A Note from the Acting Director

In Fall 2023, we were happy to welcome 62 clinic students and 25 externs in non-profit, judicial, and government placements. I hope you enjoy learning more about our work and recent successes below.

Sincerely,

Ramona Fernandez
Clinic Professor and Acting Director, Law Clinic

Lucy McGough Juvenile Justice Award

The Loyola Law Clinic will receive the Lucy McGough Juvenile Justice Award from the Louisiana
Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (LACDL) on December 8, 2023 at the Justice Albert Tate, Jr. Awards Banquet. This award recognizes the Law Clinic’s hard work on behalf of and dedication to young people in Louisiana’s juvenile system.

Faculty Awards

Excellence in Youth Defense
Professor Hector Linares won the Gault Center’s Robert E. Shephard Jr. Leadership Award for Excellence in Youth Defense. He received this award at the National Youth Defense Leadership Summit.

Pro Bono Honor Roll
Professor Judson Mitchell was named to the 2023 Pro Bono Honor Roll by the Association of American Law Schools in recognition of his exceptional work providing pro bono legal services.

Section Updates

Youth Justice
The Law Clinic’s Youth Justice Clinic, supervised by Professor Hector Linares, has filed a federal lawsuit in conjunction with the Southern Poverty Law Center against the St. Bernard Parish School Board for its policies violating the rights of students with disabilities by placing them in a punitive alternative school setting without the appropriate accommodations and education services to meet their needs.

Children's Rights
The Children’s Rights Clinic, supervised by Professor Ramona Fernandez, was appointed in 2017 to represent a minor child in a custody/avowal action. The biological father recently submitted a writ to the Supreme Court of the United States. On November 3, 2023, the students filed their brief with SCOTUS on behalf of the minor child. The team members that authored the SCOTUS brief are Janet Austin, Raegan Gallegos, Simren Patel, and Kenly Flanigan.
Family Law
The student practitioners of the Family Law Clinic, supervised by Professor Tobie Tranchina, have successfully obtained continuing tutorships for two Jefferson Parish families with developmentally disabled children. The section continues to work with several more families working toward the same goal. Additionally, student practitioner Alexandra Morris (pictured above with Professor Tobie Tranchina) was successful in reaching a continuing contact agreement in an intrafamily adoption.

Workplace Justice Project
The Workplace Justice Project, supervised by Professor Luz M. Molina, continues to advocate for low-wage workers. Since 2013, the WJP has provided direct legal services (intakes, consults, limited legal representation, litigation etc.) to approximately 1,600 people and recovered approximately $626,500.

Criminal Justice
"Professor Mitchell gives us the autonomy we need to manage our cases as we see fit, yet is always available to offer guidance and direction whenever we need it. I have been given the rare privilege of representing clients who are facing extremely substantial charges. I feel this experience is preparing me well for my future as a Public Defender."
-Alex Bellow, student practitioner in the Criminal Defense Clinic supervised by Professor Judson Mitchell

Clinic Initiatives

My Community Cares
Emily Aucoin, J.D. ’20, joins the Law Clinic as a staff attorney under a My Community Cares grant funded by the Louisiana Bar Foundation. This grant will allow the Clinic to provide civil legal services directly to youth and families who are involved in the child welfare system or at risk of entering foster care. Emily will be working primarily with the Law Clinic's Children's Rights, Family Law, and Youth Justice sections, all of which are accepting referrals through this program. Emily brings three years of experience as a child’s attorney representing children in foster care. As a law student, she was a student practitioner with the Children's Rights section, and interned at several local
civil legal aid organizations through the Gillis Long Poverty Law Center as a student and the Graduates for Justice program.

**Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative**
The Loyola Law Clinic is continuing its partnership with United Way of Southeast Louisiana as one of the legal services providers for the Louisiana Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (LAPRI). Professor Ramona Fernandez and Giacomo Castrogiovanni, Clinic Staff Attorney, currently supervise the LAPRI cases. The students in the Children’s Rights Section are actively assisting with the cases. The LAPRI project has served 87 incarcerated or recently released participants. These cases address a variety of issues such as traffic, misdemeanor criminal, child support, and custody. The goal of the program and the students is to help the participants resolve these outstanding legal issues to put them in a better position to successfully re-enter society.

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**Alumni Spotlight**

**Susana E. Reyes**

Susana E. Reyes, former clinic student practitioner in the Immigration Clinic, has been appointed as an immigration judge in Seattle to begin hearing cases in November 2023. Judge Reyes earned a Bachelor of Arts in 2007 from St. Mary’s University of San Antonio, Texas, and a Juris Doctor in 2010 from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. From June 2011 to 2023, she worked in various immigration law firms in Dallas, including her own solo practice from 2014 to 2022, the Law Offices of Susana E. Reyes, before joining The Medlin Law Firm in 2022. Judge Reyes is a member of the State Bar of Texas.

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**In the News**

**Justice for Workers**

Professor Luz M. Molina and colleagues at the Workplace Justice Project joined with the U.S. Department of Labor to sign a memorandum supporting workers who are paid low wages in Louisiana. WWNO shares the story.

**Protecting the Rights of Louisiana Youth**
The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana recently granted a preliminary injunction ordering Louisiana’s Office of Juvenile Justice to
remove all youth from a secure-care facility built in 2022 on the grounds of the notorious Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. The Youth Justice section of the Law Clinic and other civil rights groups including the ACLU, the Fair Fight Initiative, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and several private attorneys brought the suit and had been fighting for over a year to close the facility. The evidence and testimony introduced at the preliminary injunction hearing revealed that youth housed at Angola were deprived of their educational rights and subjected to solitary confinement and other traumatic conditions. The Times Picayune shares the story.

**AI in New Orleans Law**

Professor Judson Mitchell, pro bono coordinator and clinic professor, is quoted in a recent Wall Street Journal article on the constitutionality of AI Spycraft.

**The Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice**

This fully functioning legal clinic gives third-year law students the opportunity to put their classroom knowledge to work in representing those in need under the supervision of experienced attorneys. Students gain practical experience in a number of fields while learning what it means to use the law to serve others.