership with Lee Salisbury, JD 1976, in the firm of Salisbury, Lee and Tsuda LLP in Pasadena, Calif. In addition, Tsuda welcomed a new baby in 2020.

Kelly Vallon (JD 2013) was elevated to partner in Ziffren Brittenham LLP's music group.

J. Michael Vaughn (JD 1987) joined Taylor English Duma LLP as a partner in the firm's California corporate practice.

Alberlynn "Abby" Woods (JD 2002) is co-producing BET's "Twenties the After Show," with Lena Waithe, Rishi Rajani, and B. Scott, the network's first non-binary host and executive producer.

Joanna Weiss (JD 1998) received the 2020 Marcus M. Kaufman Jurisprudence Award from the Anti-Defamation League of Orange County and Long Beach, which recognizes attorneys who make outstanding contributions to the legal profession and the community.



Steven Werth (JD 1999) was named partner at SulmeyerKuptez PC's Los Angeles office. His practice focuses on representing Chapter 11 debtors in bankruptcy, and the rights of creditors and creditors' committees in Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases.

Sam Yebri (JD 2006) founding partner of Merino Yebri LLP, announced his candidacy for Los Angeles City Council District 5 in 2022.

April Yuan (JD 2013) is co-owner of the recently launched Vital Artists Agency, a talent management agency. Yuan was previously an agent with Rebel Entertainment Partners.



SUSAN BRESHEARS BAYH (JD 1984),

61, passed away Feb. 5, 2021 following a courageous battle with brain cancer. Bayh was an accomplished attorney and leader, whose impact reached across the professional, public service and

educational fields. She was married to former U.S. Senator and former Indiana Governor Evan Bayh.

“It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of our dear friend, public servant, and respected law school alum, Susan Bayh,” said USC Gould Dean Andrew Guzman. “She will be remembered fondly by so many around the country, including many of us in the Gould community. I will always be thankful for Susan’s commitment to helping our students — both inside the classroom, and in advancing their professional goals.”

Bayh’s professional background included more than 20 years in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. She was an attorney at Eli Lilly and Company’s pharmaceutical division, and before that, was a litigation attorney at Barnes & Thornburg LLP in Indianapolis as well as at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher in Los Angeles.

Among her notable highlights as a public servant, she served on the International Joint Commission of the Waters Treaty Act between the U.S. and Canada.

Bayh also served on the boards of numerous organizations. She earned a BA from the University of California at Berkeley, before pursuing law school at USC Gould.

An active and dedicated member of the USC Gould community, Bayh brought her expertise into the classroom as a lecturer in law. She also offered her insight and leadership experiences as a member of Gould’s Board of Councilors, having served since 2016.

For many years, Bayh played an instrumental role in organizing the law school’s “SC in DC” program, which provided students with opportunities to explore semester-long and summer externships in Washington, D.C.

In addition to teaching at USC Gould, Bayh had also been a distinguished visiting business professor at Butler University in Indiana.

COLONEL PHILIP LESLIE JOHNSON (JD 1973), 81, USMC (Ret.), passed away at his home in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., on Jan. 7, 2021. Johnson was born in Beloit, Wis. in 1939. In 1957, he entered Princeton University as one of four Black students in the entire undergraduate class. While there, he shared his passion for jazz as a deejay for the college radio station and was captain of the Navy ROTC rifle team. After earning a degree in sociology, Johnson joined the Marine Corps as an officer in 1961 through the Naval ROTC program at Princeton. He served two tours in Vietnam in 1965-66 as a helicopter pilot and in 1968-69 as a C-130 pilot. In his

legal career, Johnson specialized in civil litigation with an emphasis on aviation defense, products liability, and general insurance defense. He was one of the original judges pro tem appointed to the State Bar Court of California in 1990. In 1996, he reorganized the Defense Research Institute’s (DRI) aerospace law committee and served as committee chair. Johnson contributed substantial time and effort to community organizations. He served terms on the board of directors for the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, the board of directors of Legion Lex, and Princeton University’s annual giving campaign. He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Kathy, children Celeste (Jonathan) Johnson Evans and Niko, and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family and friends.

ALAN V. HAGER (JD 1969), 77, passed away Dec. 29, 2020, following a battle with Alzheimer’s disease. Hager spent over four decades as a deputy attorney general, representing the State of California and the State Lands Commission in oil and gas and environmental matters. He is remembered by his wife Kathie, daughter Anne, son Christopher, daughter-in-law Alison, and granddaughters Josephine and Silvia.

THOMAS S. NOBLE (JD 1971), 76, died on Nov. 29, 2020 following a long illness. Born in Los Angeles, Noble graduated from Occidental College in 1965, where he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, playing a significant role in the fraternity admitting its first Black members. Noble was a successful real estate developer for over 40 years, primarily in the Coachella Valley. He was deeply involved in the local community and generously contributed to schools and charities. Others turned to him for help and support: the brother Marine at Quantico who made it through 10 mile runs by holding on to the back of Noble’s belt; the old friend who asked him to be the trustee for his children’s estate; the homeless woman and her children whom he flew home to her family. Upon hearing of Noble’s death, many said that he was one of the finest men they had ever known. Noble is survived by his wife of 54 years, Frances; his son, Ian (Michelle); his daughter, Maureen (Alejandro); his granddaughter, Beatriz Leonor Figueroa; and his brother, Frederick W. Noble.

ROBERT W. ZAKON (JD 1956), 90, passed away peacefully at home on Jan. 22, 2021. He obtained his bachelor’s degree in 1953 from UCLA, where he majored in political science. After graduating from law school at USC, he spent 25 years as a trial lawyer. In 1981, he was appointed as commissioner with the Los Angeles Superior Court, where he worked for 25 years. He spent most of his career as commissioner in family law, interrupted by two assignments to law and motion court in the early part of his career. Commissioner Zakon was described by attorneys as “very bright,” “intuitive,” and as “having the best interests of the child” above all else in his work.

Scholarship & Research

SELECTION OF RECENT SCHOLARLY WORK AND HONORS OF USC GOULD FACULTY

SELECT RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Prof. Jody Armour

“Law, Language, and Politics”
University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law (2020)

Prof. Jonathan Barnett (with Ted Sichelman)

“The Case for Noncompetes”
University of Chicago Law Review (2020)

Prof. Felipe Jiménez

“A Formalist Theory of Contract Law Adjudication”
Utah Law Review (2021)

Prof. Dorothy Lund

“Corporate Finance for Social Good”
Columbia Law Review (Forthcoming 2021)

Prof. Thomas Lyon (with Melanie F.S. Fessinger, Kelly McWilliams and Faizun N. Bakth)

“Setting the Ground Rules: Use and Practice of Ground Rules in Child Forensic Interviews”
Child Maltreatment (2021)

Prof. Edward McCaffery

“The Death of the Income Tax (or, The Rise of America’s Universal Wage Tax)”
Indiana Law Journal (2020)

Prof. Robert Rasmussen and **Prof. Michael Simkovic**

“Bounties for Errors: Market Testing Contracts”
Harvard Business Law Review (2020)

Prof. Camille Gear Rich (with Catherine Powell)

“The ‘Welfare Queen’ Goes to the Polls: Race-Based Fractures in Gender Politics and Opportunities for Intersectional Coalitions”
Georgetown Law Journal (2020)

Prof. Emily Ryo

“The Unintended Consequences of U.S. Immigration Enforcement Policies”
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2021)

Prof. Abby K. Wood

“Learning from Campaign Finance Disclosures”
Emory Law Journal (Forthcoming 2021)

To view the full list of articles, awards and presentations, visit: gould.usc.edu/faculty/scholarship/

AWARDS & NOTES

Prof. Emily Ryo served as editor for *Law & Society Review* journal’s special issue, “Symposium on Immigration Detention.”

Prof. Jody Armour’s latest book *N*gga Theory: Race, Language, Unequal Justice, and the Law* (LAR Books, 2020) was named to the Kirkus Reviews annual list of “Best Indie Books of the Year” in December.

Prof. Sam Erman was named the recipient of the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation Book Prize, awarded by the American Society for Legal History, for his publication *Almost Citizens: Puerto Rico, the U.S. Constitution, and Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). The prize is awarded annually to the best book in the field of American legal history by an early career scholar.

Prof. Camille Gear Rich’s co-authored paper, “The ‘Welfare Queen’ Goes to the Polls: Race Based Fractures in Gender Politics and Opportunities for Intersectional Coalitions” published in *Georgetown Law Journal*, was included in the 2020 edition of *Women and the Law* (Thomson Reuters), an annual selection of the field’s top legal scholarship.

Prof. Dan Simon co-leads the newly established interdisciplinary USC research collaboration, Behavioral Science and Well-being Policy, which brings together more than 40 faculty and students. The cross-campus research collaboration was established in 2020.

Prof. Erik Hovenkamp won the Industrial Organization Society’s award for best junior publication of 2020 for his paper (with Kevin Bryan), “Antitrust Limits on Startup Acquisitions,” published in the *Review of Industrial Organization*. Hovenkamp also earned the American Antitrust Institute’s Jerry S. Cohen Award: Best Article of 2019 on Antitrust and Intellectual Property, for his paper “Antitrust Law and Patent Settlement Design,” published in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Technology*.

Prof. Abby Wood was promoted by the university to the rank of Professor of Law with tenure. Her research on law and politics, including campaign finance, has made her a sought-after expert in the news media, as well as in academic and public circles.

HER DREAM JOB

Background as prosecutor informs Marcela Prieto's scholarship and teaching

By Leslie Ridgeway

Assistant
Professor of Law
Marcela Prieto

Marcela Prieto's introduction to the USC Gould School of Law has been anything but typical, beginning with a year-long fellowship that started a few months before the pandemic began, and transitioning in summer 2020 to her position as assistant professor, right in the middle of the lockdown.

In spite of the unusual circumstances, she has segued neatly into teaching public international law, a role she's uniquely suited for with her background as a prosecutor in Chile, her country of origin, where she prosecuted crimes against humanity that took place during the infamous regime of dictator Augusto Pinochet.

Prieto, who graduated in 2015 with an LLM degree from New York University and is working on a Doctor of Juridical Science degree from NYU, says she is stimulated both by interacting with students and conducting research on public international law and the laws that regulate armed conflict.

"My career developed naturally because of my preferences for what to pursue and what I like to research," she says. "I like engaging with students, and to be a practitioner. I enjoyed being an advocate at trial as a prosecutor."

In the classroom, Prieto highlights systemic aspects of public international law that can lead to damaging outcomes, including the role of colonization, gender dimensions and the impact of race on criminal law. The goal is to encourage students to question these parameters and how they affect adjudication of cases, she says.

"I aim to instill in students the idea that criminal punishment is one of worst things democratic states do to their own people," she says. "I ask why this is, when criminal punishment is justified, and what should be changed. I don't want students to believe anything in particular; I want them to think about it, and about what the law looks like in different jurisdictions."

Living and earning a law degree in Chile gave Prieto a distinct perspective on the downsides and upsides of how that system is organized, as opposed to the way the U.S. legal system is organized, she says. "We should never take for granted what we have here," she says.



Prieto's public international law course delves into elements as basic to criminal law as homicide and murder, and into expanding areas such as climate change and the resulting human migrations that are expected to have an impact on nations, economies and policies for years to come.

"We will talk about collective action, how to solve climate change, and how international environmental law has played a role in domestic suits filed by people against their own governments," she says.

Starting work at USC Gould during the pandemic has presented challenges and opportunities, including not seeing her parents for a year, and discovering advantages to teaching via Zoom, though she's looking forward to getting back into a bricks-and-mortar classroom. Meanwhile, she's settling in to her new city of Los Angeles, enjoying the neighborhoods, the weather and the people, and especially her new academic home at USC.

"I'm very happy to be here," she says. "It's an honor and a privilege to be here teaching and doing research with a wonderful set of colleagues. It's the dream job." ✍️

DOING RIGHT FOR CALIFORNIANS

Abby Wood appointed to serve on Fair Political Practices Commission

By Ben Dimapindan

Professor
Abby Wood

USC Gould School of Law Professor Abby K. Wood, whose research spans the intersection of law and politics, was recently named a commissioner by California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber of the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC).

Established in 1974, the FPPC is a five-member nonpartisan, independent commission responsible for the administration of the state's Political Reform Act, which regulates campaign finance, conflicts of interest, lobbying and governmental ethics. The commission helps to ensure public officials act in a fair and impartial manner in governmental decision-making, promote transparency in government and foster public trust in the political system.

"Commissioners vote on enforcement matters," Wood says. "We also work on regulatory issues. For example, right now we are considering closing gaps in regulations around paid blog posts and certain transparency for digital ads."

"My goal," she adds, "is to do right by the people of California, who passed the Political Reform Act that created the FPPC. All of us benefit from enforcement of the Act. I'm new, but I can already tell that the people working at the FPPC are serious and ethical. They work carefully to uphold the law and serve the public's best interest. It's a great example of nonpartisan effort and collaboration."

A CHAMPION FOR CAMPAIGN FINANCE DISCLOSURE

Among the commission's main objectives, it aims to increase transparency by using technology to give more




people easy access to essential information about their public officials and campaign financing. Wood, an expert on campaign finance disclosure, sees her value added as situating transparency in a theoretical framework about public accountability. She is also currently the only academic on the FPPC.

"I am really interested in government ethics and money in politics — and a key focus of my scholarship centers on campaign finance disclosure. In an age of dark money, bolstering campaign finance disclosure is important. Disclosure informs voters about their candidates," Wood says.

Wood also serves on the FPPC's Digital Transparency Task Force. In addition, she has consulted on good governance projects in association with USAID, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, among other organizations.

"I am confident that Dr. Wood's extensive experience with California government and public policy will serve her well as a member of the FPPC," says Secretary of State Weber in a statement.

Wood's appointment adds to the legacy of Gould faculty involvement with the FPPC. Former Gould Professor and past USC Provost, the late Elizabeth Garrett, formerly served on the commission as well. 

Grant fuels refugee rights research

Hannah Garry to spend spring 2022 semester at University of Oslo Law in Norway

By Leslie Ridgeway

Professor Hannah Garry, director of the USC International Human Rights Clinic

When Professor Hannah Garry was recently awarded a Fulbright grant to study enforcement of international refugee law at the University of Oslo Law in Norway, it marked a return to her roots studying and advocating for refugee rights.

“It feels like coming full circle,” says Garry, director of the USC International Human Rights Clinic. “Working with refugees in Africa was a life-changing experience that led me to law school, which led me to seek accountability through practice of international criminal law. (Refugee rights) has been a guiding principle throughout my life. When I founded the clinic at USC, I made sure representing refugees was a significant part of our docket. This Fulbright is rooted in all that.”

The grant, bestowed by the Board of the Fulbright Foundation in Norway and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, funds Garry’s research for one semester, from January to June 2022, with the University of Oslo Law’s PluriCourts-Centre for the Study of the Legitimate Roles of the Judiciary in the Global Order. Garry’s Fulbright research is part of a five-year plan to publish two to three papers on international refugee law, culminating with a book proposal and an advocacy project within the IHRC. Garry also hopes to develop networks on the USC campus with scholars in ethnic studies and immigrant issues.

Garry decided to apply for the Fulbright grant two years ago, as global refugee issues escalated and the lack of binding mechanisms to assist and place people fleeing violence and persecution became glaringly obvious with each year, especially in well-off nations.

“In the midst of the world’s worst refugee crisis, there were flagrant violations of refugee law by some of the richest, wealthiest countries in the Global North, pushing people back to places where they could be persecuted, or killed, denying people the ability to seek asylum, separating families at the southern border,” she says. “They took violations to a new level. These powerful countries were getting away with it because there was no one to hold them



to account. I was so outraged and appalled. We have to imagine something better.”

The Fulbright application requires a proposal, bibliography, work plan and an institution willing to host the prospective scholar. When Garry reached out to the University of Oslo Law given their expertise in the study of international courts and tribunals, they were enthusiastic, but then the pandemic hit, putting travel on hold and giving Garry more time to assemble the required documents by the September 2020 deadline.

Garry’s academic background includes graduate work in international refugee law at Oxford University in addition to sociological research she conducted in East Africa on enforcement of refugee rights. It was there that she witnessed first-hand the violation of treaties and realized the problem of the lack of binding mechanisms. The IHRC advocacy project she envisions could take the form of lobbying nations for a proposed mechanism and drafting an international instrument for its implementation, perhaps through a UN body such as the General Assembly, she says.

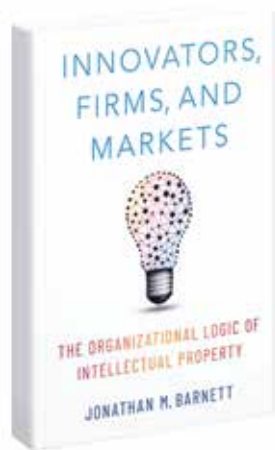
Garry is USC Gould’s first Fulbright research scholar in the history of the program. Among the larger USC faculty, she is the second to be invited to Norway through a Fulbright grant. 🇳🇴

THE “GLUE” BETWEEN INNOVATION AND CAPITAL

Jonathan Barnett’s book “Innovators, Firms and Markets” examines role of patents in supporting small, influential entrepreneurs

By Leslie Ridgeway

When patent protection is weakened, large companies gain protection against the competitive threats posed by smaller firms that are rich in innovation but poor in the capital required to convert ideas into new technologies. That’s the central argument made by Jonathan Barnett, Torrey H. Webb Professor of Law, in his new book, “Innovators, Firms, and Markets: The Organizational Logic of Intellectual Property” (Oxford University Press).



“The book can play a role in the policy conversation right now about the role of big tech in the economy in general and the innovation economy in particular,” says Barnett, director of USC Gould’s Media, Entertainment and Technology (MET) program.

Published in mid-January, the book is the culmination of more than a decade of research on the underappreciated transactional structures used to commercialize innovations in technology markets. Ranging over 120 years of U.S. economic history, Barnett examines the role of patents in supporting entrepreneurial innovation ecosystems in which outside capital supports the emergence of small-firm innovators who can challenge larger firms dominating the market.

WEAK PATENT PROTECTIONS AND THE “INNOVATION DROUGHT”


Barnett’s book studies the symbiotic interaction between entrepreneurial innovation and venture capital prominent during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Barnett argues that strong patent protection provided the “glue” that sustained these relationships. He contrasts this with four decades of weak patent protection and extensive use of compulsory licensing by antitrust regulators from the late 1930s through the 1970s.

Innovation as measured by R&D dollars remained robust during this period, but the small innovator-entrepreneur shrank back as technological research concentrated in large companies like AT&T, General Electric and RCA. While important innovations were developed during this period, the large companies were often slow in translating basic research into new technologies for consumers. “By the 70s, people were talking about an innovation drought,” Barnett says.

Barnett’s argument runs counter to a widely shared view of patents as a tax that stifles innovation, slows technology adoption, and raises consumer prices. Barnett argues that secure intellectual property rights are critical to an innovation economy that is hospitable to small-firm innovators, some of which have supplied dramatic innovations in U.S. technology history.

Barnett studied the lobbying activities of different firms and research institutions to understand the value these entities placed on patents, and why weakening patents might benefit some entities while harming others.

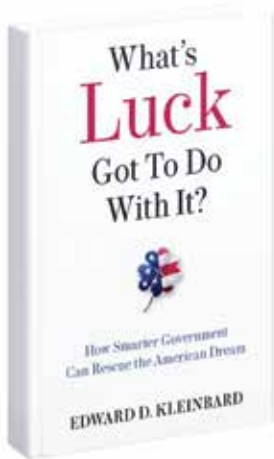
“I found that large businesses outside the life sciences mostly file briefs asking [the Supreme Court] to weaken patents,” Barnett says. “I also found that venture capital firms, tech transfer divisions within universities and biopharma firms usually favor strong patents. The contrast was striking and is closely tied to a firm’s business model or position in the technology supply chain.”

Since 2006, the “patent tax” analogy has driven a sequence of decisions from SCOTUS, weakening patent protections, Barnett says. Congress’ enactment of the America Invents Act in 2011, and the ability for any party to challenge patents at the Patent Trial & Appeals Board, has weakened patent protections further. He hopes the book will lead policymakers to rethink whether U.S. innovation policy is heading in the right direction. 

Rescuing the American dream

Ed Kleinbard’s “What’s Luck Got to Do With It?” proposes insurance as hedge against inequality

By Leslie Ridgeway



Shortly before he passed away in June 2020, Professor Ed Kleinbard, Robert C. Packard Trustee Chair in Law at the USC Gould School of Law, sent off final corrections on his third book, “What’s Luck Got to Do With It? How Smarter Government Can Rescue the American Dream” (Oxford University Press). The book is a culmination of knowledge and experience gained working as a tax attorney for wealthy clients, in the public sector as chief of staff of the U.S. Congress’ Joint Committee on Taxation, and finally as one of the most respected tax policy scholars in America.

The book scrutinizes pervasive American beliefs in individual control of destiny and the country as a land of equal opportunity that minimize the impact of brute luck on life outcomes and of education on earnings and success. Kleinbard’s solution is based in concepts of insurance, which the author understood well as a student of medieval history.

“Insurance is an effective tool whose entire purpose is to mitigate the financial consequences of bad luck,” Kleinbard writes in the book’s introduction. “It is a subtle financial instrument, honed over the last 700 years, from the time of medieval Italian merchants forward to today. If equality of opportunity is the great organizing principle of American economic life, and bad brute luck the unresolved universal force that knocks too many people off course in their pursuit of their economic dreams, then the application of insurance principles is the response that can be used to make equality of opportunity more than a hollow phrase.”

Kleinbard argues that well-designed public investment can lessen the effects of bad luck and alleviate inequality by sharing costs across the “risk pool” of the American population. USC Gould Professor Gregory Keating, who teaches torts, legal ethics and legal philosophy, noted that

— in an example of skilled lawyering at the highest level — the book builds its case by drawing on diverse scholarly disciplines and sources.

“By summoning the resources of moral philosophy and economics, and weaving them together with reams of evidence Kleinbard shows just how much fate dominates talent and effort, and how we might do something to mitigate the injustice this breeds by invigorating insurance — as institution and morality,” Keating says. “‘What’s Luck Got to Do With It?’ envisions insurance not just as an answer to the cruel workings of fate but also as an institution uniquely capable of sustaining a distinctively American ideal of equality. The book is animated by, and articulates, a vision of a social world where people are able to lead the lives they imagine for themselves, unfettered by accidents of birth and opportunity.”

LEADERS FROM POLICY, ACADEMIC CIRCLES APPLAUD BOOK

“What’s Luck Got to Do With It?” has earned accolades from influential policy and academic figures including Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, New York University tax professor Lily Batchelder, and UC Berkeley tax professors Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, who called the book “a must read for anyone interested in greater economic justice.” Fellow USC Gould tax law Professor Ed McCaffery praised the book for its accessibility and provocative ideas.

“Using the concept of insurance against all kinds of ‘bad luck,’ Kleinbard mounts a vigorous case for more progressive — and protective — government tax and transfer programs,” McCaffery says. “Sadly, this is not the dominant politics of our times, but Kleinbard has written a fresh and easily readable call for all times. If we are fortunate enough to meet up on the other side, let us hope that we have better things to tell Kleinbard than that bad luck explains the growing inequalities on earth.”



CLINICAL PERSPECTIVES 2021

USC Gould
School of Law



FROM HOPELESS TO FREE

Post-Conviction Justice Project wins release for two clients sentenced to juvenile life without parole

By Lauren Rogers and Heidi Rummel

Students in the Post-Conviction Justice Project, headed by Professors Michael Brennan and Heidi Rummel, recently won life-changing victories for two clients.

William and Jerome were both teenagers tried as adults and sentenced to juvenile life without parole or JLWOP. Both were convicted of special circumstance murder, under California's then-felony murder law, for minor roles in robberies where others committed murder. In the face of a hopeless sentence, both chose to commit to changing their lives and rehabilitate. Today, William and Jerome are living free after more than two decades in prison, and the courts have vacated their murder convictions.

Both William, 16 when he acted as a lookout for a friend who robbed and spontaneously shot the robbery victim, and Jerome, 17 when he agreed to be a driver in an attempted robbery-turned murder, never expected anyone to be hurt or killed. At the time they were given adult sentences, society viewed many youth, especially youth of color, as "super predators."

In recent years, the United States Supreme Court has recognized that children who commit crimes are constitutionally less culpable than adults, because their brains are not fully developed and for their potential for growth and maturity. The Court also outlawed certain extreme sentences for children, including the death penalty and life without parole, as violations of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. The California Supreme Court agreed in *People v. Franklin*, citing extensively to an amicus brief filed by PCJP.

PCJP SPONSORS LEGISLATION CHANGING MURDER CONVICTIONS

In the wake of these holdings, PCJP co-sponsored groundbreaking California legislation to provide second

chances for youth serving adult sentences, including Senate Bill 1437, which in 2018 effectively eliminated the felony murder rule in California. Now, a murder conviction in California requires that the accused to have killed or intended to kill or demonstrated reckless indifference to life.

PCJP filed habeas petitions challenging both William and Jerome's JLWOP sentences and their special circumstance murder convictions. The clinic pursued multiple legal



Above: PCJP client William with members of his family after his release.
Page 41: PCJP client Jerome with his father on the day of his release.

remedies for William in the Los Angeles County Superior Court and First District Court of Appeal. After his murder conviction was vacated, William was immediately released on a time-served sentence in November 2020.

Jerome's JLWOP sentence was reduced to a parole-eligible sentence in Riverside County under Senate Bill 9, legislation co-sponsored by PCJP, which made Jerome immediately parole eligible with a new sentence of 26 years to life. He was released from prison in 2018. Nearly three years later, PCJP again represented Jerome under the new felony-murder law. He was discharged from parole in March 2021.

Today, Jerome works as a certified drug and alcohol counselor, has a successful business, and is a proud new father. William is currently working for Mass Liberation, a transitional home and re-entry program for recently released lifers and is enjoying spending time with his family.



A HEALTHY HACK FOR DATA

Intellectual Property and Technology Law Clinic represents clients seeking access to their medical device data

By Greg Hardesty

When he was 37, ad executive Hugo Campos suffered an unexplained syncope — a temporary loss of consciousness caused by a drop in blood pressure. Three years later, in 2007, he was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a heart muscle disease that required him to wear an implantable defibrillator.

It was the same year Apple's iPhone came out. Interested in the latest gadgets, Campos asked his doctor how he could track his heart health by accessing the data collected by his implanted device.

His doctor told him he couldn't — that the data was being wirelessly transmitted to the manufacturer, and monitored by the clinic, but not available to the patient.

"That made no sense to me," Campos says. "I was irked and irritated, and thought it was ethically not right."



Campos became an advocate for access to health data and patient autonomy, and today he and two other people who make up the Coalition of Medical Device Patients and Researchers (CMDPT) are being represented by USC Gould's Intellectual Property and Technology Law Clinic (IPTLC) in a triennial process that culminated in April at a virtual hearing before the U.S. Copyright Office.

Every three years since 2000, parties have been allowed to petition for exemptions to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Established in 1998, the DMCA made it unlawful to circumvent technological measures used to prevent unauthorized access to copyrighted works including books, movies, video games and computer software.

Built into the law is the ability for a party to seek permission to, in essence, hack into certain encrypted data without liability under copyright law. In 2018, the IPTLC represented farmers to help them avoid violating copyright law when they broke encryption on equipment they owned in order to repair it.

The clinic, led by Jef Pearlman, a clinical assistant professor of law, will seek a renewal of an exemption first granted in 2015 concerning medical devices, but with language that broadens the exemption to include non-implanted devices and to allow third parties to assist patients with accessing their data.

2L Kate McClellan and 3L Keon Zemoudeh testified on behalf of the CMDPT at the April 8 hearing.

"I appreciate the real-world experience of working through this project," McClellan says. "We had to do a ton of research. I was overwhelmed at first, but I got up to speed really fast. It's been a very valuable experience."

Says Zemoudeh: "I also enjoyed learning about the science behind some of these devices and how researchers and patients could benefit from accessing this data."

Campos says despite the already successful exemptions, patients aren't at the point yet where they can access raw, real-time data on their devices.

"But having access to this information is a matter of our rights as citizens of a free nation," he says.

Says Pearlman of the triennial DMCA exemption effort: "It's a weird world where patients need to ask permission from a copyright agency to access their own medical data, but we hope our efforts will help the public be able to exercise their rights to their own health information."



SHINING A LIGHT ON RACIAL JUSTICE IN THE US

IHRC works through United Nations systems to fight systemic racism

By Carren Jao

The International Human Rights Clinic at the USC Gould School of Law joined an effort in fall 2020 by about 600 civil society groups to ask the United Nations to condemn the killing of George Floyd and investigate systemic racism in the United States.

2Ls Laura Penaranda and Ava Habibian are pursuing racial justice in the U.S., something new in the clinic's 10 years working to seek justice under international law for global human rights concerns. The students are drafting research memoranda, filing communiqués and working with groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, Access Now and the law firm Foley Hoag LLP.

"When you think of international human rights, you usually think of what's going on in other countries," says Penaranda, who says her work with Habibian helped clarify how international standards and domestic matters intertwine. The two are working through various U.N. processes in an effort to put pressure on the United States as it reckons with its racist systems.

"The U.N. system is not perfect, but it is a tool. There are many different strategies to think about in using it. It takes persistence, vigilance and creative thinking," says Professor Hannah Garry, IHRC's founding director.

The U.N. Human Rights Council eventually issued a resolution condemning racism against individuals of African descent globally, but many think it didn't go far enough. Civil society groups came together as the U.S. Human Rights Network, and the ACLU, invited the IHRC to join the effort as the U.S. was assessed through the U.N.'s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, an accountability effort for U.N. Member States to explain their human rights record every five years and report on their progress before the Human Rights Council and other U.N. Member States.



Since August, Penaranda and Habibian worked with the network on a letter to the Biden administration, urging the administration to participate meaningfully in the U.S.'s third UPR cycle in November and renew its commitment to human rights and adopt more than 300 recommendations by U.N. Member States.

Penaranda and Habibian also worked on an urgent appeal to the U.N. Special Rapporteur Clement Nyaletossi Voule asking him to investigate police brutality against peaceful demonstrators protesting racial injustice. Some of their recommendations were included in a joint statement by U.N. experts in 2021 calling for the U.S. government to act.

Additionally, the students submitted information to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet Jeria detailing the disproportionate use of force by law enforcement against peaceful protestors, the militarization of law enforcement in the U.S. and the marked difference in U.S. law enforcement response to anti-racism protests versus the response to the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection.

Penaranda and Habibian's work led to an intensive open dialogue between Bachelet and U.S. civil society groups during an in-person consultation held in February. The session included powerful statements from Black Lives Matter groups as well as testimony from victims and their families. Garry presented an expert statement on systemic racism in U.S. law enforcement; the students assisted with drafting her remarks.

For Penaranda and Habibian, the experience is invaluable. "I'm a lot more comfortable being able to take on cases tackling systemic and structural racism," says Habibian.



A FAMILY REUNITED

USC Immigration Clinic represents mother separated from seven-month-old baby as part of poultry plant arrests



By Leslie Ridgeway

Ana Gomez Gomez, an immigrant from Guatemala, was working in a poultry plant in Morton, Miss., in 2019 when she was detained in one of the largest workplace sweeps conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. She was moved 300 miles away to a detention center in Basile, La. Her seven-month-old baby became malnourished when she couldn't breastfeed him, developing a rash and fever. Ana was frantic at the separation.

"We all suffered," she said through an interpreter. "I cried day and night. I wanted to be with my baby. My husband [Juan] didn't know what to do."

That's when the USC Immigration Clinic got involved. Since 2013, the clinic had been representing Juan and two other clients in Morton after joining with pro bono clinics, other law school immigration clinics and organizations in 2012 to represent more than 100 abused poultry plant workers. 3L Cameron MacGregor was assigned to free Ana from detention; 3L Marisa DiGiuseppe represents both Ana and Juan. With the clinic's help, Juan obtained a U visa, which enables immigrants to apply for a green card after a three-year wait. DiGiuseppe is now working to obtain lawful permanent resident status for the couple.

"It's a constant reminder of how easy my life is, as someone lucky enough to be born in the U.S.," says DiGiuseppe, who worked in the clinic for more than two years. "For [Ana and Juan's] case in particular, it's a reminder of how these laws govern an immigrant's life, and how living in the U.S. without lawful immigration status carries harsh consequences. Most of our clients are affected by violence, poverty and language barriers, compounded by not having immigration status."

MacGregor signed up for the clinic for a year and found the practical experience invaluable.

"[Professors Niels Frenzen, director, and Jean Reisz, co-director] expect you to be the lead attorney on every case," he says. "You don't feel like a student; you feel like an attorney. You are in charge of the facts and they expect you to fill them in. Obviously they're there to help guide you, but I felt like I was in the driver's seat, not just taking orders and carrying out actions."

Among MacGregor's tasks were petitioning for Gomez Gomez' release on bond, persuading the judge that she was not a flight risk nor a danger to the community and determining which immigration court had jurisdiction over her case, which turned out to be the San Juan (Puerto Rico) Immigration Court.

"It sounds bizarre and it is bizarre," says Frenzen. "We were finally able to get an immigration judge in San Juan to set a bond and Ana was released and is currently waiting for an immigration court hearing in the New Orleans Immigration Court, which has been delayed due to COVID."

DiGiuseppe's work includes helping her clients answer a dizzying array of questions about hometown, employment experience, criminal history and more to become eligible for permanent resident status.

"We try to teach students to look at the bigger picture of the fairness or justness of legal systems they will work in and how that critical thinking can help them be a zealous advocate for their client," Reisz says.



NO DISPUTE: MEDIATION CLINIC SUCCEEDS ONLINE DURING COVID

Students hone problem-solving skills during challenging year

By Greg Hardesty

The mother had visitation rights 60% of the time, but the father wanted equal time with their 3-year-old daughter.

During an all-day mediation session, 3L Gabriela Rodriguez eventually got both parties in the emotionally charged case to reach an agreement: two days with mom, two days with dad, and alternating each week for the other three days.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the successful mediation — an increasingly popular tool to avoid the expense, unpredictability and emotional drama of a courtroom trial — played out entirely on Zoom.

As mediation clinics at some other universities shuttered because of courtroom closures caused by the pandemic, USC Gould's Mediation Clinic continued to thrive, says Director Lisa Klerman, a clinical professor of law who designed and launched the mediation program in 2007.

That's because pre-pandemic, Klerman says, the 30-some students who participated in the two-semester clinic already had experience mediating over email, the telephone and other avenues not requiring in-person meetings at the local courthouses.

"Having a program that offers a diversity of experiences for our student mediators has been crucial for them to be able to continue their work during the [pandemic]," Klerman says.

No one appreciates that more than Rodriguez, one of 12 USC Gould students who participated in the mediation clinic this academic year (reduced from the usual 20 because of COVID-19). Seven additional students participated in the advanced medication clinic, reserved for students with a year's experience as mediators who take on more complex cases.

Cases are referred through partnerships with the state Department of Fair Employment and Housing, a federal EEOC program; the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and directly.



3L Skyler Hicks has spent several hours a week in his final year of law school handling phone- and email-based mediations through the DCBA program.

Building rapport with parties remotely is harder, Hicks says, but it starts with building trust with active listening. Hicks says about two-thirds of the mediations he's handled have ended successfully.

"I enjoy explaining what the litigation process would look like if the parties were to decide to go to court instead of mediating," Hicks says. "I enjoy helping them understand how reaching a mediated resolution is a fantastic way to eliminate the risks of litigation while also preserving the opportunity to repair a pre-existing relationship with the party on the other side."

One benefit of online mediations is there typically is more time to prepare, Rodriguez and Hicks say.

Whether the case is a landlord-tenant or consumer-merchant dispute or child visitation negotiation, emotions can run high. As a mediator, "you want to try to bring down the heat a little bit," Hicks says.

Adds Rodriguez: "For some parents, online mediation is more convenient because they don't have to take an entire day off from work."

"At the end of the day," she says, "we're helping people solve their problems."



PLANTING THE SEEDS OF FUTURE GROWTH

Small Business Clinic helps organic farm build a strong foundation for the future

By Carren Jao

About five years ago, construction and restaurant entrepreneur Guido Gil decided to start a garden on his 40-acre property in the community of Val Verde, near Castaic in Southern California, to sell organic produce. Backyard Organic Farms has gradually matured as a business, offering high-quality, fresh, organic produce and eggs direct to consumers through farmer's markets, deliveries, restaurant orders and even a farm stand.

But as the business expanded, Gil's four sons — the second generation of management — wanted the farm to have a solid foundation to grow on. This led them to USC Gould School of Law's Small Business Clinic, founded by Professor Michael Chasalow. Since 2007, the clinic has helped more than 2,500 business owners, about half of which are operated by women or minorities, ensure the legal foundation of their enterprises. With the help of 2L Zachary Goldman, Gil and his sons are working out the details of an operating agreement.

"Zack has been awesome because he's helping us set ground rules in place, explicit roles and responsibilities," says Claudio Gil, a co-owner. "He's helping us draft a very good operating agreement, which deals with the intricacies like what happens when decisions have to be made and what votes need to happen — what it would look like when either everyone is on board or only one person is." The agreement also covers ownership stakes in the businesses, which affect decision-making within farm operations.

Claudio credits the SBC with helping his family with an important task.

"If it weren't for the program, it would be next to impossible for us as a small business to find someone to help with this at the level that the USC Small Business Clinic and Zack are," he says. "We are truly grateful."

GAINING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TO MEET CAREER GOALS

Goldman joined the clinic for exactly this type of experience. With a background in finance that included working at JP Morgan and a start-up company, his interests turned toward working more directly with new and emerging tech companies. The SBC allowed him to gain practical experience as a transactional corporate lawyer. Meeting online during the pandemic posed some challenges, but he found the work rewarding.

"This is an incredible opportunity to get hands-on experience drafting agreements, understanding how agreements work and what challenges might come up along the way," says Goldman, who began working at the start of spring semester. "The best way to understand how an agreement works is to explain it to them. Going through the agreement clause by clause trying to get an understanding of how everything works together and being able to pass that knowledge to the clients and talk them through different options and ways we may be able to change things has been an invaluable experience for me."

"Zack's experience working with Backyard Organic Farms is a perfect example of the value provided by the SBC," says Chasalow. "The SBC was established to provide USC law students with hands-on experiences in a transactional law practice while delivering high caliber, no cost legal services to community businesses that would otherwise not be able to afford such work. It's a win-win."



The USC Gould School of Law hosted an array of virtual programming to bring together the law school community amid the pandemic. The online events featured prominent alumni, faculty, students and special guests. Mauro Morales (JD 1991), staff director for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (pictured top row, left) joined Janet Murguía, president and CEO of Unidos US, for a conversation moderated by Professor Daria Roithmayr. Vice Dean Franita Tolson (top row, right) led an Alumni Association talk on “Constitutionalizing Our Democratic Expectations.” Student Martina Fouquet interviewed Gould alumnus (Class of 1952) and former U.S. Ambassador to Haiti William B. Jones about his career in public service (middle row). And, Dr. Terrence Roberts of the Little Rock Nine (bottom row) shared his experiences with Gould students as part of the Black Law Students Association’s Trailblazers series.



What Will Your Trojan Legacy Be?

Student scholarships. Faculty salaries and research. Hands-on clinical experiences. The Library. Summer grants for students working in public interest or international law. Alternative dispute resolution programming. Building renovations. Moot court. Legal journals. Guest lectures. Discretionary funds available when strategic opportunities present themselves.

“Throughout the 121-year history of USC Gould School of Law, many alumni and friends have included the school in their estate plans and supported a variety of aspects of the school’s programs,” says Dean Andrew T. Guzman.

“As Dean, I have witnessed firsthand the impact these current use and endowment gifts make on our ability to fulfill our mission to provide superb legal education and conduct impactful scholarly research. I am immensely grateful for the thoughtfulness and generosity of these alumni and friends.”

“Each of us has a desire to find meaning in both our daily life and work and to make an impact on others

during our lifetime. It is equally important to recognize those people and organizations that have made a difference in our own lives: the professors who taught us, the personal and professional friendships that we’ve formed and the experiences that opened up doors. Giving from our estates enables us to change the trajectory of another’s life, well beyond our own years.”

We hope you will join your fellow alumni in including USC Gould in your charitable giving and estate plans. Visit www.uscgould.giftplans.org for more information or please contact Margaret Anne Kean in the Development & Alumni Relations office at mkean@law.usc.edu or 213-821-6342.

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CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Events subject to change. Please check gould.usc.edu/events for updates on the events below.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INSTITUTE

SEPTEMBER 21-23, 2021
Virtual broadcast only

INSTITUTE ON ENTERTAINMENT LAW AND BUSINESS

OCTOBER 16, 2021
*USC University Park Campus
(In-person with virtual broadcast)*

TRUST AND ESTATE CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 19, 2021
*Westin Bonaventure Hotel
(In-person with virtual broadcast)*

INSTITUTE FOR CORPORATE COUNSEL

DECEMBER 1, 2021
*California Club
(In-person with virtual broadcast)*

For details about these events and others, please visit: gould.usc.edu/events

