



SPRING 2021

CLINICAL PROGRAMS HOST ZOOM INFORMATION SESSION AND COMPLETE 2021-2022 SELECTION PROCESS

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The Clinical Programs hosted an information session via zoom and completed their selection process for 2021-2022 academic year! Of course, it was a bit different but we managed! The zoom information session was well attended by students interested in applying to participate in one of the clinical courses during the 2021-2022 academic year. The student selection process begins in late January or early February of each Spring semester to fill all slots available in the clinical programs. A total of 62 slots needed to be filled for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Clinic directors provided information on the following clinics:

- Advanced ADR Clinic (Fall 2021 semester)
- Civil Practice Clinic
- Criminal Defense Clinic
- Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

- Family Law/Housing Clinic
- Innocence Clinic
- Tax Clinic

A number of students attended the virtual information session although it was not a record attendance as in prior years! By the end of the application deadline **74 students applied** to participate in one or more clinics. As we had expected, Covid-19 pandemic took a toll on the number of applications received; however, we were able to fill all slots and look forward to the new group of students to participate in clinics during the 2021-2022 academic year!

CONGRATULATIONS to the 2021-2022 clinical program students! We are looking forward to having you in the clinics. See you during Clinical Programs orientation!

ADR AWARD



The Dispute Resolution Center of Montgomery County, Inc., established a scholarship award several years ago to recognize the top student in the Advanced ADR Clinic for their demonstrated mediation skills. After the organization was unable to fund the award this year, Dean Jack Nowlin graciously agreed to continue to provide financial support to continue the award. The recipient of this award, selected by the faculty teaching the Advanced ADR Clinic, is **Miriam Omodele**, who will receive a scholarship award and have his name inscribed on a permanent plaque displayed in the law school.



On behalf of the Clinical Programs Faculty and Staff we thank the students for everything they have done and providing high quality representation to their clients! For more information on the Clinical Programs, please visit:
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/law/clinics-and-externships/clinics/index.php>



From the Desk of Larry Spain - Director of Clinical Programs and Civil Practice Clinic

We were able to successfully implement an in-person clinic throughout the entire academic year even though many law schools across the country worked entirely remotely throughout the year. That is not to say that this year was not without challenges and that the clinical experience was different than in previous years. We limited in-person meetings with clients as much as possible for the health and safety of everyone and adjusted to remote proceedings. Nevertheless, each of my students overcame those hardships and continued to provide valuable legal services to those individuals that otherwise would have lacked access to counsel. The following students were enrolled in the Civil Practice Clinic for the entire academic year and took seriously their responsibilities to their clients: **Gabrielle Bechyne, Austin Estelle, Ashley Harrison, Michelle King, Mikaela Mitcham, Monica Reyes Ibarra, Alexandra Rossetti, Jarod Russell, and Michael Samaniego.** I enjoyed witnessing each of them developing a range of lawyering skills and the increased confidence they gained in their ability to successfully represent clients. I thoroughly enjoyed working with each of them and expect great things from them in the future.

Each of the students, over the course of the year, had an opportunity to conduct a remote hearing

or a mock hearing in class with their actual client appearing remotely. In addition, students assisted clients with cases involving family law, disability claims, consumer issues, estate planning, name changes, and other matters.

Over the course of the spring semester, a total of 16 new client cases were undertaken, 10 cases were completed and closed and 21 cases remain open and will be carried over to the next academic year. While the pandemic led to the cancellation of in-person Pro Bono Clinics by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, students were nevertheless able to gain experience in interviewing and counseling those individuals seeking legal services that were referred by LANWT's Legal Aid Line. Over the course of the Spring semester, students interviewed and counseled 34 individuals by telephone on a range of legal problems throughout the LANWT service area from Dallas, Amarillo, Wichita Falls, Midland, and everywhere in-between.

I also wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance of **Terri Morgeson, Elma Moreno, and Nancy Mojica** and their contributions to the success of the Civil Practice Clinic and their service to students. In addition to directing the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic, Terri has worked closely with each of the students in the Civil Practice Clinic, making herself available for questions and individual assistance, supervising them on select individual cases, and accompanying them to court or mediations when necessary. And, of course, Elma Moreno and Nancy Mojica have provided valuable administrative support for the students in all of the Clinical Programs.

CIVIL PRACTICE CLINIC

- Focuses on development of professional skills and values in a closely supervised clinical setting
- Students will assume individual responsibility for representing actual clients in all phases of client representation in social security disability claims, family law, wills and advance planning, housing issues, consumer and civil rights claims and other civil cases of interest to students
- Classroom component will provide instruction in substantive and procedural law applicable to cases handled by the Clinic as well as ethical issues and professional values; professional skill development; and case rounds
- Students have individual supervisory sessions with faculty and maintain a reflective clinic journal.



Pictured L to R
Back Row: Michael Samaniego, Austin Estelle, Professor Larry Spain, Ashley Harrison, Michelle King
Front Row: Jarod Russell, Gabrielle Bechyne, Monica Reyes Ibarra, and Mikaela Mitcham

Congratulations to the following students selected for the ***Civil Practice Clinic*** for the 2021-2022 academic year:

Xenna Davis, Rachel Hood, Sean Lewis, Alexis Mejia, Charles Mooney Jr., Lisette Moreno, Trevor Shoels, and Morgan Vega



**From the Desk of
Wendy Tolson Ross -
Family Law and
Housing Clinic
Director**

This semester as with last semester with the Covid-19 situation, students have had to deal with many challenges and changes. The students have done an awesome job at adjusting to Clinic this year. The Family Law Clinic continued to appear in court hearings and mediations by zoom this semester.

The following students were enrolled in the Family Law and Housing Clinic: **Leia Bates, Neely Brown, Logan Dorsett, Natalie Lewis, Gabriel Lively, Rachel Pungwe, and Dania Sadi.**

This Semester we had 12 Divorces: 4 divorces with children and 8 divorces without children.

We had a couple of divorces that went to mediation and one case settled in mediation. We were able to secure grandparent visitation for a grandmother with her grandchild.

Finally, we had a landlord-tenant case. In this case, we were able to successfully terminate the lease and exercise constructive eviction. The landlord had taken down the walls in the apartment due to a flood and the client was forced to live in the apartment where mold continued to grow. We were also able to successfully terminate the client's lease.

The Family Law and Housing Clinic students were also able to assist with intake hotline cases for Legal Aid of Northwest Texas. Students interviewed applicants and provided them with advice (under my supervision) on their legal matter.

Thank you for all the hard work this semester!!!

**FAMILY LAW and
HOUSING CLINIC**

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester—2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 8 students. Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters.

Students assume primary responsibility under faculty supervision of all phases of representation in assigned cases in family law and housing matters. The course focuses on the development of professional skills and values in a closely supervised clinical setting, including interviewing and counseling, case analysis and planning, problem solving, fact investigation, negotiation and mediation, document drafting, written and oral advocacy.

Classroom component will provide instruction in substantive and procedural law applicable to cases handled by the Clinic as well as ethical issues and professional values; professional skill development; and case rounds.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Family Law/Housing Clinic** for the 2021-2022 academic year:

Ryan Bennett, Jorge Dominguez, Carlos Gracia, Phillip Hecker, Kyrsten Horgan, Edgar Lopez, Megan Parry, and Kieran Wood



Congratulations Neely Brooke Brown - recipient of the **Family Law Clinic Award** which is an award presented to a top student who exemplifies professionalism and goes above and beyond to represent their clients.



"I am grateful for the friends I have made in clinic and the opportunity to be an impact in other lives. Helping clients that might not have the ability to help themselves will be a highlight from my time at Tech Law."

Logan Dorsett
Family Law/Housing Clinic



Pictured L to R:

**Professor Wendy Ross,
Rachel Pungwe, Leia
Bates, Dania Sadi,
Natalie Lewis, Gabriel
Lively, Neely Brown, and
Logan Dorsett**



From the Desk of Terri Morgeson - Director, Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

Spring Semester 2021 will always be remembered for COVID delays and frozen spring break. Hopefully, this is the last semester of social distancing and things can return to normal in the Fall. The clinic students were James Aaron, Lane Birkenfeld, Trevor Chilton, Bryan Greer, Cassandra Gonzalez, Logan Jones and Jacquelynne Mayes-Steelman.

The IRS delays affected the clinic's ability to resolve controversy cases; however, we did have a successful tax court in January. Eight cases were on the docket, resulting in \$62,028.00 in

corrected liabilities and \$8,230.00 in released refunds.

We continued our education outreach in our service area with the primary complaint being late or missing EIP checks. The IRS is completely overwhelmed by the stimulus payments and is struggling to process returns. The IRS is running 12 weeks behind in process electronically filed returns and direct deposit. For paper return, they are 6 million returns behind and if a client did not properly disclose the status of their stimulus payments then the delay is even longer. To assist in our educational programs we hired a new outreach coordinator, Marya Lujan. We are excited to have Marya bring new ideas to our existing program.

LOW-INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

This is a full-year 10 credit hours (5 per semester—2 for classroom component and 3 for case work) course limited to 8 students. 2-4 students can possibly be accepted for both summer sessions and students earn a total of 4 credit hours (2 per session).

The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic was formed in April 2000 to provide professional skills training to law students and to provide law students the opportunity to gain practical experience in administrative proceedings before the Internal Revenue Service and in judicial proceedings before the United States Tax Court. The clinic serves residents in the West Texas Panhandle area of Texas and Eastern New Mexico by offering representation to taxpayers who are unable to obtain professional tax counsel. Students develop important lawyering skills by interviewing and counseling clients, conducting factual investigations, legal research and analysis, negotiating compromises, drafting documents and litigating. Students are responsible for their own caseloads but are closely supervised by the clinic director. The director of the clinic assists the students in all phases of their clinical education.

The TTU Low Income Taxpayer Clinic began its 21st year of operation in 2021 with a \$100,000.00 tax grant award for grant cycle beginning January 1, 2021 thru December 31, 2021. In grant year 2020, the LITC Program awarded over \$11.7 million in grants to 131 organizations in 45 states and the District of Columbia.

The 2020 Program Report can be viewed at
[Publication 5066 \(Rev. 11-2020\) \(irs.gov\)](#)



Pictured L to R:

Back Row:
Bryan Greer,
Professor Terri
Morgeson, Trevor
Chilton

Middle Row:
James Aaron, Logan
Jones, and Lane
Birkenfeld

Front Row:
Jacqueline Mayes and
Cassandra Gonzales

"My time in tax clinic was great. Terri is a very hands on and practical leader that teaches her student in the clinic what it is like to be a real lawyer, as opposed to a lot of the hypothetical law school situations. I am grateful for the time spent with all of my fellow students in clinic, Terri, Nancy, and Elma. I made lifelong friendships and had actual in person interactions that were very much needed during this mostly virtual school year."

Logan Jones
Tax Clinic



Congratulations to the following students selected for the *Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic* for the 2020-2021 academic year:
James Aaron, Weston Allen, Lane Birkenfeld, Trevor Chilton, Cassandra Gonzalez, Bryan Greer, Logan Jones, John Moore, and Jacquelynne Steelman-Mayes



From the Desk of Patrick S. Metze - Director, Criminal Defense Clinic

As is our custom, the students in the 2020-2021 Criminal Defense Clinic were busy all year representing real people in real cases in real time. This year, the students handled 148 cases for 92 clients. Of these cases, 41 are still pending, 51 were disposed of through some type of negotiated plea, and 56 cases were dismissed. Cases consisted of 89 misdemeanors and 59 felonies. This is an average student case load of over 18 cases and almost 12 clients per student, which is well in excess of the clients and cases promised in the clinic catalogue. These numbers do not take into consideration the 37 cases for 24 clients which were handled by the student attorneys during the year and transferred to other attorneys, mostly at the end of the year when the students ran out of time. Students handled all phases of representation from initial interview through appearance in court.

Members of the clinic represented clients in the Lubbock Municipal Court, before the Justice of the Peace, in the Magistrate Court, in both Lubbock County Courts at Law, and in all

three felony District Courts of Lubbock. Clinic students during the Spring semester were: **Avery Aiken, Macie Alcoser, Patricia Cabrera-Sopo, Andrew Gendi, Macy Jeffers, Kaitlyn Moreno, Hunter Sutterfield, and Will Whitmer.** Please congratulate every one for all their hard work. These students are trained and ready for the practice of criminal law.

During the school year, these students performed over 3000 hours of pro bono representation of the poor. I am grateful for the tireless and invaluable help of Professors **Dwight McDonald, Donnie Yandell, and Terri Morgeson** who helped guide the students all year. The wide variety of cases, along with the collaborative nature of our clinics, gives the students exposure to the daily challenges of the criminal defense practitioner well in advance of graduation. Most students agree their clinical experience ranks among their best experiences in law school. During the weekly two-hour classroom component, students shared with each other their accomplishments on their cases, their goals, fears and concerns. By freely sharing and participating in these open class discussions, students assisted each other in the learning experience and helped formulate strategies, themes and theories of their cases, while learning to perform very complicated and sophisticated legal analysis.

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CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 8 students.

Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The CDC provides a community service by representing defendants in criminal cases who would otherwise be unable to afford their own legal representation.

Cases involve misdemeanors, felonies, and juvenile offenses in Lubbock County and the surrounding metropolitan area.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation, and have taken Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility.

Recommended 3L courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this class and another clinic or externship; all other qualifications being equal, students with no prior clinical or externship for credit experience are given preference for placement in the CDC; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



Pictured L to R: Hunter Sutterfield, Avery Aiken, Macy Jeffers, Will Whitmer, Kaitlyn Moreno
Professor Patrick Metze, Macie Alcoser, Andrew Gendi, Patricia Cabrera-Sopo, and
Professor Dwight McDonald

Congratulations to the following students selected for the
Criminal Defense Clinic for the 2021-2022 academic year:

**Alejandra Aguillon, Thomas Beach, Lauren Beard, Alyssa Douglas, Jacob Gamble,
Alicia Mpande, Symphony Munoz, and Anthony Salinas**



From the Desk of Donnie Yandell - Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

The 2020-2021 Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic has finished the year and are now studying for finals. This year's student attorneys were **Jessica Bebawi, Rodrigo Escobar, Quincy Ferrill, Kris Mincey, Brandon Reese, Avery Rios, Chloe Shrode** and **Aaron Wesson**. The student attorneys handled 149 cases and closed 61. Nine of those cases were felonies, 49 were misdemeanors and 3 were juveniles.

Although the clinics are still dealing with COVID restrictions and Zoom, they were able to handle as many cases as last year and actually managed to close a few more cases than last year's class was able to close. This is a testament to their hard work and willingness to go the extra mile.

We currently have four clients' cases set for trial with an additional two or three clients that will most likely be set in the near future. We are not sure when these cases will go to trial due to the

COVID situation, but we are busy preparing for those trials. I hope that all but one will wait until next year's crew is in place.

As I stated in the Fall Newsletter, I would like to say that in several ways, I am disappointed that the student attorneys have not been able to have the same experience student attorneys from the past years' clinics have had. They have not been able to travel to court and the jails, they have not been able to have the same contact with their clients that past years have had and they are not able to interact with prosecutors as clinics in the past have. On the other hand, this year's clinic has learned to adapt and overcome, they have learned to work problems from more of a disadvantage than normal and they have learned to see things from a different perspective. I think in some ways, and in the long run, this year's clinic will have learned abilities that previous years did not tap into. Again, due to the situation present as a result of COVID, the student attorneys are learning to be creative in ways never before seen. This can only benefit their future clients.

To Caprock 2020-2021, good luck on finals and I look forward to hearing your stories about bar review! Have a great summer and then get to work.

CAPROCK REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to a maximum of 8 students. Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The CRPDO provides a community service by representing defendants in criminal cases who would otherwise be unable to afford their own legal representation. Cases involve misdemeanor and juvenile offenses in a 10 county region. Students are closely supervised by Donnie Yandell.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation, and have taken Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility. Recommended courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this class and another clinic or externship; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



Pictured L to R:

Back Row: Patrick Metze, Dwight McDonald, Rodrigo Escobar, Brandon Reese, Avery Rios, Aaron Wesson, Donnie Yandell

Front Row: Quincy Ferrill, Chloe Shrode, Kris Mincey, Jessica Bebawi, and Lori Obando



"I have enjoyed this past year in the Caprock clinic. Being in the clinic has allowed me to better understand what it takes to be a criminal defense attorney. Donnie, Dwight and Pat have been very helpful in answering any questions along the way. I highly recommend joining a criminal defense clinic if you have any interest in doing that type of work."

Kristopher Mincey
Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic** for the 2021-2022 academic year:

Lindsey Adams, James Colley, Haley Hickey, Evan Johnson, Emily Lawrence, Peter McLeod, Brookley Schroeder, and Joshua Tennison

From the Desk of Patrick S. Metz - Director, Criminal Defense Clinic (continued from page 5)

Collaborative class discussions were often very spirited and were always an enjoyable exchange of ideas. We are there to learn and enjoy our work. Several learning environments are available to the students, including mandatory office hours leading to collaborative learning. The students work in close proximity, sharing ideas and developing strategies while keying off the knowledge of their peers. It is my hope this becomes a custom that will follow them into practice as the criminal defense bar freely shares knowledge and experience with younger attorneys. Other experiential learning was courtesy of the criminal defense bar from throughout Texas and the United States.

Thanks to the pandemic, the CDC was prevented from participating in the Law School's annual chili cookoff—a departmental tradition. Nevertheless, the CDC continues with bragging rights that it produces the “best real chili” at the cookoff—even though the judges are often wrong. The Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Clifford Brown

Award for 2021 was awarded to Patricia Cabrera-Sopo for her “excellence in the art and science of criminal defense advocacy.” I only wish I had awards for all the students—they all deserve one. There was significant effort and professionalism shown this year by all members of the Clinic. I hope the experience was meaningful and a jumpstart to a successful practice in criminal law. Additionally, all my students showed a real interest in pro bono work and I know that such a commitment to the poor will continue throughout their entire careers. Or, at least it better. Also, it is my sincere wish that each student remembers Texas Tech Law fondly with particular affection for their clinical experience. As I tell the students, practicing law is about treating each client as a valuable individual, doing their very best for each client one at a time, representing that client to the best of their ability, and ethically seeking Justice by holding the State to their burden. Preparation is the key. Remember to RGDS and all you need is that Gold Card. While studying for the Bar this summer, no drama, pass the Bar and stay in touch. Come



***Congratulations
Patricia Cabrera-Sopo
2021 LCDLA Clifford
Brown Award***

CLINICAL PROGRAMS WELCOMES TWO NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Nancy Mojica (former LITC Community Outreach Coordinator) joined the Clinical Programs as a Senior Business Assistant on January 1, 2021. She has served as a part-time community outreach coordinator for the past 8 years and is very familiar with the Clinical Programs and operations. She finally took the leap she needed to join the clinics as a full time staff!

Marya Lujan joined the LITC as the part-time Community Outreach Coordinator on April 19th. She is currently a Texas Tech University student majoring in Political Science with an end goal of attending law school and becoming an attorney. She served as an outreach

coordinator for Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas in Odessa for a short period of time and is very familiar with the need of serving low-income individuals with legal matters. Welcome Marya Lujan (pictured on the left) and Nancy Mojica (pictured on the right)!!!



ADVANCED ADR CLINIC

- Students receive intensive mediation and conflict resolution skills training and course qualifies as the 40 hour basic mediation training
- Students will have the opportunity to observe mediations, co-mediate and solo mediate actual disputes through the Lubbock County Dispute Resolution Center
- Class format will consist of a combination of lecture, class discussion and interactive participation, skills exercises, mediation role plays, videotape review
- The course will provide students with the opportunity to develop skills essential to effective problem-solving that can be integrated in the practice of law as well as advise, counsel and prepare clients for mediation.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the ***Advanced ADR Clinic*** for the 2021 Fall semester:

Noah Alford, Brandy Ehrlich, Samantha Espino, Matthew Fischer, Samuel Ghirmay, Julia Green, Rebekah Luna, Brandon Milligan, Emma Montgomery, Cameron Morris, Sarah Patterson, Princess Rodarte, Victoria Rohloff, Sarah Sanders, Payton Saunders, Colton Sniegowski, Alexandra Taylor, and Taylor Trinh



From the Desk of Allison Clayton - Director, Innocence Clinic

The Innocence Clinic which consisted of **Daisy Contreras, Alexa Natarajan, Kaitlyn Schiraldi,** and **Taylor Seaton** put in thousands of hours of work on its cases this year, and it shows! We ended the year by doing two huge records reviews in cases from multiple counties. Thank goodness offices are opening back up! Next year's class has a lot of ground to cover on that front. But this year's class spent hundreds of hours laying the groundwork by drafting briefs, tracking down records, and setting the stage for next year's clinic. Ninety percent of our cases involve homicide—many times multiple homicides in one case. They implicate different areas of forensic science, including blood spatter, bite mark, DNA, and hair comparison. And they require the highest level of innocence advocacy and cutting-edge caselaw development.

We did more than just casework. We also drafted statutory amendments relating to the testimony of jailhouse informants. Those amendments have passed the House and are now making their way through the Senate. We filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court, an event which is usually the pinnacle of litigation for even seasoned attorneys. We worked with a documentarian on one of our cases. And even though prisons are locked down, we still managed to walk a client out of one.

In addition to the immense amount of work represented by each court filing, the student attorneys spent hours upon hours reviewing transcripts, working with clients even in these limiting times, and tracking down witnesses, evidence, and documents in their cases. They did this work for the least of our society, without expectation of even a thanks, because it was the right thing to do, and this group of students only knows how to do things above and beyond and exceptionally well. This year's group is adored by their clients, colleagues, and professor. Each one sets the bar for what it is to be a true advocate and counselor.

INNOCENCE CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 4 students.

Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The *Texas Tech Innocence Clinic*, working in conjunction with the Innocence Project of Texas, provides a clinical opportunity to students interested in post-conviction appellate criminal law. The Texas Tech Innocence Clinic provides legal representation and investigative services to individuals seeking to prove their innocence of felonies for which they have been convicted.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation, and have taken Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility.

Recommended 3L courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this clinic and another clinic or externship; all other qualifications being equal, students with no prior clinical or externship for credit experience are given preference for placement in the clinic; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



The Innocence Clinic Award was established in 2020 thanks to the generous support of Dean Jack Nowlin and has been awarded to former students since the inception of the clinic. This year's recipient is **Alexander Prasad Natarajan**.

Congratulations Alex!!!



Pictured L to R:

Professor Patrick Metze,
Kaitlyn Schiraldi, Alexander
Natarajan, Taylor Seaton,
Professor Allison Clayton,
and Daisy Contreras

Congratulations to the following students selected for the ***Innocence Clinic*** for the 2021-2022 academic year:
Sana Achraf, Mallory Hancock, Kayla Ryan and Bonnie Serrano



From the Desk of Patrick S. Metze - Capital Punishment Clinic

The Regional Public Defender for Capital Cases office welcomed it's thirteenth Capital Punishment Clinic this past Spring semester. This office is the only statewide defender for capital cases with eight regional offices throughout Texas. Our clients are, each of them, in the unenviable position of prolonged incarceration, generally single celled, alienated from family with little hope of eventual release. This semester two students were chosen from those that completed the Fall 2020 Capital Punishment Seminar. Completion of the seminar indoctrinates the chosen students into the unique world of the capital defender. The students chosen this year were **Darris Hawks** and **Hunter Wallen**. They were immediately assimilated into the framework of not only the capital trial teams assigned to each case, but into the entire fabric of the office. They were instructed in the various office protocols, as well as the roles of the fact investigators, the mitigation specialists, and the line attorneys. With that limited exposure, they were quickly utilized by all of the RPDCC staff and morphed immediately from observer to valued contributor. Usually, assignments include the mundane (research and drafting motions), spending time with clients in jails, the nerve wracking, and the exhilarating.

Thanks to the pandemic, some of these activities were affected but the clinic is looking forward to a "normal" year next year. Biweekly office staffings are a critical communication technique utilized by the RPDCC. Each case is thoroughly discussed, and various strategies vetted with all staff members participating. The student attorneys not only attended the staffings, but were a regular contributor to the development of the mitigation and litigation plans for each client. They were a real part of the team. This is a very unique opportunity given to only a few to view a capital trial from the defense perspective. Whereas the RPDCC focused on the "how to" aspect of defending the capital case, many discussions emphasized the "why" aspect -why the defense teams function in a particular way. Methodology and its underlying foundation is critical to the success of the capital defense practitioner, and is literally a matter of life and death for the client.

During the semester the students saw progress in many capital cases and fully participated as members of the trial teams. As a result of winning the 2013 University Departmental Award for Teaching Excellence given by the University Teaching Academy and the University Provost, each year we treat the school to lawyers, teachers, storytellers, and activists committed to the rights of the individual. Next year we hope to continue this tradition. The semester was interrupted by the demands of social distancing so the students worked from home and each completed a major project to be used in the defense of a RPDCC client.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Victor Rivera (CDC '07) - after 14 years as a family law and criminal defense attorney became the HR Director and General Counsel of R.B. Stewart Petroleum.

Joseph Austin (Tax Clinic '16) - Associate with Kelly, Hart & Hallman LL in Fort Worth, Texas.

Christal Ponce Roethlein (Civil Clinic '19) - Associate with Flores, Tawney, Acosta P.C. in El Paso.

Jessica Aycock (Innocence Clinic '20) Associate at Craig, Terrill, Hale & Grantham in Lubbock.

Sara Jaeckle (Innocence Clinic '20) - Associate at Kemp Smith Law in El Paso.

Traci Dionne (now Geiger) (Innocence Clinic '20) - Clerk at the CCA is about to join the Bexar County Public Defender's Office when her term with the CCA ends.

Scott Keffer (Innocence Clinic '20) - practicing in Houston.

Elizabeth Balido (Criminal Defense Clinic '20) - Associate with Walter, Balido & Crain in Dallas.

Jay-Neisha Davis (Criminal Defense Clinic '20) - Lives in San Antonio, servicing the Atascosa District which includes Atascosa, Frio, Karnes and Wilson. Working directly out of Wilson and Karnes.

Jeffrey Delman (Criminal Defense Clinic '20) - State's Attorney Office, Misdemeanor Trial Unit, Broward County, Florida.



"The clinic has been essential for me to learn how things will work after law school. The Capital Clinic is engaging and has required me to develop a degree of creativity in my legal research."

Darris Hawks
Capital Punishment Clinic



Darris Hawks



Hunter Wallen

THANKS TO FACULTY AND STUDENTS SUPPORTING *PRO BONO*

The Texas Tech Law School faculty has historically co-sponsored evening Pro Bono Clinics conducted by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas during the months of September and February. While those in-person clinics were suspended as a result of the pandemic, they continued to offer virtual clinics where volunteer attorneys would interview and counsel

individual seeking legal assistance by telephone. Thanks to the following faculty who assisted at Pro Bono Clinics co-sponsored by the Law School faculty and held in conjunction with Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas during the month of February: Professors **Gerry Beyer** (1 clinic), **Dwight McDonald** (2 Clinics), **Rob Sherwin** (1 clinic), and **Larry Spain** (2 clinics).

The *Elma Moreno Pro Bono Service Award* was created in 2000 by Professors Timothy and Daisy Floyd and is named in honor of Elma Moreno, original coordinator for the Private Attorney Involvement Program for Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. She is currently the Legal Assistant/Office Manager for the TTU School of Law Clinical Programs and Director of Pro Bono Projects. This award recognizes a law student whose pro bono activities best exemplify the lawyer's obligation to ensure equal access to justice. The award is currently funded by the first award recipient and managing attorney at Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Tamara Duncan (2000). Recipient gets a cash award and a plaque in addition to her name being added to the plaque which is displayed at TTU School of Law.



Congratulations Jacqueline Wyatt who was selected as the recipient of the *Elma Moreno Graduating Pro Bono Student of the Year Award* demonstrating a steadfast commitment to pro bono work throughout her time in law school.

CLINIC STUDENTS RECOGNIZED WITH SPRING HONORS AND AWARDS

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Honors and Awards ceremony was held as a drive-thru event! Congratulations to clinic students who have been honored with the following awards:

Lane Michael Birkenfeld (Tax Clinic) is the recipient of the *Edward R. Smith and Norton Baker Tax Award* which is an award presented to a student who intends to practice in the tax area and is permanently endowed by Karl Clifford ('72) and Steve Krier ('77).



Jessica Bebawi (Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic) is the recipient of the *Brendan Murray Public Service Award* which is an award donated by Donna L. Courville ('94) and Judge Lee Ann Reno ('94) to recognize a third-year student who is a current member of any law review. This student must also be either a current or former member of the Board of Barristers, an SBA officer, or class officer. Finally, this student is one who has excelled in overall service to the law school.



Wuraola Mariam Omodele (Fall 2020 Advanced ADR Clinic) is the recipient of the *ADR Award*.



This scholarship award recognizes the top student participating in the Advanced ADR Clinic for their mediation skills.

Jessica Bebawi (Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic) is the recipient of the *Robert J. and Ann Burbridge Criminal Clinic Award*. This award was created through an endowment given by Ann Burbridge who was a long-time registrar at the law school. It was created in memory of her husband and is given to a third year law student in a criminal defense clinic who has provided zealous advocacy for those accused of committing crimes in rural or underserved communities of Texas.



Patricia Cabrera-Sopo (Criminal Defense Clinic) is the recipient of the *Clifford W. Brown Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Award* (this award recognizes excellence as a student attorney in the Texas Tech Criminal Defense Clinic and is funded by the Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association).



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Lauren Michelle Trevino (Fall 2020 Advanced ADR Clinic) is the recipient of *The Fortney Award for Ethics*. This award is given in honor of former Tech Law Professor Susan Fortney to the law student who exhibits outstanding moral and ethical conduct among his or her peers while attending law school.



Cassandra Gonzalez (Tax Clinic) is the recipient of the *Professor Marilyn Phelan Award* which is an award given in honor of Horn Professor Emeritus Marilyn Phelan by Michael Denham ('99) to a graduating student who has excelled in the Tax Clinic.



Kaitlyn Schiraldi (Innocence Clinic) is the recipient of the *Judge Ken G. Spencer Award* which is given to the student whose propensity to survive in law school by dogged persistence, or ability to adapt to adversity, or sheer force of personality or charisma, appeals to the admiration of the faculty.



Michael Samaniego (Civil Practice Clinic) is the recipient of the *George W. and Sarah H. Dupree Award*. This award is an endowed award given to the member of the graduating class who, in the opinion of the student's colleagues, best exemplifies the ability desired in one soon to join the legal profession.



Quincy Ferrill (Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic) recognized as a graduating law student who excelled in legal writing by the National Order of Scribes.



Alexander Natarajan (Innocence Clinic) is the recipient of the *Innocence Clinic Award* which recognizes excellence as a student attorney in the Texas Tech Innocence Clinic.



Congratulations to the following clinic students who were also recognized with the *Pro Bono Honors Award* for completing at least 60 hours of pro bono work over three years where at least half of their hours were legal-related pro bono:

- Advanced ADR Clinic:** William Davidson and Sarah Lambert
- Civil Practice Clinic:** Michael Samaniego
- Family Law & Housing Clinic:** Neely Brown and Natalie Lewis
- Criminal Defense Clinic:** Andrew Gendi, Hunter Sutterfield, and Will Whitmer
- Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic:** Avery Rios and Chloe Shrode
- Capital Punishment Clinic:** Darris Hawks
- Innocence Clinic:** Taylor Seaton

Congratulations to the following clinic students who were also recognized with the *Pro Bono Achievement Award* for completing at least 150 hours of legal-related pro bono work over three years:

- Advanced ADR Clinic:** Rebekah Paige Farrimond, Elliott Mason, and Lauren Trevino
- Civil Practice Clinic:** Ashley Harrison, Mikaela Mitcham, and Jarod Russell
- Family Law & Housing Clinic:** Gabriel Lively
- Criminal Defense Clinic:** Avery Aiken, Patricia Cabrera-Sopo, Macy Jeffers, and Kaitlyn Moreno
- Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic:** Rodrigo Escobar, Quincy Ferrill, Kristopher Mincey, and Aaron Wesson
- Innocence Clinic:** William Scott Keffer

Thank you for your service to Tech Law!



WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

"I've learned more in the Innocence Clinic than I have in all my doctrinal course combined, purely because it's hands-on, real life work! As a clinic we go through the moments of excitement when we've found or tested a key piece of evidence that may exonerate one of our clients, and the moments of somber sadness when we know our client has exhausted all his remedies. I will miss this clinic and especially Allison. We've laid a great foundation for the next class and I can't wait to see what they accomplish!"

Kaitlyn Schiraldi
Innocence Clinic

"The Criminal Defense Clinic has given me the opportunity to practice what I've been learning for the past three years. The interaction with clients, prosecutors and judges has made me feel more confident in my ability to practice law. This experience has been invaluable."

Hunter Sutterfield
Criminal Defense Clinic

"The Civil Practice Clinic is a great place to begin as a lawyer. Clinic has taught me the fundamentals that I will use to my benefit throughout my legal career."

Austin Estelle
Civil Practice Clinic

"True public defense work happens here at Caprock Regional Public Defender Office: clinic office hours, on the phone with prosecutors, talking with your clients, and standing up for those who often have no one else in their corner. I know my future clients will benefit from all I've learned here. Donnie, Pat, and Dwight: thank you."

Quincy Ferrill
Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

"The Civil Practice Clinic has been one of the best experiences while at Texas Tech Law. It has been incredibly rewarding being able to put into practice all of the skills that I have developed over the last 3 years. I've grown so much over the last year, and I can't thank Professor Spain enough for all of his encouragement and advice."

Monica Reyes Ibarra
Civil Practice Clinic

"The Tax Clinic was an all-around great experience. I really enjoyed working with Terri and Elma, and being able to interact with clients and represent them against the IRS was valuable as I start my career."

Bryan Greer
Tax Clinic

"My experience in the Civil Practice Clinic this year has been invaluable. I would highly recommend every law student participate in a clinic because interacting and representing real clients teaches you so many skills that you would never learn in a normal classroom!"

S. Michelle King
Civil Practice Clinic

"Working on misdemeanor and felony cases through the Criminal Defense Clinic has filled me with the confidence I need to apply for jobs right now and enter the workforce once I am licensed in September. A year ago, I felt wholly unprepared to handle real cases for real clients. Now, not only do I feel ready to do that, but I feel like the training Professors Metzger and McDonald gave me will put me heads above my peers."

Avery Aiken
Criminal Defense Clinic

"My clinic experience has been the highlight of my law school career. Being in clinic has come with opportunities and challenges that have prepared me for practice. I have been able to do more in this year than all of law school combined. The mentorship from Professor McDonald and Professor Metzger are second to none. I will always be thankful for them and for the experience to launch my career."

Patricia Cabrera-Sopo
Criminal Defense Clinic

"The highlight of the second semester of clinic for me has been the recent pretrial motion hearing I participated in. I filed motions in limine, 2 motions for additional and specific discovery, as well as a motion to quash. I got to apply procedural law to real world facts, which really helped me understand what I was doing. It was actually pretty neat writing the motion and then articulating it to the Judge. Best of all, I know this is all practical use information that isn't busy work or some obscure corner of the law I'm unlikely to ever encounter again."

Jessica R. Behawi
Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

"It has been a privilege to fight against wrongful convictions alongside Allison Clayton and the rest of my brilliant colleagues. Being a part of the Innocence Clinic was the highlight of my law school career and I will always be thankful for the experience. I know I will be a better attorney because of it."

Daisy Contreras
Innocence Clinic

"Joining a clinic was one of the most rewarding decisions I've made since attending law school. Caprock has allowed me to gain real life experience while advocating for those who need it most along the way. Not to mention, the students and professors in Caprock and CDC are all one big family, and I couldn't have asked for better mentors than Donnie, Dwight, and Pat."

Avery J. Rios
Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

“Clinic has been by far the best thing about law school. Not only have I gained real world experience, I have made some of my closest friends. I also have the best of the best mentors, Dwight & Metzke, as I go into the real world. I am so grateful for this clinic and I will miss it terribly.”

Kaitlyn Moreno
Criminal Defense Clinic

“Clinic has been by far the most rewarding experience in law school. Before joining the CRPDO Clinic, I spent hours in classes learning how to be a lawyer, but didn’t really know what it meant to have real clients who depended on me and needed my help. It wasn’t until I joined clinic that I realized the true power we as lawyers have when it comes to helping clients, and I’ve been more than happy to serve my community as a student attorney. Joining CRPDO was the best idea I had in law school, and I’ve had a lot of good ideas.”

Rodrigo Escobar
Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

“Every case is a true challenge—the biggest challenge being the people involved. I appreciate the fact that, with the Criminal Defense Clinic, I developed skills on communicating and working with people who are very different than me.”

R. William Whitmer
Criminal Defense Clinic

“Within the short year that I was in the Criminal Defense Clinic, I have grown so much as a budding criminal defense lawyer. From experiencing my first jail visit, to negotiating a tough offer with a prosecutor, clinic allows students to have hands-on involvement in their cases and truly experience what it is like as a criminal defense lawyer. Besides the lifelong friendships that you will develop with your fellow CDC students, there are no better mentors than Professor Metzke, Professor McDonald, and Professor Yandell. These professors generously share their skills and knowledge while pushing you to step outside of your comfort zone. If you are questioning joining a clinic, do it! It is the most fun and challenging experience that you could have in law school. You will leave clinic, but specifically CDC, feeling more prepared to walk out into the real – legal – world, but you will also walk out of Texas Tech School of Law with a strong support system. Thank you

Professor Metzke, Professor McDonald, and Professor Yandell for providing our law school with such an incredible experience.”

Macie Alcoser
Criminal Defense Clinic

“The substantial unmet legal needs of low-income individuals is a real issue not just in the city of Lubbock but across the United States as well. I am grateful that I, along with the other qualified law students in the Civil Practice Clinic, had the opportunity to provide free legal services to clients in dire need of assistance in civil law matters including family law, social security disability law, and estate planning. The Civil Practice Clinic has been by far been the most rewarding experience of my law school career.”

Alexandra Rossetti
Civil Practice Clinic

“My experience in the Civil Clinic was truly a valuable and rewarding one. I was challenged both as a student and as an advocate. It was a pleasure to take what I learned in the classroom and apply it in a way that helps others and makes a difference.”

Gabrielle Bechyné
Civil Practice Clinic

“My experience as a student in the Texas Tech Criminal Defense Clinic has easily been the best aspect of my law school career. Having the ability to represent real people, on real cases, under the guidance, knowledge, and expertise of Professors Patrick Metzke and Dwight McDonald has set a strong foundation for my legal career. We, the students, are the ones who meet one on one with clients in jail, we review discovery and spot issues, we determine the strategies of our defense, we appear and speak in court, we negotiate with district attorneys, and we are the ones who see the real results of our work. We do all the leg work, while the professors serve as a set of lifeguards who only step in if need be. The amount that I have learned and grown in just 1 year of clinic is truly incredible. Having such a hands on and practical experience in clinic, I believe, has set myself and my classmates ahead of the pack. I am forever grateful for it.”

Andrew Gendi
Criminal Defense Clinic

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? (CONTINUED)

Sidney Wiltshire (Criminal Defense Clinic ‘20) - Public Defender with Calhoun County Public Defenders Office in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Jose Angel Gutierrez (ADR Fall ‘18) - Associate at McWhorter, Cobb and Johnson in Lubbock.

Raymond Chow (Civil Clinic ‘15) - Staff Attorney for State of Texas, Attorney General’s Office, in Dallas.

Weston Mumme (Innocence Clinic ‘19) - Associate at Jackson Lewis PC, Dallas

Brianna Weis (Criminal Defense Clinic ‘20) - Associate at Hartline Barger LLP in Dallas.

Snapshot Corner



CLINIC DIRECTORS:

Larry R. Spain
 Director of Clinical Programs
 Civil Practice Clinic
 Advanced ADR Clinic

Wendy Tolson Ross
 Family Law and Housing
 Clinic

Terri M. Morgeson
 Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

Patrick S. Metze
 Criminal Defense Clinic
 Capital Punishment Clinic
 Caprock Regional Public
 Defender Clinic
 Innocence Clinic

INSTRUCTORS:

Allison Clayton
 Innocence Clinic

Dwight McDonald
 Criminal Defense Clinics

Terri Morgeson
 Civil Practice Clinic

Gene Valentini
 Adjunct Professor
 Advanced ADR Clinic

Donnie Yandell
 Chief Public Defender
 Caprock Regional Public
 Defender Office

STAFF:

Elma Moreno
 Office Manager/Legal
 Assistant

Nancy Mojica
 Senior Business Assistant

Lori Obando
 Senior Business Assistant for
 CRPDO

Marya Lujan
 LITC Community Outreach
 Coordinator

*Congratulations to all students who passed the
 February Bar Exam!*

Job well done!!!

On Behalf of the
CLINICAL PROGRAMS
 FACULTY AND STAFF



You did it!
Congratulations



Good Luck with the Bar Exam!



CLINIC NEWS

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3311 18th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79409

(806) 742-4312