



Inter Alia

SAN JOAQUIN COLLEGE OF LAW • Volume 33, Issue 2



FRONT ROW (L-R): Harmandeep Kaur, Laura Higareda-Chapa, Chloe Fernandes, Aman Chahal, Willie Barrera, Paul Armo, Amreet Badesha, Diana Aguilera, Lorena Vargas, Abigail Unruh, Gloria Toledo Pulido, Heather Thomas, Jose Rosas, Leonardo Piceno, Rosa Oregal Gonzalez, Nancy Leon, and Stephanie Landeros

BACK ROW (L-R): Austin Insko, Ryan Heller, Matthew Hamilton, Jesica Gonzalez, Eliseo Coronado, Jr., Besan Farra, Erika Esqueda, Janelle Di Mino, Aosam Saleh, Mandeep Sanghera, Landon Sciacca, Rosie Palomino, Allison Rodriguez, Jacob Montejano, Armida Mendoza, Leslie Miller, Sylvia Luna, and Vanessa Martens

Burnished for the Bar

After two years of hybrid graduation Ceremonies, the 49th Graduating Class of SJCL celebrated together on May 28th.

Hundreds of friends and family cheered on the newly minted Juris Doctors. The candidates arrived at SJCL bearing degrees from 18 different institutes of higher education, including eight who came from six different University of California campuses. Nearly 40 percent of the graduates have degrees from Fresno State, but both Cal Polys were also represented. The degrees came from as close as Fresno Pacific University to the distant University of Washington, Arizona State, and even Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain.

Valedictorian Jesica Gonzalez recalled some of the terrors of law school, of being called on in class, and worrying about making the cut when first year grades were published, but also sent out a massive sigh

of relief as she said “We made it! However, we did not do it alone.”

Among those helping them succeed was U.S. Magistrate Judge Erica Grosjean, who not only taught three classes at the Law School but also took on several SJCL judicial interns and swore in the last two groups of SJCL barpassers. It was not surprising that the graduating class chose her as Keynote Speaker.

Judge Grosjean admitted she had never spoken before such a large audience, and added she was used to being the one asking questions in court, and so she told the graduates to ask some questions of themselves.

The questions included: “Who is the most proud of you today,” “Who is waiting for you to have more time to spend



Commencement Speaker **Hon. Erica Grosjean**



Valedictorian **Jesica Gonzalez**



A Message From the Dean

SJCL stands at the confluence of two forces that will dramatically change legal education.

First, the bar exam may be completely different in a few years. The Blue Ribbon Commission on the Future of the Bar Exam has met multiple times and is considering several alternatives. The California Supreme Court will ultimately decide if any of the recommendations will be implemented.

The number of subjects tested likely will be reduced to only those most fundamental – likely Constitutional Law, Contracts, Torts, Real Property, Civil Procedure, Criminal Law and Procedure, Evidence, and Business Organizations.

There will be a reduced emphasis on memorization. Some proposals completely eliminate essay and MBE questions since lawyers do not do these things in practice. The new emphasis will be on legal writing, analysis, research, and other skills - negotiation, client counseling, contract drafting, and pre-trial and trial practice. The bar exam may include several Performance Test type exercises including the normal legal document drafting exercise and some short-answer questions targeted to material in the Performance Test. The test taker may have to write a critique of a lawyer's performance in a negotiation, client interview, or motion argument.

The Blue Ribbon Commission is considering an alternative pathway to admission patterned after the Professional Licensing Program extended to graduates of the class of 2020. Many hours of supervision under a licensed attorney would have to be completed. Could some of that be done during law school? How do you ensure that young lawyers are receiving competent mentoring and supervision?

Second, the pandemic may change how law will be taught. Some students and faculty appreciated the comfort and time saved not driving to a fixed facility. However, the majority of SJCL's current faculty and students feel that in-person learning is more effective than virtual learning. SJCL remains committed to high quality legal education and developing technology for hybrid classes that will make virtual students feel like they are sitting in the classroom with in-person students.

Whatever direction these two forces take, SJCL's existing curriculum is well designed to respond to the changes. SJCL has long emphasized legal writing, analysis, and research with eleven units devoted to that training. SJCL's practice classes can be expanded to provide students with the experiences they need to take on any exam or pathway created.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice Pearson".

Janice Pearson

Dean

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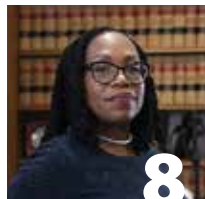
Get Social with SJCL



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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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Robert Williams and Michael Goldring Inducted Into Hall of Fame

Michael Goldring (Law '89) and Robert "Bob" Williams (Law '75) were honored at a ceremony on April 28th stretching down the steps of the Law School and pouring into Veteran's Park. Kathy Hart (Law '77), already a Hall of Fame member, introduced both inductees. She says Michael Goldring was born and raised in both Long Island, New York, and the San Joaquin Valley. He graduated with a degree in Business Administration from the University of Southern California before attending law school. Hart noted that Goldring worked for 25 years in private practice before moving to his current positions in health care. "He joined Baker, Manock, and Jensen, developing an expertise in health care law as he became a partner in the firm. Then, together with Bob Fishman and Doug Larson, he founded the firm Fishman Larsen and Goldring."

Eight years ago, he took a position as in-house counsel for Valley Children's Hospital Network, where he is currently Senior Vice President of Strategic Partnerships. As such, he is responsible for the expansion of Valley Children's main campus, which is already a nationally recognized 358-bed facility with nearly 700 physicians and 3,5000 staff associates. Prior to that, he was President of Valley Children's Medical Group, the medical foundation for the hospital.

As Hart explained, "He is receiving this Hall of Fame award for this significant contribution to the legal community through his health care expertise, work ethic, and commitment."

But there was a very personal reason that Goldring became so very interested in health care law. Twenty-nine years ago, his daughter, Rachel, was born with a heart condition so severe that he and his wife were warned she might never leave the neonatal intensive care unit alive. At the Hall of Fame induction Ceremony, Rachel was on the cusp of a heart transplant as she sat in the audience, applauding her father.

In addition to his many roles at Valley Children's, Goldring has also assumed



Congratulations to the newest members of the SJCL Hall of Fame: **Robert "Bob" Williams** (Law '75), with keynote speaker and prior Hall of Fame inductee **Kathy Hart** (Law '77), and **Michael Goldring** (Law '89)

leadership roles in several other nonprofits targeting medically fragile children, including Exceptional Parents Unlimited, Camp Taylor (a camp for medically complex children), Children's Specialty Care Coalition, the Padrino's Guild, and the Baby Heart Foundation.

The second honoree, "Bob" Williams, is about as Clovis as you can get. He grew up on a dairy farm in town, which meant he worked there every day, even as a child. As Hart explained, "Indentured servitude may be illegal in this country, but it's not when it's a family farm." In addition, he graduated from the old Clovis High, the 102-year-old structure which SJCL now proudly occupies, and his name is engraved on the stones depicting each class graduating from the building.

After attaining his degree in Business Administration at Fresno State, he joined the Army Reserves, where a friend told him about SJCL. He called on a Thursday and started law school four days later. He says he is still shocked to this day at how quickly his life changed in less than a week. After graduating as Class Valedictorian, he joined a civil defense firm for five years before joining Bob Perez in a personal injury firm. That firm is now Perez, Williams, Medina and Rodriguez. He is now semi-retired

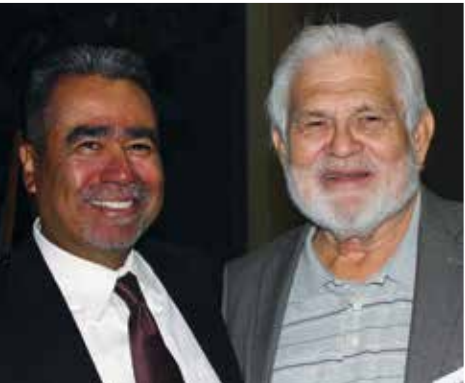
after 40 years with the firm, where he had argued cases in Superior Court along with the Fifth District Court of Appeal for the 9th Circuit and the California Supreme Court. Somewhere during that adventure, he married fellow alumni Julia Brungess (Law '82).

Hart says SJCL wants to honor Williams for "his sterling contributions to the field of personal injury law, his reputation, and loyalty to the Law School."

Williams says he is thankful to SJCL for the opportunities it has provided him in life, but feels the next inductee into the Hall of Fame should be his entire graduating class. He points out 1975 was only the second SJCL graduating class, but eleven out of its 12 graduates passed the bar on the first try, putting the Law School on the map nationwide. While Goldring's class of 1989 came 14 years later, Michael pointed out that 21 of his class of 22 did the same.

Other Hall of Fame Members in attendance included Honorable Gary Austin (Law '76), Deborah Coe (Law '91), Rayma Church (Law '91), David Weiland (Law '92).

SJCL would like to thank the sponsors of this year's Hall of Fame, including Spencer Enterprises – Cru Wine, Haydon Law, and the SJCL Alumni Association.





WOMEN POWER DEMOCRACY

100 Notable Women of Fresno Includes Five Alumni

Five SJCL alumni are among those honored as part of the 100 Notable Women of Fresno. They include Susan B. Anderson, Doris Coleman, Hon. Elizabeth Egan, Anidelle Flint, and Lisa Smittcamp.

Francine Farber says this exhibit and presentation was developed by the Suffrage Centennial Committee of the League of Women Voters of Fresno to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote in April of 1920.

The ceremony was held at the Madden Library on May 4th, but posters celebrating each woman were on display for several weeks beforehand.

Farber, the Chair of the Committee, says they had no trouble finding 100 names; it was the winnowing that was work. Most of the photos were taken by Fresno Photo Laureate Howard K. Watkins, and each person attending the free event received a booklet containing all 100 biographies. Congratulations to all one hundred!



Susan Anderson (Law '87)



Doris Coleman (Law '78)



Elizabeth Egan (Law '95)



Anidelle Flint (Law '87)



Lisa Smittcamp (Law '95)

A Traynor Team and a Tribute

San Joaquin College of Law Traynor Moot Court Team Coach Professor Amanda Cary couldn't be prouder of her team. "I just wanted to congratulate Hannah, Carragan, and Besan for doing an amazing job at the 2022 Traynor Moot Court Competition. Hannah wrote an excellent brief and provided a lot of support to Besan and Carragan in helping them prepare for their arguments, which took place on April 2nd. Carragan and Besan performed like seasoned advocates in both rounds of oral argument. For their efforts, Carragan and Besan were among only a handful of students who received individual merit awards for oral argument. It was a pleasure to work with all three of them and I am very proud of what they accomplished. I know Jenn would have been proud too."

The "Jenn" she refers to is SJCL alumnae and professor Jennifer Oleksa, who passed away in February following a courageous battle with brain cancer. Traynor Coach Cary explains the connection:

"Jenn put the team together and asked me to coach with her at the beginning of the Fall semester. Because of her subsequent declining health and passing earlier this year, I ended up coaching the team on my own. We all just wanted to make her proud, because she put a lot of faith in us."



(L-R): Carragan Huerta, Hannah Janigian, and Besan Farra

State Senator Names 2L "Woman of the Year"



State Senator Shannon Grove says the work of second-year San Joaquin College of Law student Gail Zurek has not gone unnoticed.

"Gail has been a strong advocate for businesses and has supported Visalia's economic vitality," she says.

And with that, she named Gail "Woman of the Year" for California's 16th District. Gail has done a lot more than just attend San Joaquin College of Law for two years. She has served the Visalia Chamber of Commerce for the past seven years and is now its President and CEO. At the beginning of her tenure, she helped engineer the creation of a microbrew district, a Jr. CEO program to teach youth how to start their own businesses, and Impact Leadership Conferences to provide training for young professionals.

More recently, the pandemic has made for some rough times for area businesses. Gail has responded with bold plans to pump life back into the community, including resources and workshops, not to mention weekly videos which almost seemed like pep talks.

"I absolutely love representing businesses, connecting them with resources, and providing thoughtful solutions," she says. "Doing that work during such unprecedented times was challenging but reinforced my passion."

As if she's not doing enough, this mom of two teenagers says becoming an attorney will only make her a stronger resource.

"What I've learned at SJCL, both professionally and personally, will continue to help me serve my community. I appreciate Senator Grove recognizing this work and partnership in supporting local businesses."

In Praise of the Qualified Jurist

BY PHIL CHERNEY, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR

When the United States Supreme Court commences its 2022-23 term on the first Monday in October, a tumultuous term in its rearview mirror, Ketanji Brown Jackson will become the first African American woman to take a seat on the bench. As the 116th justice, the high court – and the country – receives a uniquely qualified jurist. Justice Jackson was a trial and appellate court judge, and a former trial deputy in the Office of the Federal Defender. Unlike other law clerks to the Supreme Court, Josh Hawley (R-Missouri) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas), also graduates of Harvard Law, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee who voted against her confirmation, Justice Jackson took her prestigious clerkship and academic credentials to the front lines as a DC circuit public defender.

What stands out about Justice Jackson's career is her willingness to represent those in greatest need of legal representation, and her commitments to public service and to equal justice under law – verities essential to her core values.

Ideology has always played a pivotal role in Executive branch appointments. Appellate court judges with strong academic backgrounds are critical to well-reasoned decisions, which may have precedential value well beyond the litigation before them, but, in my view, the best are those with trial court experience. Easily overlooked, Justice Jackson becomes the only member of the high court with substantial trial court experience. Like NFL analysts Troy Aikman and Tony Romo, who impart insights from their playing days to the broadcasting booth, Justice Jackson brings her field experience to the bench. As courts sitting on high are fond

of saying, “there are no perfect trials.” We benefit, therefore, from appellate court judges seasoned in the rapid-fire world of trials who may be better able to distinguish “imperfect” from “unjust.”

Before being elevated to the California Supreme Court, Chief Justice Ronald George of Los Angeles (1991-2011) was a trial judge for ten years, and Associate Justice Marvin Baxter of Fresno (1991-2015) was a deputy prosecutor before being appointed to the Fifth District Court of Appeal. By contrast, six of the seven justices on the current court lack trial court



experience. Only Justice Patricia Guerrero, recently appointed by Governor Newsom, has substantial trial experience, first as federal prosecutor and then as state trial court trial judge.

Perhaps the best example is United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren (1953-1968). Warren began his legal career as a deputy prosecutor before becoming District Attorney for Oakland-Alameda County. Elected as the first full-time Attorney General of the State of California, then three-time Governor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower nominated Warren on his law enforcement record to swing the court to the right. Ironically, Chief Justice Warren, ushered in an era of respect for and expansion of civil liberties that reverberates to this day. Author of the landmark deci-

sion, *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963), which expanded the Sixth Amendment right to assistance of counsel in all criminal cases in state court, he understood the importance of counsel to unrepresented, indigent defendants. Listening to the recording of oral argument in *Gideon*, it is clear that he relied on his trial court experience in Oakland and understood the ramifications of Clarence Gideon's rejected plea for counsel in Florida. Oakland was one of the first jurisdictions to voluntarily appoint defense counsel for the indigent. Warren appreciated how unfair it was for an unrep-

resented defendant to face a trained prosecutor in an adversarial criminal proceeding. Upon reversal, and appointment of counsel, Gideon's wrongful burglary conviction was followed by acquittal.

As a federal defender, Justice Jackson took on cases for the marginalized, undesirable, mentally challenged, drug addicted – and sometimes innocent – people accused of crimes who have neither the money nor means to hire a lawyer. As all public defenders learn, the Bill of Rights can pop up on their daily docket of clients. Asserting the rights of the accused is the duty of defense counsel. In a moment of exasperation, Thurgood Marshall, trial counsel for NAACP during his formative legal career, and author of *Powell v. Texas* (1968), wrote, “findings of fact

in any recognizable traditional sense ... in the record [before us]... , hardly reflects the sharp legal and evidentiary clash between fully prepared adversary litigants which is traditionally expected in major constitutional cases.” Justice Jackson learned as a federal defender, trial and appellate court judge, to appreciate fully developed arguments for review.

As a district court judge, Justice Jackson had one of the lowest reversal rates of any federal judge in the country. Her research and analytical skills were tested as a public defender and honed as a trial and appellate court judge. At her confirmation hearing, American Bar Association officials, who vetted her qualifications with over two hundred witnesses, and documented her progression as lawyer and judge, found

her eminently qualified in all professional and moral categories. Her qualifications are impeccable.

This may be why Senators Cruz and Hawley chose to focus on a handful of sentences she handed down in child pornography cases as a district court judge. Commencing with a “soft-on-crime” barrage of questions – checking his social media tweets all the while – and rudely interrupting Judge Jackson, Senator Cruz was more interested in his performance than on her answers.

With the same political agenda, Senator Hawley, concentrated on the child pornography cases. The former Attorney General of Missouri, Senator Hawley once advocated on appeal to uphold a 241-year sentence handed down by a trial judge for a sixteen-year-old Black teenager who had committed a series of robberies on one day. No one was killed or seriously injured, but Hawley continued to argue – despite the trial judge’s misgivings about her harsh consecutive sentences – that it did not constitute “cruel and unusual punishment.”

As Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island), a former United States (trial) Attorney himself, pointed out in response, Congressional “Sentencing Guidelines” in child pornography cases are among the most draconian laws on the books. No one defends child pornography on moral grounds. But the demographics of consumers – mostly white, middle-aged men with no prior criminal record – have been compared to the unequal treatment of crack cocaine possession by mostly poor black consumers to powder cocaine consumed by mostly rich white college students under the Guidelines. Reform of child pornography laws continues to be taken seriously.

Contrary to Cruz and Hawley’s political antics, those with experience in sentencing practices for possession of child pornography understand that most cases do not qualify for upward departures and many end up with downward departures. As appointed vice chair of the United States Sentencing Commission (2010-2014), Justice Jackson noted that the Supreme Court has held that the Guidelines are not mandatory but advisory only. Trial court judges retain their inherent power to exercise discretion to a given case and a unique defendant.

Defense Strategy Draws Award

The Texas Criminal Lawyers Association has presented David Mugridge (Law '85) with the prestigious Dr. Ann Streissguth Award for the advancements he made in the use of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) for the defense of clients.



David Mugridge (Law '85) receives the Dr. Ann Streissguth Award, flanked by Washington State University Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry, **Dr. Richard Adler**, M.D. and attorney **William Martin**, the first recipient of the award in 1985.

Dr. Ann Streissguth, for whom the award is named, is the University of Washington Medical School Professor who first developed the concept of FASD, and the long-term consequences for children born after alcohol use during pregnancy. The award was presented at the Texas Tech Law School Conference on April 29.

Mugridge successfully argued his client, convicted double-murderer Leroy Johnson, suffered from FASD and should be spared the death penalty. The jury unanimously voted in favor of life in prison for Johnson last year in the deaths of Gary and Sandra De Bartolo, who were murdered in a botched robbery attempt

in 2009. Mugridge says his defense team consisted solely of SJCL law students and SJCL attorneys, including Mark King (Law '05).

Mugridge spent more than a decade working on the case and studying how his client’s FASD might have affected his judgement before and during the crime. The award was given by Dr. Richard Adler of the University of Washington Medical School, who leads a team of experts around the County to promote awareness of FASD. As a result of working with Dr. Adler, Mugridge says he is now beginning to consult with out of state attorneys on FASD cases, including the Parkland shooting case in Florida.

The inflammatory rhetoric of Senators Cruz and Hawley left only a minor dent in Judge Jackson’s stellar reputation.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson is a welcome addition to the Supreme Court with a unique perspective, as a woman, a person of color, a former public defender, trial and appellate court judge, and the academic credentials to back up her experience. We should welcome this newest member of the high court and celebrate our strength in diversity.



*Professor **Phil Cherney** has taught a variety of courses at SJCL, including criminal law, procedure, and evidence. He has over four decades of trial and appellate experience in State and Federal courts, and has tried multiple murder cases, capital cases, and death penalty appeals.*

NALC & BREN

The New Americans Legal Clinic (NALC) offers services to legal immigrants seeking a path to citizenship, and the BREN Clinic helps individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities obtain the services they need.

For the Sake of the Children: Paula's Story

BY **DIANE SKOUTI**, ALUMNI LIAISON

According to his mom, Matthew - age 8 - has gotten the short end of the stick in his life thus far. Matthew is a twin who was born with an extremely rare condition called Waardenburg Type 2A, (only 28 others in the United States share this condition), that caused him to have deafness and severe vision impairment. In addition, Matthew has intellectual disability, and autism.

As mom Paula describes it, Matthew's story was heartbreaking even before he was born. "We knew he had problems when he was in-utero, but when he was born, they told us he was normal. Then he failed the newborn hearing test. That was the point at which we should have received some information and assistance about resources for our child, but the system failed us," she said.

Paula recounted through silent tears, how her family was not made aware of any resources that should have been offered as they learned of Matthew's additional medical and developmental issues.

"When a deaf child is born, you are supposed to receive help from the county with resources. We were left completely on our own. I felt like we went to war in that instant with the agencies and services that were meant to help."

And the refrain, familiar to so many families with special needs children, continued as Matthew grew.

"Matthew now is like a one-and-a-half-year-old living in an 8-year-old's body. He has so many issues. I just want him to have the services and help he is entitled to, like everybody else. I want him to learn to the

best of his ability, to one day be able to do the basic things," says Paula. Even though he has been in school since the age of two, Paula says Matthew has progressed very little. He has no ability to use language,



Matthew and his mom Paula have received life-changing assistance from Jodie Howard and the BREN Clinic at SJCL.

cannot feed or care for himself, or communicate his needs. "We work with him in specific ways here at home, but then he digresses at school because there is no cohesion to the process."

"It is important," Paula says, "that everyone (the school district, the teachers and aids, anyone who is involved in Matthew's education or care) be on the same

page with good communication between home and school, not to mention the use of resources."

As so many parents of special needs kids have experienced, when a parent requests the resources or extra help that is available through government funding, they are often accused of asking for special treatment. That is simply not the case.

"The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides funding for resources and assistance for special needs children in public schools. It shouldn't be like pulling teeth to get them the help they need," Paula says. She also notes that parents often don't know what help is available or what to ask for, so it's not offered. This is why advocacy is essential.

Through a friend of a friend, Paula was connected with Jodie Howard and the BREN clinic at San Joaquin College of Law. Upon inspecting a summary of what had and had not been provided for Matthew, Jodie was able to identify which services and programs could benefit him. By asking for a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), Matthew's daily schedule could be improved.

"It has taken the influence of an attorney (someone who knows the legal rights of each child to an equitable education), to get Matthew the services he should have had from the start. It has been the difference of night and day in the six months that we have been working with Jodie (and BREN)," Paula said.

Research has shown that inclusion in general education classrooms is an important element in the education of special

needs children. Paula says Matthew has never had the chance to be in an inclusive classroom. “There should be meetings, like an open forum, that include parents, the school district, school staff, In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC), attorneys, and anyone who has a hand in the education and care of special needs kids,” Paula added. It takes knowledge and understanding by all involved, including those families without special needs kids, so they can all be part of the solution.

She describes the feeling that many families face, of being on the “opposing side” in a battle to obtain the best education possible for their child. “We already have so much on our plates just trying to care for our special needs kids. We are struggling. Why does our child’s legally granted education have to be a struggle too?”

And Paula is not fighting for Matthew alone. A self-described bleeding heart, she says she feels strongly for all special needs kids and their families. “Some of the parents are just too overwhelmed to help their children, some don’t know where to turn. Some of the children may not be receiving the love and support they need at home. It breaks my heart every day,” she says. “Until you’ve walked an inch in our shoes, you have no idea what it’s like.”

The very nature of having a special needs child causes many families to live secluded lives. “We aren’t able to do things like other people do, we can’t go many public places,” she said. It shouldn’t follow that these families must also fight for the assistance their children need to grow and learn.

Like any parent, Paula worries about Matthew’s future. “I worry constantly about him. What will happen when my husband and I are no longer here? More than anything he needs to learn as much as he can.”

With Jodie Howard’s “plethora of people, resources, and groups to reach out to” Paula says things have improved a great deal for her family. “Everyone should be piggy-backing and trying to help these families through their difficulties, for the sake of the children.”

For Jodie Howard and the BREN clinic, that is precisely the point.

And the NALC Award Goes to...

BY MISSY MCKAI CARTIER PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

At San Joaquin College of Law, we are not sure whether the strongest message of this story should be congratulations or gratitude. So we will start with the former, celebrating Jessica Jaramillo Perez for winning the New American Legal Clinic’s Pro Bono of the Year Award. Her efforts have assisted so many who lacked the legal power to lift themselves into citizenship. For that, and for believing in the vision of NALC, we are beyond grateful.

We interviewed Jessica, a 2021 SJCL grad, to get a better picture of this benefactor to many.

What type of Law are you practicing right now?

Right now, I am an Associate Attorney at the Law Office of Carlos Fuentes in Merced. We primarily practice criminal defense.

What inspires you to help the NALC Clinic clients?

While I was a student at SJCL I took Professor Barreto’s NALC class, and it quickly became one of my favorites. The clients are kind, understanding, and immensely grateful for the help. I loved the way the clinic was structured and Professor Barreto’s passion for immigration law really rubbed off on me. She is doing such a great job maximizing the number of people NALC can help and I’m happy to contribute in a small way.

How great is the need for immigration attorneys in the Valley?

There is a huge need for immigration attorneys in the valley and that need is only increasing. More importantly, there’s an even bigger need for pro bono and low-cost representation. The vast number of people who have the need for immigration legal services can’t afford to pay a lot for these services. This is especially true in the Valley where a large part of the clientele is made up of farmworkers and their families.

Is there any case in particular that sticks in your mind or resonates with you?

Through NALC I have been working with a juvenile on his Asylum and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status cases. This mi-



Jessica Jaramillo Perez (Law '21)

nor was abandoned by his mother before he turned one and his dad passed away when he was only ten. He travelled to the US alone and is now residing with one of his uncles. NALC is representing him in his fight to remain in the US and I’m delighted to be a part of his legal team.

How hard is it for attorneys to become Pro Bono attorneys for NALC?

Becoming a Pro Bono attorney for NALC is not hard. I emailed Professor Barreto asking for information on how I could gain experience in immigration law, and she provided an endless number of resources for me. She told me I could become a Pro Bono attorney for NALC and gave me all the information I needed to make an informed decision. I should add the work itself is not easy by any means, but it’s worth it! I would encourage anyone considering becoming a NALC Pro Bono attorney to do it! Professor Barreto, Staff Attorney Jaspreet Klar Jauregui, and everyone at NALC are super supportive, patient, and helpful.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I’m very humbled by this recognition. I’d also like to add that I’m grateful to Professor Barreto for providing me this opportunity to help clients in need while gaining valuable immigration experience.

Cyber-fraud Inspires New Firm



(L-R): **Ethan Mora** (UC Irvine School of Law), **Clare Demera** (Law '21) and **Jordan Bennett** (Law '20) are pioneers in the legal practice areas of cryptocurrency and cybersecurity fraud as Bennett & Demera, LLP.

In the offices of the newly formed law firm, Bennett & Demera LLP, a perceptible energy hangs in the air. The sign on the front door is freshly installed and the elegant taupe-colored walls have yet to fully dry, but the founding partners inside are already at work on some of the newest cases within the legal profession.

BY **DIANE SKOUTI**, ALUMNI LIAISON

Jordan Bennett, Clare Demera, and Of Counsel, Ethan Mora, are offering up a new, modern approach to the practice of law. Some of their practice areas are so new in fact, this group is thought to be one of the first in the Fresno area to offer the service. Unable to find even a few local firms handling cryptocurrency and cybersecurity fraud, the attorneys have leapt into what they expect will be the next big thing in legal representation.

“Are you offended by someone looking into the windows of your home?” asks Jordan, who has known fellow SJCL graduate and firm partner Clare Demera since high school. “That is what’s happening in your online life,” he adds. Cyber security and cryptocurrency fraud are two of the fastest growing areas of legal practice today, Jordan says. “You might be surprised to know that Fresno sees its fair share of cybercrime. We wanted to take on those unique areas of law that are not serviced by other firms.” Before creating their firm, the attorneys asked numerous members of the local legal community if they would be interested in

adding cybercrime/security law to their focus areas. None were.

“I believe we are the only law office in Fresno focusing specifically on this type of law,” echoed Ethan. “This type of white-collar crime is now coming out of the woodwork, and it’s affecting members of our community at every life-stage” he said. Sophisticated cyber scams now involve criminals working in groups to send out fraudulent bank notices about delinquent taxes or fees that target the elderly. The well-worn Nigerian Prince scam that solicits money via email has been upgraded many times over, and its surrogates have become far more complex.

At the same time, budget cuts to law enforcement have shrunk the financial crimes unit in Fresno and in many other California cities. It has become easier than ever for computer hackers to get into our bank accounts by gaining access through information they glean from telecom providers. The partners have already fielded several inquiries regarding this type of

fraud in the Fresno area, and they believe it’s only the tip of a calamitous iceberg.

What is needed, according to Ethan, is case law that can back up these scenarios. “In order to assist victims of this kind of fraud, there must be precedent and case law for reference,” Jordan added. “Law firms are hesitant to add cybercrime to their practice areas because there are few legal tools at their disposal.”

In larger cities the attorneys who handle cybercrime work mostly for the “dark side,” which includes defending banks and the large telecom companies who are at the root of breached data. “We want to help the victims, the people who are getting scammed,” Ethan said.

As a result of this new practice area, new job fields relating to law have emerged. In order to investigate online data that is suspected of being fraudulent, a certification for an *open-source intelligence analyst* is a new expert position. Another new job category is the *Block-chain forensic analyst*, whose specialty is to trace the transaction history of cryptocurrency. The Block-chain

is a system in which a record of transactions made in Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency is maintained across several linked computers. Because it is encrypted, the Block-chain connects data together in blocks and in chronological order.

With the launch of Bitcoin in January of 2009, there were big hopes for the use of Block-chain for things like fraud-proof elections, 24-hour banking, faster transactions, and more privacy. With all these applications now on the verge of becoming mainstream, case law and precedent are sorely needed in the cyber arena. It is this void that Clare, Jordan and Ethan hope to fill – as pioneers in this practice.

To foster their vision, there is a need to bridge the information/knowledge gap about cyber-fraud in general. Most people don't realize the wide-ranging damage a cyber hacker can cause. Absolutely everyone is vulnerable, from farmers, to medical facilities, to businesses, and individuals of every kind. "It will be another prong of our service to provide consulting on how to resolve and avoid falling victim to cybercrime," Jordan said.

"We can help people solve problems they don't know they have," said Clare. "Allowing access to your personal or work computer by a repair person for example, can cause major issues for years, and increase a person's vulnerability of getting scammed."

The attorneys also plan to provide consulting services to businesses on the implementation of security protocols to properly protect client and trade information in their operations.

"We are all very team oriented and enjoy collaborating on these complex problems," said Clare. Added Ethan: "We grew up with computers. We know it's a heavy lift to set precedent and make case laws, but once you put yourself out there as someone who can help, you can give hope to the victims who felt it was just too complicated to fight, or have given up."

Bennett & Demera LLP also practice in the areas of Real Estate, Estate Planning, and Civil Litigation. They encourage anyone who is practicing or interested in cybersecurity law to connect with them at (559) 981-2588 in order to grow the knowledge base in this emerging area of law.

California Lawyers Association

Discovering its Benefits to Law Students, New Lawyers, and Seasoned Practitioners

BY JESSICA FIERRO (LAW '13)

The California Lawyers Association (CLA) is a voluntary bar association that formed in 2018 when the practice-area "sections" separated from the State Bar of California. While the State Bar of California continues to handle attorney licensing and disciplinary investigations, CLA provides professional development through essential networking and educational opportunities for California lawyers and law students.

CLA is probably best known for its 18 sections, which are focused on a wide-range of content areas: antitrust and unfair competition; business; criminal; environmental; family; intellectual property; international and immigration; labor and employment; law practice management and technology; litigation; privacy; public; real property; solo and small firm; taxation; trusts and estates; and workers' compensation. In addition, the CLA New Lawyers Section (formerly California Young Lawyers Association) provides networking, education, and support specifically for lawyers who have been practicing eight years or less. The sections provide MCLE webinars, conferences, other events, journals, and more.

Law students can join up to three CLA sections free of charge (see <https://calawyers.org/lawstudent/>). Many sections offer mentorship programs, writing competitions, and fellowship opportunities.

CLA does not replace career services or support at your law school or firm, nor does it replace involvement in local county bar associations, which are important places to connect with regional attorneys and hear about issues of significance to your local community. That said, CLA is a great supplement to local bar associations, connecting a student or practitioner to attorneys practicing in similar issue area across the state. By getting involved in a state-wide organization like CLA, a San Joaquin Valley practitioner can broaden



Jessica Fierro (Law '13) served as an Adjunct Professor in 2020, and she is currently the Chair of the CLA Environmental Law Section Executive Committee.

his or her professional network, perhaps while providing attorneys across the state with a more nuanced understanding of the legal issues affecting the San Joaquin Valley.

How does a student or practitioner get involved in CLA? It can be as simple as becoming a member. To be even more involved, you can reach out to your section's leadership. You could write an article for a CLA periodical, offer to present a webinar, offer to participate in a conference panel, or help judge a competition. You could attend a conference like the CLA's 2022 Annual Meeting from September 15-17 in San Diego (which features panels and speakers from across the sections) or a section conference like the Environmental Law Conference from October 13-16 at the Tenaya near Yosemite National Park. Practicing attorneys can apply to join a section Executive Committee early each calendar year, with applications usually due around March 1 (<https://calawyers.org/join-a-section-executive-committee/>).

For more information on CLA and its many opportunities and events, visit <https://calawyers.org/>.

Graduation FROM PAGE 1

with them,” and “Are there clients or cases you won’t take?”

The judge said, “It’s great doing real legal work,” adding there are plenty of jobs and opportunities awaiting the grads. She concluded “On behalf of the San Joaquin College of Law legal community, we are all waiting for you.”

Then it was the graduates’ turn to have their say as they were hooded. Aside from her thanks to her friends and fiancé, Harmandeep Kaur had a comment reflective of the Covid-constricted classes: “I want to thank my family, especially my mom for making sure my dad stays quiet while I am in class.”

And speaking of class, Eliseo Coronado Jr. has a message for his new colleagues: “I hope to see you out in the field one day – just not as opposing counsel.”

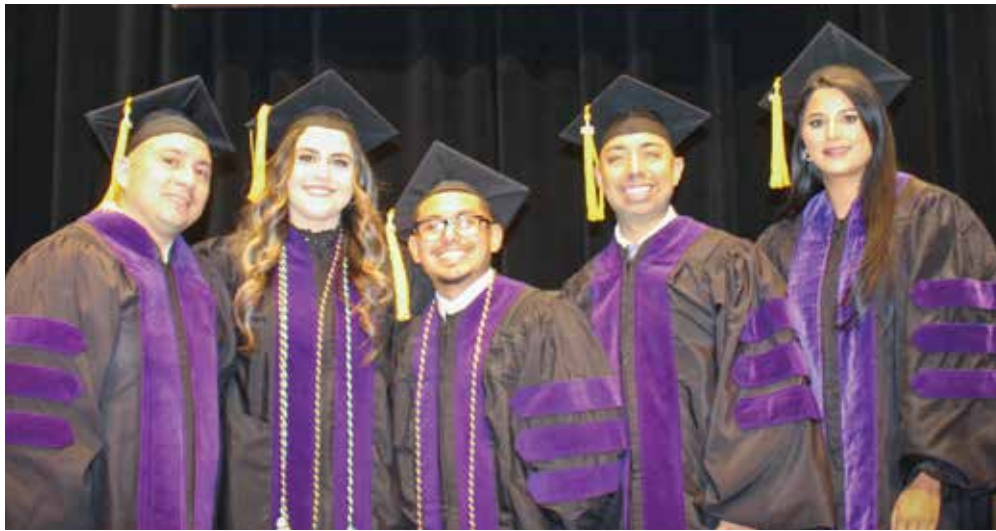
Vanessa Martens event thanked the Law Office of David Mugridge, where she clerked during law school and “was able to personally participate in a death penalty trial.”

Rosa Oregel-Gonzalez, winner of the “John Loomis Legacy Award,” pointed out that she, a first-generation student, will now be part of the “two percent Latina Attorneys in the United States.” She adds “Thank you to my sisters in suffering at the Law School. We did it, girls!”

Rosie Palomino is another come-from-behind winner. Despite working as a Pizza Hut manager and caring for her 90-year-old grandmother during law school, she earned about a half-dozen scholarships and gave thanks to her “loved ones, friends, mentors, and SJCL Faculty and Staff who, despite the odds, never doubted my ability to fearlessly attain my dreams.”

Mandeep Sanghera had special thanks for her late grandfather. “In a culture that’s so quick to marry their daughters off, I appreciate that he raised me with the knowledge that I am no different than my male counterparts and that I can, and will, do everything they can.”

Babies got more than one mention during graduation speeches. Liz Rodriguez spoke of the two she gave birth to during law school, while Sylvia Luna expressed gratitude to her daughter Juniper who waited until after final exams to be born. Erika Esqueda, meanwhile, told her husband “We have one more hurdle, Sam, the bar, then after that, it’s baby-making time!”





SJCL Family is Real Deal

BY **DIANE SKOUTI**, ALUMNI LIAISON

Jaskaran (Jas) Gill (Law '17) majored in neuroscience at UCLA because he always wanted to work in medicine. Once he became an EMT, he learned of his tendency to become nauseated in hospital settings! Fate intervened when his pre-med roommate switched to law school, and Jas followed suit.

For the Honorable Toni Mims-Cochran (Law '96), law school was always the goal. "I don't know why," she said, "I can't remember wanting to be anything else." During her undergrad years, Judge Cochran studied business, but was always involved in organizations or companies where she could advocate for someone. Eventually, her father asked when she planned to focus on her interest in law. Half-way through her business degree, she shifted her studies in preparation for law school.

Judge Cochran and Jas joined fellow SJCL alumni Alicia Hinton (Law '09) and Esmeralda Kinney (Law '20) last spring, for a discussion about their wide-ranging career pathways in law.

Jas says his first day in Torts class set the tone for his approach to his career. "Professor Goodrich spent most of the class going over the reading that had been assigned prior to the first class. Many students hadn't read the material and didn't know how to read a brief. It burned into me that I had to always be prepared for class." Jas says one of the most valuable skills he learned in law school was time management.

For Jas, year three was a challenge when he got a job as a law clerk in addition to his studies. "We did a lot of litigation that involved a lot of risk," he said. "That, combined with school, led to a lot of stress for me. The professors broke down the subject matter in ways that helped me prepare for tests. I learned how and where to spend my time, which also helped later as I began practicing law. It taught me also how to fit in time for family." Jas practiced insurance defense after law school, but realized it was more rewarding to help plaintiffs. He switched sides and became a personal injury and civil litigation attorney.

Throughout her education, Judge Toni Mims-Cochran overcame challenges. Originally from the Bay Area, she was a



Jaskaran Gill (Law '17)



Alicia Hinton (Law '09)



Esmeralda Kinney (Law '20)



Hon. Toni Mims-Cochran (Law '96)

teen mom who struggled to incorporate college studies into her homelife. She didn't know anyone when she moved to Clovis to attend SJCL and was without family support nearby. Every day of her first semester she left her tape recorder on in class while picking up her son from school. She then returned with him in tow until class was over. She did that until she found good childcare. It was the support and friendship of her fellow students and the administration that helped her to feel at home. "They developed into a family and helped me accomplish my goal of a career in law while still being a good mom to my son," she said.

After law school Judge Mims-Cochran returned to Oakland to represent tenants and unlawful detainers, first as a volunteer

and later a staff attorney at an eviction defense center for 16 years. She says she is grateful for the opportunity to serve the neighbors in her hometown community. She is now a Commissioner for the Superior Court of California in Alameda County.

Alicia Hinton came to the law as a second career. Initially working with her degree in computer science, it was 15 years before she realized she wanted to have more impact by helping people, rather than machines. Alicia moved from San Jose to attend SJCL, while her husband stayed behind for his job, and came to Fresno on weekends. Alicia says her fellow students and the school became her support system and helped her a great deal to complete the difficult dual degree program of Conflict Resolution and Peace Making (through a

SJCL Alumni Superior Court Judge Count Climbs to 27

special arrangement with Fresno Pacific University) and a J.D. from SJCL. Her husband eventually retired and joined her in Fresno, but her friends and colleagues within the SJCL family helped her to make it through. Alicia is now a solo practitioner with a focus on consumer protection. With the bulk of her practice being in Lemon Law (vehicle sales fraud), Alicia says her work advocating for consumers who have been deceived is extremely rewarding.

Esmeralda Kinney's interest in policy led her to attain an undergrad degree in Political Science. A first-generation Latina student who valued the importance of higher education, she saw how a J.D. could open many opportunities not otherwise available. As an un-documented citizen at the time, Esmeralda was ineligible for financial aid, relying instead on scholarships, family, and foundations at other schools, in addition to her full-time job to get herself through.

"I had no idea what I was doing in the beginning. There was no one in my life who did it before me. I loved that I could relate to the student body because a lot of students were seeking second careers, or had families, or were first generation students like me," she said. "It can be isolating when your family has no idea what you are going through. They don't know what it's like; they can't really celebrate your accomplishments. My fellow students here were cheering me on and understood the significance of each achievement, which made all the difference." Esmeralda said the law school became her second community. Now an immigration attorney, Esmeralda says the case that has been most satisfying thus far was one of her first. She recalled the fear of representing a young woman in court against the opposing counsel, who had over 20 years of experience. "The opposition was incredibly aggressive, and I felt like I was two inches tall!" she said. "But I realized my client's fate was in my hands. I vowed to do everything in my power to get a just verdict that was in her best interest. We ultimately won and she was so very happy. I will keep that moment forever as the first time I made a difference in someone's life."

Erin M. Childs (Law '02) has been elected to the post of Superior Court Judge in San Luis Obispo County. She joins fellow Fresno attorney Mike Frye, who is expected to fill a second open superior court seat in SLO County when all votes from the June Primary Election are tallied.

Having spent more than 13 years as a family law attorney, Erin decided she had grown tired of the adversarial nature of being in court three to five days a week. Setting her sights on joining the bench, she first became a court commissioner in Fresno County, and then moved to San Luis Obispo County to fill that same role. Five years later the opportunity to run for one of twelve superior court judge seats in SLO county opened up. Friends and colleagues helped convince her to run, but the clencher was when she realized she was running unopposed! "Campaign Lite," she called it.

"I'm passionate about families and kids, and I feel like from the bench I can do a lot to help kids and help our families in our area and our community," she said.

Erin lives in Arroyo Grande and is replacing retired Superior Court Judge



Erin Childs will become SJCL's 27th Superior Court Judge, and 61st alumni bench officer.

Dodie Harman. Fresno attorney (though not an SJCL grad) Mike Frye worked in the Fresno County District Attorney's Office before moving to the United States Attorney's Office, and eventually to SLO County as head of the Public Integrity Unit. He is expected to fill the vacancy left by Judge Linda Hurst when she retires later this year.

A Shout-Out to Service



It's hard to actually quantify how much our alumni give back to the community, but anecdotally, it's a lot. Take for example 2017 grad Michael Kerr, who was recently honored by the City of Fresno. A Proclamation named April 2, 2022 as "Michael Kerr Day" in appreciation for his three years of work as a Disabled American Veterans California State Commander, ensuring that all injured or ill veterans get the care they have earned.

Also being honored in April are attorneys who have donated 25 or more hours

on behalf of Fresno County Courts, either in pro-tem service or as an ADR settlement officer. Of the six attorneys being honored by the judges of the Fresno County Superior Court, four are SJCL grads, including Annette Ballatore-Williamson (Law '97), Cheryl Browns (Law '94), Brenda Linder (Law '04), and Amy Lopez (Law '95). Right behind them, donating substantial muscle but less than 25 hours, are Russell Cook (Law '80) and Mary Moshrefi (Law '05).

The Mission of SJCL is "to educate and develop highly skilled attorneys and problem solvers who will benefit their communities through public and private service." With alumni like this, it's "Mission Accomplished" every day.



“Do Not Freak Out”

Alumni impart words of wisdom to Class of 2022

BY DIANE SKOUTI, ALUMNI LIAISON

As our newest cadre of almost-attorneys prepared to leave the law school nest, Professor Jason Hamm made time in his Remedies class for the Alumni Association’s Annual Bar Survival Talk.

Handing off their yellow markers to the Class of 2022, the alumni offered emotional support and shared their personal tips and tricks for passing the mother of all exams.

The alumni speakers, which included Joshua Hernandez, Jason Crockford, Jas Gill, and Victoria (Hernandez) Maga, spoke candidly about their own best, and worst bar prep practices.

Their advice included tidbits for any scenario. Jason Crockford (Law ’18), approached the bar with a highly regimented method, as physically rigorous as it was mentally. “I was in the best shape of my life,” he said. “You need to have a regimented schedule and stick to it. My weak spot was MBE’s, so I did a lot of them. Do not freak out! Rely on common sense.”

Josh Hernandez (Law ’18) began preparing for the bar by taking a month off. “After the 3rd year, I was burned out and needed some time,” he said. He incorporated two main themes for his bar prep approach: “strive for balance in your life, and keep your lifestyle very similar to what you were doing during law school.” Josh noted that one must be diligent, stick with a program, take the studying seriously, and buckle down for two or three months before the exam. He also acknowledged the added elements that family and jobs add to the juggling act of bar study.

Josh’s sister, Victoria Hernandez Maga (Law ’14), was a young mom with a newborn during her bar exam experience. She said finding a schedule that worked for her was imperative. “I treated studying like a job,” she said. “I went to SJCL from 9 – 5 and went through all essay questions and 30-40 MBE’s every day. I made sure, though, to be home for dinner with my family every night.” She also set weekends aside for family.

Jas Gill (Law ’17) said adapting to where one is in the study process is a must. “Take your time to go over what you need most. Skip the long boring stuff if you are tuning it out. It’s a common-sense thing to gage your own needs,” he added. Jas also talked about the importance of calming the nerves. “I didn’t study the day before,” he says. “You need to stay calm and focus on yourself. The testing environment is nerve-racking. You are there with thousands of people and they are all typing away. You will come across a question you don’t know. Answer to the best of your ability. Don’t let anxiety work against you.”

Jason compared the sound in the testing room to a war zone. “It was a cacophony of sound I’ve never heard in my life! A thousand people typing frantically!” he said.

Victoria said she used ear plugs because the sound was overwhelming. She wanted to only hear her own thoughts. “It’s exhausting and you come back thinking you failed. I thought, I may have passed - but I think I failed! You do the very best you can and then leave it all on the table!”

She also suggested going to the hotel room early. She took a CD to go over some of the law, ate breakfast, and worked to curb the anxiety. She went to dinner alone and distracted herself.

Jason agreed. “I took the last few days off, rented a hotel room and went up there with my dad. I don’t cram well so I was organized. Show up and have plenty of food,” he said.

Josh’s best advice was to create “common sense rules” and use them to analyze questions you don’t know. “There are so many people wearing sweatshirts from their alma maters. Don’t be intimidated. You definitely belong there, don’t let it freak you out! SJCL is a great school and (if you were paying attention) you will be prepared.”

Jas noted that the prep programs have tons of books and information to assist with study. They offer simple rules to rely on. “I started studying the day after graduation,” he said.

Jason said he remembers sitting in Remedies class, listening to the alumni speak on bar survival the year he graduated. “There are so many choices for studying for the bar. You have to follow the schedule they set up and keep track of everything you do. You know your own strengths and weaknesses, so you address those.”

“In the end, after you complete the test, you will probably feel a sense of self-doubt,” Jason said. “Most of us did. That is normal and natural. You need to take it easy on yourself, know that you (hopefully) did your best, and you will pass!”

Welcome New Colleagues!

San Joaquin College of Law celebrated with its' most recent bar passers.



“I’m going to be standing on this staircase while you take my picture in a few years.”

It’s a common statement from students at San Joaquin College of Law; they are talking about the traditional staircase shot, which celebrates the latest batch of bar passers. That tradition, part of the Champagne Toast, was on hiatus for most than two Covid-wracked years but returned with a roar on the evening of May 16th as bar passers were toasted, congratulated and, in some cases, sworn into the bar.

U. S. Magistrate Judge Erica Grosjean graciously administered the oath to the latest colleagues of the bar. It is the second time she has offered such services to SJCL bar passers because the normal Bar Admissions Ceremony has also been on Covid-hold.

Judge Grosjean minced no words as she recalled how hard she had worked to reach the same pinnacle in her own life. As an SJCL Adjunct Professor for the past five years or so, she told the admittees she knew there were no “easy graders” at SJCL, and just graduating was a feat unto itself. And while not a graduate of the Law School herself, Judge Grosjean said SJCL is “the heart of the local legal community.”

As is the usually the case with SJCL bar passers, more than half had “you pass, you’re hired” offers in hand. Nicolas Mancillas heads to Perez, Williams, Medina & Rodriguez, David Piercy was picked up by the Law Office of Michael J. Aed, Taylor Pittman is already working at the Moran Law Firm, while Daniel Sharma is already serving as a Tulare County Deputy District Attorney.



The traditional Staircase shot of the February bar passers!
Back Row (L-R): **Nicolas Mancillas**, **Daniel Sharma**, **Raul Magana**, and **David Piercy**.
Front Row: **Taylor Pittman**, **Aimee Perez**, and **Rajveer Kaur**.



(L-R): **Michael Aed**, CA State Bar Board of Trustees Member **Mark Broughton**, and U.S. Magistrate Judge **Erica Grosjean**.

Excellence in Writing, and in Life: The George Vasquez Legacy

BY **MISSY MCKAI CARTIER** PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

“**H**e was very deliberate. Whatever he did, he cared about it. Whether it was his writing, the law, justice, or his students, he took it on whole-heartedly.” San Joaquin College of Law Academic Dean Justin Atkinson remembers George J. Vasquez as a hard-working student who became an equally committed colleague.

That commitment echoes through George’s life like the theme of a resume, as is reflected in the Resolution entered into the Fresno County Superior Court records in his memory on May 25th. George’s close friend and former classmate, James Mugridge wrote:

“At Pepperdine University in Malibu, George became much more serious about his studies, and he graduated with a degree in English Writing and Rhetoric. George was a founding member of the Pepperdine chapter of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

“In law school, George studied hard; he obtained the highest scores in his class in Constitutional Law, Torts, and Evidence, to name a few; he was an author of the best brief in the law school’s internal moot court competition; he was on the winning team for the California-wide Traynor Moot Court competition; and he graduated with highest honors.”

The George J. Vasquez Memorial Scholarship reflects his quest for excellence in writing. It actually includes two scholarships: one for the student with the highest graded brief in fall semester Appellate Advocacy and another for the student with the highest graded brief in spring semester Moot Court.

George’s legal career began during law school when he worked directly for the City of Fresno and then indirectly for the



(L-R) **George Vasquez** (Law '13) wrote the brief while classmates **Amanda DeHart** (Law '13) and **James Mugridge** (Law '13) argued the case, winning SJCL its first Traynor Trophy in 2013.

City of Clovis through the law office of Lozano Smith. He opened his own firm in 2016, practicing “door law,” meaning he would take on whatever kind of case walked through the door. Two years later, he partnered with other graduates of San Joaquin College of Law to open Clovis Law Group.

During this time, he also taught writing and appellate advocacy at SJCL. Professor Atkinson remembers how George was always available to meet with his students.

“He cared about them, and they trusted him.” Atkinson adds “Everybody who knew George loved George. He was a truly authentic person; he was always George, and always stood by who he was.”

George lost his battle with Covid last year, five days after he turned 36-years-old. Mugridge points out that he caught the virus before vaccines were available. He adds George did not have a choice, but everyone now does, and he urges others to get vaccinated.

Saturday in the Park

BY RICHARD M. CARTIER, RETIRED SJCL PROFESSOR

Being retired isn't always a picnic in the park but on June 4th it was. La Raza Lawyers Association hosted the Frank T. Ramirez Family Picnic at Woodward Park. Frank, a long-time local attorney, was a founding member of La Raza and a former president. My wife, Missy, and I attended.

The Ramirez Family Picnic was an annual tradition. After Frank's passing in 2018 from a stroke and complications of diabetes, the family tradition took a hiatus. Recently the family decided to reprise the event. Frank's oldest daughter, Irene - now the Hon. Irene Luna - was hoping to honor him with a picnic and a walk to promote the importance of exercise and good health. Her judicial appointment stymied the plans for a walk this year, but with the support of La Raza, the picnic was a tremendous success. Great music, conversation, and food.

La familia Ramirez es muy simpatica. Gracias a todos.

Connecting with the Ramirez family and with the members of La Raza made for a truly meaningful day. There was an underlying presence of San Joaquin College of Law there, too. Irene is a 2006 grad, her mother, Teresa, graduated from the SJCL paralegal program, Missy is the Public Information Officer, and, although I retired from SJCL in 2015, I enjoyed reconnecting with several SJCL alums who attended.

Maybe next year -- a walk in the park.



(L-R) La Raza Secretary **Marco Aguiar**, Honorable **Irene Luna**, La Raza President **Mary Vasquez**, and La Raza Vice President **Miguel Lopez**.



Honorable **Irene Luna** (Law '06) with her mom, **Teresa Ramirez**.



Honorable **Irene Luna** (Law '06) and Professor **Richard Cartier** (Ret.)



Good food and good times!

First Annual CCAPABA Banquet

The Central California Asian Pacific American Bar Association's (CCAPABA) first annual banquet at Woodward Park was a WOW, as people poured into the tranquil and cooling Shin Zen Gardens on May 26th to enjoy dinner, speeches, and camaraderie.

BY **MISSY MCKAI CARTIER** PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

CCAPABA Board member Pahoua Lor (Law '08) says she's grateful to the crowd of about 200 participants. "We have been talking about hosting a scholarship banquet since the formation of CCAPABA for more than ten years now. This year, with the help of the legal community and other partners and friends, we were able to make that vision happen. On behalf of the board and our members, CCAPABA would like to extend our gratitude to all those that attended and sponsored our event."

Keynote speaker Hon. Anthony Ishii of the Eastern District Court of California called not just for support of issues related to Asian Pacific American communities, but also hailed a coalition of bar organizations representing other minority groups.

Two scholarships were given out to law students Jamie Juni and Victor Qiu in honor of the late Judge Mikio Uchiyama who, despite being forced into a concentration camp with over 100,000 other Japanese Americans when WWII started, was able to secure a student release to attend the University of Texas. He became the first Asian to graduate from that law school. His legal career includes being the first Japanese American City attorney, the first Asian Judge in the Central Valley, and the first Justice Court Judge to sit on assignment with the California Supreme Court.

In addition to honoring scholarship recipients, CCAPABA celebrated the appointment of one of its members, Judge Charles Lee, to the Fresno Superior Court bench. Judge Lee was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom last December.



Judge **Dale Ikeda** (Ret.) and **Travis Ishikawa** (Law '12)



Magistrate Judges **Stanley Boone** and **Barbara McAuliffe**



BACKING UP THE FRESNO GUMYO TAIKO DRUMMERS ARE (L-R): **Hon. David Kalemkarian**, **Hon. Irene Luna** (Law '06), **Hon. Gary L. Green**, **Hon. Charles Lee**, **Hon. Leanne Le Mon**, **Hon. Ana de Alba**, **Hon. Anthony Ishii**, **Hon. James A. Kelley**, **Hon. Stanley Boone**, **Hon. David Gottlieb**, **Hon. Barbara McAuliffe**, **Commissioner Cynthia Loo**, and **Hon. Dale Ikeda** (Ret.)

Cheers and Tears

This year's Scholarship Ceremony at San Joaquin College of Law saw nearly 60 scholarships awarded to highly deserving students on April 2nd, but tears flowed as three of the scholarships were unveiled for the first time.

Shannon Pell began to choke up as she presented the scholarship in honor of her late father, James C. Pell. Shannon, a 2006 graduate of SJCL, says her dad was not an attorney, but was a fierce advocate of justice and the award continues his tradition of supporting it.

Meanwhile, most of the room was in tears as James Mugridge presented the first scholarship in George Vasquez's honor. Along with Amanda DeHart, Mugridge and Vasquez were both on the Traynor Team in 2013, bringing home the trophy to SJCL for the first time. Both alumni have since served as adjunct faculty at SJCL. Mugridge said George died of Covid last year, adding he contracted the virus before the vaccine was available.

Even Dean Jan Pearson was unable to hold back tears as the parents of Jennifer Oleksa handed out her memorial scholarship. Both Jenn and her mom, Michelle Oleksa, are SJCL Alumni. Jenn, a 2016 grad, was already a Deputy Attorney General in the Criminal Division of the California Attorney General's Office and adjunct faculty at SJCL when she developed brain cancer. She lost her two-year battle last February. Michelle was thrilled to announce the Scholarship recipient; she had been a student in Jenn's class and Jenn had mentioned how remarkable she was.

Speaking of remarkable, Public Relations Co-Chair and Soroptomist International of Clovis Board Member Judith Preuss was so impressed by this year's scholarship winner she invited her to an upcoming Soroptomist luncheon, asking that she tell her story before the group. Karen Lopez Pena is not only an immigrant, but she is the first member of her family to attend school past the second grade.

Hers is not the only remarkable story among the students and graduates of SJCL. Many struggle, but persistence paves their way.

Scholarships

Congratulations to the recipients and special thanks to all who have made these scholarships possible.

Andres Diaz Special Education Scholarship	Laura Higareda-Chapa
Baradat & Paboojian Trial Advocacy Scholarship	Aosam Saleh
Bertha and John Garabedian Military Service Scholarships	Booker Senatore, Travis Childress, Vladimir Pacheco, and James Proctor
Carolyn T. Mirviss Scholarship	Lisa Talley
Cartier First Year Improvement Scholarship	Reynaldo Alvarez
Central California Bankruptcy Association Scholarships	Besan Farra and Nancy Leon
Darryl B. Freedman Bar Study Support Scholarship	Rosie Palomino
Delta Theta Phi First Year Scholarship	Karan Nagra
Delta Theta Phi Scholarships for Participation	Leslie Miller and Travis Childress
Elizabeth O'Neill Memorial Scholarship	Bianca Lazcano
Entrepreneurial Spirit Scholarship	Alice Uribe-Cardona
Ernest S. Kinney Trial Lawyer Scholarship	Stephanie Landeros
First Generation Student Scholarship	Marisol Cruz Rodriguez
Founders' Scholarship	Janelle Di Mino
George J. Vasquez Memorial Scholarships	Carragan Huerta and Jessica Gonzalez
Ibarra/Casillas Lawsuit Scholarships	Cindy Arredondo, Willie Barrera, and Brittany Hieng
James C. Pell Memorial Scholarship	Vanessa Fayad
Janice Pearson Scholarship	Stephanie Adams
Jennifer Lynn Oleksa Scholarship	Carragan Huerta
Judy Wiseman Memorial Scholarship	Allison Rodriguez
Kharazi Bar Study Support Scholarship	Sylvia Luna
LawSUIT Scholarships	Diana Aguilera and Brittany Hieng
Legal Edge Scholarship	Savana Perez
Leon S. Peters Leadership Awards	Jesica Gonzalez, Helen Lee, Hannah Janigian, Ann-Marie Padilla, and Jacqueline Vazquez
Loomis Legacy Award and Scholarship	Rosa Oregel-Gonzalez
LSCA Community Action Scholarship	Laura Higareda-Chapa
LSCA Executive Board Scholarship	Lorena Vargas
LSCA Outstanding Member Scholarship	Besan Farra
Mike Rhodes Social Justice Scholarship	Raquel Chavez
Proctor Scholar of the Year	Diana Malcolm
Proper Defense Law Corporation Employed Student Scholarship	Lorena Vargas
Public Service Scholarship	Gurjot Brar
SBA Academic Improvement Scholarship	Gloria Toledo Pulido
SBA Bar Study Support Scholarships	Amreet Badesha and Landon Sciacca
SBA Covid-19 Pandemic Hardship Scholarships	Terrance Dennis and Hannah Ravizza
SBA Strong Academic Performance Scholarship	Reynaldo Alvarez
Soroptomist International of Clovis Woman's Advocate Scholarship	Karen Lopez Pena
Spirit of San Joaquin Scholarship	Madison Erickson
The Notorious Ruth Bader Ginsburg Scholarship	Armida Mendoza
Trudi Gale Manfredo Scholarship	Abigail Unruh



Grow Your Own Attorney

Most of the San Joaquin College of Law bar passers are employed as fulltime attorneys the second they get bar results because they have a “you pass, you’re hired” offer well in advance. It’s not just that they are proving their skills every day as they await results; it’s also because there is a noticeable shortage of attorneys in the area and competition for them is sometimes quite keen.

It may be time to think about “growing your own.” If you have a clerk or paralegal you feel would better complement your office as an attorney, please talk to Admissions (dsteel@sjcl.edu or 559/323-2100) about partnering toward that goal. The prospective student may need both the support of the Law School and your office to succeed, but it may be more doable than you think.



ALUMNI SURVEY

Thank you to each of our alumni who shared their thoughts in the annual alumni survey!

We had a record number of responses this year, which will help us to better serve your needs and interests. The winners of the two gift card drawings were Brian Chin (Law '20) and Jacquelin Curry (Law '16). Congratulations and thank you all!



UPCOMING EVENT!

Make plans to stop by The Point (Willow & Nees in Fresno), Thursday, August 4th, 5:30pm, for an Alumni Association mixer. All SJCL grads and current law students are heartily invited. Come re-connect and catch up with your compatriots while meeting and inspiring current law students in a relaxed and fun atmosphere. Please RSVP to dskouti@sjcl.edu for general head count. Hope to see you there!



YOUR TALENT IS NEEDED

Many of you have expressed an interest in re-connecting to your alma mater by serving as a mentor to law students/new attorneys, guest speaking, and/or volunteering for alumni events. If you are interested in participating in these or other activities, please send your name, contact info, and area of interest to dskouti@sjcl.edu. We appreciate you!

The Results are In!

LEADERSHIP AND LOVE

Students at San Joaquin College of Law expressed their love for two professors and their choices for leadership in the student organizations. Hon. Jonathan Conklin, who has taught at SJCL for more than a quarter century and personally sworn in scores of graduates in his chambers, was voted Adjunct Faculty of the Year. Logan Tennerelli, a former Fresno City College Pathway Professor who became Dean of Students two years ago, scored the Full-time Faculty of the Year honors.



Dean of Students **Logan Tennerelli** was awarded Faculty of the Year



Fresno Superior Court Judge **Jonathan Conklin** was awarded Adjunct Faculty of the Year



Student of the Year

First Year Karen Lopez-Pena and
Gabriel Sanchez
Second Year Ann-Marie Padilla
Third Year Diana Malcolm
James Proctor
Fourth Year Erika Esqueda

SBA Officers

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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!" column!

Trisha L. Beckstead (Law '02) is now a Senior Appellate Court Attorney at the Fifth District Court of Appeal.

Jordan A. Bennett (Law '20) and **Clare E. Demera** (Law '21) have opened Bennett & Demera LLP, a law firm focusing on Cybersecurity and Cryptocurrency fraud and consulting, Real Estate and Business Litigation, and Estate Planning.

Ranjeet K. Brar (Law '12) is now a partner at Quall Cardot LLP.

Crystal Cabrera (Law '09) is now an attorney for the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA).

Kira D. Ceballos (Law '01) is now a Partner at Testan Law.

Honorable Erin Childs (Law '02) has been elected as a San Luis Obispo Superior Court Judge after several years serving as a Commissioner for both SLO and Fresno Counties. Judge Childs is one of 61 SJCL Alumni Bench Officers and one of 27 Superior Court Judges in the alumni ranks, but she is the first SJCL SLO Superior Court Judge.

Gladdey Donsanouphit (Law '19) is now Deputy Title IX Coordinator at Fresno City College.

Faith C. Driscoll (Law '13) is now Senior Counsel at Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani.

Michael Elder (Law '05) is now an attorney for the Fresno County Department of Child Support Services.

Heidi R. Falany (Law '17) is now an Associate Attorney at Parker Kern Nard & Wenzel.

Brittany E. Hines (Law '16) is now an Associate Attorney at Borton Petrini, LLP.

Kevin B. Kalajian (Law '08) has opened The Law Office of Kevin B. Kalajian, specializing in Personal Injury actions.

Mandy Kendzora (Law '15) is now a Judicial Staff Attorney for the Fresno Superior Court.

Nicolas A. Mancillas (Law '21) is now an Associate Attorney at Perez, Williams, Medina & Rodriguez, LLP.

Dustin J. Moses (Law '21) is now an Associate Attorney at the Dias Law Firm in Hanford.

Nicholas J. Penner (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Cuttone & Associates.

Aimee N. Perez (Law '21) is now an Associate Attorney at Acumen, LLP in Calabasas.

Taylor D. Pittman (Law '21) is now an Associate Attorney at the Moran Law Firm.

Daniel C. Sharma (Law '18) is now a Tulare County Deputy District Attorney.

Peter J. Wall (Law '08) has been promoted to Chief Deputy County Counsel in the Office of the Fresno County Counsel. He is now one of three Chief Deputies reporting directly to the County Counsel.

Sara D. Widener-Brightwell (Law '94) has been appointed by the Division of Workers' Compensation to serve on its Ethics Advisory Committee, which reviews all ethics complaints from the public against workers' compensation administrative law judges. Widener-Brightwell is currently General Counsel for the California Workers' Compensation Institute.

In Memoriam

San Joaquin College of Law notes with sadness the passing of

Larry A Donaldson (Law '75) on May 2, 2022.

He is survived by his children, grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

Adina E. Janzen (Law '85) on May 3, 2022. She is survived by her husband, Glen, a daughter and son, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Judith A. Ward (Law '74) on May 23, 2022. She is survived by her brother, Jonathan Geisler.

Thank you FOR YOUR SUPPORT

San Joaquin College of Law thanks the following individuals and organizations for their gifts. Their generosity helps SJCL deliver an outstanding academic program to students.

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You deserve to be properly recognized for your contributions, and we strive for 100 percent accuracy. If we have made an error, please contact Lonsetta Hightower at 559/323-2100 or lhightower@sjcl.edu.

**WE ♥ OUR
ALUMNI**

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2022 Bankruptcy Institute

Now in its 36th year, the two-day seminar offers insolvency professionals 13 hours of MCLE/CPE continuing education credits via a virtual platform. Attend from the comfort of wherever you are.

September 21

Golf Tournament

Ridge Creek Dinuba Golf Club

September 22-23

CCBA Bankruptcy Institute

8:30AM - 4:00PM

Early Registration for CCBA members
\$275 (\$300 late registration after September 9)

Early Registration for non-members
\$350 (\$375 late registration after September 9)

Register online at: ccbankruptcy.org

For program and registration questions
please contact dskouti@sjcl.edu



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**Central California
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San Joaquin College of Law certifies that this activity conforms to the standards for approved education activities prescribed by the rules and regulations of the State Bar of California governing minimum continuing legal education.