



# Inter Alia

SAN JOAQUIN COLLEGE OF LAW • Volume 33, Issue 3



## Historic Appointment to Superior Court

Pahoua Lor (Law '08) is the first Hmong Woman to serve as a Superior Court Judge in California and the first Hmong to sit on the Fresno County Superior Court.

In an interview with *The Business Journal* a decade ago, she mentioned a friend had cautioned her against using her “ethnic name.” Lor told *The Journal* “I’ve never had a desire to be a Patty or a Patricia or a Peggy... The thought never occurred to me. I’ve had such a positive response. I just can’t imagine taking on a new name.”

Lor says her parents’ story is truly remarkable. “My father came to the United States at age 16 with his uncle. He left behind his parents and his siblings with one goal; to give his future children better opportunities. I never had the opportunity to meet my paternal grandparents. Growing up, a time before cell phones, my grandparents and my father would communicate with each other through recorded audio tapes. My father would mail a tape to them and wait to receive their taped reply.”

She says her father came to her house the day her appointment to the bench was announced. “He called his uncle, the one that brought him to the United States.

He said, ‘Uncle Lue, I’m just calling to tell you that you brought me here with you and today my daughter is a judge.’ I started crying.”

The 42-year-old Lor has been a Sole Practitioner since 2013 and has been a part-time Immigration Attorney at The Fresno Center since 2019. She served as a Staff Attorney at Central California Legal Services from 2010 to 2013. Lor was a Sole Practitioner from 2009 to 2010. She becomes San Joaquin College of Law’s 28th Superior Court Judge and 64th Bench Officer. A Democrat, she fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Hilary Chittick.

Lor says her success has not gone unnoticed in the Hmong community. “Judge Adam Yang, a Hmong-American Judge from Minnesota, reached out to me after he learned on social media that I had been appointed. His initial reaction and response to me was ‘About time.’”

Lor believes it’s hard to disagree with that sentiment. “Fresno is currently home



to the second largest Hmong population and hosts the largest Hmong New Year celebration in the United States. The fact that Fresno now has a Hmong-American female judge is significant for so many reasons. First, it sends a message of inclusion and acceptance; that the Hmong are no longer outsiders, but members of the community. Secondly, the fact that a woman was appointed will hopefully inspire young women everywhere to believe in their dreams and that possibilities are endless.”

Lor adds “My dad left his country, his parents, and siblings for a better life for his unborn children. My mother took us to the library every Saturday. Today I celebrate this with my parents, my family and friends. Officially Judge Lor!”



## A Message From the Dean

Under Rule 4.16(d)(6) of the Guidelines for California Accredited Law School Rules, all state-accredited schools must maintain a minimum five-year cumulative bar examination pass rate of 40 percent or more.

**B**ased on results provided by the State Bar, data complying with this requirement must be submitted by July 1 of each year. For the last two reporting periods, 2021 and 2022, SJCL's pass rate was the highest of the state-accredited schools.

**2021: 77.7%**

**2022: 76.3%**

In fact, SJCL has been the highest in three of the last five years, second in the other two years only by a few points to a school in Chico with a much smaller student body.

Given that SJCL follows an admission policy that considers much more than LSAT score and has an extremely diverse student population over every dimension, this demonstrates that the curriculum at SJCL is fundamentally sound and that there is an incredible wealth of talent in the San Joaquin Valley. We are proud they are SJCL graduates.

Recently, SJCL graduates have distinguished themselves in other ways. On November 4, 2022, Pahoua Lor, class of 2008, will be formally sworn in as the first Hmong woman Superior Court Judge in the State of California.

Three SJCL graduates have accepted federal clerkships with the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California. Rosa Oregel-Gonzalez will be clerking for Judge Ana de Alba, the first Latina judge in the Eastern District. Jaymie Eaton is already serving with Judge Jennifer Thurston and Janelle DiMino is already serving with Magistrate Judge Erica P. Grosjean. Judge de Alba and Judge Grosjean have both teach at the law school.

We thank immensely all the individuals who contributed so generously to the 2021-2022 SJCL Annual Fund. Your support was invaluable and appreciated as SJCL worked to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. We still have work to do, but your commitment, coupled with our commitment, to the students of the Valley has been heartening.

Long ago, SJCL adopted the motto "*One Degree. A World of Options.*" As I talk with graduates every day, I am forever reminded of the truth of that statement. SJCL graduates work hard for the accomplishments they achieve and distinguish themselves in every conceivable field of legal practice.

Sincerely,

Janice Pearson

Dean

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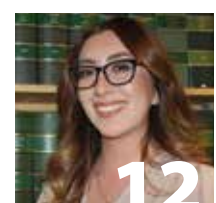
#### Get Social with SJCL



# Inter Alia

Volume 33, Issue 3 • Fall 2022

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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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# A Rare Renaissance Man

Some of the residents of Buckeye Farms.

BY DIANE SKOUTI, ALUMNILIAISON

For most attorneys, free time is a scarce commodity given over only to family, favored activities, and rest. Because of their universal penchant to serve, many legal professionals serve on boards and volunteer, in addition to pursuing a few hobbies.

For Chris Matthes (Law '16) time doesn't seem to exist. A newly promoted Supervising Attorney at the Fresno office of Michael Sullivan & Associates, Chris is obviously devoted to his legal career. The firm specializes in workers' compensation law, but also handles employment law, general liability, and the like. In his new role, Chris oversees junior attorneys, along with his own case load of workers comp defense, and the niche area of defending insurance carriers and third-party admin-

istrators against audit. There are nearly 100 attorneys among the firm's nine statewide offices, and, like the Rhino featured in the firm's logo, they are aggressive and effective in their approach.

The antithesis of the Fresno office and Chris's fellow Rhino-esque colleagues (most of whom are also SJCL grads), is Buckeye Farms. Pastoral, mountainy, and situated halfway between Marshall Junction and Auberry, the farm receives an equal amount of Chris's devotion, as do his young family, his love for the violin, his aptitude for languages (the "s" denotes the plural - as in - he is conversational in some 12 languages!), and the animals he and his family steward. Chris Matthes is a rare, modern-day Renaissance man. His image could accompany the definition in

Merriam-Webster: 1) a person who has wide interests and is expert in several areas.

"I grew up working on an almond ranch," Chris explains. "I always wanted to do something in agriculture, but you really can't anymore unless the operation has been passed down through family." He noted the extreme cost of farming these days, and the disappearing margin of profit. After years of higher education and a lot of really hard work, Chris says he was able to purchase the property to create Buckeye Farms. "It's as much work as any 'regular' job," he says, "but it's also very therapeutic."

A lot of attorneys develop bad habits to deal with the stress of the job. "I don't drink or have other (damaging) habits," he said.

"I do physical labor as a healthy alternative, to balance out my life."

For his undergrad degree, Chris studied German. With no other ideas in mind, it was something he knew. His grandfather was a first-generation German. As a teen Chris traveled to Germany to embrace the culture and attain a native command of the language. Later, after briefly considering a career as an M.D., he got his master's degree in German, and began teaching it at U.C. Davis and Sacramento City College.

"Since attorneys are wordsmiths with language, I felt a connection to the law," Chris says. After teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) at both Davis and Sac State for three years, Chris came back to Fresno with his wife, Heather, who had enrolled in nursing school. During this time he worked as the manager of the

Japanese Kitchen in Clovis, a favorite lunch spot for SJCL's Joyce Morodomi, Jill Waller-Randles, and Lonsetta Hightower. As they chatted over teppanyaki, the staffers asked Chris about his plans. They encouraged him to think about law school, so he did. He took the LSAT, enrolled in the 3-year program, and graduated with his J.D.

Chris credits his multitude of experience and activities for his various successes. Having studied the violin from the age of 10, he has played semi-professionally in various quartets and orchestras. "But the demands of the farm, in combination with the legal profession, keep me from joining a group these days."

Chris notes an interesting conundrum when mixing the disciplines he loves so with farming. He explains: "They are opposing forces. Music, language, and the law require an esoteric discipline. I don't discount those or farming as they both demand skill sets that are not necessarily better than others." At the same time, he says there is an interplay between managing his cattle and his job as an attorney. It's

all about strategy, he says. Planning and looking out for the health of your herd is similar to developing a strategy for managing each case.

And where does he find the time? He feeds his animals at 6:00 a.m. and then at 7:00 a.m. transitions over to law. After he has finished lawyering for the day, he fits in a little more farm time with his five-year-old son and his wife, Heather. "They are very helpful and participate in the process every day of the week. The Matthes family doesn't go on many vacations!" he adds.

Chris says he only relaxes on the 8th day of the week, which of course, means never! His quest for continued learning and achievement is relentless. He recently passed the exam required to become a Certified Specialist in workers' compensation law.

When there is "free time," Chris goes to the marketplace in search of cattle to add to his herd. Our interview was precisely timed, in fact, because he had to rush off to see a man about a bull. "There's a rancher from Santa Maria who wants to buy our Ferdinand (the Bull)," he said.

In addition to cattle, Buckeye Farms also features sheep, chickens, a rooster named Roger, turkeys (who, by the way are higher on the cognition scale than chickens and quite friendly, according to Chris),

ducks, and guinea hens, who help control insects and rattle snakes. They also have a small herd of Nigerian Dwarf Goats, who Chris says, make excellent pets. "With the exception of the beef cattle, all of our farm animals are sold with the intention of being pets," he said.

While Chris notes that it is difficult to focus on just one facet of his life at a time, he hopes he is setting a good example for his son. "I hope his is a childhood without a heavy influence of electronics or video games. The life experiences on the farm, of seeing the birth of animals, of understanding the process of life and what it means to sweat, goes a long way in developing



an appreciation for hard work - and for life," he said.

While he admits he is a "total workaholic" putting in seven days a week both on the farm and at the law firm, Chris says he is quite happy. He has spent his life getting up each morning for a full day of work. Never missed one, in fact. He credits his grandfather for teaching him that, and the tendency to always do his best. "I wouldn't be able to have done any of it without my legal education, and the amazing opportunities the firm has given me," he said.

"I want to impress upon people interested in law school that the opportunity to pursue your dream can become available by working hard and getting a legal education. There is no limit to what you can accomplish by becoming an attorney and striving to be the best in the field. SJCL gives you that opportunity, the rest is up to you."



# Back-to-School Night/ Networking Event Hits a Home-run

A double header of fun and support was on tap at this year's SBA Back-to-School Night.

In addition to the traditional dinner and merriment in the park, students were invited to sit in on panel discussions with SJCL alumni who shared their thoughts and experiences on topics like succeeding in law school, and the real scoop on life as an attorney.

Four sets of speakers from a variety of private law firms, public defenders, and district attorneys talked about their time in law school, and their pathways to the careers they love. Each panel spoke in half hour increments and answered questions from students.

James Orr (Law '17) said the Fresno County Public Defender's Office has been a great fit. "Who wants to spend their days surrounded by crime and bad news?" James said but added, "I love it!" The public defenders panel included representatives from Fresno and Tulare Counties, each of whom are SJCL grads.

Sarah McNabb (Law '15) said her dream throughout law school was to work in the District Attorney's office. "After one week in that job I couldn't believe I ever wanted to be a DA!" She says she has been quite happy since moving to the other side as a public defender. "Don't count anything out" (when starting your career in law), she advised.

During the private attorneys panel, Gary Winter (Law '06) of Lawvex said one of the most important traits his firm looks for is attorneys who have a heart for people. "We are not about GPA, awards, or other pedigrees – we care most about who a prospective associate attorney is (as a person)."

Sally Moreno (Law '95), District Attorney for Madera County, concurred. "The most important thing is for attorneys to have a strong moral foundation, be able to make good decisions, and have good



# A Historic Valley Sweep

Where do the State's two "Outstanding Prosecutors of the Year" practice? According to the California District Attorneys Association, right here in Fresno and Madera Counties.

The CDAА awards two "Outstanding Prosecutor of the Year" Awards, one for large counties and one for medium/small. This year, Chief Deputy Fresno County District Attorney Deborah Miller won for large counties while Madera County Deputy District Attorney Rachel Cartier won for medium counties. It is an unquestionable coup for the Valley.

The Madera District Attorney's Office congratulated Cartier for the win, adding "Rachel's dedication is just one example of her exceptional work ethic. CDAА, a statewide organization, has recognized her commitment to prosecutorial



(L-R) Madera County District Attorney **Sally Moreno** (Law '95), Fresno Deputy DA **Deborah Miller**, Madera Deputy DA **Rachel Cartier** (Law '11), and Fresno County District Attorney **Lisa Smittcamp** (Law '95).

excellence, legal knowledge, trial skills, and unwavering support of victims and law enforcement."

While Miller is a graduate of Thomas Jefferson School of Law, Moreno, Cartier and Smittcamp are all San Joaquin College of Law alumni.

Meanwhile, at the same September 8th ceremony, Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward was sworn in as the 2022-23 president of the CDAА, the first Tulare County representative to hold the post in CDAА history.



judgement. These things can't be taught. Commitment to community and to serve are also very important," she added.

On tips for success in law school, the grads' advice was a bit more dubious.

"Stay up really late if you have to and learn to gage how much time you need to spend on reading and studying," recommended Lanae Oviedo (Law '20) of Fitzgerald, Alvarez, and Ciummo.

Henry Campa (Law '11) of the California Justice League warned, "Be careful about who's in your crew! Find a study partner who wants to do well, who is serious (about it). Don't let anyone drag you down."

As the panel discussions concluded, the wail of an electric guitar and the enticing thump of Dean Atkinson's drums signaled the start of the party portion of the night. His band "Rush the Fill" kept some 200 attendees entertained while waiting in what seemed like a never-ending line for tacos. We congratulate the SBA on a terrific start to the fall term.

## Hamilton Themed Institute Fires up Practitioners

Bankruptcy professionals were treated to a stellar line up of speakers and sessions at the 36th Annual CCBA Bankruptcy Institute, presented in association with SJCL, in late September. The two-day seminar featured 12 sessions and 25 speakers, both local and from afar, and offered 12 hours of MCLE and CPE credit. Featured topics ranged from the State of the District, Ninth Circuit Caselaw Updates, Chapter 7 During Covid, Vicarious Liability, and Fraudulent Transfers, to the ethical pitfalls of social media and the law, among many others.

The Central California Bankruptcy Association invites attorneys interested in the growing field of Bankruptcy Law to join the association (at [ccbabankruptcy.org](http://ccbabankruptcy.org)) and look into the many opportunities the practice provides.

## Student Appreciation



Student Appreciation Goodie Day returned to the start of the fall term with COVID-appropriate bagged popcorn and bottled coffees, thanks to the SJCL Alumni Association. Next up – Pie Before Finals! (Above L-R) **Jacqueline Amador** (2L), **Blanca Delgado** (2L), and **Rebeca Delgado Mendez** (2L) pick their favorites before class.



The CCBA and SJCL wish to thank the following speakers for sharing their time and wisdom.

- Chief Judge Fredrick Clement** – U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District
- Chief Judge Ronald Sargis** – U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern Division
- Christopher Seymour** – Bankruptcy Attorney
- David Goodrich** – Partner, Golden Goodrich, Los Angeles, CA
- Don Howell** – Bankruptcy Attorney
- Gabriel Waddell** – Fear Waddell, PC
- Gregory Powell** – Office of the US Trustee
- Hagop Bedoyan** – Partner, Klein DeNatale Goldner
- Hon. Meredith Jury** (Ret.) – Bankruptcy Judge, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Central District
- Hon. Jennifer Niemann** – U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District
- Hon. Rene Lastreto II** – United States Bankruptcy Court, Eastern Division
- Ian Macdonald** – Macdonald Fernandez LLP, San Francisco, CA  
Professor - University of San Francisco School of Law
- Ian Wieland** – Sagaser, Watkins & Wieland, PC
- J. Scott Bovitz** – Bovitz & Spitzer, Beverly Hills, CA
- James Eischen** – Legal analyst and national conference speaker
- Jeremy Faith** – Margulies Faith LLP, Encino CA
- Lori Enrico** – Giannetta & Enrico, LLP
- Michael Gomez** – Frandzel, Los Angeles, CA
- Nancy Rapoport** – Garman Turner Gordon Professor, William S. Boyd School of Law, UNLV
- Peter Bunting** – Bankruptcy Attorney
- Peter Fear** – Fear Waddell, PC
- Riley Walter** – Wanger Jones Helsley, PC
- Sean Carter** – Humorist at Law, national speaker
- Wayne Blackwelder** – Clerk, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern Division
- Wayne Silver** – Wayne Silver Law, Redwood City, CA

**SAVE THE DATE**

got mcle?

Saturday, January 7, 2023  
Watch your email or [diskouti@sjcl.edu](mailto:diskouti@sjcl.edu) for details





# Constitution Day

DISSECTING *DOBBS* AND THE AFTERMATH

Fundamental Rights Discussion by  
Professors Linda Barreto & Logan Tennerelli  
Commemorates Constitution Day

BY **MISSY MCKAI CARTIER**, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

For the first time in San Joaquin College of Law history, this year's Constitution Day Lecture speakers were all women. The September 21st lecture, delivered in a hybrid format, featured panelists and SJCL Dean of Students Logan Tennerelli and Director of the New American Legal Clinic Linda Barreto, along with moderator and 4L-student Cindy Arredondo. Dozens joined the lecture on campus in the auditorium while dozens more watched via zoom. The topic was the Supreme Court's June 2022 decision, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned 50 years of precedent recognizing the right to abortion dating back to *Roe v. Wade*.

The discussion began with a history of the rulings and court appointments leading to the Court's watershed decision to overturn the constitutional protection of abortion rights, with a focus on Justice Samuel Alito's majority opinion. According to the Professors, Justice Alito's opinion rested heavily on two ideas: first, the term "abortion" is not used in the Constitution, and second, a right to abortion is "not deeply rooted in the Nation's history and traditions."

Professor Barreto pointed out that the nation's "deeply rooted history" includes slavery and other discrimination, including denying voting rights to women and African Americans. Furthermore, Professor Tennerelli argued that the founders did in fact value "life and liberty" as "inalienable rights." Indeed, many of the rights the Court recognize as "fundamental" under the due process clause of the Fourteenth

Amendment are not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. The "right to privacy" includes contraception, sexual intimacy, same-sex marriage, interracial marriage, parental decision-making, and bodily autonomy, including the right to refuse sterilization or life-saving medical treatment.

None of these due process rights are "deeply rooted in the Nation's history," Professor Barreto pointed out, meaning the reasoning used in *Dobbs* threatens these liberties as well. For instance, she said, while abortion rights have been upheld countless times by the Court since 1973, rights such as same-sex marriage were not recognized until 2015. Therefore, the professors fear that other decisions relying on the precedent set by *Roe V. Wade* will now be called into question, as its underpinning tenant is washed away by *Dobbs*.

Additionally, the Professors argued that abortion bans violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, which applies a heightened standard of review to laws that discriminate based on gender. Professor Barreto pointed to *Struck v. Secretary of Defense*, a case argued by Ruth Bader Ginsberg before she ascended to the



(L-R) **Cindy Arredondo** (4L), Professor **Linda Barreto**, and Dean of Students **Logan Tennerelli**.

Supreme Court. In that case, Susan Struck faced mandatory discharge from the Air Force because she refused to terminate her pregnancy. Ginsberg successfully argued it was a clear case of women being denied "equal protection" of the law. Professor Tennerelli added that the *Dobbs* decision disproportionately affects certain women, including low-income women, minors, and women of color.

In a Q&A session following the discussion, one attendee asked what concerned citizens can do. Professor Tennerelli pointed out that while citizens cannot vote for Supreme Court candidates, they can vote for other officials and lean more heavily on elected representatives now that individual states will determine the fate of abortion rights. Fittingly, the lecture ended by urging everyone to vote in the midterm elections on Tuesday, November 8.



## Helping to Heal Trauma

BY DIANE SKOUTI ALUMNI LIAISON

Finding oneself suddenly plunged into the legal system for any reason is traumatic. For some, it is life-changing. Shanna Hesketh (Law '17) knows well the strain of trauma, having experienced it from more than one side of the law. She is drawing upon her varied experience as a victim and a plaintiff, as well as her role as an attorney, to help others with similar needs. "The legal community has been shrouded in secrecy long enough. It's time to demystify things, bring folks the information they need to make important decisions."

With her new law firm, Trauma Law California, Shanna aims to assist and "walk alongside" those who are adrift in the legal system due to serious trauma. She specializes in personal injury and criminal defense.

Shanna says she knew from the age of five she wanted to someday be an attorney. Her best friend's dad, (Robert Piacente, Law '92) worked out of his home. She remembers clearly how he described his job: "I make money arguing," he said. It stuck with her, and Shanna set her sights on the same "sweet gig" for herself. Upon experiencing multiple serious traumas of her own, Shanna's plans for a career in law were sharpened to a fine-tip point.

The first was the murder of her brother, who was shot and killed around the corner from their childhood home. Shanna and her family anguished through the murder trial in Fresno Superior Court. She says her high school mock trial coach, who was also

a criminal defense attorney, helped to calm the anxiety of that experience by providing explanations of the legal process.

Having an understanding of the procedures and events throughout the trial helped Shanna to find a sense of safety and security. She realized that she too, could provide those same gifts to others if she became a criminal defense attorney. "There's a very real fear that comes with not knowing what's going on in the legal system," she added. "The more you don't know, the more your anxieties run wild. Having answers can help to calm those fears."

Shanna was just two months into her first year of law school when she was involved in a motor vehicle collision that left her with a devastating neck injury. In addition to her 1L coursework, she underwent dozens of treatments and eventually spine surgery to correct the damage from the crash. During her recovery, Shanna experienced the trauma that collision victims endure while trying to navigate the medical and insurance systems to get the support and care they need.

And it didn't end there. During her 3rd year of law school she was rear-ended in another collision on her way to moot court. This one caused another neck injury and surgery on her shoulder. Shockingly, a third rear-end collision a few years later led to yet another neck injury, more surgery, and a mild traumatic brain injury that required six months of treatment at a brain injury rehabilitation clinic.

After working through each of these personal ordeals Shanna realized she had an extraordinary opportunity to assist those enduring trauma, most notably due to injury or arrest, in uniquely beneficial ways.

It is a twist of irony that Shanna loves the practice area of criminal defense, in spite of – or maybe because of – what happened to her brother. Once Shanna became an attorney, a wise mentor asked her to promise she would not jump into criminal prosecution until she worked in criminal defense for at least a year. Her colleague feared that Shanna would see every defendant as her brother's killer, and that she would focus on vengeance, be miserable, and burn out.

"She was right," Shanna says. "I loved it (criminal defense), and it helped to heal a lot of those broken pieces in me." She has defended three homicide cases and has written to convicted murderers in prison as part of a prison ministry program, since. "I'm able to see them as just people," she says. "People who may or may not have made a mistake and somehow ended up next to me in a courtroom. Sometimes they have a traumatic story to tell about how they landed here. Sometimes being in the courtroom is their traumatic story. Addiction and mental health issues don't give a damn who you are or what you have planned for your life. I could have been here in one of those orange jumpsuits if I had gotten hooked on the pain pills after my neck injuries, or if my brother's death had driven me a bit crazier than it did. We're all just a couple circumstances away from ending up on the same path as those defendants."

Shanna has chosen to turn her past trauma(s) into tools for helping others through theirs. And to hopefully stop amassing any additional trauma herself. "That would be very nice!" she added.

Shanna's law firm, Trauma Law California, opened on July 1, 2022. Her goal is to develop a modern, tech-forward, and client-centered approach with ease of access for her clients. We wish her every success in this new chapter of her career in law.

# Don't be an Asterisk\*



At San Joaquin College of Law, we are always so proud to point out our 64 alumni bench officers.\* Why the asterisk? Do we not know if we actually have that many? No, we are sure of that, we just don't know if there are any more.

**W**e recently received an email from one of our alumni who did serve in this capacity, retiring after several years. The tone was sad and disappointed because the Law School had never acknowledged this service. The Law School was sad and disappointed as well, because this was the first we had heard about it.

We receive word if an alumni is headed to the state or federal bench, but not if they become a commissioner or administrative law judge. So, if this sounds like you, please let us know so we can honor you (and brag about you just a little bit!). Our alumni successes are our successes.

Meanwhile, if you have a friend in this category and see they are missing from the list, drop us a line. Because a real friend doesn't let a friend be an asterisk.

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## (Another) New Generation

**S**JCL is often a family affair. So many students and grads have had spouses, aunts, uncles, parents, children, cousins, nieces, nephews, and siblings attend. Professor Sally Perring used to comment that she needed to retire before the grandkids started coming. Looks like she made it out just in time.

The first grandchild of an alumni officially enters SJCL this fall, one of six incoming students who are not the first in their families to experience San Joaquin College of Law; they have parents, a grandparent, a brother, a cousin, or an aunt already ensconced in our alumni ranks.

They come bearing degrees from 18 different institutions, including Fresno State and Fresno Pacific University. Six U. C. campuses are also represented, ranging from Merced to Berkeley, Davis, Riverside,

Santa Cruz, and Irvine. Some hail from out of state, bringing degrees from the University of Wisconsin, Western Governors University in Utah, and Oregon State.

All bring passion. A large number are hoping to work in immigration law, either because they themselves come from that family background or because they have seen first-hand the way others have been held back by their citizenship status. Others want to work with small businesses, including one whose parents run their own small shop. Then there's an incoming student whose sister is a physician and impressed upon her the need for legal help for victims of domestic violence.

For those who don't believe mentorship matters, consider the 1L who says she has enrolled at SJCL because her third-grade teacher brought her own dad, a judge, to

school one day. Another says his grandfather always wanted to be an attorney, and his dad is a sheriff's deputy, so law school is the natural progression for him. Another student said after years of doing Interior Design in Orange County, "Law school was always the path, and it's now or never."

Perhaps pride enters into the picture for some of the incoming class. One says he's here because "A buddy bet me I couldn't do it." Another said her brother is getting his PhD and she "couldn't live with him being a doctor" without her stepping up to the plate as well.

We are so glad they are all here! We would like to thank the moms, dads, grandparents, cousins, brothers, sisters, aunts, buddies, and third-grade teachers who have nurtured their dreams thus far.



## Notorious RBG Scholarship

**A**rmida Mendoza (Law '22) was among those honored at the League of Women Voters' August 25th Women's Equality Day celebration in Fresno. Armida is the first winner of the League's newly established "Notorious Ruth Bader Ginsberg Scholarship," in memory of the late Supreme Court Justice. It is awarded to a female SJCL student in good academic standing with financial need who demonstrates a commitment to social justice in gender equity, women's rights and/or civil rights. Armida, who is now studying for the bar, is pictured with her family and her plaque.

## Perseverance on the Pathway

"I love giving people a voice."

**R**osa Nava says she was hooked on practicing Immigration Law from the very first time she worked in a law office and met her client. Her personal pathway to law school has seen her earn a B.A. in Sociology at Fresno State along with CAL-Law Scholar Certification at Fresno City College. She also spent more than two years as an Immigration Caseworker, Community Outreach Intern and Volunteer at the Education and Leadership Foundation, another year as a Legal Intern at San Joaquin College of Law's New Americans Legal Clinic, and a year as a Legal Intern with the United Farmworkers Foundation.

But it always comes back to giving a voice to the voiceless.

Rosa is the 2022 winner of the Law Pathway Tuition Reduction Scholarship. Students entering San Joaquin College of Law through the



Law Pathways Program at Bullard High School, Fresno City College, and Fresno State who are California LAW Scholars are eligible to apply. California LAW is an educational pipeline created by the California State Bar's Council on Access and Fairness aimed at diversifying the legal profession in California to better reflect the population of the state. More information is available at Law Pathway Scholarship (sjcl.edu).

# Kharazi Book Scholarship Winner Celebrated

Congratulations to Rocio Lopez Martinez, winner of the 2022 Kharazi Book Scholarship.

Aside from graduating from U.C. Berkeley as Public Service Fellow, her track record of service includes being a Department of Justice Accredited Representative for Catholic Charities of San Diego, a Lead Advocate, a Lead Legal Assistant, a Legislative Intern, a Legal Case Manager, a Citizenship Instructor, a Conflict Mediation Coordinator and a Policy Researcher.

Lopez Martinez says “Through my community involvement I constantly witnessed the harsh reality of marginalized minority communities and realized that I wanted to dedicate my life to social change but I knew that to more efficiently work with individuals who faced legal adversities I had to acquire a legal education and obtain a law degree, which ultimately brought me to San Joaquin College of Law.

“Essentially, in my heart, I am compelled to continue my devotion to social change and wholeheartedly pursue my goal

of becoming an immigration lawyer who provides low-cost, legal services to low-socioeconomic communities in San Joaquin Valley, where there is an overwhelming number of indigenous and undocumented families who remain forgotten.”

Lopez Martinez adds she is grateful for the help of Ty Kharazi, a 1996 SJCL grad and the founder of the Kharazi Book Scholarship. Kharazi was a 16-year-old college student in 1977, studying in the Los Angeles area on a scholarship from his home country of Iran. Six months after he arrived, so did the embassy takeover in Tehran. Ty found himself without finances and family. He managed to land several fast-food jobs while trying to take at least one college course at night every semester. Ten years later, he achieved his bachelor’s degree in Biology from CSU Bakersfield, followed by his masters in Health Care Administration. Kharazi has established both the Kharazi Bar Study Support Scholarship



to offset the cost of a bar review course and this book scholarship, recalling those two expenses were outside the very tight budget which he lived by during law school.

For more information or to apply for the 2023 Kharazi Book Scholarship, visit [sjcl.edu](http://sjcl.edu) then SJCL 1L Scholarships then Kharazi Book Scholarship.

# \$5,000 Goodwin Bar Scholarship Winner Announced

Anthony Porter says he “doesn’t like to be bored.”



It doesn’t seem like there was much chance of that happening while he was earning his undergraduate degree at U.C. Davis, commuting 127 miles from Merced (where he lived with his single mom and younger brother), and working two jobs. He says he was “working hard for the prospect of a life that was not government welfare or delayed bill payments.” Throughout that “chaos,” he says he was “always so tired and anxious, but ironically very happy, because I was making progress.”

The \$5,000 tuition reduction from the Goodwin Scholarship pushes that progress a little bit further down the road. Porter reflects back on the times when the brothers went hungry, or even homeless, and believes he can be more than just a future

meal ticket for his family; he can be a role model to his younger brother.

Porter is hoping to work in some area of Agricultural or Water Law. He says he sees smaller farmers and businesses losing out on issues that can lead to losing a business. After years of being buffeted by the winds of poverty and necessity, Porter is ready to make his own choices. Among those, he wants to make his mom proud, joking he’d like for her “to get a return on her investment.”

“Above all, I am elated that my decision to apply for law school is mine, and mine alone, he says. “I have decided this is how I will make a name for myself. Anthony Porter, a fatherless child, first generation success story, and Attorney at Law.”

# SJCL ON THE MOVE

New job? Big promotion? Special honor? Send your info to [mcartier@sjcl.edu](mailto:mcartier@sjcl.edu) and be part of the "SJCL on the Move!" column!

**David M. Benton** (Law '14) is now a Senior Associate Attorney in Wood, Smith, Henning & Berman's Fresno office.

**Sam S. Brar** (Law '12) is now Managing Attorney for Singerman Law's Northern California Office.

**Jordan L. Brown** (Law '16) and Nichola G. Krebsbach (Law '16) have opened the West Coast Resolution Group, Inc, offering mediation services out of their office in Visalia, CA.

**Daniel Cisneros** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Tyson & Mendes.

**Bryan C. Doss** (Law '07) is now an Associate Attorney at The Law Office of Thomas J. Burns, which serves the legal needs of the Zurich Insurance Group's insureds in Northern California state and federal trial courts.

**Jacobo Espindola** (Law '20) has partnered with **Gabriel J. Pacheco** (Law '14) to form Pacheco & Espindola.

**Heidi R. Falany** (Law '17) is now a Staff Attorney at Central California Legal Services.

**Shanna N. Hesketh** (Law '17) has opened the firm of Trauma Law California.

**Angela M. Karst** (Law '05) is now a Deputy City Attorney with the Fresno City Attorney's Office.

**Rajveer Kaur** (Law '21) is now an Associate Attorney at Wilkins, Drolshagen & Czeshinski LLP.

**Esmeralda Kinney** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at the Yarra Law Group.

**Tim Kuckelman** (Law '08) is joining Arhaus, Inc. as Chief Operating Officer.

**Pahoua C. Lor** (Law '08) is now a Fresno County Superior Court Judge.

**Ivan G. Martinez** (Law '17) is now an Associate Attorney at Peel Garcia LLP.

**Chris Matthes** (Law '16) is now Supervising Attorney at the Fresno Office of Michael Sullivan & Associates.

**Michael A. Mazzoni** (Law '13) is now a Partner at Yruegui & Roberts.

**W. Rod McCelland Jr.** (Law '94) is now an Administrative Law Judge for the CA State Division of Workers' Compensation. He previously served as a Senior Partner at Yruegui & Roberts.

**Adriana I. Mendoza-Gurrola** (Law '20) is now a Deputy County Counsel for Fresno County.

**Anthony J. Muia** (Law '20) is now a Fresno County Deputy District Attorney.

**Lanae Oviedo** (Law '20) is now an Attorney for Ciummo & Assoc.

**Manuel Parra, Jr.** (Law '17) is now an Associate Attorney with Pascuzzi, Pascuzzi & Stoker.

**Jeremiah L. Paul** (Law '12) is now a Principal Workers' Compensation Consultant at Epic Insurance Broker & Consultants.

**Jesus Pereda, Jr.** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Barsamian & Moody.

**Jessica Jaramillo Perez** (Law '21) is now a Staff attorney at the New American Legal Clinic (NALC).

**Angad S. Puniani** (Law '20) is now an attorney for the Madera Office of Fitzgerald, Alvarez & Ciummo.

**Brett L. Runyon** (Law '86) and **Carol Ann Seita** (Law '14) have teamed with two other experienced partners to open the first office of Tyler and Mendes in the Central Valley.

**Zena M. Sin** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Lang, Richert & Patch, APC.

**Jeffrey R. Suggs** (Law '08) is now an Associate Attorney at Albert and Mackenzie.

**Hon. Mary Thornton** (Law '08) has been reappointed to another three-year term on the Board of Parole Hearings, where she has served since 2019.

**Preetpal "Prince" Singh Toor** (Law '18) is now a senior associate at Wood Smith Henning & Berman's Fresno office.

**Pazong M. Vang** (Law '20) is now an attorney for the Fresno Superior Court.

**Elizabeth Villanueva** (Law '20) is now a Bakersfield City Attorney.

**Shannon N. Wallen** (Law '16) is now an Associate Attorney at Griswold LaSalle Cobb Dowd & Gin LLP.

## *In Memoriam*

*San Joaquin College of Law notes with sadness the passing of*

**Fred D. Douma** (Law '75). He is survived by his three sons and his wife, Blanche.

**Marilyn E. Olson Trafican** (Law '01). She is survived by her mother, sister, and two brothers, along with her three sons, a daughter, and four grandchildren.

# Thank you FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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