“We educated, privileged lawyers have a professional and moral duty to represent the underrepresented in our society, to ensure that justice exists for all, both legal and economic justice.”

~Associate U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

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**Elder & Health Law Clinic**

The Elder & Health Law Clinic offers students a diverse and rewarding experience giving back to one of the most vulnerable and underserved populations in our community. Under the supervision of Professor Melissa Brown, students in the clinic assist elders with a wide range of legal issues. This year alone the clinic has handled a variety of legal issues, including: elder abuse litigation, filing and representing clients in probate proceedings, drafting estate planning documents, representing clients at elder abuse restraining order hearings, disputing denials of public benefits, and assisting elders targeted by scams. As a member of the Elder and Health Law Clinic you never know what the next intake will bring you, but that’s part of the fun!

Recently the clinic team won an elder abuse restraining order for a woman that had been tormented and physically abused by a neighbor for years. The tension had gotten so bad that the woman was injured at the hands of her neighbor and required medical attention. Her living situation became so threatening that she feared even leaving her home. The woman was afraid to seek a restraining order because her previous attempt to obtain a restraining order had been denied due to her unfamiliarity with the legal system.

However, after the most recent physical attack the woman reached out to the Elder & Health Law Clinic for help. Here is what April Perkins ’18 had to say about the case:

“This case is a perfect example of why I chose to be a part of the Elder & Health Law Clinic. In addition to preparing the client for the hearing, I also had the opportunity to argue our case and to cross-examine the abuser in front of the judge. I can’t think of a better way to get this kind of real-life courtroom experience. And on top of all of that, I got to offer my client the hope and safety that she has not experienced in years.”

**Medical-Legal Partnership Homeless Advocacy Project**

In addition, the Medical-Legal Partnership Homeless Advocacy Project provides direct services to Sacramento’s at-risk population. Services include criminal record expungement and public benefits.
Prisoner Civil Rights Clinic

Students in the Prisoner Civil Rights Mediation Clinic co-mediate Section 1983 prisoner civil rights cases with federal magistrate judges at the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. Under Section 1983, state prisoners may file a civil rights complaint seeking relief for alleged violations of their rights under the United States Constitution or federal statutes. Most of the cases students co-mediate involve prisoner claims related to excessive use of force, a failure to protect, a refusal to provide the prisoner with adequate medical care, an infringement on his right to free exercise of religion, or retaliation.

Students delve into the theory and practice of mediation and develop a working knowledge of section 1983 prisoner civil rights law and procedure. Students interview prisoners two weeks prior to each mediation and draft a pre-mediation bench memorandum for the magistrate judge. Students then meet and confer with the judge at federal court and co-mediate the case.

Bankruptcy Clinic

In the Bankruptcy Clinic, we represent many elderly clients. During this academic year we were contacted by Cheryl, a 73 year old woman who earlier had pledged her beloved 1998 Toyota as collateral for a loan. The loan had a substantial balance and a 35% interest rate. She was worried about having the car repossessed as she was unable to make the payments. We were able to discharge the debt in bankruptcy. We were also able to redeem her car from the creditor's security so that she could keep it by paying the creditor $200. She now has clear title to her car with no payments and is thus able to get to her doctor's appointments and the grocery store.

The Bankruptcy Clinic helped me apply the knowledge I learned in the Bankruptcy course. I had the opportunity to file Chapter 7 petition and accompany my clients to court for the Meeting of Creditors. All my clients were very thankful for my assistance, and I was glad to assist them with their financial difficulties.

Legislative and Public Policy Clinic

The Legislative & Public Policy Clinic, supervised by Professor Rex Frazier '00, has been hard at work this year. Since the fall semester of 2017, clinic students have been identifying and addressing problems with state law and developing public policy responses. This year's clinic work has resulted in four projects, including two original bills:

1) Students: Michelle Evans and Keri Firth: **AB 1784** (Maienschein) would create a post-placement coaching program for foster parents.
2) Students: Inez Taylor and Kevin Duewel: **SB 1011** (Roth) would improve the process for establishing a limited conservatorship for a person with developmental disabilities.
3) Students: Aoibheann Cline and Ryan Thomason: Students providing technical assistance to Senator Hertzberg on his **SB 930**, to establish a cannabis banking system.
4) Students: Kristin Stallings, Anupe Litt, and John Ricca: Students providing technical assistance to Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer regarding a budget proposal to increase inmate wages.

After four years in operation, twelve of the eighteen clinic bills have made it through the Legislature, with eleven receiving Governor Brown's signature and becoming law. Fingers crossed for this year's clinic students.
Immigration Law Clinic

In the Immigration Clinic, students represent low income clients from around the world in applications for asylum, special immigrant juvenile visas, U visas, VAWA petitions, DACA, and naturalization. Students have appeared in Family Court and Probate Court through our representation of minors in special immigrant juvenile petitions. In addition, students have represented clients at the Immigration Court in San Francisco and the Immigration Office in Sacramento.

This past year the Immigration Clinic initiated a partnership with the Sacramento State Dreamer Resource Center. Students conducted consultations with college students and family members monthly throughout the year. In addition, students provided consultations at the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp, the Dreamers Club at the Luther Burbank High School, and the Wellspring Women’s Center.

This past fall, the Immigration Clinic welcomed Kishwer Vikaas as a clinical fellow. Kishwer's background includes a mix of family law, immigration law, and public benefits law. Kishwer mentors and supervises law students and works on time sensitive complex cases. One of her first cases involved an emergency request for reuniting a mother from Mexico with her teenage son who was undergoing a transplant in San Francisco.

Federal Defender Clinic

There are several aspects that the Federal Defender clinic affords 3L's that are not available at most internships. One is that each team handles a case from its inception to its end. As fledgling attorneys, it is a necessary skill to be able to manage your time appropriately, handle logistical difficulties when trying to manage six different people's schedules, and make sure you have an overall balance between work and home.

Another is that every attorney in the office is dedicated to making sure you are able to handle the work. This tribe of hardworking, big-hearted individuals is a spectacular environment to learn how to do your job and love it.

The seminar portion of the clinic is therapeutic in a way that tests your ability to handle all the moral, ethical, physical, and psychological stressors that are inherent in the work that defense attorneys must cope with. For those who have taken advantage of the trial advocacy classes offered at McGeorge, the seminar enhances and fleshes out the nuances of each skill that was taught at a baseline level. Every word you choose to use in court must be tailored for a specific purpose; each objection and question must be considered from multiple avenues of how it will benefit your client.

You are guaranteed work, and you can bet that it will be hard. The federal government takes cases that they can almost certainly win. The dichotomy between options available to defendants charged at the state level is cataclysmically more lenient than the federal system. Where a defendant in state court who is looking at the possibility of jail time may be able to avoid such a result with various work project options or diversionary programs, these are largely if not wholly inapplicable to federal misdemeanors.

You and your client are against the weight of the federal government with an endless amount of resources. These odds force you to consider every facet of a case and find the subtleties within the law that are often overlooked. If you put in the time for this year-long clinic, you will be practice ready at graduation.

Law school does not teach you what it means to be an attorney or how to do it, but this clinic bridges the gap between theory and application. If you weren't ready for the real world, you will be. —Joshua Johnson, JD Candidate 2018

Small Business Clinic

The Small Business Law Clinic (SBLC) and seminar, supervised by Professors Elizabeth Jackson and Kaitlyn Saberin, continued in spring 2018. The SBLC aims to provide students with business transactional experience and to support small businesses in the local community with legal services. Housed in the law firm of Delfino, Madden, O’Malley, Coyle and Koewler LLP, clinic students focus on issues that lawyers encounter in a business or corporate practice, from checking conflicts and preparing engagement letters, advising on entity formation, the formalities of entity formation and drafting organizational documents, and negotiating various agreements such as leases, intellectual property licenses, independent contractor, and employment contracts. This semester the students advised two clients in forming S-corporations and drafted bylaws and other formation documents. They also worked through researching charitable and educational purposes to support an application for tax-exempt status, and were introduced to the nuances that come with being a tax-exempt organization. Students are developing basic business and transactional legal skills, having learned what resources to consult, how to review documents, and key issues to be mindful of in various types of transactions for the clients. The SBLC endeavors to fill a critical need in the economic development of the law school’s neighborhood.
A few words from...

Although this is a time of transition, many constants remain—first and foremost of which is McGeorge’s commitment to social justice and the role that all legal clinic students play in fulfilling this commitment. For over 40 years our legal clinics have had a significant impact on our community. From individual counseling and transactional needs, to legal representation in civil, criminal and administrative courts, McGeorge legal clinic students are there. From advocacy affecting broad public policy change to mediating disputes, McGeorge legal clinic students are there. The professionalism, dedication, competency and passion for the law demonstrated by our students is simply extraordinary. I am proud of McGeorge’s commitment to social justice, and know that every student who joins our legal clinics can say “Now this is why I came to law school!”

- MELISSA BROWN, Legal Clinics Director and Supervising Attorney, Elder & Health Law Clinic

Meet Alumni from the Elder & Health Law and Immigration Clinics

Isabel Glaese Blackburne ’17, Attorney Advisor, Executive Office of Immigration Review, Atlanta Immigration Court

During her second and third year at McGeorge, Isabel Glaese Blackburne participated in the Immigration Clinic. After participating in the clinic during her second year spring semester, Isabel wanted to play a bigger role in the clinic and was excited when she had the opportunity to serve as an immigration team leader during her third year of law school. Isabel worked on a wide range of projects while at the clinic and was thankful to work with Spanish speaking clients. Working alongside the Elder and Health Law Clinic fellow, Isabel helped a client gain special immigrant juvenile status, which she considers to be one of her most memorable and impactful cases.

During her time at the clinic, Isabel learned the importance of brief writing and researching skills. Isabel’s role as an attorney with the Executive Office of Immigration Review enables her to continue building upon the skills and tools she utilized while in the Immigration Clinic. As an Attorney Advisor, she is learning the practical day-to-day application of immigration law.

Why you should participate in the Immigration Clinic: The Immigration Clinic is a wonderful opportunity to work alongside your classmates who share an interest in serving the community. If you are considering immigration law after graduating from McGeorge, the clinic is an incredible opportunity to build your skills and to gain valuable experience within the field.

Chancellor Veal ’17, Board Counsel, Board of Parole Hearings

Ever since Chancellor was a young kid, he knew he wanted to be an attorney. Chancellor started on his path to helping people at San Francisco State University where he mentored youth incarcerated in juvenile hall. From there, law school brought the opportunity for Chancellor to continue his passion for serving others; beginning in his 3L year with the Elder and Health Law Clinic. The clinic was the best practical experience law school could offer.

“I got to represent a client at an elder abuse restraining order hearing, argue in front of a judge, and cross examine a defendant. I can’t stress enough how important it was to do the restraining order hearing because it showed me the amount of time and dedication it takes to be a successful advocate for my client.”

As an attorney, Chancellor still uses the skills that he gained in the Elder and Health Law Clinic. Chancellor maintained a diverse caseload that consisted of estate planning, restraining orders, and civil cases. As an attorney for the Board of Parole Hearings, he employs the same problem solving and case management skills to find a creative solution for the parole board and the inmate he learned in the clinic.

For questions, contact:
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