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We've run the numbers and graded the law schools for their commitment to public service. CUNY and Yale lead the pack, but 94 other law schools get a B- or better. Find out who makes the grade.



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On the Cover: Standing from left to right: Clinical Professors Nicole Smith Futrell and Donna Lee. Seated from left to right: Student Orlando Rodriguez and Criminal Defense Clinic Director Steve Zeidman.

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Dean Michelle J. Anderson

Dear Friends,

Each May brings a sense of change and excitement to our campus. This year, on top of graduation, there is an additional buzz in the polished linoleum corridors of this retrofitted junior high school that we have called home for decades.

Students, faculty, and staff are anticipating our move to a new home, slated for one year from now, in May 2012.

Our new building, built in 2007 and complete with classrooms, fixtures, furnishings, and equipment, was designed as a training facility. It will be ready for use far sooner than the seven to 10 years it would have taken to construct a new building.

As you'd expect from the CUNY Law community, the prospect of a change of residence has generated plenty of lively dialog. For our friends off campus, I want to provide some context.

Long ago, Charlie Halpern, the first dean at CUNY Law School, concluded that we needed a more accessible venue in

order to enhance our mission. He made no secret of his serious disappointment with the current location, which requires a long subway ride and a bus transfer for most students, clients, and guests.

Logistics have prevented some public interest-minded students from attending CUNY Law, as they could not afford to buy a car or take the time to travel here to pursue a law degree.

The new location at 2 Court Square in Long Island City puts the campus within walking distance of more than a dozen subway and bus lines as well as the Long Island Railroad. We'll be just one stop from Manhattan, enhancing our students' access to courts, internships, and field placements in all five boroughs. The new location will also enhance access to the school itself for our impoverished clients and partner community organizations.

We will advance our commitment to be a more environmentally friendly law school with this 260,000-square-foot space. The building has a LEED Gold certification that will make CUNY Law one of the greenest law schools in the country. Ninety percent of the structural steel in the building is derived from post-consumer recycled materials, and construction waste materials were also 90 percent recycled. When it rains, we will be catching water in a 20,000-gallon storm water retention system, which will collect and recycle rainwater in the building's mechanical system.

Repurposing 2 Court Square is also the best kind of recycling, taking corporate space and turning it into public interest space, to serve the greater good by educating the next generation of students who will practice "Law in the Service of Human Needs."

As we look ahead to our move to Long Island City, it's worth remembering that we remain in Queens, and our resolution to serve the poor in this borough is unwavering.

At the same time, the heart of CUNY Law is not confined to the current Flushing location. The heart of CUNY Law School is the innovative and progressive work we do. And we will bring our work and commitments with us to 2 Court Square. May our mission guide us in seizing this opportunity together.

Yours,

Michelle J. Anderson
Dean and Professor of Law

Collaborating for Change

New York City Council Member Mark S. Weprin (D-Oakland Gardens), in partnership with CUNY Law's Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) and the YMCA of Greater New York, is bringing the strength of CUNY Law alums to immigrant communities in need in Queens.

Through this new collaboration, CUNY Law alums will provide legal services to immigrants seeking support through the YMCA's New Americans Initiative, which helps immigrants adapt to their new circumstances. "Aside from learning to communicate in a new language, unmet legal needs are among the most pressing issues for the new Americans we work with every day, and this new partnership will go a long way toward helping the Y be more responsive to the people it serves," says Diosdado Gica, senior director of the New Americans Initiative.

"CUNY Law is offering a tremendous benefit to the community by providing legal services to those who need them most," said Council Member Mark S. Weprin. "I am truly pleased to help bring legal resources to eastern Queens."

CLRN, which has been run by Fred Rooney since its inception in 1998, is a peer-support network of more than 300 CUNY Law alums providing 'low-bono' legal services to their communities. CLRN's programs are specifically designed to support CUNY Law School graduates as they set up and run solo or small-group



From left, Diosdado Gica, senior director of the Y's New Americans Initiative, Dana Feinberg, executive director of the Cross Island YMCA, Council Member Mark S. Weprin, and CLRN Special Projects Manager Ben Flavin (sitting), meet with a client.

practices devoted to serving the pressing needs of the poor and disadvantaged in communities that are underserved by lawyers.

"In the YMCA, we have found a partner that shares our mission and values, and its position as a trusted ally here in eastern Queens will enable us to support the poor and disadvantaged," says Rooney.

Rooney and his work have been recognized as exceptional. Last year, the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services awarded CLRN the Louis M. Brown Award for Legal Access. ●●

A Hard-Fought Legislative Victory

When President Obama signed into law a 9/11 health bill early this year, it was recognition enough for Benjamin Chevat ('86) for his efforts on the legislation. In fact, Chevat helped to lead the five-year fight for the successful passage of the legislation.

"I was the main staffer working for Congresswoman [Carolyn] Maloney on the issue," says Chevat, who is the New York representative's chief of staff.

Rep. Maloney (D-NY) authored the legislation along with Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Peter King (R-NY), and Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Charles E. Schumer (D-NY).

The New York delegation "started to realize that there were issues with the toxins at ground zero and that the health and welfare of first responders, survivors, and people in the community" were at risk, Chevat says. They wanted "to make sure the City got the support and aid that it had been promised."

The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act provides \$1.5 billion in funding for health care for people exposed to hazards released by the collapse of the World Trade Center.



Ben Chevat ('86)

The legislation also reopens the federal September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to provide an initial \$2.8 billion of economic relief over six years to those harmed by the attacks, for a total of \$4.3 billion.

The Zadroga Act is named for the New York City police officer who rushed to ground zero on 9/11 and later died of a respiratory disease at the age of 35.

For Chevat, seeing the passage of the Zadroga Act didn't come as a complete surprise, given his legal education.

Longtime CUNY Law professor Dinesh Khosla and his simulations "allowed us to practice advocacy and persuade people to our client's point of view," says Chevat, whose class was the first to graduate from CUNY Law.

"CUNY's focus on practical applications definitely helps prepare you for working in government here in Washington, and advocating for your client. Here we were representing responders and survivors of the toxins at ground zero, and we had to make the case that the nation needed to help them."

CUNY Law School's motto, "Law in the Service of Human Needs," clicked with Chevat, as did the convenient location.

"I had been working as a staffer in the New York State Assembly, so when the Law School opened up in Queens, it was a perfect fit." ●●

Building a Stronger Future



Rick Rossein

CUNY Law is set to move to 2 Court Square in Long Island City in 2012.

To engage the CUNY Law community in a dialog about the design and renovation of the six floors it will occupy, Dean Michelle J. Anderson convened an interface committee. Composed of faculty, staff, and students and chaired by Professor Rick Rossein, the committee met on an ongoing basis with the architectural and design team at Kohn Pedersen Fox to discuss everything from classroom size to paint colors. Professor Rossein shares his thoughts on CUNY Law and the community's involvement in this important moment in the life of the Law School.

What brought you to CUNY Law?

When the Law School enrolled its first class in 1983, I was working in the New York City Office of the Mayor in the area responsible for enforcing the mayor's executive order concerning equal employment opportunity in city contracting. The late professor Rhonda Copelon, a founding faculty member and friend, invited me to teach one of her civil rights classes about employment discrimination, and, after teaching two classes, I was urged by her to apply for a position. Since I enjoyed the students in her class, was enthusiastic about the mission of the Law School, and had graduated from Antioch Law School, one of the two original clinic-focused law schools, I knew I had found my home at CUNY.

Tell us a little about your scholarship, teaching, and public interest passions.

I have been involved with the struggle for equality and fairness in our society since I was very young, having grown up during the civil rights movement and in a family that was active in pursuing human rights. In law school, I was inspired by a professor in the women's employment discrimination clinic, and I had the opportunity to work in the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. Assisting people in gaining dignity and fairness in the workplace (and in other places like schools) through equal opportunities informs my practice, teaching, and scholarship.

What will moving to the new space mean for you and the classes you teach?

Since my teaching is infused with learning doctrine through a lawyering lens, I am thrilled with our move to the wonderful new building at 2 Court Square in Long Island City. For example, I teach a trial practice class in which the students conduct a three-hour mock jury trial. In the new building, we

will have a moot appellate courtroom and three trial practice rooms, including one with the latest in electronic technology. This will enable us to project exhibits, depositions, and videos, and have multiple fixed cameras simultaneously focused on the student lawyer, the jury, the witness, and the judge, so that the student will later be able to observe and learn from viewing his or her impact on the various participants in a jury trial.

What role did the interface committee play?

The interface committee brought together students, staff, faculty, and administration to coordinate communication and seek broad input and ideas on how to design our space for our unique community and mission. The committee was part of the larger building committee and facilitated many small group meetings and discussions, where we listened to the needs and ideas of faculty, staff, and student groups.

What are some of the design elements that will have the greatest impact on the new space?

Upon entering our new building, one will be greeted by a visitors' center, a child-care center, a three-story bold atrium, large classrooms, and a moot courtroom. On the second floor, there will be a welcoming area and a new, state-of-the-art auditorium. The third and fourth floors consist of classrooms and study space. The fifth floor, which is designated almost entirely for clinic space, will have a fabulous public interest law office with great work space, and secure and comforting interview rooms for the student lawyers and their clients. Each of the lawyering seminars will have its own space, and there will be social and eating areas and lockers to store coats and books nearby. There will be many student group study rooms located throughout the Law School complemented by individual study and quiet areas in the library. The library will be equipped with the latest technology and will occupy the top floor.

What does the move mean for CUNY Law?

The very close proximity to seven subway lines, the 10-minute walk from the Long Island Railroad, and the location just across the river from Manhattan will allow our students easy and quick access to their field placements, internships, and legal jobs, while being anchored by the great new building. Clinic clients will have easy access to our nationally recognized clinic. We expect much more interaction with the

legal community and social justice organizations, which will be only a short ride away. We plan on hosting many more conferences and speakers and look forward to increased participation in our classes by practitioners who can simply hop on a train and join us. Additionally, our new neighborhood is a few blocks from a recently renovated city park, five blocks from the new city park along the East River with spectacular views of Manhattan, a few blocks from P.S.1's art site, two blocks from the historic Supreme Court building, and two blocks from a city parking garage that offers free space to bike riders. ●●



2 Court Square
Photo Courtesy
of Kohn Pedersen Fox

A Leading Voice in New York

The Honorable Jonathan Lippman, chief judge, New York State Court of Appeals, shares his vision for increasing access to justice and civil legal services for underserved communities.

What prompted you to champion access-to-justice issues and the provision of civil legal services in urgent cases as a signature concern of the New York State courts?

No issue is more fundamental to the mission of the courts than ensuring equal access to justice for every New Yorker. When the ripple effects of the downturn in the economy began to threaten our ability to meet that mission, I felt that as chief judge of the state, I had a moral and ethical responsibility to take the leadership role and make access to justice and increased funding for civil legal services paramount concerns of our judiciary. For vulnerable New Yorkers—including the elderly, children, people with disabilities, abuse victims—civil legal services often are their only means to secure public resources to keep their lives afloat or to maintain the roof over their heads. With the influx of recession-fueled cases, such as skyrocketing home foreclosures, evictions, consumer debt cases, an increase in family offense and custody petitions, and a rise in matrimonial conflict, we saw more and more litigants appearing in court without counsel. Civil legal services providers, themselves struggling with shrinking resources, were unable to meet the growing demand for help, turning away eligible clients—as many as eight or nine for every individual served in New York City. Declining interest rates dramatically reduced the revenues of the largest funder of civil legal services, the IOLA Fund, making it likely that providers who [had] relied on IOLA grants in the past would have to close their doors. That led us to take the unprecedented step of including \$15 million in the judiciary budget for 2010–2011 to help offset IOLA's shortfall. But in reality, even when our economy was strong, civil legal services were greatly underfunded, and less than 20 percent of the civil legal services needs of the poor were being met. So last year, I presided over hearings to assess the current level of needs and formed the Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services in New York. Following the hearings and issuance of the task force report in November, I adopted the task force's recommendation of including \$25 million in our 2011–2012 budget (as part of a plan to increase funding by \$100 million in four years).

How will you prioritize the provision of civil legal services to ensure that those most in need are most able to get legal help?

Assuming the funding is approved, priority will be given to matters involving the essentials of life as defined in the task force report: housing (including evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness), family matters (including domestic violence, children, and family stability), access to health care and education, and subsistence income (including low wages, access to disability and other benefits, and consumer debt). Those living below 200 percent of the federal poverty level will be eligible. An oversight board will use the IOLA Fund's grantmaking process for the first year, but the board will issue the request for proposals, make decisions on grants, and assure accountability by grantees. A more permanent distribution mechanism is being studied.

There are those who have noted your courage and leadership in standing up for unrepresented litigants facing homelessness, family breakup, and other crises in these difficult financial times—and there are others who argue that budget constraints make this initiative ill advised. You have responded that this not only is the right thing to do, but also saves money. What are some of the clearest examples of this?

Task force data shows that every \$1 spent on civil legal services in New York returns \$5 to the State. As to why that is the case, the task force calculated that emergency shelter costs are reduced when legal services avert wrongful evictions and foreclosures and, thereby, prevent homelessness; savings in medical care, lost wages, counseling for children, police resources, and incarceration are realized when legal services obtain protection for a domestic violence victim; and state and local public assistance funds are saved when federal disability or unemployment insurance benefits are obtained. Moreover, when federal dollars brought into the state are spent, they generate additional activity for the benefit of the entire state economy.

Many other clear savings have not been quantified, such as the benefit to the courts when the attorney helps solve a problem and it never becomes a court case. Or, since the task force found that litigation costs are higher for the parties opposing an unrepresented litigant, and judges and court personnel must spend extra

time assisting them in navigating the process, providing counsel in litigation leads to substantial economic benefits for the parties and the courts. To those who say that budget constraints make increased funding ill advised, I respond that civil legal services, in fact, are most critical when there is an economic downturn—access to justice is not a luxury affordable only in good times.

What other access-to-justice initiatives are the New York State courts engaged in under your leadership?

We have many access-to-justice initiatives, so I will mention only a few. Still on the subject of civil justice, we have an Attorney Emeritus Program, which grants a special status to senior attorneys who provide 30 hours of pro bono representation under the auspices of qualified legal services providers, bar associations, and court-sponsored volunteer lawyer programs. We also just launched a mortgage foreclosure program to provide counsel to homeowners in settlement conferences, beginning gradually in Orange and Queens Counties, with the hope we will soon expand statewide and develop networks of legal services, pro bono, or law school clinic counsel to provide additional legal assistance in foreclosures.

Reform of indigent defense representation in criminal cases is also an important initiative. Although the U.S. Supreme Court recognized legal representation of indigent criminal defendants as a constitutional right in *Gideon v. Wainwright* in 1963, as recently as five years ago, the Commission on the Future of Indigent Defense Services found New York's indigent defense system to be severely dysfunctional and structurally incapable of providing poor defendants with effective legal representation. In June 2010, the Legislature took the welcome step of creating the Indigent Legal Services Board and State Office of Indigent Legal Services. I have the honor of chairing the nine-member board, which has broad statutory powers and will work with the ILS Office to ensure that every defendant has effective legal representation.

Two other projects worth mentioning are the Justice Task Force formed to examine wrongful convictions, which has just launched a Web site and released its first recommendations, and a juvenile justice reform agenda that incorporates improvements in family court, the use of alternatives to detention, and the strengthening of juvenile probation.

What role can law schools generally, and CUNY's public interest-focused law school in particular, play in supporting efforts to improve access to justice and support civil legal services to meet the urgent legal needs of poor and low-income people?

Law schools play a vital role in finding ways to assist unrepresented litigants. We need them to continue to do so, because even if my proposed four-year funding plan reaches

the goal of \$100 million in funding by the fourth year, we will close the justice gap only by half. CUNY Law already contributes a great deal by focusing on public interest-oriented lawyering, and by its nationally recognized clinical programs and justice initiatives. For the long term, all law schools can help by graduating lawyers who view ensuring access to justice as an integral part of their professional lives. For the short term, I have already mentioned clinical assistance with foreclosures, but I also hope that all law schools will, like CUNY, be incubators for fresh ideas, innovations, and collaborations, and I personally welcome thoughts on how we can enhance access to justice in New York. ●●



The Honorable Jonathan Lippman

Students Intervening for Justice

A KID HORSES AROUND AT SCHOOL. A CHILD WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER HAS AN OUTBURST IN CLASS. SOMEONE BRINGS A LASER POINTER INTO HOMEROOM.

There was a time when these acts led to detention or a trip to the principal's office. Instead, suspensions—as a means of ongoing discipline—have become shortcuts for New York City public schools that are under-resourced, overcrowded, and attended by low-income students of color, according to the National Economic & Social Rights Initiative.

Studies show that repeated suspensions increase the likelihood that students will fall behind, be held back a grade, or drop out. Suspended children may find it easier to get into trouble, and that, studies find, can eventually lead to incarceration. It's known as the school-to-prison pipeline, and it begins when education takes a backseat to no-tolerance discipline practices and policing policies in schools.

When kids are suspended, getting them back to the classroom without legal representation can be as difficult as emerging from the criminal justice system without a lawyer.

"It's so eerie how much [school suspension hearings] mirror prison disciplinary hearings," says Amanda Jack ('11). "It's the same process and the same low threshold" for the school to prove why a student should be suspended.

Jack, who will be headed to a job with Brooklyn Defender Services in the fall, has represented more than 30 clients—all students in public schools—as part of the Suspension Representation Project (SRP), a collective of law students from schools that include Cardozo, Brooklyn Law, Columbia, Fordham, and Pace, advocating on behalf of public school kids and their parents. If a suspension ruling stands, SRP advocates try to appeal.

"While most of my clients have been in 7th or 8th grade, I have had clients as young as 5 years old," says Jack. They can also be as old as 17. Most of her clients have also been male students of color.

Jack was instrumental in bringing SRP to CUNY two years ago, after she and her CUNY classmate Patrick Foster ('11) attended a talk on how schools were increasingly relying on suspensions, even if a student's behavior didn't merit such a severe disciplinary measure.

African-American students are disproportionately affected by school suspensions. Although they make up 33 percent of the student body in the state, they have made up more than half the suspensions over the past decade, says the New York Civil Liberties Union. Students with disabilities are four times as likely to be suspended as students without special needs.

"We should figure out how to represent these students," Jack recalls saying to Foster.

She discovered a way through SRP, a project founded by New York University Law students in 2007. Jack coordinated SRP in its first year at CUNY, but was helped by other students, including Foster and third-year students Eric Kushman and Paula Segal.

In the first year, more than 30 CUNY students took part in training, gaining insight into legal skills, from interviewing clients to conducting direct and cross-examinations and delivering closing arguments. After training, students shadow an experienced student advocate on a case, until they learn enough to become primary representatives at suspension hearings.

Today, about 60 CUNY students have trained to be SRP advocates, with about 25 actively taking cases, almost double the num-



First row, left to right: Students Lauren Paulk, Jean Stevens, Maggie Palmer, Kat Hutchinson. Second row, left to right: Filaree Moore, Melinda Cooperman, Amanda Jack, Becca Olson. Back row: Adam Shoop, Amy Robinson-Oost, Victoria Roytenberg, Milo Primeaux, Molly Catchen

ber of the year before, according to Kat Hutchinson ('12), who got involved in SRP in her first year.

"Every time I take a case and walk into the hearing office, I see a dozen students waiting for their hearing without an advocate," says Hutchinson, a codirector of SRP at CUNY Law. "You are there to represent just the one [student], but it feels good to go and at least try to fill that void a little bit."

Even before coming to CUNY Law, Hutchinson had an interest in students' rights to an education, having worked with at-risk high school students. "SRP was the greatest thing that could have happened to me in my first semester here," she says.

CUNY Law SRP codirector and second-year law student Molly Catchen had worked in the Bronx at the Legal Aid Society in its juvenile rights practice prior to law school; SRP helped her continue working on education issues and school suspensions.

Together, she and Hutchinson coordinate calls that come in on the help line, talk parents through the process of what happens at a hearing, and then assign advocates. They also coordinate advisor office hours and training, like a recent cross-examination session with Professor Babe Howell (see feature on page 18), who teaches Criminal Law and Criminal Trial Advocacy.

Fielding calls from parents every week, Catchen hears a lot of parental frustrations with schools' aggressive reactions to incidents. She once represented a student suspended for having a laser pointer at school.

"I feel the school overreacted to the situation. A lot of things that we see students being suspended for are really just 'kids being kids,'" says Catchen.

But this is New York City, not Long Island where Catchen grew up; it's not Hutchinson's home state of Montana; and it's not rural Pennsylvania where Amanda Jack went to "an almost all-white school in the sticks, where this kind of stuff would barely get you detention," says Jack.

At the end of the day, CUNY Law SRP advocates help their clients and continue to hone their advocacy skills.

"It's a great way for law students to step outside the classroom and connect what they are learning to real life," Catchen says. "In the midst of the stresses of law school, it reminds many of us why we wanted to [come here] to begin with." ●●

CLOSE-UP

CUNY Alums in the Academy



Ann Cammett
Photo by
Aaron Mayes

Ann Cammett

William S. Boyd

School of Law at the University of Nevada

Teaching law: For Ann Cammett ('00), it's a way to spread the public interest spirit and mission of CUNY Law School.

"When we become teachers, wherever we are, we have a chance to inspire students by providing a counter-narrative to the traditional paths of law school training—paths that focus on prioritizing profits over people," says Cammett, an associate professor at the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Cammett came from a fine arts background. With a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, she gained work as an art director and graphic designer. Her clients were largely social justice organizations and political groups. So for Cammett, it wasn't a far stretch to go from art to law.

"I've always had an allergy to injustice! I knew many progressive lawyers who were doing interesting and meaningful work as well. I simply wanted to do what they were doing," says Cammett,

Michelle Adams

Cardozo Law School

Ask Cardozo Law School Professor Michelle Adams ('89) what put her on the path to public interest law, and she'll talk about her dad and growing up in Michigan's Motor City.

"My father [practiced] criminal defense law in Detroit for 30 to 35 years, serving two or three generations of Detroiters. So I knew I wanted to be a lawyer," recalls Adams, who has taught law at Cardozo since 2007, and before that at Seton Hall for 12 years.

Adams took her first steps toward law when she moved to New York after earning a B.A. in history from Brown University in 1985. Working as a paralegal, she realized she wanted to go farther. When she heard about CUNY Law School, it seemed to be the perfect fit with her political sense and interest in public service law. In 1986, she ended up enrolling in CUNY's fourth graduating class.

"It was an incredibly nurturing environment. It was a place where I could say, 'OK, this is what I'm doing with my life right now,'" says Adams.

After earning her J.D., Adams clerked for a federal magistrate judge, then became a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society in the Civil Appeals and Law Reform unit.

At Legal Aid, she worked on a big case against the New York City Housing Authority alleging race discrimination. Larger issues kept surfacing as she wondered how the public housing authority had become so racially segregated in the first place. None of the questions were the kind that could make their way into a brief.

"There were all these issues that I thought would be great to have more time to think about, but not in a litigation environment," she says.

She learned about Harvard Law School's Charles Hamilton Fellowship, which was trying to get more people of color to teach law. The fellowship would also give her the chance to pursue her master's degree, gain some mentorship, and do some teaching.

"I loved my CUNY Law experience so much I thought it would be great to get an additional degree at Harvard and to have the opportunity to become a law professor," recalls Adams. When she won the fellowship and her tuition was covered, she knew what to do. She earned her LL.M. in 1994.

Whether deans, professors, or law librarians, there are more than 65 CUNY Law alums working in academia across the country.

who really sees her career switch as a change of tools with which to do political work, rather than a change in focus.

At CUNY, Cammett drew inspiration from the late professor Rhonda Copelon, for whom Cammett worked as a teaching assistant, and Professor Sue Bryant, former director of CUNY's Battered Women's Rights Clinic.

"My current work flows directly from my experience as a student lawyer in [Bryant's] clinic," Cammett says.

In the clinic, Cammett worked with incarcerated survivors of abuse who themselves had committed crimes. She began to see a direct connection between child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and criminal justice involvement.

"More importantly, I began to question the common wisdom that the world was made up of criminals and victims and realized that many incarcerated people were both victims and perpetrators of crimes," she says. "I started to see many legal problems as flowing from social systems that redound specifically to the detriment of low-income communities."

After stints at Legal Aid in Brooklyn and as a policy analyst for the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, Cammett accepted a clinical teaching fellowship at Georgetown University Law Center, putting her on the academic path.

Georgetown allowed her to "test whether or not teaching was a valid path. Obviously, [it] was a natural fit," she says.

At Boyd, Cammett serves as an advisor for public interest law students and teaches civil procedure. Her students, she feels, benefit from her experiences, which she describes as being at the intersection of family law, economic justice, and the civil consequences of criminal convictions.

Among her proudest achievements at Boyd: founding the Family Justice Clinic that she now codirects with Elizabeth MacDowell. The clinic covers family law, but has a special focus on low-income families of prisoners, clients with immigration issues, and those affected by the child welfare system and other forms of state intervention into families.

"When serving low-income clients, students are often appalled at the cavalier nature of government agencies when interacting with poor people. This spurs them to want to do affirmative litigation or work on policy projects that address problems of access to justice for our clients," she says.

"Many students want to believe that they can still be agents of change in these difficult times and use law to do good," adds Cammett. "CUNY grads who teach are in a unique position to offer this kind of mentoring." ●●

While Adams was enjoying her time at Harvard, she realized how complementary CUNY Law and Harvard were. CUNY Law wanted to break down the traditional law school curriculum, teaching core legal subjects in what was, at the time, an experimental way: providing clinical experience through simulations. Harvard, by contrast, was all about tradition.

"I think I did pretty well in both environments. The combination of the two schools was just a great preparation to teach law," she says.

Adams credits CUNY with her desire to infuse all her classes with "a healthy respect for public interest law." She has taught core public law courses that examine protection of the individual's rights and the rights of minorities, as well as the relationships among the federal government, individuals, and the States. She writes on race discrimination and affirmative action, and she intends to broaden her scope.

Whatever direction she takes, Adams knows her career can always trace its roots back to the education she got from CUNY Law. "I'm tremendously grateful for the experience and proud to be associated with CUNY," says Adams. ●●



CUNY Law's Public Defenders

Ask Steve Zeidman what it takes to be a great public defender, and he doesn't miss a beat.

"It takes an enduring sense of outrage. It takes a lot of passion," says Professor Zeidman, the director of CUNY Law's Criminal Defense Clinic, adding with quiet intensity, "and just a great sense of humility."

It's the convictions, the staggering rate and sheer number of imprisoned people—overwhelmingly poor people and people of color—that generate the outrage, says Zeidman, who runs the clinic with Clinical Professors Nicole Smith Futrell and Donna Lee. There are 2.3 million incarcerated people in the United States and another 5 million on probation or parole.

"On any given day, almost one out of three black men in their 20s is incarcerated or under some kind of criminal justice control. We need public defenders who are aware of that, simultaneously outraged and motivated by that, and willing to confront and push back against the system that produces that result day in and day out," Zeidman says.

The fact that there are so many people locked up in the system says something about defense attorneys who may just be going through the motions as court-appointed lawyers for people who can't afford their own.

"If you're motivated by platitudes about the adversarial system and that everyone is entitled to a fair trial, that is not going to get you or your client very far," says Zeidman. "Somehow, this has to stop or, in five years, we'll be saying: Can you believe there are 3 million people incarcerated, 4 million, 5 million?"

To challenge what's happening in the criminal justice system, CUNY Law offers its Criminal Defense Clinic, which prepares about 20 third-year students by providing basic skills and knowledge, including substantive law, criminal procedure, and evidence. Students learn about interviewing, counseling, and negotiating.

They also learn to "look at a criminal case in context." There's a lot of dialog in class as students examine with a critical eye all the players and their motivations, as well as the forces that led the accused to be brought into court, whether it's policing policies that target particular communities or governmental neglect of those same communities. All this is in the name of better representation for each client.

Once defenders graduate, some stay in New York, but others return to their own neighborhoods and communities all across the United States.

"To me, it's a sign that students are motivated to do the work wherever there is need," says Zeidman. CUNY alums direct alternative-to-incarceration programs, file civil rights lawsuits on behalf of people wrongly arrested, and assist those held in jails and prisons. "I am quite sure there is no other law school in the country that can boast of having so many alums who are public defenders. I don't even think there's a close second." ••

Student Profile

Giving Back to His Community

This fall, Orlando Rodriguez ('11) will be heading to the Bronx to work for the Bronx Defenders criminal practice.

For Rodriguez, it's a dream come true, finding an organization that has the same principles that he does. His office will be at the Bronx Criminal Courthouse, just a couple of miles east of the neighborhood where he grew up.

"I am excited about being able to serve the people in my home borough," says Rodriguez, who will start as a staff attorney with Bronx Defenders in early September after he graduates.

Rodriguez's experiences as a young Latino in the Bronx during a time of oppressive law enforcement forged his desire to enter indigent defense work. In the late 1980s to mid-1990s, Rodriguez recalls a neighborhood where a third of the families were below the poverty level, a situation exacerbated by a poorly funded education system and a lack of jobs.

"I got a clear sense of why people turned to using drugs and selling drugs," he says, as well as other behaviors that led to mass arrests and incarceration. "I watched some of the most talented young men I have ever had the privilege of knowing lose years of their lives in prison, if they had not already lost their lives in the streets."

Rodriguez says that two semesters of experience in CUNY Law's Criminal Defense Clinic gave him essential skills and allowed him to move from theory to practice.

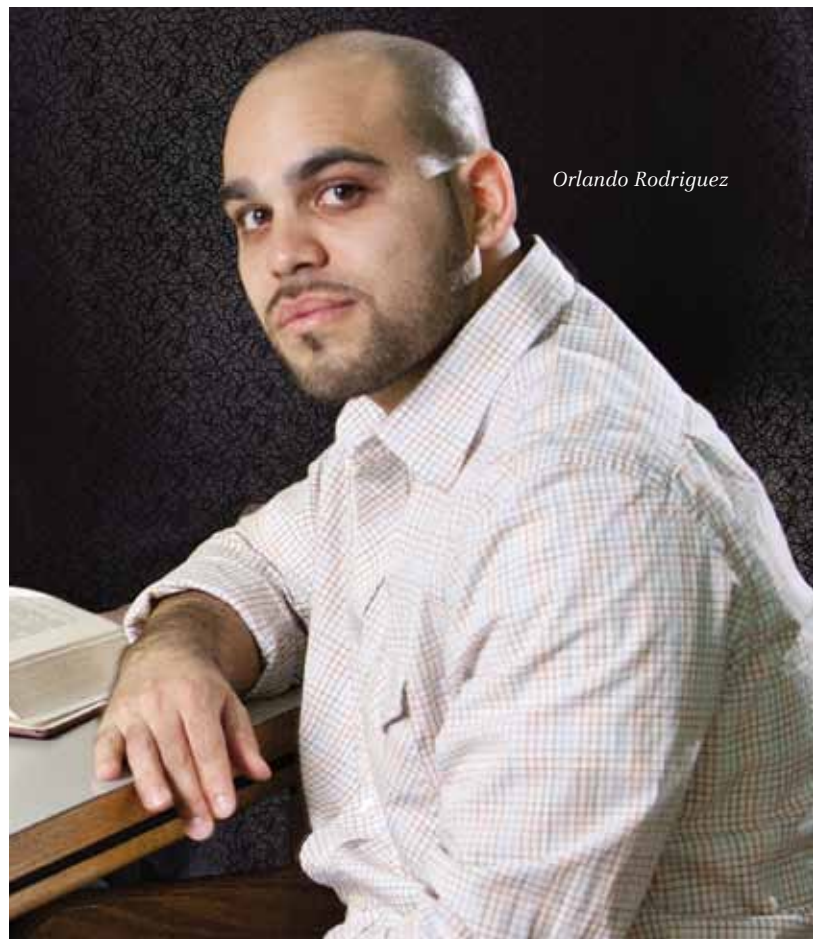
"Here we were confronted by real people in tough circumstances facing serious consequences," he says. "I soon realized the intellectual challenges were the easy part. Learning to cope with the emotional gravity of this work [would] be the greater challenge."

When one of his clinic clients faced misdemeanor charges in Queens Criminal Court, Rodriguez recalls, the prosecution requested \$3,500 bail.

"I was nervous and worried for my young client, but I was also prepared as I argued for my client's release," he remembers. "I was overjoyed when the judge agreed to 'ROR' (release him on his own recognizance)."

His client has since enrolled in an alcohol abuse program and things are going well.

Despite the solid clinical experiences he gained at CUNY



Orlando Rodriguez

Law, Rodriguez knows he has many challenges ahead. Although he knows he's up for the fight, he can't shake the feeling that he's bailing water from a sinking ship with a teacup; it's hard for one person to change the system.

The other great challenge is to develop the trust of his clients, who may view him as just another part of the system that led to their arrest.

"If I can impact someone's life by keeping them out of jail, or injecting some humanity into the process, if somewhere along the way I do my part to pull back the veil that hides the ineffectiveness and cruelty of the system, then I think I can say I had a 'successful' career," says Rodriguez. ●●

New York City

Making an Impact



From the Bronx to Queens, CUNY Law's public defender alums are arguing passionately and convincingly on behalf of underserved communities across New York City. Here is just a small sample of some of these outstanding individuals.



Top row, from left:
 Japheth Baker '05, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan); Iván Pantoja '06, The Legal Aid Society (Brooklyn); Elizabeth Latimer '06, Brooklyn Defender Services; Bahar Ansari '06, The Legal Aid Society (Brooklyn); Geoffrey Bickford '08, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan); Ebbette Fortune '10, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan); Alma Magaña, 2007 Visiting Student, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan).
 Second row, from left:
 Amanda Scioscia '06, Brooklyn Defender Services; Michael Oppenheimer '06, The Bronx Defenders; Carly Meyer '07, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan); Jenny Park '07, The Legal Aid Society (Bronx); Bridgette Bissonnette '10, The Legal Aid Society (Bronx); Rebecca Greenberg '08, The Bronx Defenders; Robyn Lear '06, The Legal Aid Society (Brooklyn); Jonathan Stonbely '07, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan); Lily Goetz '07, The Legal Aid Society (Bronx); Gurmeet Singh '05, The Legal Aid Society (Manhattan)

Making a Difference in Florida, L.A., and Colorado

Luis Cabrera

For Luis Cabrera ('90), it wasn't much of a stretch to go to CUNY Law School; its mission dovetails with his own philosophy.

"It's a matter of helping your neighbor. I was a caseworker and a social worker years before I went to law school," says Cabrera, a Polk County, Florida, public defender for the last 15 years. Before that, right out of CUNY, he worked for five years as a public defender in adjacent Hillsborough County, where he had been an investigator for six years.

Cabrera's current focus is representing indigent criminal defendants in felony cases, from grand theft to first-degree murder.

"Oftentimes, it's the lowest stratum of society that's caught up in the system. The minorities are indigent; they're easy to get picked on and trampled," he says. "We're the guardians of the law. We're in the trenches."

In Florida, Cabrera has seen an increase in violent offenses, including home invasions, robberies, and armed robberies. And the penalties can be severe. Florida's so-called 10/20/Life statute means possession of a firearm in a robbery results in an automatic 10 years in prison; firing the gun results in 20 years; if someone gets hurt or dies during the robbery, it's 25 years to life in prison.

About 80 percent of cases go through plea negotiations during which Cabrera will try to get the charges reduced. If the client is innocent, they go to trial.

It's CUNY's Criminal Defense Clinic that he credits with preparing him for his public defender career in Florida. He values the clinic for not just teaching the theory, but also teaching its application and the process. The clinic also taught Cabrera to practice law driven by the service of people in need, not by profit.

It's lawyering to serve "your community, the underprivileged, and the downtrodden," says Cabrera. "That's CUNY's philosophy, and it coincides with my beliefs and philosophy. That's what I do; that's who I am." ●●

"We're the guardians of the law. We're in the trenches."



Luis Cabrera

When Nayda Kuachusri ('08) graduated from CUNY Law, she wasn't planning to work in Los Angeles as a criminal defense lawyer.

"I thought I would stay in New York," she recalls, having applied to Legal Aid and other organizations.

What made up her mind was an interview with the L.A. County Public Defender's Office at a Manhattan career fair and their offer of a senior law clerk position. After passing the California bar, she was hired as a public defender. One of 700 attorneys in the county, Kuachusri usually works at least 10 hours a day, going to and from court, filing motions, handling requests from investigators, and working diligently to advocate for her clients.

If there's a trial, she'll bring work home. Kuachusri handles more than three-quarters of the misdemeanors that come into her courthouse, up to 45 cases a day.

But the caseload isn't the most tiring or intensive aspect of the job; it's relating to clients on a compassionate level, something she learned from the clinic.

"I'm exhausted at the end of the day because there's so much emotional involvement. Being a public defender, you see people at the worst time in their lives," she says. "In most cases, my clients are normal people with relatively normal lives and something horrible happens. And they react either in the best way they could, or not. And then the police end up getting involved."

Nayda Kuachusri



Nayda Kuachusri

So Kuachusri wants to be there for her clients, working with them to get the best results she can. If jail time is involved, Kuachusri will try to soften its sting.

"I try and get them sentenced to classes or community service or some type of organization where they can get mental health counseling, not just a lot of jail time," she says. "And I look at those things because of CUNY." ●●

Ned Deakins

Ned Deakins is a criminal defense attorney in Denver, Colorado.

You might say his vantage point has moved about one mile higher in elevation than it was in New York City when he attended CUNY Law. While life is slower here than in the Big Apple, says Deakins ('06), indigent clients' need for legal representation remains the same.

"I feel compelled to work on behalf of poor criminal defendants—people who are marginalized in the courtroom and in the criminal justice system, as a whole," says Deakins, a deputy state public defender in the appellate division who writes criminal appeals on behalf of his clients.

Non-Caucasians make up a disproportionate percentage of his clients, even though they are hardly the majority of the population. From a sampling of his own cases, 38 percent of his clients are Latino, although they make up only 20 percent of the state's population, and 17 percent are African-American, even though they represent just 4.5 percent of the population.



Ned Deakins

His clients come from all over the state. Most are convicted of felonies, ranging from possession of a controlled substance or criminal impersonation to murder or kidnapping. Other clients may be on probation or parole, he says.

In his four years with the Office of the Colorado State Public Defender, he's seen an increase in the number of cases in which clients serve large amounts of prison time and even life sentences.

When times get tough for his clients, Deakins thinks back to his time in the Criminal Defense Clinic at CUNY Law. He is reminded to stay on task, think critically, and "remember that there's a person who needs help on the other side of the papers, cases, and filings. Above all, the clinic has helped me remember to care." ●●

CUNY Law Professor Babe Howell

As a former public defender, CUNY Law professor Babe Howell knows firsthand the costs of aggressive policing targeting communities of color.

Below is an excerpt from remarks she recently gave at the 40th anniversary celebration of the NYU Review of Law & Social Change, in which she reflected on the intersections of race and class in the criminal justice system.¹

The mass criminalization of people resulting from Zero Tolerance Policing (ZTP) and “quality of life” initiatives adopted in the mid-1990s have made it nearly impossible for a young man of color in our city to avoid arrest or harassment, while white men and suburban youth engage in the same low-level victimless conduct without consequences.

As a defense lawyer and a teacher, I struggle to make people understand and care about the real costs of these “minor arrests” and the injustices they impose on individuals, families, and communities. This is an uphill battle. People believe that misdemeanors are “minor” (at least until someone they care about is charged with one), and typically focus on felonies, excessive imprisonment, and capital cases. While these subjects are important, aggressive policing of minor offenses exacts disproportionately high costs from individuals who are generally as law-abiding as those of us sitting in this room, as the prosecutors who prosecute them, as the police who arrest them, and as the bankers on Wall Street.

A little background about what brought me to criminal work and to my focus on minor offenses. When I came to NYU School of Law, I had already worked for a number of years doing

anti-eviction work with families at the Legal Aid Society. Like many would-be public interest lawyers, I was interested in the “innocent poor,” the victims of unscrupulous landlords, lenders, and employers. During law school internships, I worked on civil discrimination cases and labor law. My goal upon graduation was to work in a small, rural legal services office representing poor people in the wide range of civil matters that destroy and disrupt lives. Why represent criminals, I thought, when so many people are victimized by discrimination and corporate malfeasance?

During law school, however, two things happened that changed my viewpoint and made me recognize that so many of the people in the criminal justice system are every bit as “innocent” as the people that I went to high school and college with. The only differences between my experience and theirs were where they lived and the color of their skin.

First, what I learned in criminal procedure class stoked my growing sense of outrage about how people are treated by

the criminal justice system. The rules and sanctions that “protect” our Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendment rights only make sense to those who are confident that they will never be the target of police stops or investigations. I learned that our constitutional rights are not violated when police lie to suspects, interrogate children without their parents, or

“...my cousins, two young black men who had the misfortune of living in Los Angeles in 1992, were thrown in jail while going to buy pizza and held for 12 days before being released. I became a public defender.”

stop and frisk men for looking in a jewelry store window in broad daylight. The rules that we learned in criminal procedure [seem] acceptable only if you are confident that the police will never stop, search, or question anyone [you] care about. That sense of security is not one that communities of color enjoy.

Second, on the heels of the acquittal of the police who beat Rodney King, my cousins, two young black men who had the misfortune of living in Los Angeles in 1992, were thrown in jail while going to buy pizza and held for 12 days before being released. They never committed any offense and were never charged with any crime.

I became a public defender.

Working at the Legal Aid Society in Manhattan, I had the opportunity to witness firsthand the consequences of Rudolph Giuliani and William Bratton's Zero Tolerance Policing strategy. People were arrested for selling umbrellas and flowers on the streets, drinking beer on their stoops, possessing marijuana or other drugs for personal use, and "trespassing" in their own buildings.

The number of misdemeanor and lesser arrests skyrocketed from around 80,000 in the late 1980s to around 200,000 in the late 1990s, and has continued to rise under the Bloomberg administration to over 245,000 in 2009.² Many of those arrested have no prior criminal record, and the arrestees are consistently at least 85 percent people of color. The pressure on police officers³ to make arrests for minor offenses was sweeping largely law-abiding citizens of color into the criminal courts.

Few people think about the costs of these policies and the injustices hidden in these numbers. Even defense attorneys sometimes treated the deluge of cases as "disposable" because the arrestees are usually released after 24 hours in jail. The costs, however, include lost employment, lost housing, missed school, and families torn apart by immigration removal proceedings.

CUNY graduates who become public defenders understand that the costs of ZTP perpetuate racial disparities in our society. They will fight minor cases and call prosecutors to task for ignoring the racial disparities caused by ZTP. True public defenders understand that to ignore minor offenses is to allow the criminal justice system to continue to heap disadvantages on the most vulnerable segments of its population. ●●

Babe Howell



¹ For the complete text of the speech, see K. Babe Howell, "From Page to Practice and Back Again: Broken Windows Policing and the Real Costs to Law-Abiding New Yorkers of Color," 34 *NYU Review of Law & Social Change* 439 (2010).

² N.Y. State Div. of Criminal Justice Servs., Adult Arrests, New York City: 2000-2009 (2010), <http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/crimnet/ojsa/arrests/nyc.htm>.

³ For more on the pressure on police to make minor arrests and issue summonses, see Graham Rayman, "The NYPD Tapes: Inside Bed-Stuy's 81st Precinct," *The Village Voice*, May 4, 2010; Graham Rayman, "The NYPD Tapes: Part 2," *The Village Voice*, May 11, 2010.

Photo of Babe Howell by Holger Thoss

From Public Defender To Mayor

From his window, Mayor Matt Ryan scans the low-lying buildings that make up the skyline of Binghamton, New York, his hometown.

He's faced plenty of challenges since returning to Binghamton, a rust-belt city that in better times was home to many big manufacturers. It's even the birthplace of IBM.

"I can see [the IBM] building right here from where I'm sitting," says Ryan ('90). "At one point it employed over 15,000 people; now they're down to less than 2,000."

As other major employers, such as shoemaker Endicott-Johnson, have disappeared over the decades, so too has much of Binghamton's taxpaying population, now roughly 47,000, down from its peak of 80,000. That has put a strain on what the mayor can do for the city and its people.

"We're trying to do everything we can," the two-term mayor says.

Before City Hall, Ryan's public interest experience included work for the former New York State Division for Youth and behind-the-scenes efforts on political campaigns. He also was active in issues including tenants' rights and keeping an incinerator from being built in Binghamton.

Then he started thinking about a law degree.

"I felt at the time that if I became a lawyer, I could advocate better for the things I believed in," says Ryan.

A tennis buddy put him in contact with Professor Joe Rosenberg (now director of the Elder Law Clinic), who helped the then 37-year-old Ryan decide on CUNY Law, with its public interest focus and non-cutthroat learning environment.

Upon graduating, Ryan worked for the Legal Aid Society in Binghamton and later joined the public defender's office, staying there for 15 years. He credits CUNY's Criminal Defense Clinic with helping him learn to really think through problems and come up with solutions.

Taking public service a step further, Ryan, aligned with Democrats and the Working Families Party, ran in the 2005 mayoral election and won, despite some naysayers.

"A lot of people thought I didn't have the temperament to be mayor because I was vocal about my criticism of the system and wouldn't let judges push my clients around without a fight," he says, chuckling. "Not too many people go into politics from the public defender's office. They usually come from the DA's office."



Binghamton Mayor Matt Ryan

As mayor, Ryan has not shied away from pushing the envelope. Last spring, he put up an electronic sign outside City Hall to show taxpayers how much money has gone toward the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that could be going toward social services. The act, as part of the Cost of War project, brought Binghamton national attention and earned Ryan a peace award from Peace Action of Central New York.

The roots of the mayor's dedication to public service go back to the late 1960s, when, as a teenager, he worked on Robert Kennedy's presidential campaign, which ended with the senator's assassination. Ryan was part of the honor guard at RFK's funeral at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"I think going to CUNY Law School really helped get my focus back to what it was in 1968: trying to be good at public service," he says, citing his favorite quote by Robert Kennedy:

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance." ●●



Q&A: Telling CUNY Law's Story

Vivian Todini is CUNY Law School's new executive director of institutional advancement. With a passion for justice, she comes to the position with more than 20 years of experience working with public interest organizations, guiding them on how to integrate communications and fundraising into building support for their litigation and public policy strategies. Todini holds a B.A. from William Paterson University and a master's degree from New York University.

What did you do before you came to CUNY Law?

My career has been largely dedicated to social justice advocacy. I began in journalism working at a daily newspaper and then moved into communications and development work. I had a seven-year stint as communications director for Legal Momentum, formerly NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. Right before I joined the Law School in 2009 as communications director, I had run my own consulting business for 10 years. As a consultant, I had the privilege of working with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, LatinoJustice/PRLDEF, the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, The White House Project, and the National Council for Research on Women, among other organizations. I developed communications and fundraising initiatives to further the progressive public policies for which my clients were fighting. I ghostwrote op-eds, speeches, and legislative testimony. I organized press and donor briefings and worked with individuals on media training and boards of directors on developing their fundraising acumen.

What drew you to CUNY Law?

The level of passion among the students is unmatched. They have the courage of their convictions. The faculty are extremely dedicated to our pedagogical approach of pairing theory and practice, and they are leaders in their fields. Because the faculty have backgrounds in practice, students have the opportunity to learn from their real-life examples. The staff is also a strong part of the fabric of the community, with many having been here since the school was established. CUNY Law is a unique environment. It's like a family that sometimes squabbles, but ultimately loves one another and shares core values.

What does the executive director of institutional advancement do?

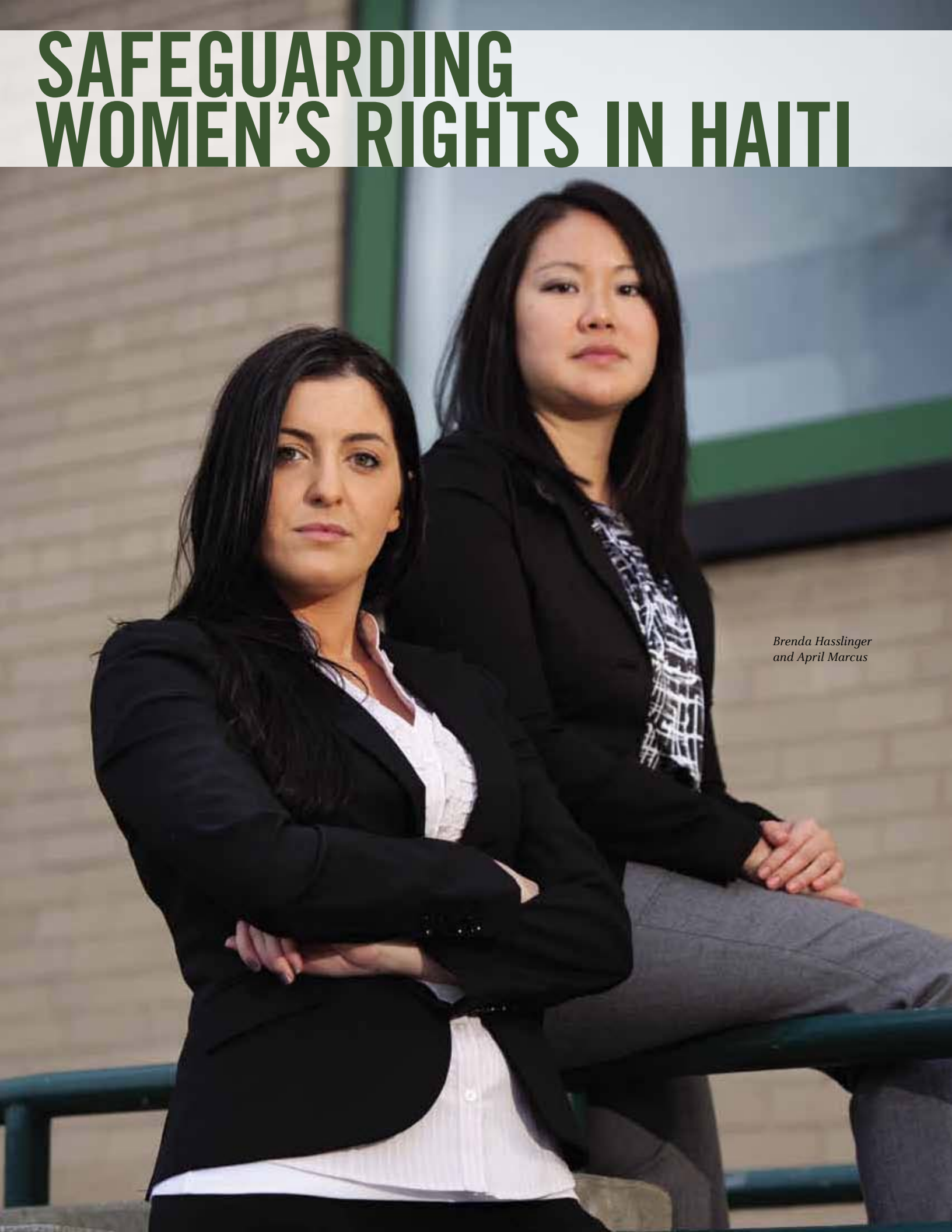
I am responsible for all fundraising for the Law School. Our job is to tell the important story of CUNY Law. We do this through a variety of means, including this magazine, video, media outreach, brochures, our Web site, one-on-one meetings with donors, and different public fora. It's important for people to know about the impact that our students, faculty, and alumni have on the city of New York, the nation, and the world.

We remain in contact with the press so that the legal expertise and progressive perspectives of faculty members on human rights issues are kept in the forefront of national discourse. Moreover, as donors consider where to give their hard-earned dollars, knowing that CUNY Law remains a leader on social justice issues helps build our case for support. It's also important that the CUNY Law family of alums is kept apprised of how the Law School is growing and how the next generation of students is following proudly in their footsteps. One of our goals is to reconnect with our alums so that they can learn more about how their ongoing support bolsters our programs and keeps CUNY Law strong. After all, they know firsthand how fellowships, for instance, which need ongoing outside support, and clinical experiences build resumes and distinguish CUNY Law graduates.

Another goal is to communicate better with our donors and potential supporters. For instance, people need to know that our clinic provides services to underserved communities, and that, through the LaunchPad for Justice, our graduates work in tandem with the New York State courts to provide legal services to people fighting for basic housing rights, such as the right to heat and hot water.

Lastly, because we are a public institution, the funds we receive are narrowly, but importantly, designated for covering the curriculum. That means that initiatives such as the summer and winter public interest fellowships or the scholarships that we make available must be funded through private donations. We tell the story of CUNY Law so that we can help accomplish these goals. ●●

SAFEGUARDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN HAITI



*Brenda Hasslinger
and April Marcus*

Even seven months after they returned from a fact-finding mission to Haiti, it's hard for April Marcus ('11) to believe what she and a small group from CUNY Law have accomplished on a legal level and experienced on a personal level.

Marcus, as part of her work for CUNY Law's International Women's Human Rights (IWHR) Clinic, helped draft a successful petition in international law, laying the groundwork for strengthening women's rights in Haiti and around the world.

"People can practice law for years and never get a chance to have a successful petition under their belt. I feel really lucky to have chosen this project and to be on this team with people that are really motivated to make change," says Marcus.

Haiti still suffers from devastation caused by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that rocked the central part of the country, including the capital, Port-au-Prince, in January 2010. Hundreds of thousands of people died, and an estimated 1.5 million still live in displacement camps, where rape and sexual attacks on women have escalated.

"Anecdotal and statistical evidence have shown us that anytime you have disaster and conflict and people are living in displacement camps, you always have spikes in sexual violence," says Lisa Davis, who graduated from CUNY Law in 2008 and who now is an adjunct professor in the IWHR Clinic. She had learned of the situation in Haiti from MADRE, an international women's human rights organization, where she is director of human rights advocacy.

So, in October 2010, sensing how CUNY Law's IWHR Clinic could get involved, Davis led a student delegation to Haiti that included, along with April Marcus, Brenda Hasslinger ('11) and Thyra Smith ('10), as well as legal fellow Brad Parker ('10). Together they toured displacement camps, interviewing residents, security guards, representatives of women's groups, and U.N. agencies, as part of a fact-finding and documentation mission.

The CUNY Law group worked closely with KOFAVIV, a Haitian grassroots organization established by and for rape survivors; many of its members live and operate inside the displacement camps.

Hasslinger cannot forget seeing the KOFAVIV women for the first time, as they sat in a circle on the clinic's porch in Haiti.

"When they saw us, they began singing. I felt so incredibly moved by their song; I felt the strength, hope, empowerment, and thirst for change in the women's voices. I couldn't help but cry," says Hasslinger.

The CUNY Law students ultimately traveled to five out of

22 camps KOFAVIV monitors to document the violence women have suffered.

"While most of the stories of the women I heard from were terrifying, the women did not seem afraid. They were angry and were not going to accept defeat. They wanted safety for themselves and their daughters," Hasslinger says.

Squalid conditions were part of the problem in the camps. With no proper sewage system, bathrooms were often not fit for use, says Hasslinger, so people had to use containers or "go out in the open."

An even bigger problem was a lack of security and lighting that made women vulnerable to attacks. "Some of these camps are so dark you can't see your feet at night when you walk,"

Davis says, adding that some camps might have as many as 5,000 residents.

Debriefings led by Davis were often emotional, according to Marcus, who had never had a travel experience like this before.

"It's heartbreaking to see the kinds of conditions people have been living in," says Marcus. "People were stepping over the rubble. I couldn't believe that any progress had been made" since the earthquake.

Upon returning to the Law School, the IWHR Clinic students helped draft a petition requesting that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States ask member-state Haiti to take immediate measures to prevent violence against women and girls in Haiti.

Two months after the CUNY delegation filed its petition, the commission ruled in favor of the IWHR-led petition, agreeing to the clinic's recommendations to Haiti, which included the provision of security and lighting in camps, access to medical care for rape

victims, the removal of barriers to prosecution of perpetrators, and the future inclusion of grassroots groups at the planning table when issues are addressed by the government.

The commission's decision set precedents on two counts, according to Davis; it had never before ruled in favor of petitioners holding the government liable under international law for rapes committed by a private actor—someone who was not a member of government—nor had it ever ruled in favor of rape victims who were unidentified, similar to a class action.

Even though the IWHR Clinic had a successful petition, it plans on continuing its work in Haiti. As for graduating students Hasslinger and Marcus, they are thankful for their hands-on Haiti experience with the clinic, something human rights clinics at other law schools rarely provide. ●●

"While most of the stories of the women I heard from were terrifying, the women did not seem afraid. They were angry and were not going to accept defeat. They wanted safety for themselves and their daughters," Hasslinger says.

Caring About Students By Caring for Their Kids

It's the little things that third-year student Josephine Vitta loves about her boys.

"The arms around your neck when they give you a hug, the smiles, or just seeing them develop" are among the most wonderful things about 22-month-old Noa and 7-month-old Luka, says Vitta.

They also make it tough for her to step away from her duties as a mother while she finishes 16 credits to complete her degree, half of them linked to the Immigrant & Refugee Rights Clinic. At the same time, Vitta acts as a teaching assistant for the Economic Justice Project. It's a lot to handle with two little ones.

"Having two kids under 2 years old is not for the faint of heart under any circumstance," she laughs. "I don't sleep very much, I'll tell you that!"

In a family that relies primarily on one income—her husband Chiza works and she receives a monthly stipend through the Haywood Burns Fellowship in Civil and Human Rights—and with a long commute from Harlem to campus, Vitta has needed a reliable, affordable, and convenient solution for her sons' care.

For the past 19 months, she's found it on the first floor of the Law School.

CUNY was the first law school in the nation to provide on-site care for children, and, indeed, remains one of the few legal education institutions with a child-care center on the premises.

But even CUNY wasn't always this way. Fred Rooney, director of CUNY Law's Community Legal Resource Network and a graduate of the school's first law class in 1986, remembers how it used to be when he had to bring his infant son to school.

"Friends in the Admissions Office crafted a makeshift crib for him in the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet," he recalls.

You won't find that arrangement today at CUNY's Children's Center, which touts a nurturing staff, state-certified early-childhood educators, and even a playground.

While Vitta has classes Monday through Thursday, she knows there's qualified child care for her sons every one of those days, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"It's really improved the quality of life for my children and myself," she says. The cost: \$30 a day for the first child, with a \$3 discount for the second.

The Children's Center also allows for parents to make frequent visits. So between classes or clients, Vitta can easily check on her kids. Instead of dropping them off for eight hours at a time, she can visit, say, every couple of hours if desired.

It's a schedule that she attests has made her a better law student.

"When I feel the urge to see them, I can just go see them and then get back to work," says Vitta. At the same time, Noa and Luka "get lots of attention, so that peace of mind has made it easier for me to focus on what I need to do."

And that's to earn her law degree from CUNY. Vitta values the school's mission of social justice.

"CUNY was my one and only choice. I looked at various schools, but I really didn't see any in line with what I wanted to do in terms of my social and political philosophy," she says. "I really just want to help individual people."

Prior to enrolling in law school, Vitta worked for universities for several years as an advisor, explaining complex immigration regulations to students from other countries. The advisory work built on the community service she performed in schools with AmeriCorps during the Clinton administration. She credits all these experiences with solidifying her passion for public service.

Vitta's long-term goal: to deal with displaced people and their legal rights; people who may be migrating from place to place because of conflict in their home country or for economic reasons. Her short-term goal: immigration law and the rights of people who come to the United States.

Whatever she ends up doing with her lawyering career, it will be hard to match the quality of care her sons have gotten at CUNY Law.

"Along with some of the other mothers who are graduating, we're exploring our options of what to do next and where, how much it's going to cost, and how much time we're going to spend commuting from work to day care," she sighs. "It really is a big hurdle that's coming up."

And it makes her that much more appreciative of CUNY's foresight in having the Children's Center in the building.

"If they didn't have it, I wouldn't have succeeded," Vitta says. ●●



Josephine Vitta with son Luka on her lap and son Noa playing inside CUNY Law's Children's Center

Alumni News

1986

BENJAMIN CHEVAT, chief of staff to U.S. Representative Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), helped lead the five-year fight for the successful passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, also known as the “First Responders Legislation.” See “News Brief” on page 3.

1991

ANNA LEVINE has been actively involved in mediation for more than 15 years. She is currently on the panel of the New York City Family Court program for custody/visitation hearings. She has also been involved in many other types of mediation, including that involving special education, early intervention, and parent/teen hearings. Anna sends her regards to all her alumni friends.

1992

JOSH HANSHAFT successfully prosecuted a case involving two Ecuadorian brothers who were assaulted in 2008. One of them was killed in the attack. Because their attackers used gay and Hispanic epithets, one assailant was convicted of murder in the second degree, classified as a hate crime, and sentenced to 37 years to life in prison; the other was convicted of manslaughter in the first degree and sentenced to 37 years in prison.

After retiring from 39 years of public service with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority–LIRR, **PETER C. WALSH** was elected vice president of the District Managers Association for the Village of Port Jefferson Business Improvement District. Also, Peter was elected director of the Suffolk County Bar Association Academy of Law.

1994

DANIEL FLANZIG, partner at Flanzig and Flanzig, has once again been named a “New York Super Lawyer” in the New York metropolitan area as well as a “Top Legal Eagle” by Long Island’s *Pulse* magazine. His firm handles significant personal injury litigation.



Jonathan Meltz ('96)

ERIC MILGRIM is the chief law clerk to Acting Supreme Court Justice Steven Jaeger in Nassau County.

VICTORIA NEILSON has been appointed adjunct professor for New York University School of Law’s inaugural LGBT Rights Clinic. She also continues as legal director of Immigration Equality, an organization that recently hired **ROSALBA NOVOA DAVIS** ('07) as a staff attorney in its Washington, D.C., office.

1996

JONATHAN MELTZ is a criminal defense attorney in Miami and recently appeared on A&E Network’s “After the First 48.”

The episode featured a highly publicized murder trial in which Jonathan utilized Florida’s controversial “Stand Your Ground” self-defense law.

1997

JOEY MOGUL was honored at the 2010 annual dinner of the Chicago Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

1998

MICHAEL TOBMAN is a lobbyist and political consultant in New York. His editorial, “The Democrats and School Choice,” was featured in the February 13, 2011, issue of *Crain’s New York Business*.

1999

FIORDALIZA A. RODRIGUEZ was installed as president of the Dominican Bar Association on January 12, 2011.

2000

TINA C. BENNET moved her office to Madison County in November 2010. Tina tells us her law practice for fathers’ rights is still going strong, and she is in a relationship with Richard Foley. Visit www.tinabennet.com.

VERONICA THRONSON is an assistant clinical professor of law and director of the Immigration Law Clinic at Michigan State University College of Law. Previously, Veronica was the directing attorney of the Domestic Violence Project at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, where she practiced in the areas of family and immigration law from 2002 to 2010.

2003

DAVID ABRAMS recently received an opinion from the Florida First District Court of Appeal in a pro bono case involving

the rights of pregnant women in Florida to make their own health care decisions.

2004

CAROLINA GUACCI joined the University of Miami School of Law in 2008 as a clinical instructor/supervising attorney in the Children & Youth Law Clinic. She was recently featured as a speaker at Miami Law HOPE Public Interest Resource Center's Public Interest Lecture Series, where much of her work at CUNY Law and in New York was noted.



Veronica Thronson ('00)

2006

BRIANA DENNEY is a new partner at the firm of Newman & Denney, P.C., which specializes in the areas of matrimonial and family law.

PAULA T. EDGAR recently took a position as the associate director of career services at Seton Hall University School of Law, after leaving her longtime post as the executive director of the Practicing Attorneys for Law Students Program, Inc. (PALS).

KELLY KUTERBACH, along with three of her colleagues, founded Community Law Offices, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit law firm designed to help bridge the justice gap by providing free and low-cost legal services, on a sliding scale basis, to low- and moderate-income individuals in southern New Jersey. The firm is designed to provide representation in a wide variety of civil law matters to clients who are ineligible for existing free legal services but unable to afford private attorneys' fees.

CARLA P. MONIZ was awarded the 2010–2011 Bart J. Gordon Memorial Fellowship by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation. In addition, Carla was elected cochair of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) of Massachusetts. Carla and her spouse, Katie, also joyfully welcomed their daughter, Devin Moniz, on August 19, 2010.

2007

JENNIFER HOPE and **MATTHEW MONROE** ('08) are engaged to be married on June 18, 2011. After working at a small boutique labor firm in Philadelphia doing primarily ERISA-related litigation for two years, Jen is now a trial attorney for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Matt worked for two years as an associate attorney for a practice owned and managed by CUNY Law alumna and adjunct professor **LAURA GENTILE** ('87) before joining Sheller, P.C., a plaintiff-side civil law firm specializing in mass torts, medical products liability, and *qui tam*/whistleblower litigation.

2008

TREVOR DAVIS has had a solo criminal defense practice in Greenfield, MA, since 2008. He primarily handles court-appointed cases.

LUCAS T. NASCIMENTO is successfully running his own law firm, where he practices immigration law specializing in deportation defense. Lucas is also looking at forming a public interest law firm that would essentially act as a public defender's office for immigrants facing deportation and would provide low-cost or free legal services to indigent or low-income non-citizens fighting for their rights in immigration court.



Paula Edgar ('06)

2010

In January, **BRIGHT DAE-JUNG LIMM** became cochair of Korean Americans for Political Advancement (KAPA). Founded in 2006, KAPA is a grassroots membership organization that educates and organizes Korean Americans in New York City for both issue and electoral campaigns. It is the only organization of its kind currently operating in New York City.

RAUL PINTO is employed at the ACLU in North Carolina, where he is working on issues of racial discrimination involving the police force. ●●

Faculty Notes

MICHELLE ANDERSON delivered the plenary keynote address, titled “Implementing an Integrated Curriculum in Law School,” at the Canadian Clinical Legal Education Conference in October 2010. She was quoted in the article “The Ken Buck Rape Case” in *Mother Jones* in October 2010 and cited in the *Feministing* article “Obstetric Violence and the Ongoing Movement to Redefine Consent” in November 2010.

PENELOPE ANDREWS authored the chapters “Without Fear, Favor or Prejudice: Judicial Transformation and the Independence of the Judiciary in South Africa” in the book *Law and Social Movements* (Scott Cummings, ed., 2010), and “The Judiciary in South Africa: Independence or Illusion?” in *Judicial Independence in Context* (Irwin Law, 2010).

REBECCA BRATSPIES presented several lectures in October 2010: “Sustainability: Is Law Up to the Challenge?” at the Suffolk Law School Transnational Law Review distinguished lecture series; “Human Rights and the Law of the Sea in the Arctic,” at the NYU On Thin Ice: International Law and Environmental Protection in a Melting Arctic conference; and “BP and the Perils of Regulatory Privatization,” at Albany Law School. The *Georgia Journal of International Law* published her article “Using Human Rights to Improve Environmental Regulation.” Bratspies coauthored the articles “Environmental Law—United States and Canada” in *The Law and Politics of Sustainability*; “Regulatory Blowout: How Regulatory Failures Made the BP Disaster Possible,” in the *Center for Progressive Reform Working Paper 1007*; and “From Ship to Shore: Reforming the National Contingency Plan to Improve Protections for Oil Spill Cleanup Workers,” in the *Center for Progressive Reform Working Paper 100*.

DOUGLAS COX published the article “Archives and Records in Armed Conflict: International Law and the Current Debate over Iraqi Records and Archives” in the *Catholic University Law Review*. In November 2010, he was quoted in an MSNBC article, “CIA Faces Second Probe over Video Destruction.”

PAMELA EDWARDS was a panelist on the Pipeline for Law Schools panel at the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT) conference Teaching in a Transformative Age: The Law School of the Future, in December 2010.

RAQUEL GABRIEL was a panelist with **PAMELA EDWARDS** and **JENNY RIVERA** on a panel titled “Admissions, Curriculum, Academic Support, and the Mission Statement of a Law School: Taking Action to Increase Opportunities for Students of Color” for SALT’s Teaching in a Transformative Age: The Law School of the Future conference in December 2010.

JULIE GOLDSCHIED was on a panel with alum and University of Nevada, Las Vegas, law professor Ann Cammett (’00), titled “Systems Down: Financial Crisis and Inequality in Family Law Practices and Systems,” at the LatCrit XV conference in Denver, Colorado. Goldscheid’s presentation was titled “The Economic Downturn’s Impact on the Rhetoric and Substance of Anti-Gender Violence Advocacy.”

VICTOR GOODE published “Race Immigration and Birthright Citizenship” in *The Race Equity Project Newsletter*, Issue 5.4, in December 2010, the Legal Service Project of Northern California. He presented on the panels “Mindfulness and Inequality: Making Privilege Visible” and “Opportunities in Law School: Academic Support and Other Co-Curricular Activities” at the Mindful Lawyer conference at Berkeley Law in October 2010.

BABE HOWELL moderated the CUNY Law Review panel discussion “Suspect Fits Description: Response to Racial Profiling in New York City” in September 2010.



Professor Carmen Huertas-Noble

CARMEN HUERTAS-NOBLE wrote “Promoting Worker-Owned Cooperatives as a CED Empowerment Strategy: A Case Study of Colors and Lawyering in Support of Participatory Decision-Making and Meaningful Social Change” for the *Clinical Law Review*. She coauthored, with **BERYL BLAUSTONE**, “Lawyering at the Intersection of Mediation and Community Economic Development: Interweaving Inclusive Legal Problem-Solving Skills in the Training of Effective Lawyers,” published in *The Washington University Journal of Law and Policy*.

RAMZI KASSEM published “Implausible Realities: Iqbal’s Entrenchment of Majority Group Skepticism Towards Discrimination Claims,” in the *Penn State Law Review* (2010). He was a panelist, part of the CUNY CLEAR presenting delegation, for the Empowering Communities event at the Muslim American Society Youth Center. Kassem was a moderator and

panelist for the “Discussion on Tolerance/Intolerance in America: Muslim–Non-Muslim Relations, the Border, and Racial Profiling” at the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans 2010 annual conference. He delivered the keynote address, “Nine Years of Aggressive Tactics Against American Muslims: Lessons Learned,” at the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms inaugural conference in Washington, D.C. Kassem was also a presenter and panelist for “Next Generation Strategies: Challenging Abuse in Transnational Counterterrorism Strategies” at the Columbia Law School’s Human Rights Institute.

JEFFREY KIRCHMEIER was a panelist at the New York City Bar Association as part of the program “Existential Crisis in the Courtroom: Capital Punishment, Civil Commitment, and Terror Management Theory,” in November 2010.

JENNY RIVERA coauthored “La Voz de la Abogada Latina: Challenges and Rewards in Serving the Public Interest” at the Commission on Latinas in the Profession Report, Hispanic National Bar Association Annual Convention in September 2010. She also published “The Law Professors’ Report on U.S. Supreme Court Nominee Sonia Sotomayor: On the Merits,” in the *National Bar Association Journal of Law and Policy* (2010). Rivera was a guest lecturer at the University of

Connecticut, where she presented “Challenges and Obstacles Faced by Latina Domestic Violence Survivors” in October 2010. She was a guest CLE lecturer, presenting “Latinos and the Law: The Struggle for Civil Rights,” at Chadbourne & Parke, LLP, in October. Also in October, Rivera participated in two panel discussions, “Arizona Immigration Law” under the Academic Lecture Series at St. John’s University, and “The Age of Obama: Color Blind and Gender Neutral?” at Legal Services New York City. She moderated “The 2009–2010 Supreme Court Term: Impact on the Latino Community and Practitioners—A Discussion of Select Cases from the Supreme Court’s 2009–2010 Term” at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP, and Affiliates. Rivera, former Haywood Burns Chair **MARGARET MONTOYA**, and **YVONNE CHERENA-PACHECO** published submissions in the second edition of *A Critical Reader: The Latino/a Condition*.

RUTHANN ROBSON is the John T. Copenhaver Chair in Law at West Virginia University for 2010–2011. She gave the keynote address at the annual West Virginia Fairness conference. Robson gave the opening lecture for the Humanities Seminar at the CUNY Graduate Center, titled “Undoing Marriage.” Her comments on constitutional law continue to be available at the Constitutional Law Professors Blog.



Professor Richard Storrow

RICHARD STORROW, Fulbright scholar to Spain, conducted research on the Spanish laws that regulate assisted reproduction while in residence at Pompeu Fabra University’s Faculty of Law in Barcelona. He published “The Pluralism Problem in Cross-Border Reproductive Care” in *Human Reproduction*, and presented his paper “Legal Aspects of Cross-Border Reproductive Care” at an interdisciplinary workshop on traveling abroad for infertility treatment held at the University of Cambridge in December 2010.

DEBBIE ZALESNE cowrote with Touro Law professor Deborah Post the chapter “Vulnerability in Contracting: Teaching First-Year Law Students about Inequality and its Consequences,” in *Vulnerable Populations and Transformative Law Teaching: A Critical Reader* (Carolina Academic Press, 2011). ●●

SHARING OUR VISION

The Third National People of Color Legal Scholarship Conference: Our Country, Our World in a “Post-Racial” Era, at Seton Hall Law School in September 2010 in New Jersey, featured a strong presence by CUNY Law faculty. In fact, the “Post-Racial Law School: Acknowledging Different Voices” panel was completely made up of CUNY Law presenters, including faculty members Raquel Gabriel, Carmen Huertas-Noble, Julie Lim, Jenny Rivera, and Nicole Smith Futrell.

CUNY LAW FACULTY ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THESE FORA AT THE CONFERENCE:

The “Bridging the Gap between Law School Professionals and Minority” panel included Professor Pamela Edwards. “Be Careful What You Wish For: Community Support for Aggressive Policing in New York City Housing Authority Buildings” included Clinical Professor Nicole Smith Futrell. Professor Babe Howell spoke on the “Fear Itself: The Impact of Allegations of Gang Association on Pre-Trial Release Determinations” panel, and the plenary “A ‘Post-Racial’ Era?” featured Professor Jenny Rivera.

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