



Inter Alia

SAN JOAQUIN COLLEGE OF LAW • Volume 29, Issue 1



Trustee **Anthony Mendes**, Dean **Jan Pearson**, Trustee **Ross Borba**, and **Nancy Flynn**



Trustee **Hon. Robert Oliver** with wife **Stephanie**

Celebrating our Supporters at the Lifetime Giving Societies Reception

The cold night air and intermittent rain didn't dampen the atmosphere at the Lifetime Giving Societies Donor Reception last month. Congeniality and gratitude permeated the grand hallway, a space that normally bustles with beleaguered law students and backpacks.

Platinum cloth-covered bistro tables and arranged roses transformed the hallway into an elegant wine bar, beckoning SJCL supporters to come and be feted with gourmet nibbles, conversation, and song.

Illustrating the growth of the law school and the donors who make it all possible, the Lifetime Giving Societies board that

covers the west wall proudly displayed 33 Gold Triangles representing this year's elevations in giving level. The greatest elevation was made by the Borba Families, whose recent donation took them to the Visionary level, and the top of the board. In addition, 15 Gold Stars on the board represent new names that have joined the giving societies. A minimum of \$2,500 is required to be recognized on the board. There are over 200 individuals/organizations who currently meet that qualification.

Our generous donors include alumni, non-alumni legal community members, Board of Trustee members, community

neighbors, staff, and even former staff. A grand mixture of these groups came together to reminisce and listen to a wonderful performance by the Fresno Pacific University Women's Chorale while enjoying great food and CRU wine.

We humbly thank all of our donors for your continual support, and invite those who were unable to join us, to stop by anytime and have a peek at the names displayed proudly on our wall. As the theme of the evening decreed, you all truly do make a difference.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 10

Alicia Diaz Wrest Hired as Associate Academic Dean

San Joaquin College of Law Academic Dean Justin Atkinson laughed when asked what he thought of Wrest taking on the position of Associate Academic Dean. “She could easily step into my shoes and SJCL would probably be a better place.” But Atkinson’s smile ended as he added “Seriously, that’s how much confidence I have in her.”

Wrest graduated from SJCL in 2010. During law school, she clerked at the Dias Law firm in Hanford, her hometown. She passed the bar and was immediately hired as an Associate Attorney at the firm, then elevated to partner in 2012. She practiced in the areas of Business Transactions and Civil Litigation.

Two years ago, when hired as SJCL Library Director, she began work on her Master of Arts in Library and Information Science from the University of Arizona, which she completed in December. In addition, she attained a Certificate in Legal Information and Scholarly Communica-

tions. Aside from her other duties as librarian, she has worked supporting students and alumni in preparing for the bar. Her new position formalizes that “contact when they need support.”

Wrest counts her “ability to connect with students and understand where they are coming from” as one of her strengths. She adds she’s “excited because our students are so hard-working. To be of any assistance to them at this point in time, when they are taking on what will likely be their greatest challenge and sweetest success, is just an honor.”

She’ll also assist Atkinson as they, in his words, “Divide and conquer all administrative duties that our accreditations require.”

Wrest is looking forward to that challenge, describing herself as “very organized, which will help refine our processes.” Wrest will also continue teaching “Legal Methods.”



Mark Masters will replace Wrest as SJCL Library Director. Masters currently is the Research Librarian at the Fresno County Library and will not be joining SJCL full time until August, but will be helping design the renovation of the new library building (in the current Clovis Senior Center). He holds both a J.D. and a Masters in Library Science.

SJCL Partners with Fresno State for Panel



San Joaquin College of Law was pleased to partner with Fresno State on November 30th for the panel discussion “Legal Ethics in the Criminal Justice System.” More than 125 students of both institutions along with others were in attendance. Pictured (L-R): SJCL Academic Dean **Justin Atkinson**, FSU Ethics Center Director **Dr. Andrew Fiala**, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California **Phillip Talbert**, and Fresno Office of the U.S. Attorney Chief **Kirk Sherriff**.

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Volume 29, Issue 1 • Spring 2018

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Get Social with SJCL



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Vision: *To be the premier provider of legal education, scholarship, and service in the San Joaquin Valley.*
Mission: *To educate and develop individuals to become highly skilled attorneys and problem solvers who will benefit their communities through public and private service. In seeking this vision and attaining this mission, SJCL shall embody the values of civility, excellence, integrity, intellectual inquiry, and service.*

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With SJCL's new agreement, the Senior Center will transform into a Law Library

The Clovis City Council has voted to adopt a lease-purchase agreement with San Joaquin College of Law, enabling the Law School to eventually move its law library as soon as the new Senior Center is completed.

Under the terms of the agreement, SJCL will lease the building for \$90,000 per year for 20 years, with the option to buy it for one dollar at the end of that time. Clovis hopes to use that money to help finance the new Senior Center slated to be built just a few blocks away, at Veterans Parkway and Third Street.

The new Senior Center is expected to be completed by the end of 2019. The agreement gives the City 90 days after completion of the new Senior Center to vacate the

old one. SJCL believes the building will not require extensive renovation, and hopes to occupy the building as early as the start of classes in August 2020.

Dean Jan Pearson believes "A modern law library is not just a repository for books. It is also a research center with computer access, individual and group study spaces, plus a classroom or two." All in all, she describes the vote as "A great move forward!"

The January 8th vote would have been unanimous, but Bob Whalen recused

himself because he sits on the SJCL Board of Trustees. Councilperson Lynne Ashbeck enthusiastically moved to enter into the Agreement, saying the Law School was a gem of downtown Clovis. It was approved 4-0 with Whalen abstaining.

More than 1,500 students have attained a Juris Doctor from San Joaquin College of Law since its inception in 1969. The Law school currently counts 47 bench officers among its alumni ranks.

Faculty and staff show their approval as Dean Jan Pearson signs the agreement. (Below, L-R) **Diane Steel, Francisco "Javier" Rosas, Lisa Nilmeier, Greg Olson, Associate Academic Dean Alicia Diaz Wrest, Carlyn Robbins, Dean Jan Pearson, Victoria Denny, Mark Enns, Beth Pitcock, Diane Skouti,** and Academic Dean **Justin Atkinson.**





By the Numbers

Current Campus

- 34,467** Square Footage
- 7,140** Library/Study Area Square Footage (21% of Facility)
- 36** Offices
- 8** Classrooms
- 2** Individual/Group Study Spaces
- 1** Student Office/Law Review

Projected Campus with Senior Center

- 46,045** Square Footage
- 11,578** Library/Study Area Square Footage (25% of Facilities)
- 46** Offices
- 12** Classrooms
- 11** Individual/Group Study Spaces
- 5** Student Offices/Law Review



Only a sidewalk separates the current Clovis Senior Center from San Joaquin College of Law as seen in the photo and map above.

Helping Through Law & Philanthropy is All in the Family

Dean Jan Pearson is accustomed to receiving donations to the law school from generous alumni and supporters, and she is grateful for each and every one. In January, a special donation came in, with a note that was so inspiring, she shared it with faculty and staff.

“In view of the excellent first-time pass rate of SJCL, my wife Diane, my son Christopher (a grad), and I enclose our check... made payable to San Joaquin College of Law.”

The check was signed by famed local attorney Richard Watters, of Miles, Sears & Eanni. Mr. Watters, a 1973 graduate of Santa Clara University School of Law, who is described by Judge Lawrence O’Neill as “the quintessential superlative litigator in every way,” says he came across a lead article in the Daily Journal, praising the success of SJCL graduates on the latest bar exam. He reported being so impressed, he mailed off a donation for \$5,000.

“Education gives you a keen advantage,” Watters said during our visit to the offices of the law firm that does not bear his name. Watters has spent his entire legal career, over 40 years, at Miles, Sears & Eanni, and serves as president and majority owner of the firm. He sees no reason, however, to change the name. “It’s an established and well-known name among the legal community,” he said.

In addition to Richard, son Christopher (Law ’07), and five other attorneys, including the single remaining founding attorney, Carmen Eanni, make up the firm.

As devoted supporters of education at all levels, the Watters family provides support to each of their alma maters. Richard, his wife Diane, and Christopher attended six colleges or universi-



Richard Watters and Chris Watters (Law ’07)
of Miles, Sears, & Eanni

ties between them, four of which are the recipients of endowed scholarships.

“(My wife and I) started with nothing, now we give to everything,” Watters said, from his 2nd floor office in the stunning gray and white Brix Mansion on Fresno Street, which he owns. Built in 1911 in the style of an Italian Villa, the mansion-turned-law-firm contains 12 rooms and over 4500 square feet of office space grandeur, situated across the street from Community Regional Medical Center.

“The key to today’s social issues is education. For young people, the answer is to become educated, productive citizens,” he said.

Unlike his father, Christopher Watters wanted to stay local, and graduated from SJCL in 2007, with Distinction. He is like his father, however, as an attorney awash in accolades and awards. Christopher has been selected as a Northern California Rising Star every year since 2012, designated one of the Top 40 Lawyers Under 40, and included in the Premiere 100 Trial Attorneys by the American Academy of Trial Attorneys.

“For Chris, SJCL has been a boon,” Richard said. “Not only is he an excellent attorney, but also he went through law school with three little ones at home.” The family emphasis on education flows thusly, to the next generation.

“For us, the first thing is helping others,” which explains the family’s devotion to serving through law, and supporting education.

“You have to get the news about SJCL’s success out there,” Richard said as we thanked him for his time and our visit. He added that from his perspective, he would expect there to be “tons of alumni support coming in (to SJCL)” due to the highly accomplished and close-knit network of local graduates it has produced.



Miles, Sears, & Eanni is located within the historic H. H. Brix Mansion in Downtown Fresno

Surviving the Bar Exam: From Those Who Know

SJCL alumni from various graduating classes arrived in Professor Kucera's Remedies class bearing gifts of the useful, edible, and invaluable kind.

Presented each year by the Alumni Association, the Bar Survival Talk is meant to provide valuable tips and information from those who successfully tamed the beast.

Especially helpful this year was the input of recent grad Michael Kerr, (Law '17), who was among the first class of examinees to experience the newly formatted, two-day exam. In addition to some approved test day tools, the alums also brought with them delectable cookies and coffee. A big thanks to the Alumni Association for their mentorship.



Recent SJCL Alumni Bar Passers present their experiences (L-R) **Corina Burchfield** (Law '15), **Michael Kerr** (Law '17), and **Kristina Garabedian** (Law '14).



Soon-to-be-graduates in Professor Kucera's Remedies class listen to tips on the Bar Exam.

Celebrating December Bar Admissions



FRONT ROW (L-R) **Ingrid Caero, Christina Piña, Brittaney Contreras, and Allison Ryan**
BACK ROW (L-R) **Carmen Kalashian, Matt Lear, Brandon Hamparzoomian, David Devencenzi, Janay Kinder, Richard Placido,**
and **D'Artagnan Montrose**
NOT PICTURED **Lenore Christensen and Carey Haydon**

There are very few aspects of American life not touched by law. Associate Justice Kathleen Meehan was the first to address the prospective admittees to the bar after Justice Herbert Levy convened Court on December 6th in the B. F. Sisk Courthouse. Justice Meehan asked the prospective attorneys to “honor the high purpose of the profession,” adding that pro bono work “brings us closer to our goal of liberty and justice for all.”

State Bar Board of Trustees Representative Mark Broughton echoed her call for pro bono help, adding that equal access to justice is a primary concern of the State Bar. Meanwhile, U.S. Magistrate Judge Erica Grosjean seemed to indicate it was a duty in that attorneys do more than earn a license; they take an oath, joining the cause of “supporting, defending, and upholding the rule of law.” She added “What does

it matter? It’s all about justice, the most righteous cause there is.”

Nearly every speaker touched on the priority of maintaining a good reputation in the practice of law, exhibiting honesty, integrity and civility in every action.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Kimberly Gaab drew laughter when she put it quite simply: “You can be the good advocate without being the jerk.”

got mcle?

San Joaquin College of Law’s Alumni Association provided a great line-up at this year’s Got MCLE?

The Alumni Association wishes to thank all who participated in the January Got MCLE? Eight sessions, providing CLE credits in all three required areas, were met with great reviews.

ABOTA: Civility & the Law

by Rayma Church

California & Cannabis 2018: Are you dazed and confused yet?

by Brenda Linder

Competency in Family Law

by Hon. Lisa Gamoian

Judges Pet Peeves

by Hon. Stanley Boone, Hon. Jane Cardoza, and Hon. Mark Snauffer

Legal Ethical Issues: Organizations vs Individuals

by Anthony Raimondo of Raimondo & Associates

New Year’s Employment Law Update

by S. Brett Sutton and Wes Carlson of Sutton Hague Law Corporation

Opening a Law Practice

by Robert C. Abrams

Recognizing Bias in How We Practice

by Kristina Garabedian

New Administrative Law Judges from SJCL

Christine Nijjer (Law '04) and Mary Thornton (Law '08) are now Administrative Law Judges for the California Board of Parole Hearings. Their new positions bring the total number of San Joaquin College of Law bench officers to 47.

Christine says she heard about the openings last summer as the Board was looking to handle a larger load due to passage of Prop 57, which gave more discretion to the Parole Board. With her experience at the Public Defender's Office, County Counsel, and, most recently, as a Madera County District Attorney, she felt she was uniquely qualified to understand the intricacies of the position.

Aside from seeking justice for the victims, she had a closer glimpse into crime's "perpetual cycle, created and passed on from generation to generation," adding "What we have been doing isn't working."

In the past, parole focused heavily on the gravity of the crime. Now the focus is shifting to how the inmate has changed since that time, and their feelings towards the victims of that crime. Aside from punitive justice, rehabilitation and restorative justice have become larger components in parole consideration.

"There are some who still blame the victim and have no insight into how it has affected that person," she says. They



Hon. Mary Thornton

will likely be denied parole and not have another hearing for anywhere from three to 15 years.

As Christine began her training as an ALJ in October, she kept in contact with her previous co-worker at the Madera District Attorney's Office, telling Deputy DA Mary Thornton how much she loved the position and how her experience in the District Attorney's Office helped her quickly grasp the terms and ropes of her new job.

Mary recalls frequent calls from Christine, saying how it was a wonderful job and goading her into applying. She did, and was accepted for a post beginning in January.



Hon. Christine Nijjer

Both Mary and her husband, Peter Wall (Law '08) agree: It is an incredible opportunity. Mary explains that she did not start law school until she was in her forties and had kids in high school. Due to her self-described "late start," she felt a job as a judge was "not even within the realm," pointing to how many years other attorneys practice before they are considered for such positions. She says the job is not for everyone, pointing to the travel away from home, sometimes for a week at a time, as cases unfold in prisons ranging from Wasco to San Luis Obispo and Sacramento. It would be hard for someone with small children.



Hon. Alan Simpson Appointed Presiding Judge of the Fresno Superior Court

Congratulations to the **Hon. Alan Simpson**, a 1983 alumnus and SJCL Alumni Hall of Fame Member, who began his two-year term on January 1st, as the Presiding Judge of the Fresno Superior Court. Judge Simpson previously served as the Assistant Presiding Judge and succeeds Judge Kimberly Gaab.

Lifetime Giving Societies Celebration Shower



Dean **Jan Pearson** recognizing all the contributions of our generous donors.



Emilio Avellaneda (3L) and Trustee **Tony Mendes** help themselves to some of the delicious food.



William (Law '86) & **Rachael Hazen**



Kristin & Michael Elder (Law '05) with staff member **Diane Steel**



Trustee **Ross Borba** and **Nancy Flynn**



Hon. Gary Austin (Law '76) and **Kathy Hart** (Law '77)

s Donors with Gratitude



Trustee **Jesse** (Law '13) & **Liz Molina**



Chorale singers from Fresno Pacific University



Hon. Gary Austin with Trustee **Melissa White** (Law '96) and her niece **Taylor White**



Trustee **Hon. Robert Oliver** with **Hon. Dale & Deborah Ikeda**



Charlie Palmer (Law '13) and staff member **Joyce Morodomi**



Rose Safarian, **Liz Molina**, Professor **Christine Goodrich**, and Professor **Gregory Olson** enjoying the humorous remarks by Dean Pearson



Academic Dean **Justin Atkinson** and Professor **Jeffrey Purvis**



Gwen Watt, **Rose Safarian**, **Maureen Hayes**, staff member **Beth Pitcock**, **Joan Lassley**, and staff member **Diane Steel**



Staff members **Jill Waller Randles** and **Sabina Johal** with Sabina's husband **Gurinder**



Trustee **Lisa Smittcamp** (Law '95), staff members **Joyce Morodomi** and **Lisa Nilmeier**, and **Joan Lassley**



Trustee **Eddie Ruiz** (Law '95) with staff member **Diane Steel**



Trustee **Deborah Coe** (Law '91) and **Greg Hood**



Staff member **Carlyn Robbins**



Monique (3L) & Robert Taylor



Dean Jan Pearson with James (Law '87) & Piti Witherow



Staff member Beth Pitcock and Emilio Avellaneda (3L)

“Why I Give”

Donor Wall participants were asked to give brief testimonials about why they support San Joaquin College of Law. These moments will be used in upcoming social media campaigns, as well as recruitment of future law students.



Trustee **Melissa White** (Law '96) shares her insights



Howard Watkins shares his reasons for supporting SJCL



Eddie Ruiz (Law '95) being interviewed for a segment of “Why I Give”

Law Alumni Provide much Merry & Bright

SJCL alumni and staff came through in a big way for the Alumni Association's 2017 Marjaree Mason Children's Christmas Party.

Some 60 donors provided close to \$6,000 to fund the annual holiday event, providing fun and goodies galore for the families.

Volunteer alumni shoppers started searching for gifts weeks in advance, with personal wish lists from the children in hand. Brightly wrapped packages were piled high under the beautiful Christmas tree (donated by Roger Wilson - Law '97) to be distributed upon the arrival of Santa himself.

The December residents of both Marjaree Mason Centers (MMC) were thrilled to be met at the door by Kofi Sotiropoulos of *Channel 26's Great Day*, who has graciously served as *Master of Ceremonies* for the event since its beginnings.

After a delightful Mexican food buffet, the Clovis High School Choir led party guests in a carol sing-along. As the choir reached the last lines of "Here Comes Santa Claus," quite by

coincidence, the big man himself came Ho Ho Hoing through the door, resplendent in yards of richly colored red and green velvet.

In addition to the hand-picked gifts for each mother and child, decorated sugar cookie mittens, chocolate Santas, kid-sized petit fours, snuggly blankets (donated by Kristina Garabedian and Shoe Box Sharing), and books (donated by Missy Cartier), were placed gently into giant-sized leaf bags to take home.

The next day, Corina of MMC sent a note "I just wanted to say thank you again so much for the party last night. I came into work today and saw the kids playing with all of their toys and some were wearing the outfits they received as gifts to school! You all have truly made this holiday very special."

Many thanks to everyone who had a hand in this year's party.



Joyce Morodomi, Shelli Pepper (Law '01), Nicea Darling (Law '12), Kristina Garabedian (Law '14), and Natalie Packer (Law '08)



Santa with Kofi Sotiropoulos



Shelli Pepper (Law '01) and Nancy Stegall (Law '96) with donated books



Clovis High Choir led the group in singing a variety of classic Christmas carols



Gabriel Brickley (Law '04) with some of the donated blankets with a volunteer from Shoe Box Sharing

Military Holiday Card Care Packages



SJCL staff and students banded together to support our second annual holiday card and care package drive for deployed soldiers by donating gifts and writing cards. This year, it was personal. Staff Sergeant Michael Rodriguez is the son of our Facilities Manager, Rick Rodriguez, and is currently deployed with the soldiers of Bravo Battery 1-143rd in Qatar. Rick says his son and his entire company were thrilled with the cards and two huge boxes of goodies (especially the hot sauce and menudo)!

NALC Celebrates a Huge Achievement

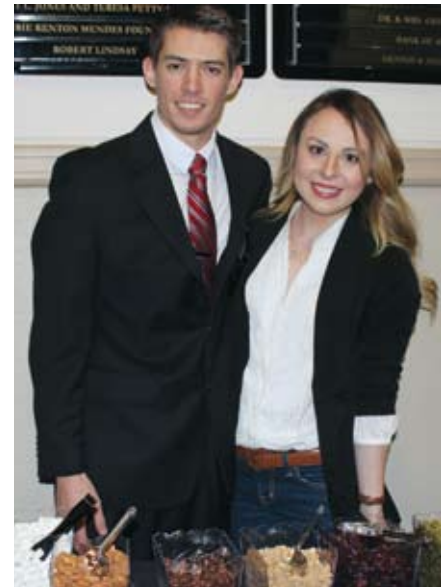


The New American Legal Clinic achieved its goal of 142 naturalization applications filed in the fourth quarter of 2017! The most ever accomplished in a quarter previously was 111. To celebrate, NALC and SJCL staff members destroyed a piñata, similar to the way they destroyed this challenge. Pictured above Dean **Jan Pearson** takes her whack at the prize, but it was Associate Academic Dean **Alicia Diaz Wrest** who did in the snowy foe. NALC Legal Director and Professor **Gregory Olson** later took the prize on parade.

Make-Your-Own-Trail-Mix-Bar Brightens Start of Spring Term

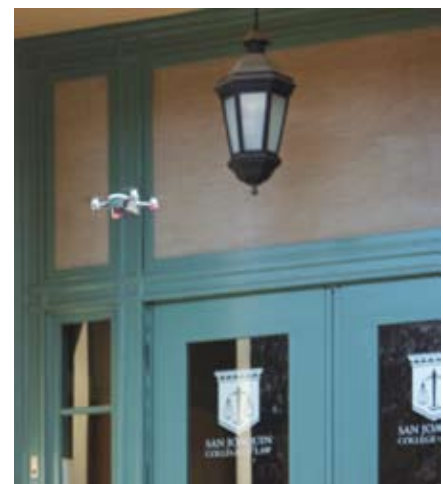


The offerings from the SJCL Alumni Association's "Make-Your-Own-Trail-Mix-Bar" proved to be quite popular with students returning to class in January. Several students mentioned how much they appreciate and enjoy the quarterly goodie days provided by the Alumni Association.



Jordan Scrivner and **Kelsey Schulteis**, the first year representatives to the SBA, stopped by to grab a snack. Why so dressed up? "New year, fresh start!"

Flying Through the Halls of SJCL



SJCL has some exciting videos coming your way soon. Thanks to **Miguel Soto** of MAS Entertainment for coming out and getting some great shots via drone!

SJCL ON THE MOVE

New job? Big promotion? Special honor?
Send your info to mcartier@sjcl.edu and be part of the “SJCL on the Move!”

Ingrid V. Caero (Law '17) is now an attorney for Central California Legal Services.

Edward R. Carrillo Jr. (Law '95) is an Administrative Law Judge for the CA Department of Social Services.

Alexandria De La Fuente (Law '15) is now an attorney at the Fresno County Public Defender's Office.

Bryan C. Doss (Law '07) has opened the Law Office of Bryan C. Doss.

Faith C. Driscoll (Law '13) is now an employment law attorney at Barsamian & Moody.

Kristina D. Garabedian (Law '14) is now an Associate Attorney at Wild, Carter & Tipton.

Matthew L. Green (Law '16) has formed Gillett Green LLP, serving clients throughout the state from locations in Visalia and San Luis Obispo.

Scott L. Jones (Law '07) is now an attorney for the CA Department of Industrial Relations, where he works on wage and hour theft cases.

Stephanie T. Kokka (Law '16) is now an Associate Attorney at Powell Slater, LLP.

Nichola G. Krebsbach (Law '16) has joined the firm of Gillett Green LLP as an Associate Attorney.

Joshua A. Longoria (Law '14) has opened the Law Office of Joshua Longoria, specializing in Immigration Law.

Claire Tuttle Meredith (Law '13) is now an Associate Attorney at Yruegui & Roberts.

Christine L. Nijjer (Law '04) is now an Administrative Law Judge for the CA Board of Parole Hearings.

Natalie M. Packer (Law '08) is now an Associate Attorney at Borton Petrini, LLP.

Jeremiah L. Paul (Law '12) is now an Associate Attorney at Michael Sullivan & Associates LLP.

Jordan M. Penner (Law '14) is now in charge of operations at Outback Materials.

Nicholas J. Perry (Law '10) is now an Associate Attorney at Yruegui & Roberts

Richard J. Placido (Law '17) is now an Associate Attorney at the Yarra Law Group.

Keith B. Teague (Law '13) has officially opened the Teague Law Group, specializing in personal injury, workers' compensation, employment, and landlord-tenant issues.

Mary Thornton (Law '08) is now an Administrative Law Judge for the CA Board of Parole Hearings.

Jason L. Trupkin (Law '17) is now an Associate Attorney at Kahn, Soares, & Conway LLP.

Sally Noxon Vecchiarelli (Law '15) has opened “Proper Defense,” a law firm specializing in juvenile and criminal defense.

Out and About



Linda Barretto (Law '14) welcomes baby **Amila Rey**, with a little help from six-year-old big brother **Adrian** and four-year-old big sister **Aliana**.

If you would like to be part of *Out and About*, please send your photo and information to mcartier@sjcl.edu.



What a catch! **Scott Levy** (Law '10) caught this 310 lb. tuna during a four-day fishing trip in Puerto Vallarta in January. Did you know when a fish weighs more than 200 pounds, they're called cows? When they weigh more than 300 pounds, they're known as super cows and only a very small portion of the fishing community has ever seen one, let alone catch one. It took three hours to reel it in, but what a story to tell!

Staff Happenings

Met the newest member of our San Joaquin College of Law family, Staff Accountant **Sabina Johal**! Born and raised in India, she came to the United States in 2008, and graduated from CSU, Bakersfield with a bachelor's degree in business and a concentration in accounting. In addition, she holds a Bachelors in Commerce degree obtained in India. For the past three years, Sabina has been working in the public accounting field.



Thank you for your support!

December 1, 2017 - February 28, 2018

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New Date

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More information coming soon to sjcl.edu

