



# Inter Alia

SAN JOAQUIN COLLEGE OF LAW • Volume 32, Issue 4



Covid shut down the traditional courtroom Bar Admissions Ceremony, but that didn't stop U.S. Magistrate Judge **Erica Grosjean** from holding an impromptu "swearing in session" on November 18th for eight of our 24 July Bar Passers. Picture (L-R): **Hon. Erica Grosjean, Frankie Oliveras III, Ashley Emmerson, George Harris Jr., Nathan Martin, Jenna Halop, Surinder Padda, Travis Tubandt, and Dusty Nunes.**

## Impromptu Swearing In Ceremony

In keeping with the rare circumstances surrounding our newest group of courageous bar passers, a unique swear-in session was organized on the fly to fill in for the cancelled (COVID) FCBA sponsored courthouse event.

**T**he Honorable Erica Grosjean officiated the first-ever SJCL group swear-in, held at the Senior Citizens Center (and future home of the new SJCL law library) next door to the law school, on the Thursday following the bar result announcements.

Eight of our 24 bar passers took the attorney's oath together, with family and friends on hand to witness the happy occasion. The event served to bring to a close the students' extraordinary law school journeys and provided the cherry on top of their entrance into the new and exciting careers that await. We can't wait to see what each of our 24 newest bar passers do next!



**Travis Tubandt** interned for U.S. Magistrate Judge **Erica Grosjean** who was gracious enough to perform the impromptu ceremony.

## A Message From the Dean

As the year comes to an end, here's a brief update on 2021 events of note and changes on the horizon for 2022.

The WASC Interim Review has concluded. SJCL was commended for the improved bar passage rate, its significant efforts on program assessment and review, and its commitment to improving its physical facilities. The team recommended that SJCL continue its progress on collecting data and assessing the program and diversifying the board, adjunct faculty and full-time faculty as positions become available. No further reports are required until the Offsite Review in fall of 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in spring of 2025.

The Committee of Bar Examiners Five Year Site visit occurred virtually October 26 - 28, 2021. Although no formal report has yet been received, the team seemed impressed with SJCL's students, staff, faculty, and board. Going forward, SJCL will be eligible to apply for joint accreditation because of its WASC accreditation, eliminating the Five Year COBE site visits.

The American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar recently approved use of the GRE as an alternative examination in making law school admission decisions. Many ABA schools were already accepting the GRE. As a result, SJCL's Faculty Committee voted to accept either score from applicants. SJCL will track closely data regarding performance of students who were admitted based on a GRE score just as it currently tracks LSAT takers.

The February bar exam will be administered exclusively in person absent health department orders barring an in-person exam. This is in part a result of the great number of technological issues encountered during the July 2021 exam. In addition, the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE), the entity that creates the Multistate Bar Exam, will not provide the exam unless it is conducted in person due to concerns about the security of the exam.

The NCBE and the State Bar are on parallel tracks to create a new bar examination. It will take three to five years to complete the process. However, both efforts are focused on reducing the number of subjects tested on the exam while increasing the emphasis on the skills needed to practice law effectively – legal research, issue spotting, legal analysis, oral and written communication, and client relationships. A variety of testing mechanisms may be used including short answer, multiple choice, extended response, and perhaps even computer simulations.

SJCL expects to have possession of the current Clovis Senior Center January 1, 2023. Now begins serious planning for the transformation of the building into the Darryl B. Freedman Law Library. This facility will include classrooms, more varied study spaces for students, and potentially more clinical space consistent with the coming changes in the bar exam. We hope the Darryl B. Freedman Library will open to students in August of 2023. If you are interested in naming opportunities in the new library, please contact me.

Work proceeds on upgrading the technology of most of SJCL's existing classrooms. This will provide more effective hybrid instruction to give SJCL more flexibility. This work should be completed by May of 2022.

Finally, I want to acknowledge all the effort by students, faculty, staff, Board of Trustees, and donors over the last 22 months to confront and manage all the challenges created by the COVID pandemic. Every effort has been made to ensure that students continued to receive a solid legal education in a safe environment. That graduates have done well on the two bar examinations during this time while there has been no outbreak of COVID on campus reflects that these efforts have been successful.

Everyone at SJCL hopes that all of you have happy holidays and a fabulous new year!

Sincerely,



Janice Pearson

Dean



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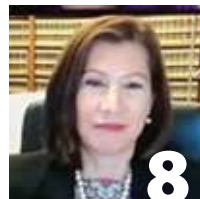
### Get Social with SJCL



# Inter Alia

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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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# “Dumb to our Place”

BY DIANE SKOUTI, ALUMNI LIAISON



Mark Arax, an award-winning author and journalist, has made the San Joaquin Valley and its people the focus of his writing career. His latest book, *The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California*, intertwines his investigative reporting with the history of California’s water issues. In October of 2021, Mr. Arax visited Professors’ Baggett and Guy’s Water Law class as a guest speaker and shared his philosophy on what has gone wrong.

Since the mid-1800’s, California – much like the rest of planet Earth – has endured our societies’ “culture of extraction.” The discovery of gold in the area above Sacramento set off the Gold Rush of 1849, which attracted tens of thousands of would-be miners (the original 49’ers). This resulted in the construction of some 4,000 gold mines and a boon of so many businesses and towns that it helped bring about California’s statehood.

Over a period of just four years, some \$2 billion in gold was extracted from the mountain range that rises to the east along the Central Valley.

This, according to Mark Arax, was the catalyst for California’s water woes, and our desperate need now for water laws – and water law attorneys – in order to resolve them. “We (Californian’s) are seized by a communal madness here,” Arax said to a mixed audience of in-person students and participants watching via Zoom.

“I believe it’s tied to the original sin of California, after we got rid of the indigenous (peoples), when we went into the mountains and captured the flow of rivers to extract and mine for gold. That was the start of it all.”

As he does so eloquently with the written word, Arax spoke about the history of the land while weaving in the stories he has investigated and shared, as exemplified in his most recent book, *The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California*.

Arax explained how large-scale hydraulic mining eventually replaced the individual miner’s pick and pan. The practice generated huge profits for the mining companies but ravaged great portions of the region’s landscape. Dams diverted rivers away from farmland to supply the mines with water, and mining sediment choked many of the waterways. In addition, the use of mercury to separate the gold from the sediment released large amounts of the toxin into the environment, polluting the water, the soil, and wildlife far and wide.

It was this diversion and pollution of California’s waterways that created conflict between the mining companies and the fledgling agriculture industry in the Central Valley, until the wealthy mine owners finally agreed that the growing of crops was a more valuable prospect than

any further pursuit of gold, once the mineral became scarce.

During this creation of “the most industrialized farm belt in the world,” the precious element in great demand and sought for extraction by both the growing populace of the state and the vast number of new farmers throughout the valley, quickly switched from gold, to water.

As Arax explains, the diversity of California’s “states of nature” (annual rainfalls of only a few inches on one end of the state and up to 140 inches on the other) and all the biomes and environs that exist in between, were bound to bring about disparity in access to water. By divvying up the supply, coming from both the snow melt (distributed by rivers and streams) and the aquifer (a grand underground lake that is tapped with wells to extract water in the dryer areas) it was always assumed there would be enough water to provide for the needs of this thousand-mile-long state.

The task of distributing the water supply evenly fell to the Central Valley Project (in the 1930’s) and the State Water Project (in the 1960’s). The Aqueduct, as it’s called, is “a combination of dams, canals, and a concrete river 444 miles long,” that was supposed to provide water enough for all. But continual droughts, the reckless management of water, and now climate change in combination with continual drought is prophesizing dire consequences for our state.

It’s been a folly of one mistake after another, according to Arax, that has caused the aquifer to drop far below its once flush levels and the ground around it to sink. Over-pumping for agriculture, over-tapping for new housing, and over-taxing with drip irrigation that enabled land never good enough for farming to be irrigated, are all the culprits in this crime.

“When the aqueduct system was built, we had 13 million people living here,” Arax said. “Today we have 40 million.” The question of hitting the limits of urban sprawl and farming must be answered. In addition, “Some 10 million of those 40 million living in CA are living in the ‘wildland urban interface’ which means they are living in the path of wildfire.” As whole communities are burning down, more are being built in the same places. It makes no sense, he added.

In his article *The Well Fixers Warning* (The Atlantic, August 2021) and his most recent book *The Dreamt Land...*, Arax cautions of the water shortages that have already begun to impact California.

One can’t help but wonder how such serious slights could have occurred. One reason, as Arax explained it, is a lack of general knowledge imparted in our schools about our place in the world. “We grow up dumb to our place.” He sighted an example from his own childhood about the name of his Fresno middle school: Tenaya. “I went to that school but was never told who or what

Tenaya was.” The school was named after Chief Tenaya, the great Indian Chief who was respected and well known. “Why aren’t we taught these things? Why don’t the powers that be think it’s important that we are taught such things?”

Some of the students in attendance for the presentation mirrored the fact that they too have grown up devoid of a clear understanding of the water issues facing their home state.

Since the 1800’s water issues have been plaguing our state, yet most of today’s kids know little to nothing about that, Arax said. That’s why the situation continues to grow worse with each decade: the lack of knowledge and insight into the issues and what must be done toward solution.

Arax says his desire to be less dumb about his place is what lead to his interest in observing and writing about his valley home.

“The great challenge of the next 15 years will be for the state to muster the will and manpower to hold the farmers accountable and make sure the draw of groundwater is stable.”

Arax contends that the only way to ensure this is to fallow (leave idle) one to one and a half million of the six million



Fresno Author and Journalist **Mark Arax**’s writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *California Sunday Magazine*, and many other publications.

acres of farmland in the San Joaquin Valley, a severe solution for a severe problem. “The farmers know it’s the only way to solve the water issue and allow the aquifer to replenish.”

The 2014 passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) sought to establish a framework of legislation that would protect California’s groundwater resources over the long-term. SGMA requires that local and regional agencies develop and implement sustainable groundwater management plans without causing “undesirable results.”

And that “over-pumped aquifers be brought back into balance by 2040.” But a whole lot of damage can happen between now and then. In his article from *The Atlantic*, Arax’s interview subject – the well fixer- said the damage happening to our valley and its water supply has already gone from “unprecedented” in scale, to “biblical.”

It will take water and environmental law to change this narrative. “California must now re-envision itself – the dream has to change,” Arax says. “If we are truly a place that wants to lead the world in how we respond to climate change, we’re going to have to respond to this whole disconnect in our resources.”



## NALC splits a \$250,000 Grant with Fresno Adult School



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**S**an Joaquin College of Law (SJCL) and the Fresno Adult School (FAS) are pleased to announce they will split a \$250,000 grant from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The grant will flow over a two-year period, enabling SJCL to file a minimum of 240 naturalization petitions free of charge. (This does not include filing fees in the event the client is not eligible for a fee waiver.)

Specifically, the funding will assist legal permanent residents living in California who are eligible for naturalization. In 2019 (the latest available data), 2,340,000 California residents were eligible for naturalization, at least 189,965 of which reside in the six counties which make up the Central Valley.

Through a partnership of FAS and SJCL's New American Legal Clinic (NALC), legal permanent residents take citizenship classes and, if needed, English language classes at FAS and then are provided free naturalization services through NALC, including filing necessary forms and providing representation through all phases of the process, with an attorney or DOJ accredited representative attending complex interviews.

In its nine-year history, NALC has provided such services for legal permanent residents from at least 30 different countries, helping over 3,400 individuals obtain their citizenship. NALC has two full-time attorneys, two DOJ accredited representa-

tives, one fulltime administrative assistant, volunteer attorneys from the community, and numerous SJCL student advocates filing cases under attorney supervision. NALC is one of the few nonprofit service providers willing to take on complex immigration cases.

The Valley's population is ethnically diverse; 22 percent of its population is foreign born and English is not the language spoken in the home for 45 percent of the population. Less than 15 percent of Valley residents hold a bachelor's degree. The poverty rate in Fresno County tops 20% (nearly double the national rate), leaving many individuals without the resources to obtain immigration legal services. According to a study published by Boundless, Fresno County has the second lowest rate nationwide of eligible people applying to become naturalized citizens. The study points to data from 2017 showing 54,000 eligible immigrants in Fresno County, with only 4.8 percent becoming U.S. citizens that year.

This combination demonstrates the Valley's need for English language training, citizenship instruction, and naturalization assistance to break the poverty cycle.

This grant, the fifth of its kind to FAS and SJCL, will help these prospective citizens fully participate in the American economy and life. Without this funding, SJCL could potentially be forced to cut the number of naturalizations completed each year by 50%.

# A Courtroom Challenge to a Medical Cap

It is not uncommon to see SJCL alumni battling it out in a courtroom, and we are perpetually pleased to see their decorum, respect, and knowledge on full display. This case, however, has an added aspect to it. Warren Paboojian, (Law '85), Adam Stirrup (Law '08), and Erik Peterson (Law '07) may have battled themselves into a case which could affect hundreds of California injury cases in the coming years, as reported below by the *Daily Journal*.

LOS ANGELES & SAN FRANCISCO

## Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2021

PERSPECTIVE

### Attorneys hope to use \$50M award to challenge MICRA cap

BY BLAISE SCEMAMA, DAILY JOURNAL

The \$50 million verdict a Fresno jury awarded a man who suffered brain injuries will be reduced by \$30 million due to a law limiting noneconomic losses in medical malpractice suits, the plaintiff's attorneys said Thursday, vowing to fight the reduction.

The defendant ambulance company said it will appeal the entire verdict, insisting its employees gave the patient proper care, but the plaintiff's attorneys said that might give them another chance at defeating the damages cap.

Warren Paboojian and Daniel R. Baradat of Baradat & Paboojian Attorneys won the \$50 million award for mortgage broker Nicholas Merlo, 39, and his wife Kaci last week and said they expect it to be substantially reduced by the judge under a section of the Civil Code.

The jury found American Ambulance staff caused Merlo's brain injuries by making mistakes with the breathing tube and driving him to a hospital 5 miles farther than needed.

The jury awarded Merlo \$20 million in past and future economic damages, plus \$20 million in noneconomic damages and \$10 million in lost consortium damages to his wife. However, bound by California Civil Code Section 3333.2., Judge Kristi C. Kapetan is expected to re-duce the noneco-

nomie and consortium awards to \$250,000 each, according to the plaintiff's attorneys.

In 1975, the Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act, or MICRA, was enacted to encourage doctors to keep practicing in California. The code section states: "In no action shall the amount of damages for noneconomic losses exceed" \$250,000. Plaintiff's have made several unsuccessful attempts in the Legislature and at the ballot box to get the cap changed.

Baradat called the code section "draconian" and said it needs to be updated to account for inflation.

"A lot of states have something like this, but they've indexed it for inflation," he said. "\$250,000, went a lot further in 1975 when they enacted this Civil Code section. The plaintiff's bar has tried to overcome it many times but is always unsuccessful because the insurance companies and the medical societies oppose it."

Responding via email Friday, American Ambulance's general counsel Erik S. Peterson said the company would appeal the award.

"This is a very sad situation," Peterson wrote. "Our paramedics treated Mr. Merlo like they would any patient, using their training and procedures to do everything they could to improve his declining condition. Despite their efforts and the efforts

of hospital staff, he suffered a very serious injury. Unfortunately, we will have to appeal the verdict."

Paboojian said American Ambulance's appeal will open the door for his team to fight the award cap on cross appeal. He said he hopes a persuasive argument that the company was grossly negligent would convince an appellate court to take another look at the damages cap.

"The courts have routinely upheld it," Paboojian said. "However, this is a gross negligence standard and we're hoping that given the fact that it's gross negligence, the appellate court will look at this differently."

In March 2018, Merlo was undergoing endoscopy surgery in a nonemergency hospital when his breathing became erratic and needed to be transferred, Baradat said.

On Tuesday, the jury found the ambulance company and its staff were fully liable for Merlo's injuries after they removed his intubation tube and weren't able to reinsert it while transporting Merlo. They also found Fresno Dr. Eric Graham, who treated and diagnosed Merlo, was not liable for Merlo's injuries. *Nicholas R. Merlo v. American Ambulance*, 18CECG3026. (F.C. Sup. Ct., filed Aug. 13, 2018).

Fresno attorney Adam B. Stirrup of Baradat & Paboojian also represented Merlo in the litigation.



Hon. Consuelo Callahan



Hon. Tani Cantil-Sakaue



Lindsay Fox, United Way



Rosa Oregel-Gonzalez (4L)



Dean Logan Tennerelli



Zofia Trexler, FCC Student

# It's Not About the Ketchup...



Women in leadership series serves up some good advice

BY DIANE SKOUTI, ALUMNI LIAISON

For one of her first jobs, California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakaue worked as a waitress in a lousy restaurant serving people who were often demanding and rude. She says at the time, the experience provided her with zero inspiration. And yet, she attributes that job, in part, to her successful career as the leader of the state's Judicial Branch, and her service as the chair of both the Judicial Council and Commission on Judicial Appointments.

How so, one might ask?

"Because I learned that it was never about the ketchup!" Justice Cantil-Sakaue said during a panel discussion entitled "How to Become and Thrive as a Leader". As part of the Women in Leadership Series, the virtual program was presented via Zoom by the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California's Special Emphasis Program, Federal Bar Association, Fresno County Women Lawyers, and Women Lawyers of Sacramento.

Over a hundred participants from across the state logged in to the panel discussion, which included student perspectives from Rosa Oregel-Gonzalez, a 4L at SJCL who immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico at the age of 12 and will graduate this spring. Rosa was awarded SJCL's 2021 First Generation Student Scholarship, the 2021 La Raza Lawyers Association Scholarship, the 2020 Fresno County Women's Scholarship, and the 2019 George A. Hopper Moot Court Best Brief Award. Zofia Trexler, a Fresno City College student who will graduate with three Associates

degrees and a Cal Law Scholar certificate this spring, also spoke on the panel.

During her introductory statement, the Chief Justice noted that rudeness and anger are often aimed at those in service industries and beyond, but if you pay close enough attention, you learn that the reasons are always much bigger than say, an urgent need for ketchup. Years later, as a new attorney and ultimately a judge, she found that her go-to phrase applied to many situations in law and has helped her to maintain her confidence while meeting each new challenge in her career.

It is a great advantage, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakaue said, to employ emotional intelligence when striving for a leadership role. "You can't stand in the shadows; you need to speak up – but civilly – be inclusive and respectful. Incorporate the ideas of others that can bolster your position. Let people know who you are and show up."

Panelist Judge Consuelo Callahan, United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, agreed. "You can find experiences that can benefit you every day (at any age). You need to look to those people who others listen to. Those who are able to gain the cooperation of others and listen to their ideas."

Judge Callahan recommended that aspiring women leaders get involved in causes that they feel are important, and to put themselves in the presence of others with similar goals. "You need to put yourself out there and even be a little uncomfortable; you will learn from it." She explained how the development of leadership skills comes



# Irene Luna Appointed Fresno County Superior Court Judge

BY MISSY MCKAI CARTIER, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

When Irene Luna graduated from San Joaquin College of Law in 2006, she went to work for her dad, Frank Ramirez. She loved being with him, but ultimately, the Civil Law he practiced was not giving her the chance in the courtroom she began to crave. And so, after five years, she moved to the Fresno County Public Defender's Office, where she had six jury trials in just nine months. She briefly returned to working with her dad, but the call of the courtroom never left and she returned to public defense in 2014, working in both Fresno and San Benito Counties for Fitzgerald, Alvarez and Ciummo.

Meanwhile, as her father continued in his career path, he began to contemplate becoming a judge. He never made it, passing away in 2018 with his dream unfulfilled.

As time went on, judges and other attorneys mentioned that she should apply for that position, pointing out the value of her legal experience and her "judicial tem-

perament." She says she had never really thought about it prior to this encouragement. When she got the call on November 8th telling her she had made it, she admits she had "no idea" she would be appointed. She adds "I don't know how it happened. We're still in shock."

Her life right now is, as she describes it, "a whirlwind." She and her husband currently live in Monterey, but are moving back to Fresno, which she considers home. As this article goes to press, the Bullard High graduate has yet to receive a date for her enrobenment, or what department she'll run.

However, she is sure of one thing; her father would be so proud. One of his dreams was that all of his children graduate college, and he saw that fulfilled. While Luna does not feel she is fulfilling his personal dream of becoming a judge, she admits it was a final factor in applying for the position, adding "I always wanted to make him proud of me."



Governor Gavin Newsom appointed her to replace the retiring Judge W. Kent Hamlin. Luna, a Democrat, will earn \$223,829 annually in her new position and will have to run for reelection in 2024.

Luna becomes the 60th SJCL Bench Officer and the 26th Superior Court Judge among the alumni ranks.

from taking on challenges and overcoming the fear that comes from that.

"Successful people still get scared a lot," she said. "I just ask myself: is my own death or great bodily injury involved? If not, then I know I can survive it and learn something useful!"

"Developing as a leader requires listening to all sides, being able to look at things broadly. We can't get offended by other points of view," she said.

Judge Callahan explained how it's never too early or too late to develop leadership skills. "Students and young people who have not yet had the opportunity to achieve a title can definitely be leaders," she said. "We need to have the courage to evaluate a situation and then make decisions based on our own beliefs. Listen to others, but don't follow them blindly."

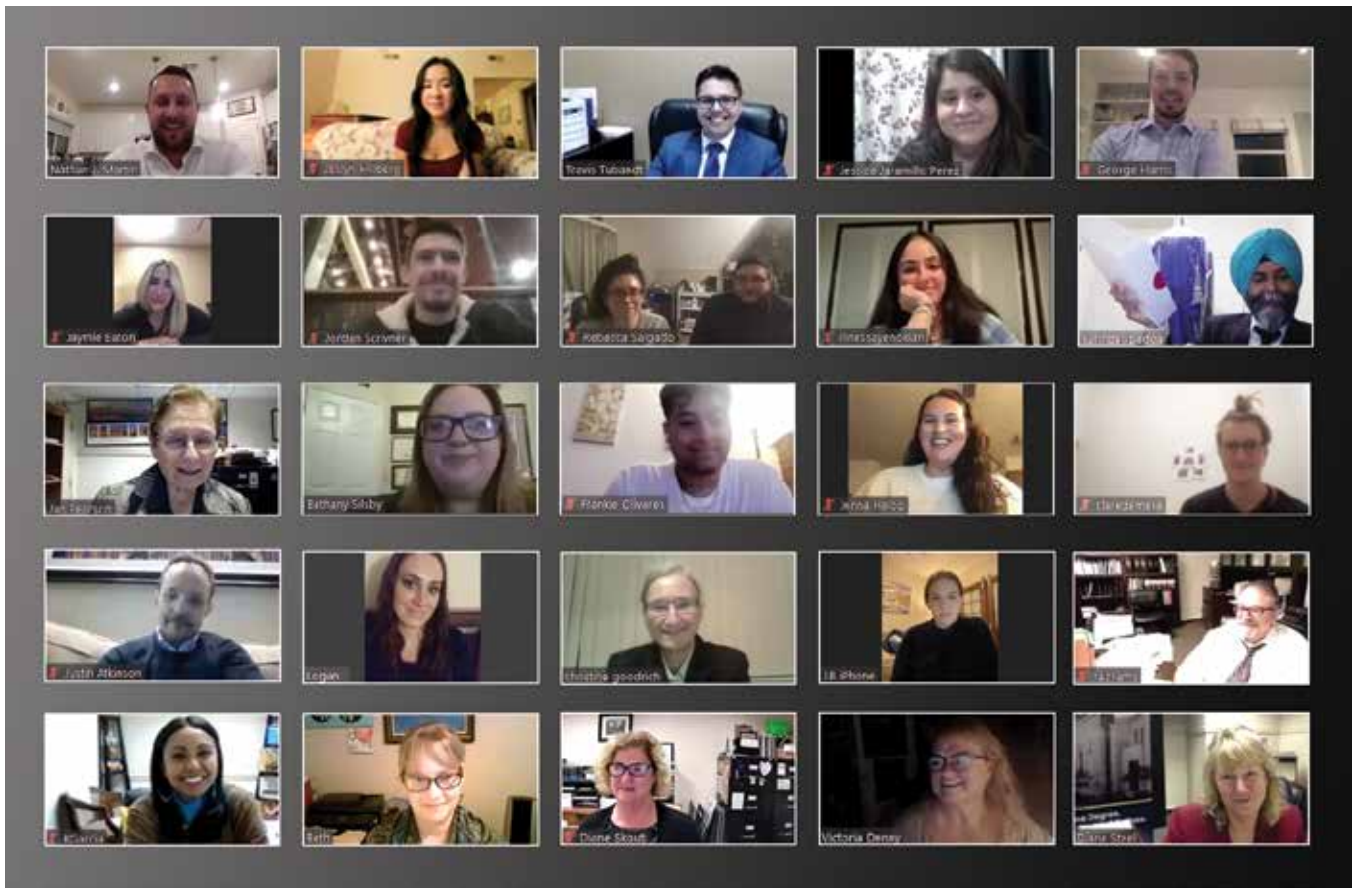
Fellow panelist Lindsay Fox, President and CEO of the United Way for Fresno and Madera counties noted that long resumes with bullet points are not always indicative of great leadership skill. She said that those experiences that are nuanced, those times we overcame obstacles or were provided with opportunities to watch and observe, are invaluable. Having proximity to good leaders can be a huge benefit, she said. You can see how they operate – both good and bad – and learn what leadership culture really is. "If you can observe decision making, mentorship, the management of stressful situations, it's the best way to learn."

Fox invoked a phrase by Fred Rogers of "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood" fame: Look for the helpers. "Always watch for those people who can help you by providing

support and mentorship wherever you are, and always be sure to thank them," she said.

A recurring theme expressed by each of the panelist-leaders was to find comfort and confidence in who we are, know our own strong points, our own stories, and listen to the stories of others. "We are all worthy" said Judge Callahan.

The Chief Justice agreed: "The best way to overcome obstacles – is to have obstacles," she said. "If you want to be able to make lives better and contribute to policy, you need the experience of having had challenges (yourself). Obstacles are like the wind," she added. "They cause us – like trees – to develop roots, to dig down and grow stronger so that ultimately, we may thrive."



# Congratulations to SJCL's Bar Passers

On November 15, 2021, San Joaquin College of Law's faculty and staff celebrated the success of twenty-four Bar Passers on their passing of the July Bar.

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

Like two dozen other San Joaquin College of Law July Bar passers, Jaymie Eaton learned she passed the Bar on Friday, November 12, at 6:00 p.m. The following Monday morning, she was quickly sworn in because McCormick Barstow had already calendared their newest Associate Attorney for cases in December.

Jaymie was not the only “you pass, you’re hired” Bar passer. By the time Monday evening’s Virtual Toast to Bar Passers rolled around, Surinder Padda had already put in his first full day on the job at Central California Legal Services, where

he now works on their Housing Team. It has always been his wish to “be the voice for the people.” Rebecca Salgado has been interning at CCLS and hopes to be added to its Health Team.

Nathan Martin is excited to continue his work, now as an Associate Attorney, at Wanger, Jones, Helsley, where he has been clerking on general business cases. Meanwhile, George Harris is already an Associate Attorney at Michael Sullivan & Assoc., cashing in on his “you pass, you’re hired” offer. Clare Demera is in that same blissful situation as the newest Associate Attorney at Pascuzzi Pascuzzi & Stoker.

Travis is now In-House Counsel for Zinkin Development, where he was enjoying practicing Property Law, and is thrilled to find he is now also entrusted with Entertainment Law in the form of athletes’ contracts.

Other Bar passers have deals with details that “need to be ironed out,” while still others have interviews piled up, including several working toward a position of Deputy District Attorney.

The laughter and cheers at the Virtual Toast were a far different scene from what the Bar passers experienced upon seeing their results three days earlier. Frankie says his girlfriend videotaped the moment, which reveals him “crying and bawling for about a minute and a half.”

Joselyn Hillberg says she “expected to cry if she failed,” and was surprised she cried when she passed.

Nathan Martin also admits he “started crying like a little baby.”

Innessa Yenokian says she wanted to be alone when she checked her Bar pass status, because “It’s scary to let a lot of other people down. They don’t tell me

how much they were dreading me having to take it again.”

Bethany Silsby also understands this family dynamic. She says she was “dumb-founded” when she discovered she had passed, but then went out and presented her parents with shirts that read “Beth is my Lawyer.”

Several Bar passers were unsure of their status after the screen came up reading “Pass” in “the tiniest letters.” Travis worried it might indicate those grading the Bar had decided to pass on grading his.

All in all, there was great joy among the Bar passers. Clare Demera says she drank a bottle of champagne. The whole bottle? “Yes.”

Jenna Halop says, “I went out and drowned myself in sushi.”

Surinder Padda and his wife found themselves screaming and shouting in River Park upon seeing the good news. The good news, however, was amazing news to his family, who had no idea he was attending law school. “Nobody knew,” he says, so he made the announcement to his in-laws by presenting them with a box of sweets. He admits “They’re still mad they didn’t know.” Meanwhile, his whole village now knows and is celebrating. “Now I’m a role model,” he says, adding “I am a true American Dream.”

## *Congratulations* TO ALL BAR PASSERS, EACH CELEBRATING THEIR OWN DREAM

Jared Bertoni	Dustin J. Moses
Clare E. Demera	Dusty B. Nunes
Jaymie A. Eaton	Frankie C. Olivares III
Ashley N. Emmerson	Surinder Padda
Rosalia Estrada	Nicholas Penner
Fernando M. Garcia	Ryan Petty
Jenna L. Halop	Dana Robnett
George I. Harris, Jr.	Rebecca A. Salgado
Joslyn N. Hillberg	Jordan S. Scrivner
Ali M. Huda	Bethany Silsby
Jessica Jaramillo Perez	Travis J. Tubandt
Nathan J. Martin	Innessa Yenokian



Bar passer **Surinder Padda** (In the Blue Suit) didn’t tell his extended family he was becoming a lawyer until he actually passed the Bar. His swearing in was the first time they had a chance to participate and congratulate him during any sort of ceremony, so they turned out in force.

# Dependency Court Attorneys Focus on Finding Hope



(L-R) **Diego Andrade** (Law '16), **Jordan Brown** (Law '16), **Honorable Hugo Loza**, Presiding Judge of the dependency courts for Tulare County Superior Court, and **Tim Bragg** (Law '11).

BY **DIANE SKOUTI**, ALUMNI LIAISON

On any given day in this country, a lot of media attention is given to legal issues facing criminals, huge corporations, celebrities, and lost souls. It is rare, however, for the tribulations of the misguided, everyday folks who wind up in dependency court to receive any notice.

For three SJCL alumni, the role of dependency court advocate is hugely significant, for it is there that struggling families have the potential to be saved.

Diego Andrade (Law '16), says he always intended to become a law enforcement officer. As a young man who grew up in Tulare County, he became a father at 19 (during his first year of college), and ultimately attained a degree in Criminology from Fresno State. Upon learning there was a law school he could attend locally, his interest switched from law enforcement to advocacy, and he enrolled in SJCL.

"I took the risk," he said during a recent lunch with his fellow grads-turned colleagues. "I knew it would be tough, but I had faith in myself. I knew if I put the work

in and I could figure it out and adapt, that I could do it."

Diego continued working at various jobs (including pizza delivery driver) throughout law school, but he says his position representing parents in dependency court has made it all worthwhile. "This area of law is emotional and intimate. You are intruding into people's lives. Children are being removed from their parent's custody."

Diego says the best part of his job is when, after the ups and downs of a case, the parent is successful, and the child is returned to their custody. He described the feeling as "a round of applause moment" because the parent did all they needed to do to get their lives back on track. There are often mental health issues, or substance abuse, or unhealthy relationships, but when the parent is able to resolve their issues and become a functioning member of society it's very rewarding, he said.

"That's when it feels like we have really helped the family, and ultimately the community overall," he added.

Jordan Brown, Law '16 agreed. "You are dealing with people at their utmost

worst. Their kids have been taken away, there is probably not a worse time in their life, and you are trying to explain their legal options."

Jordan, who formed a study group with Diego during law school and now counts him among his colleagues on the team of dependency court attorneys contracted with The Allen Law Firm in Visalia, says the job touches on differing areas of the law.

"Parenthood is a fundamental right, protected by the constitution just like our liberty. We have family law issues, and sometimes criminal law issues, so we deal with a lot." Jordan said much of the time they provide their parent clients with common sense encouragement, almost like a life coach. "You have to have a heart for people," he added.

Jordan was a business owner/entrepreneur for 14 years before starting law school. He and his wife owned a coffee roasting business which he says was "super fun" but didn't predict a great deal of longevity. Jordan says his business experiences

# Alumnus Makes the “40 Under 40” List

Congratulations to Adam Rushing (Law '13), who has been named to Business Street Online's "40 Under 40" Class of 2021! He is the Chief Operating Officer and Board Member for the California Autism Center.

“I’m honored to receive the “40 under 40,” Adam says. “Since I am a transplant from England, becoming part of the Fresno community was very important to me. Although I do have family in Fresno, I have made it a major focus to build my network of friends and contacts in the business community. I couldn’t have achieved what I have without the huge help and support of my friends, colleagues, and family.”

Adam was born and raised in London, England. He studied English and History at Leeds University. Upon graduating, he and his family moved to Fresno. Adam attended San Joaquin College of Law, passing the Bar in 2013. He practiced Personal Injury and Employment Law for four years at the Law Offices of Goldberg & Ibarra before shifting into the autism services field. Adam joined California Autism Center and Learning Group in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer and Board Member.

“I am close personal friends with the founder of California Autism Center,” he explains. “While the company was growing in its early stages, we worked together (unofficially) on building CAC’s internal compliance and HR department. Once the company was big enough, I ended up joining CAC full time as Chief Operating Officer... I was drawn to CAC by the passion of the staff and the cause of helping children with ASD and their families.”

Business Street Online say the annual list “recognizes some of the top young business professionals in the public and private sectors in Central California. They are leaders in their communities and have achieved great success before the age of 40. They were nominated by their peers and represent the future of the Central Valley.”

Considering the average age of a student at San Joaquin College of Law is 28, it isn’t easy for grads to achieve notability in the community before the age of 40. And yet,



Adam is the sixth graduate to make the list in its 13-year history. Prior honorees include Lisa Bennett (Law '03), Adam Stirrup (Law '08), Sevag Tateosian (Law '08), Rachelle Taylor Golden (Law '13), and Linda Barreto (Law '14).

piqued his interest in law. Although not a stellar student during his undergrad years, Jordan says he felt his interest in law could help him make it through law school. He continued to work his coffee business throughout and was able to push himself from the rank of next to last in his class to the top 17 by the time he graduated.

Tim Bragg (Law '11) said that only about half the advice he and his colleagues give their clients is legal advice. The other half is more “life-skills” guidance he said. “We tell them they need to get it together. We use our own life experiences and roles as parents to empathize with their challenges, sort of like holding their hand (as they navigate their way toward success).”

Tim, who spent some 14 years as a journalist before enrolling in law school, says he wanted his 2nd career to be stable and long-lived. The blows from the economy and the growth of digital media has steadily

choked the newspaper industry, leading to bureau closures across the country.

Tim says he enjoys being his own boss. He says it’s great to have the stable income of the contract with the dependency court, in addition to retention of his own schedule and work/life balance. Each of the three graduates have their own solo practitioner law offices, where they are free to take on additional cases if they wish.

Diego agrees with the ease of schedule, noting that he is able to adjust to accommodate his wife’s turn to earn her teaching credential. “The flexibility of this job is ideal for my family,” he said.

Diego says his role in dependency court reflects his ultimate definition of the attorney’s mission – to help fellow community members to improve the quality of their lives.

All three of the alumni agreed that the victories are not as plentiful as the fails

among the parents they work with, but they say they never stop looking for little bits of hope.

“It’s really tough when you have to tell them their parental rights are being terminated and there is nothing more we can do for them,” Jordan said. He added that dependency court is collaborative in nature. The collaboration among the various constituents is there to assist the family holistically. “The question is, can we get these parents the help they need to put this family back together.”

Ultimately it is a belief in social justice that keeps the dependency counselors upbeat and motivated. Their ultimate goal is to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to correct their wrongs. “Many don’t make it, but we help to give them the opportunity for a do-over, and that is what’s most rewarding,” said Tim.



# Looming Attorney Shortage?

BY **DIANE SKOUTI**, ALUMNI LIAISON

One has only to glance at SJCL's online Job Board to see how many law firms and agencies are seeking to fill open attorney positions in the Central Valley. Often times, a job listing is re-posted more than once because it has gone unfilled for more than a month. And it seems paralegals are just as hard to come by, as noted by local attorneys like Glen Gates (Law '78), who says his firm has had trouble filling paralegal positions as well.

In early November of 2021, corporate law firms in San Francisco and the Bay Area were reporting that they had on occasion, turned away clients due to a shortage of associate attorneys. With a windfall of work coming through their doors (some due to COVID), both large and smaller firms reported passing up client opportunities due to short staffing. Losses in potential revenue for some larger firms were estimated to be in the \$ millions. (Mitchell, Rick. November 2, 2021.)

Likewise, in September of 2021, the District Attorney in Pueblo, Colorado was struggling to fill five vacant attorney positions in his office. Due to a shortage of attorneys across Colorado, law students who have yet to graduate or are awaiting bar results are now being considered for positions where previously, more experience was preferred. Due to understaffing, postponed court hearings have caused a backlog of delayed cases, and the quest for crime victims seeking justice is prolonged even more than usual.

When combined with the current upturn in instances of violent crime, the situation in Colorado, as well as much of the rest of the country, is dire. (Chuck, Natalie, September 28, 2021).

In addition to the usual ebb and flow cycles of interest in professions like the law, a whole lot of baby boomer attorneys are now preparing to retire. Where plenty of older, country lawyers were once happy to serve those living outside of city limits,

the tendency of lawyers today is to base themselves in urban areas where the salaries are higher. This "graying bar" of attorneys, who are retiring and not being replaced, aids in the proliferation of "legal deserts" in rural areas and small towns. In these areas, folks needing assistance with everyday issues like contract disputes, estate planning, real estate transactions and divorce, must search far and wide for legal help.

While lawyer jokes abound about billable hours and the fleecing of the uninformed, the fact is that salaries in rural areas are often too low to meet the financial burdens of recent law school graduates and their mountainous student loan debt. Thus, as addressed at a forum on the SJCL campus back in 2018, gaps in legal access in rural communities continue to grow.

A 2019 report in the ABA Journal noted that the New Mexico Supreme Court was considering using licensed legal technicians to provide civil legal services in order to improve the availability of legal services

Chuck, Natalie, September 28, 2021. "District Attorney's staff shortage forcing victims to wait for justice." KOAA News 5: <https://www.koaa.com/news/crime/district-attorneys-staff-shortage-forcing-victims-to-wait-for-justice>

Mitchell, Rick. November 1, 2021. "Wake Up Call: Talent Shortage Hits California Firms/Wallets". Bloomberg Law: Wake Up Call: Talent Shortage Hits California Firms' Wallets ([bloomberglaw.com](https://www.bloomberglaw.com))

Weiss, Debra C., May 28, 2019). "Facing shortage of lawyers in some areas, this state is considering licensing legal technicians". Found at: Facing shortage of lawyers in some areas, this state is considering licensing legal technicians ([abajournal.com](https://www.abajournal.com))

Statz, M., Termuhlen, P. October 1, 2020. "Rural Legal Deserts Are a Critical Health Determinant", American Journal of Public Health 110, no. 10, pp 1519-1522 From: Rural Legal Deserts Are a Critical Health Determinant | AJPB | Vol. 110 Issue 10 ([aphapublications.org](https://aphapublications.org))

Law School Transparency. Law School Enrollment Change, 1963 - 2019 - LST Data Dashboard ([law-school-transparency.com](https://www.law-school-transparency.com))

in the state. (Weiss, Debra C., May 28, 2019). Of all the counties in New Mexico at that time, some 21% had five or fewer lawyers and two had no attorneys at all. Other states, like Washington and Utah, have already begun to license nonlawyer legal technicians to address the same issues.

While cost has always been a factor associated with legal access, some estimates claim that the cost of hiring a lawyer is now out of reach to some 80% of the population - yet most in this group do not qualify for free legal aid or programs. In addition, the COVID pandemic has uncovered yet another context for "legal needs." With so many individuals experiencing financial difficulties, unemployment, and health concerns due to COVID, it has been demonstrated that a shortage of attorneys, and specifically rural attorneys, "has significant impact on public health," (Statz, M., Termuhlen, P., 2020)

While the relationship between public health and attorneys in civil and criminal contexts is well known, the same relationship is responsible for establishing equitable health-related laws and policies that impact health care. It is the interventions of attorneys that transform institutional practices and help bring about the stability necessary for health maintenance. Thus, the justice gaps that exist rurally are leaving parallel rural health inequities in their wake.

As a service that is needed at one time or another by just about everyone - ultimately as unavoidable as the undertaker - it would seem like a win/win for college graduates to consider law as a sound and profitable career choice.

During years of U.S. recession, an uptick in law school enrollments often follows. But law school enrollment trends since 2010 have been consistently on the decline, which trickles down to fewer practicing attorneys. (Law School Enrollment Change, 1963 - 2019 - LST Data Dashboard (lawschooltransparency.com))

In addition to these factors, tuition costs, ever toughening bar admissions exams, or the misses in the application of justice itself have each had a hand in the trends. It suffices to say that students currently enrolled in law school can take comfort in the knowledge that there will very likely be more than one job awaiting them upon joining the bar.

# Attorneys Wanted

Seeking attorney hosts to offer job shadowing and internship opportunities for local high school and college students

BY **LOGAN TENNERELLI**, DEAN OF STUDENTS

Bullard High School, Fresno City College, and Fresno State are seeking attorneys to offer and host internship and job shadowing opportunities for local pre-law students interested in the legal field. With your help, we can give aspiring lawyers in the Central Valley the opportunity to explore different areas of the law, visit a courtroom or witness a trial, experience a professional work environment, connect with attorneys, and expand their knowledge of the law. We hope this opportunity will increase students' excitement for and trust in the justice system, enhance student confidence and awareness of the legal field, understand professional etiquette, learn networking skills and make professional contacts.

By offering a job shadowing or internship experience, you can help local students get an up-close opportunity to see what a typical day as a lawyer looks like. This may be the first professional experience - let alone exposure to the legal profession - that many students in the region will have.

This job-shadowing and internship initiative also gives attorneys, judges, and legal professionals a chance to guide and inspire future lawyers, expose students to new areas of the law and areas of legal need in Fresno, identify potential longer-term interns, and get to know students in the area. Interested attorneys and judges are welcome to:

- Host a job-shadowing experience in-person or virtually for individual or small groups of students on a one-time or rolling basis.
- Invite students to watch hearings

and/or trials open to the public.

- Offer paid or unpaid short-term internships for local students.
- Volunteer to speak to students during various high school and college courses that are part of the pathway, and/or:
- Propose other opportunities for students to see what you do.

If you are willing to consider being a host, please reach out to SJCL Alumni Coordinator Diane Skouti (dskouti@sjcl.edu). Opportunities will be posted on SJCL's webpage under the Careers tab.

This internship initiative is part of Fresno's regional Pathway to Law, which currently serves more than 600 students. The Pathway is a collaboration between Bullard High School, Fresno City College, Fresno State and San Joaquin College of Law. The goal is to provide an educational pipeline for diverse students interested in law-related careers, particularly first-generation students and students who identify as members of groups that are underrepresented in the legal profession. The partnering schools are proud to share that this regional pathway was awarded the 2021 State Bar of California Education Pipeline Award. Fresno City College also received the 2021 Diversity Champion Award. We look forward to welcoming more attorneys in the region into the pathway family.

Thank you in advance for supporting our regional pathway to law and our community's future lawyers!



# The SJCL/Olmos Banquet Legacy Continues

After a Covid-induced hiatus, the Mario G. Olmos Banquet came roaring back this year, celebrating with a sell-out crowd at Arte Américas on November 5, 2021. Also roaring back: SJCL's presence among the winners of the eight scholarships. Seven of the eight went to current students, while the eighth went to someone who aspires to be an SJCL professor.

*Congratulations to them all.*

## Mario G. Olmos Scholarship

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### Jacqueline Vazquez (2L)

From a very young age, Ms. Vazquez knew how important her education would be to her and her future. It was by chance that Ms. Vazquez applied to the Fresno Superior Court and began her work in the courtroom as a Criminal Law Examiner. It was this experience that led her to go to law school. She identified with those she saw in the courtroom, and knew that she could make a difference.

## Frank Ramirez Scholarship

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### Lorena Vargas (4L)

Ms. Vargas is currently a student at San Joaquin College of Law. She indicated one of the factors that motivated her to attend law school was to be able to provide for her two children. As she wrote in her essay, she, "... had the power to change things, but first (she) had to become the attorney, not the assistant."

## Robert Tomás Olmos Scholarships

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### Rosa Oregel Gonzalez (4L)

Rosa Oregel Gonzalez is a graduate of California State University, Stanislaus. Earlier this year she had a cancer scare and had a benign tumor removed from her lung. Despite that, she still managed to keep her grades up and currently ranks fourth in class.



### Armida Mendoza (4L)

From a very young age, Armida had to financially help her family by working with her parents in the fields. Despite this, Armida's parents always encouraged her educational growth. While working with her parents in the fields, Armida witnessed firsthand the vulnerability of her community and the lack of resources available to fight for their rights.



## Michael McGonigle Scholarship



### Cindy Arredondo (3L)

Ms Arredondo graduated from Fresno State with a degree in Criminology Forensic Behavioral Science, a General Business Minor, and certificates in both Legal Studies and Co-Curricular Leadership all while working two jobs and being a single mother. Citing a desire to make her family and son proud while fighting for the rights of those most disenfranchised as the reason for attending law school.

## Larry Hoskins Scholarship



### Hannah Ravizza (1L)

Hannah Ravizza had a very comfortable lifestyle until at only ten years of age she lost her father. Her Dad, who had been at every dance recital, choir performance and basketball game would no longer provide the strong support and counsel that she had so appreciated. After her father's death Hannah knew that she could not let him down and followed in his footsteps when she graduated from Fresno State with a BS in Criminology-Victimology.

## La Raza Lawyers Association Scholarships



### Marisol Cruz Rodriguez (2L)

Marisol Cruz Rodriguez is working hard to become an attorney versed in immigration law. She has previously worked in the legal field and this past summer worked as a law clerk for a local law firm that primarily represents poor Mexican farm workers.



### Primavera Martinez

Ms. Martinez has known since she was young that she wanted to use her voice to advocate for justice. As the granddaughter of Mexican immigrants and migrant workers, Ms. Martinez is reminded daily of the struggles that her family has faced. With her legal education, Ms. Martinez plans to create programs which encourage and support future lawyers in Fresno County. Ms. Martinez also aspires to become a teacher at SJCL.

## Our Graduates are our Lifblood

As the ambassadors of your alma mater, you play a key role in perpetuating SJCL's legacy.

We count on you to:

- Share your law school experience with someone who may be interested in the practice of law.
- Participate in the robust SJCL Alumni Network with your peers and colleagues.
- Serve as a mentor to recent graduates and current students looking for experienced guidance.

As a non-profit institution, SJCL is in need of your time and financial support. You can start by joining the Alumni Association at [www.sjcl.edu/alumni](http://www.sjcl.edu/alumni). You might also consider becoming a mentor. For more information on how you can get involved, contact Diane Skouti at [dskouti@sjcl.edu](mailto:dskouti@sjcl.edu).

## *In Memoriam*

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

**Ivan F. Altamura** (Law '95) on October 8, 2020. He is survived by his wife, Alisa, son Nikolas, and daughter Marina, as well as his parents and his in-laws. Ivan joined Capitol Advocacy as a lobbyist in January 2015 and was known as the heart of the firm.

**Terry C. Hillblom** (Law '91) on September 6, 2021. Terry is survived by his wife of 45 years, Sandra; his son, Christopher; his daughter Kimberly and son-in-law, Dale Burr; along with five grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

**Gary M. Pertuit** (Law '84). Prior to his retirement, he was a Tulare County Senior Deputy District Attorney.

**Terry A. Wapner** (Law '86) on December 4, 2021. He is survived by his wife, Chanel, along with their daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren. In addition, he is survived by his brother, a brother-in-law, and two sisters-in-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!

**Corina J. Aguirre** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at Richard G. Cenci, Attorney at Law, in Fresno.

**Osmundo J. Arguello** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at Zwicker & Associates, P.C. in Glendale.

**Emilio Avellaneda** (Law '19) is now a Staff Attorney for California Rural Legal Assistance in Stockton.

**Iqbal Singh Bains** (Law '18) has opened the Bains Law Offices, with a focus on Estate Planning, Business, and Family Law.

**Jesse Banuelos Jr.** (Law '18) is now a Deputy City Attorney with the Fresno City Attorney's Office.

**Daniel Cisneros** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at the Ericksen Arbuthnot Fresno Office.

**John E. Dyer** (Law '06) is now a Staff Attorney at Central California Legal Services.

**Jorge Gallegos Jr.** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at Fowler Helsel Vogt in Fresno.

**Steven J. Graham** (Law '09) is now the Director of Catholic Charities in Merced. Last year, the organization provided food to nearly 50,000 people, an 87% increase over the previous year.

**Leticia Guzman** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Public Interest Law Foundation, a private firm that does public agency law.

**Bryce Yonehiro Hatakeyama** (Law '09) is now an Administrative Law Judge for the State Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

**Manny E. Ignacio** (Law '11) is now an associate Attorney at the Camarillo Offices of LightGabler, where he defends employers in matters including wage and hour, class action, harassment, and discrimination claims in state and federal court, as well as regulatory compliance claims.

**Cristina Jelladian-Buchner** (Law '04) has opened the firm Jelladian Buchner Law, APC.

**Michael A. Kerr** (Law '17) has opened the Law Office of Michael Kerr, PC in San Diego, where he specializes in Estate Planning.

**Mao Lee** (Law '16) is now a Deputy City Attorney with the Fresno City Attorney's Office.

**Kelly Liu** (Law '20) is now a Research Attorney for the Fresno County Superior Court.

**Irene A. Luna** (Law '06) has been appointed to the Fresno Superior Court by Governor Gavin Newsom. She becomes the 60th Alumni Bench Officer and the 26th Superior Court Judge.

**Michael P. Mahoney** (Law '11) is now Legal Counsel for Netafim USA, the world's largest drip irrigation company.

**William E. McComas** (Law '08) has been appointed by Fresno State President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval to the Fresno State Advisory Board. The Board serves in an advisory capacity and is used at the discretion of the President to seek counsel and advice as needed. McComas is also currently Vice President of the Fresno County Bar Association and President of Central California Legal Services.

**Joshua D. Milton** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at Bruce J. Berger Law Firm, Inc., in Clovis.

**Michelle M. Mora** (Law '18) is now an attorney for the California Correctional Peace Officers Association.

**Varduhi Rose Petrosyan** (Law '99) is now an Associate Attorney at Pillemer & Pillemer - A Boutique Law Firm Specializing in Subrogation, Civil Litigation and Family Law Mediation in Encino.

**Heather N. Phillips** (Law '08) is now an Associate Attorney at the Riverside-based Employment Law Firm Castillo Harper.

**J. Brent Richardson** (Law '01) is now an Associate Attorney at Jamison Chappel & Beaumont in Oakhurst, where he specializes in drafting contracts, resolutions, and ordinances as well as handling employment issues, evictions, and transactional disputes.

**Dan L. Rogers** (Law '08) has started the IP Firm of Premack Rogers PC. Their clients are seasoned video game developers and publishers, creative tech entrepreneurs, social media gurus, and digital artists and musicians.

**Tomas J. Ross** (Law '13) announces Allstate Insurance Company has changed the name of its Fresno legal office to The Law Offices of Tomas J. Ross. This in-house counsel office handles civil litigation matters in Kern, Tulare, Kings, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Inyo and SLO Counties for Allstate Insurance Company.

**Kelsey Armstrong Seib** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at Michael H. Meyer, Chapter 13 Trustee, in Fresno.

**Todd B. Stermer** (Law '06) has been appointed City Clerk by the Fresno City Council.

**Keith B. Teague** (Law '13) is now an Associate Attorney at Hanna Brophy.

**Libby Hellwig Teague** (Law '14) is now an attorney for Fresno County Counsel.

**Preetpal Singh Toor** (Law '18) is now an Associate Attorney at HBG Law in Modesto.

**S. Nicole M. Tucker** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney in the Fresno offices of Atkinson Andelson Loya Ruud & Romo.

**René Turner-Sample** (Law '88), co-owner of Freedman Law and Cornwell & Sample, has been named as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, one of the premier legal associations in North America. She is the first female attorney from Fresno to receive this prestigious honor and is also the only Fresno-area female plaintiffs' lawyer to have two personal injury jury verdicts in excess of \$1 million. In addition, she has served as past president for the Central California Trial Lawyers' Association and taught the trial practice course at San Joaquin College of Law for over a decade.

**Yao Vang** (Law '20) is now an Associate Attorney at Hillberg Law in Turlock.

**Brent C. Woodward** (Law '04) has joined his wife, Errin E. Woodward (Law '08), at the Woodward Law Office, PC.

**Patricia Ziegler-Lopez** (Law '11) is now a Kern County Public Defender.

# 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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## DONATIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 – NOVEMBER 30, 2021

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### **\$2,500+**

Hon. Nancy Cisneros ('80)  
Steven Spencer

### **\$1,000 - \$2,499**

Hal, Debora and Gracie Bolen  
Geraldine Brown ('79)  
Central Valley Community Foundation  
Cole Fisher, Cole, O'Keefe & Mahoney  
Michael Condry ('80)  
Allison Gong-Dummitt ('96)  
James & Coke Hallowell  
William Hazen ('86)  
David Hogue (Board & '93)  
Anthony Mendes (Board)  
Joseph O'Keefe ('96)  
Laurie Renton Mendes Foundation  
Carlyn Robbins  
Ruiz Law Offices  
Eduardo Ruiz (Board & '95)  
Hon. Barbara St. Louis ('80)  
Zipporah Underhill ('99)  
Christopher Watters ('07)  
Richard & Diane Watters  
James Witherow ('87)

### **\$500 - \$999**

Lance Armo ('95)  
Julia Brungess ('82) & Robert Williams ('75)  
Courtney Caron ('07)  
Jeffrey Castleton ('17)  
Douglas Haas ('82)  
Gary Hill ('78)  
Avelina Sobrzano Huichapa  
Serafin Cervantes Lopez  
J. Wesley Merritt

Mark Miller (Faculty)  
Douglas Noll (Board)  
Margaret Shainberg ('93)  
Sierra IP Law, PC  
Karen Spinardi ('97)  
Kimberly Sweidy ('85)

### **\$250 - \$499**

California Change Lawyers  
Steven Alfieris ('97)  
Hon. Gary Austin ('76)  
Deborah Boyett ('01)  
Devika Choudhury ('10)  
Joanna Ebner ('05)  
Kevin Gunner ('86)  
Hon. Kent & Kathy Hamlin  
Kent Jones ('12)  
Hon. K. Diane Lushbough ('88)  
Francisco Martinez  
Janice Pearson (Dean) & Jackson Grode  
Steven Salazar ('84)  
Hon. Mark Snauffer  
Regina Tanner ('95)  
Philip Tavlian ('80)  
Hon. Georgia York ('78)

### **\$100 - \$249**

Thomas Armstrong ('89)  
Jaskarn Atwal ('06)  
Erica Camarena ('02)  
Missy (Staff) & Richard Cartier  
Phillip Cline ('78)  
Rosa De Cortes  
Gabriel Delgado ('13)  
Victoria Denny (Staff)  
Joby Dupuis ('85)

D. Greg & Jeanne Durbin  
Gerald Farrington ('80)  
Marla Garcia ('13)  
Gregory Gross ('99)  
Judith Hall ('91)  
Zeferino Hernandez  
Hon. Gary Hoff  
Rhea Ikemiya ('09)  
League of Women Voters of Fresno  
John Malmo (Faculty)  
Dr. David Margolin ('11)  
Patricia Pinto ('94)  
Hon. Ralph Putnam ('75)  
Vernon Reynolds ('10)  
Cynthia Robinson (Staff)  
Martha Rodriguez  
Robin Schumacher  
Yolanda Serna  
Malcolm Stewart ('77)  
Brooke Storm ('08)  
Sevag Tateosian ('08)  
Hon. Ricky Tripp ('01)  
Peter Wasemiller ('82)  
Jacqueline Yates ('92)  
David Yengoyan ('05)  
Thomas Zynda ('93)

### **Other**

Amazon Smile Foundation  
R. Louis Gysler ('79)  
Stephen Malm ('08)  
Jared Nelson (Staff)  
Loretta Ramseyer

### **In-Kind Gifts**

Phillip Cherney (Faculty)

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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 Lonzetta Hightower at 559/323-2100 or [lhightower@sjcl.edu](mailto:lhightower@sjcl.edu).



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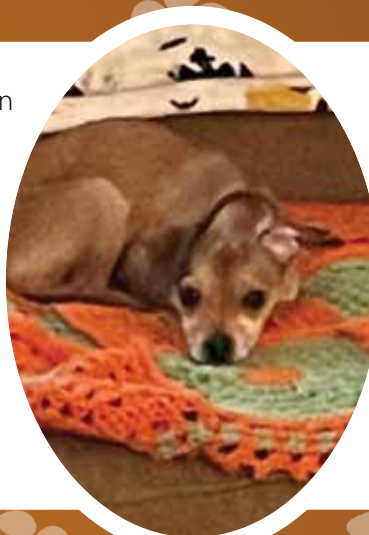
# Happy Holidays



*from our families  
to yours!*



Last October an article was published in the *Fresno Bee* praising the resiliency of our 2L "COVID (year) Class" for their successful completion of the entire first year of law school via Zoom. Having read the article and finding inspiration in the student's achievement, a kindly woman named Paula Savin came by the Law School with a hand made doggie blanket she intended to give to one of those students. It was a lovely hand crocheted blanket in fall



themed colors. Paula explained that it was her hobby to make and give her blankets to pet owners for their animals.

In the interest of a just selection of the recipient (one pet blanket vs several students with pets) we held a drawing. The winner, James Meinert (2L), said his dog Folly would love the blanket. From the look on Folly's face, we would have to agree.

Happy winter Folly!