

Summer 2014

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Celebrating the 41st Graduating Class

The 41st commencement was held at the William Saroyan Theatre on May 31, 2014 with the Honorable Gary Austin providing the Commencement Address.

ore than half a dozen of the 51 graduates of the Class of 2014 who externed at one of three District Attorneys' Offices want to become prosecutors. Another four who worked in the New American Legal Clinic say they want to practice immigration law, including one who plans to practice in Australia this fall. Several others who served as clerks for private firms are hoping to begin their permanent careers, including two who already have offers in hand. Another will take the Patent Bar because he wants to practice Intellectual Property Law.

But first and foremost, they all want one thing, as perhaps best expressed by graduate Joshua Longoria.

"My future plan is to pass the Bar. That's all I care about."

The Commencement Speaker, the Honorable Gary Austin (Law '76), seemed to sense this, heavily peppering his address with Bar study tips. He related how he had shut himself away in an office during his own time studying for the Bar, emerging with a full-grown beard. He joked about how a picture of him

at that point would be an appropriate entry into the SJCL "Hall of Shame," rather than the "Hall of Fame" status he currently enjoys at the Law School.

Judge Austin was not the only Hall of Famer in attendance, nor was he the only alumni judge. The Honorable Don Penner (Law '74) also enjoys those statuses, but he was there to enjoy something else: the graduation of his son, Jordan Penner, 40 years after his own.

Family played a big part in the emotions of the day at the Saroyan Theatre.

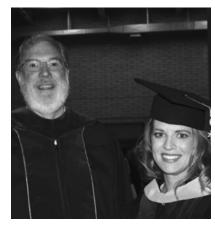
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Commencement Speaker, **Honorable Gary Austin** (Law '76), peppered his address with Bar study tips for the graduates.



Valedictorian Conlin Reis



Fresno Pacific University Professor **Duane Ruth-Heffelbower** congratulates **Susan Davey** on receiving both her Juris Doctor and her Masters in Peacemaking and Conflict Studies simultaneously through the Cooperative Degree Program.

SJCL Toasts 17 February Bar Passers

Sometimes even champagne can't make an event even happier. That seemed to be the case for those attending the February Bar Passers' Champagne Reception on May 19th at San Joaquin College of Law.

any said they were experiencing as much relief as joy. One was so sure she didn't pass that she had spent the past few weeks telling her co-workers it just didn't look good. They were as shocked as she was when the "pass" screen came up under her name.

Jesse Molina was among those whose emotions ran the gamut when he prepared to punch in his computer code. He says he felt he just had to pass for his wife and children. When the screen came up with green, his eyes filled with tears and he could hardly see as he checked and re-checked to make triple sure it was his name on that

About half of the February Bar Passers have been working as clerks as they awaited word from the Bar, in offices ranging from private practice to the Madera District Attorney's Office to serving as a Legal Specialist for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Many of them had a "you pass, you're hired" promise in hand.



Back Row (L-R): Jesse Molina, Jessica Fierro, Ann Litten, Charles Palmer, and Vernon Reynolds.

MIDDLE ROW (L-R): Claire Meredith, Lucia Gonzales, and Karen Gill

FRONT ROW (L-R): Jonna Williams and April Woods.

ALSO PASSING BUT NOT PICTURED: Ranjeet Brar, Nicole Christy, Nicole Idiart, Kent Jones, Carlos Leyva, Angela Martinez, and Mark Wilson.

Along with family and friends, the Bar Passers were toasted by fellow alumni, including Ryan Dunning, who graduated a year earlier than Jonna Williams and just accepted a position as a Patent Examiner with the U. S. Patent Office in Washington D.C., but came back to raise a glass in her honor.

Both of them recalled their Law School study days, including "Taco Wednesdays" and the times they and fellow classmates Erick Rhoan and Travis Ishikawa would take over the back room of Denny's to study for finals. Jonna joked they did it so often the Denny's waitresses knew their names.

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Inter Alia

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NALC Assists in Asylum Applications

In addition to the roughly three dozen naturalizations the New American Legal Clinic (NALC) completes every quarter (assisting legal permanent residents to become citizens), NALC also provides other services to the community.

mong these services, students working in NALC at SJCL had the opportunity to assist a foreign national in applying for political asylum.

A.T. was born in northern Syria and at the age of 12, was sent to Venice, Italy to receive a formal Catholic education. A.T. successfully graduated with a Ph.D. in Armenological Sciences. Based upon his education and linguistics (A.T. speaks five languages), he sought employment with the Syrian government. A.T. believes his application was denied based on his "western" education, race and religion.

Everything unraveled for A.T. around March 2011 during the "Arab Spring." The Syrian Secret Service (SSS) became increasingly diligent and more violent towards any perceived threat within Syria. A.T. was perceived as such a threat. He was Armenian, Christian, educated, and not affiliated with the Baath political party.

In 2012, A.T. travelled to the United States and sought asylum based upon his fear of religious and ethnic persecution if he were to return to Syria. After approval of his asylum application, A.T. was able

NALC Clients Become Citizens

SJCL is pleased to announce that 20 clients of the New American Legal Clinic (NALC) recently had their naturalization interviews at the USCIS Fresno Office and passed their citizenship test. Five of them waited until May to be sworn in, but we joined the other 15 on April 8th as they took their oaths at Valdez Hall in the Fresno Convention Center.



Pictured above with some of the new citizens are SJCL's **Kenia Garcia-Perez**, **Victoria Denny**, **Ramona Garcia**, and Professor **Greg Olson**.

to send for his wife and three children to join him in the United States.

A.T. sought the services of NALC to prepare and submit the Adjustment of Status application for him and his family. Students Dushawn Johnson (3L) and Leila Alamri-Kassim (2L) interviewed A.T. and prepared all the necessary documents. Once A.T.'s application and supporting documentation had

been reviewed and approved by NALC Professors Jessica Smith Bobadilla and Gregory Olson, the application was submitted to United States Citizens and Immigration Services (USCIS.)

If A.T. and his family are successful in their Adjustment of Status application, they will receive Permanent Resident status and be eligible for U.S. citizenship in five years.

Full-Time Faculty

Justin B. Atkinson, Jessica Smith Bobadilla, Andreas Borgeas, Richard M. Cartier, Christine A. Goodrich, Denise M. Kerner, Janice L. Pearson, Sally A. Perring, Gregory Olson, Jeffrey G. Purvis, Peter Rooney, Rose Safarian

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Alumni Corner

This is the time of year in which we welcome the newly minted SJCL graduates to the alumni family. I had the privilege this year of speaking at the commencement ceremony and got to personally welcome the new graduates to our diverse and distinguished alumni community.

By, Brande Gustafson, Alumni Association President, Class of 2009

ne of the perks these graduates receive is a waiver of the \$30 membership fee for their first year of membership when they join the SJCL Alumni Association. Joining the Alumni Association is as easy as going online to the Alumni Association section on the Alumni page at www.sjcl.edu and clicking "Join Now." You can even pay online. Of course, you can always download a membership form and mail in the \$30 membership fee too.

During the summer months the Alumni board will be busy preparing for three important events coming up in the fall.

The first is the Hall of Fame, co-chaired by Ron Henderson and Beth Waldow. Since 2007, the Alumni Association has honored alumni who made significant contributions to the legal field and the community. This year's inductees will be recognized at the San Joaquin Alumni Hall of Fame Reception on September 11, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. at the Robert E. Coyle Federal Courthouse in Fresno. Nominations for Alumni Hall of Fame are currently being accepted. Deserving

alumni may be nominated by completing the form located at www.sjcl.edu on the Alumni Page. Nominations will be accepted through June 27, 2014.

The next event is the Senior Citizen Law Day on October 18, 2014 at SJCL. This event provides invaluable information and assistance for free to a group most deserving of our services. Beth Waldow and Dr. David Margolin are the cochairs of this event.

We round out the fall events with Got MCLE on November 8, 2014 at SJCL. This event is co-chaired by Nitza Coleman and Roger Wilson. The event provides three hours of Continuing Legal Education from local judges and attorneys on contemporary issues for free to current members of the Alumni Association. We are still welcoming suggestions for topics and speakers for this event.

Finally, I would like to personally invite you to attend our board meetings. We meet in the SJCL faculty lounge on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. We would love to have your atten-



Brande Gustafson

dance, your ideas or just your support. If you have an idea you would like your alumni board to entertain, please feel free to contact me at brande@walawfresno.com or contact any of our board members.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming fall events.

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Alumni Ignite a Passion for the Law

"My parents were field workers. As a new attorney assisting farm workers, I looked across the table and felt like I was representing my father."

-David Ibarra



SJCL extends special thanks to the Alumni who returned to share their experiences and successes with current and prospective law students as part of our Alumni Panel Forum. Pictured (L-R): Warren Paboojian (Law '85), Michelle Oleksa (Law '99), Nick Zinkin (Law '01), Jan Pearson, Dean, David Ibarra (Law '10) and Alexia Kirkland (Law '10).

avid Ibarra joined fellow alumni Warren Paboojian, Nick Zinkin, Michelle Oleksa, and Alexia Kirkland in sharing stories of their legal careers, along with some fascinating personal experiences and insights, at an alumni panel forum at SJCL on May 20th.

Ibarra told the assembled group of prospective and current law students that his inspiration to become an attorney came from several areas in his life, among them his neighborhood, "where criminal attorneys were needed badly." Ibarra, a partner in the firm Goldberg and Ibarra, stressed having balance in one's life when attempting to accomplish any great task or goal, like completing law school. Both he and Warren Paboojian, of Baradat and Paboojian, agreed that you've got to like it, and want it.

Paboojian has chalked up an impressive "win list" of high profile/high settlement cases against lawyers who graduated from other law schools. "SJCL provided a great education for me, and besides that, I couldn't get into medical school!" he said, with a wink.

Michelle Oleksa started law school at the age of 29 with two young children. Her previous job required her to work closely with attorneys, and she realized she could be a lawyer. After law school she ran a private practice in bankruptcy law for 10 years. Now she's a staff attorney for the U.S. Small Business Administration doing transactional real estate work in 26 states. "I love my job," she said.

Alexia Kirkland, of the Law Office of Kirkland and Rozzo, became an attorney because she saw how the law helped the people in her early life. She wanted to help empower non-citizens to receive fair treatment, and now works with the Lawyer-Tenant Network on housing issues.

Nick Zinkin, a real estate attorney whose father and father-in-law are both lawyers, said law school demands "hard work, commitment for 3-4 years, and for the most part, shutting down your social life." But he noted that everything he learned in law school, he carries with him for the rest of his life. Zinkin also represents professional athletes in a wide range of engagement and endorsement agreements.

The common theme among the alumni panelists was consistent: how much they each love their legal careers, and how they credit SJCL with helping them get there.

Scholarship Banquet

In a nod to its rich history and to celebrate the reprise of the classic American tale, the SJCL Student Bar Association invited guests to travel back in time to Roaring-20s at its first ever "A Gatsby Soiree" on Friday, April 5, 2014.

Inspired by the novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald and the film adaptation by Baz Luhrmann, the event was held at the glamorous Fig Garden Racquet Club. Guests were met with a '20s-style lawn party replete with Gatsby-inspired food, drinks, and desserts, all accompanied by swinging live music. Although Jay Gatsby himself was not in attendance, he would have been pleased by the ambiance created by Spring Banquet Chair and Vice-President Roshana Shirzad.

Roshana may find this year's banquet experience will prove useful next year; she has been elected Student Bar Association President. Other newly elected 2014-2015 SBA Officers include Vice President Sandra Garcia, Secretary Kim Nakagawa, and Treasurer Jessica McClung.

Along with the customary scholarship and Witkin Awards, special recognition was also given to Professor Sally Perring and Alumni Liaison Joan Lassley; both have announced their retirement in June.

The New American Legal Clinic honored the law firm of Yarra, Kharazi and Clason with a Pro Bono Award. The firm has donated many hours of pro bono service in the last year to the clinic.

Other high points of the evening included the announcement of Professor Christine Goodrich receiving the Fulltime Faculty Member of the Year Award, and Professor Andy Kucera receiving the Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year Award.



Beautiful crowd on an amazing evening!



Students Roshana Shirzad, Harout Bouldoukian, Adam Rushing, and Catherine McLaughlin



David Ibarra (Law '10), Ibarra/Casillas LawSUIT Scholarship donor



Student Sundip Singh and guest



Student Katelen Weisenberger and guest



The 2014 Scholarship Recipients



Brande Gustafson (Law '09) with her husband Rob Slocum



Student Amanda Moran and James Farmer



Student Brittany Hines and Shacola Philips



Jessica Smith Bobadilla, Professor of Law, Emily Sirabian, and Rose Safarian, Professor of Law

Scholarship Recipients

Abota Memorial Scholarship **Justin Vecchiarelli**

Alumni Association Carolyn T. Mirviss Scholarship Leila Alamri-Kassim

Alumni Association Spirit of SJCL Scholarship **Catie McLaughlin**

Baradat & Paboojian Trial Advocacy Scholarship Elizabeth Thomasian

Bertha & John Garabedian Military Service Scholarship

David Benton

CCBA Scholarship
Harout Bouldoukian, Jeffrey Castleton, and Brandon Hinton

Clovis Soroptimist Woman's Advocate Award Libby Hellwig

Darryl B. Freedman Bar Study Support Scholarship Angelica Ambrose

Delta Theta Phi Scholarships Heidi Falany, Annika Schuil, and D'Artagnan Montrose

Elizabeth O'Neill Memorial Scholarship Sandra Garcia

Ernest Kinney Trial Lawyer Scholarship Sally Vecchiarelli

Florentino Jose Memorial Scholarship **Gabriel Pacheco**

Ibarra/Casillas LawSUIT Scholarship Alexandria De La Fuente

Janice Pearson Scholarship Kristina Garabedian

Judy Wiseman Memorial Scholarship **Jonas Parr**

Ken Coyle Memorial Scholarship Michael Landers

Kharazi Bar Study Support Scholarship **Andrew Antaramian**

Legal Edge Consumer Scholarship D'Artagnan Montrose

Leon S. Peters Foundation Leadership Awards Jessica McLung, Craig Waters, Jarret Rogers, **Amanda Moran and Virginia Madrid-Salazar**

Proctor Scholar of the Year Mandy Kendzora

Robert F & Kathryn S. Price Scholarship **Randy Bell**

SJCL Student Bar Association Law Scholarship for Merit – Most Improved

Diego Andrade

SJCL Student Bar Association Law Scholarship for Need

Linda Barreto

SJCL Student Bar Association Law Scholarship for Participation

Veronica Pena

The Founder's Scholarship **Wesley Carlson**

Theodore R. Forrest, Jr. Trial Advocacy Memorial Scholarship **Heather Spurling**

Woman Lawyer Scholarship Corina Burchfield

Filling Those Shoes

After my first few weeks as the SJCL newbie with the (I now realize) unwieldy task of replacing Joan Lassley, I've made it a priority to learn not only all I can about the position, but also about Joan – the force with which to be reckoned.

By **Diane Skouti**, Alumni Coordinator

"Ello there, I'm Diane Skouti.
I'm replacing Joan Lassley,"
I said with great enthusiam
from my seat at the registration table
at Joan and Sally's lovely retirement
party.

"Oh? Ha! You've got some big shoes to fill," was the reply from most everyone I met: graduates, faculty, board members, and current students alike. To be sure, 23 years on any job is impressive, daunting even. I can't begin to fathom what it's like to be all in for nearly 33, like Dean Pearson. But that's just one of the terrific things that attracted me to SJCL in the first place. This school is all about commitment, longevity, excellence, and in Joan's case, having the phrase "I'm happy to help" permanently tattooed on your forehead.

I'm a helper by nature too, but I don't know anyone who trumps the helper card like Joan. She is, I've already

learned, known far and wide as the ultimate doer. The one you call when you need someone to "get 'er done," whether it involves alumni events, \$50,000 in outdoor paint, or lassos. I'm convinced this trait is two-parts personality to one-part genetics. People at the retirement party commented that Joan's granddaughter Reagan, who's 9, was refilling water pitchers as swiftly as any five star maître'd. The "helper gene" is undeniable.

"I like to keep busy, keep moving," Joan has mentioned more than once while showing me her meticulously kept binders and 23 years worth of notes, records, and receipts. I know I shouldn't strive to be "new Joan;" no one could ever do that. And while I'm decisively "not Joan," that's not the right title either.

The secret, I think, is the level of commitment. It's what all the most successful professionals impart. I plan to take



Diane Skouti, Alumni Coordinator

full advantage of my precious training time with Joan, to learn how a beloved, long-term employee serves to the utmost degree. After that...look out all you SJCL alums, there's a new coordinator in town, and I'm learning how to wrangle, er, I mean, coordinate, from the best!

SJCL Welcomes Kenia Garcia and Oscar Torres to the SJCL Family



Kenia Garcia is the new receptionist and administrative assistant for the New American Legal Clinic. Kenia has a BS in Technical Management/ Criminal Justice. Her educational background, strong work ethic and positive attitude have been a wonderful fit with the NALC team.



Oscar Torres, a recent Fresno State graduate with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Sports Marketing, is the new Admissions Counselor. Oscar's marketing background and interest in using social media has already served to develop and enhance SJCL's online and social media presence to help increase student outreach.

Diane Steel Earns Masters in Counseling

We heartily congratulate Director of Admissions, Diane Steel, for earning her Master's Degree in Counseling from the Kremen School of Education, at California State University, Fresno.

iane was inspired to seek her graduate degree because of a love of learning and growth. "I figured if I was advising others to pursue higher education, I should challenge myself to do the same," she said.

As Director of Admissions, Diane speaks to prospective students who are often unsure of themselves and their abilities to succeed in law school. "Making the choice to attend law school involves difficult decisions which impact family, relationships, and future employment." Diane says she felt as a trained counselor, she would enhance her ability to listen

effectively to students' ultimate priorities, and provide them with the support to believe in themselves, and guide them more effectively.

"I have an enormous amount of respect for students who work full-time and pursue higher education," she said. "It wasn't easy, but I did it." Diane says she can now speak from experience on the challenges of graduate school, and she knows firsthand what it takes to be successful, which she plans to impart to SJCL students.

Congratulations, Diane!



Diane Steel, Director of Admissions

Students Honored with Zekian Scholarships

Congratulations to SJCL students Nellie Peloian and John Orman, winners of this year's Zekian Scholarships.

he Fresno County Bar Association, in association with the Zekian Scholarship Committee, awarded the scholarships in memory of Harry Zekian, who graduated from Clovis West High, Fresno State, and Whittier Law School before forming the firm of Beitchman and Zekian. The scholarship was created after his untimely death in a motorcycle accident in 2003 at the age of 29. The Zekian Scholarship Committee seeks high-achieving students with plans to practice locally. Each received a scholarship in the amount of \$2,500.00.

The Zekian Scholarship Committee consists of Harry's law partner and closest friend, David Beitchman, Fresno businessmen Dror Geron and Krikor Nishanian, along with Harry's brother, Levon Zekian, and former FCBA President, Brian Tatarian.



Former Fresno County Bar Association President **Brian I. Tatarian** congratulates SJCL students **Nellie Peloian** and **John Orman**, winners of this year's Zekian Scholarships!

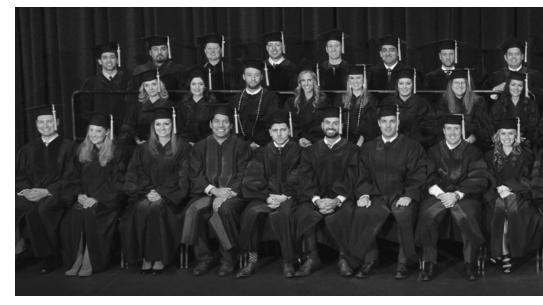
Graduation (From Page 1)

Valedictorian Conlin Reis was among the first to pay tribute to his family, encapsulating the years of sacrifices they had made for him by simply thanking them for all the times they had accepted "the law school excuse." Others thanked grandparents, parents, spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, and even their children. Ryan McAbee thanked his young son, Lucas, "who waited patiently for this and was always willing to share his crayons or pencil boxes, in case I needed them."

Catherine McLaughlin thanked both a boyfriend and an alumnus simultaneously when she extended her gratitude to Adam Rushing (Law '13), "even though he didn't thank me last year in his graduation speech."

Sabrina Prindiville's thank-you circle was perhaps the widest of all. She noted "In this case, it really did take a village to help this one woman achieve the goal that I set for myself more than 30 years ago."

And speaking of villages, SJCL's will grow a little smaller over the summer with the retirement of Professor Sally Perring, Dean of Academic Affairs. The Class of 2014 honored her by requesting she perform the hooding part of the ceremony for all but one graduate. That graduate, Susan Davey, received both her Juris Doctor from SJCL and her Masters in Peacemaking and Conflict Studies from Fresno Pacific University (FPU) simultaneously through a cooperative program between SJCL and FPU. The program gave her the opportunity to create and implement a conflict resolution course that is now being taught at a state mental health facility. She plans to practice law for the State of California. She was hooded by FPU Professor Duane Ruth-Heffelbower.



The Class of 2014



Jordan Penner is flanked by his mom, Linda Penner, and dad, Honorable Don Penner



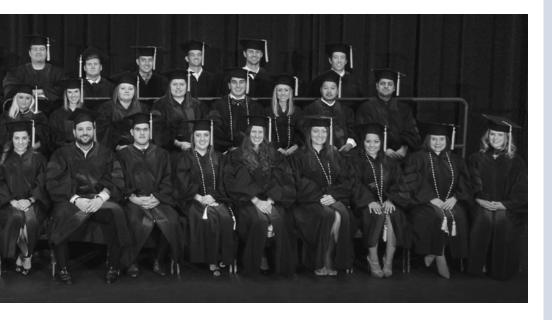
Libby Helwig, Heather Spurling, and Carol Ann Seita



Sabrina Prindiville with her parents



Harout Bouldoukian and Nicole K. Idiart (Law '13)





Kristina Garabedian, Randell Harper, and Michael McAfee



Victoria Hernandez Maga and guest



Jacqueline Plata and guest



Elizabeth Kozycki, Amanda Kjar, and Jonathan Echols

Congratulations Class of 2014

Peter Daniel Aguayo Angelica Isabel Ambrose Andrew Armen James Antaramian Linda Kristal Barreto Randy Kenneth Bell David Mitchell Benton Ronald Scott Bierma Aaron Michael Blunt Harout Garo Bouldoukian Wesley Lawrence Carlson Candace Maureen Clark-Talbot Susan Deniece Davey Jennifer Ann DeRuosi Megan Kristine Dutra Jonathan James Echols William Russell Freeman Kristina Diane Garabedian Veronica Lynn Hales Charles Paul Hamamjian Randell Lynn Harper William Jack Hathaway Libby Alyssa Hellwig Victoria Lydia Hernandez Maga Tanvir Joshi Bradley John Kalebjian Amanda Michelle Kjar Elizabeth Nicole Kozycki Joshua Anthony Longoria Julie Kathryn MacMichael Ryan Michael McAbee Michael Rios McAfee Catherine Marie McLaughlin Ashley Rose Mohammadi Ramon Nava Lacee O'Brien David Christopher Olmos Gabriel Joseph Pacheco Jonas Nathaniel Parr Iordan Michael Penner Jacqueline M. Plata Sabrina Johnson Prindiville Conlin David Reis Sara Elena Santoyo Ruiz Carol Ann Marie Seita John Trevor Simonson Heather Michelle Spurling Elizabeth Alyson Thomasian Michael Charles Titus Justin Nigel Vecchiarelli Tyler Michael Vierra Robert James Yamamoto

Celebrating the Retirements of Sally Perring and Joan Lassley

Thanks so much to everyone who made the May 9th retirement celebration for Professor Sally Perring and Joan Lassley a huge success!

he park outside San Joaquin College of Law (SJCL) was packed with alumni, faculty, family and friends who dined, dished, and delighted in the festivities. Professor Perring, Dean of Academic Affairs, has been with SJCL since 1983, when she began as an adjunct. Nearly 75% of all SJCL grads have taken her Real Property class. Joan Lassley has kept SJCL looking great by passionately preserving our beautiful, historic building and serving as head cheerleader for over a thousand alumni.



Joan Lassley, **John Loomis**, *Board Member & Founder*, and **Sally Perring**, *Academic Dean*



Deborah Boyett (Law '01) adds a card with her favorite memory to accompany all the other well wishes.



Michelle Oleksa (Law '99), Melissa White (Law '96), and Jennifer Oleksa (Law '15)



Phil Tavlian (Law '80) with wife Linda



Wendy Sedillo (Law '10), David Margolin (Law '11), Pat Smith, *Staff*, and Sally Perring



Ross Borba, Board Member, and Nancy Flynn



Val Conklin, Honorable **Jon Conklin**, Honorable **Gary Austin** (Law '76), and Honorable **Stanley Boone**

Thank You

San Joaquin College of Law would like to thank the following donors for their generous gifts to honor the retirements of Sally Perring and Joan Lassley.

Dede Agrava Anonymous Justin Atkinson

Baker, Peterson & Franklin

Ross Borba
Deborah Boyett
Clara Bronder
Geraldine Brown
Harry G. Brown
Gary D. Brunsvik
Karen Buck
Denise Cahill
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Aaron Johnson Kenneth Jorgensen

Jan Kahn

Darlene Azevedo Kelly Kathi Kesselman Donna Korotie Stefanie Krause Mary J. Lane Joan Lassley Jeannie Lewis

Jim and Carole Linenbach

John Loomis
Pahoua Lor
Dianna Madison
Stephen Malm
Dr. David Margolin
Barry Matson
Kimberly Mayhew
Timothy Mazzela
Pamela McFarland

Kathleen McKenna Doug McKinney Anthony Mendes John "Wes" Merritt Denise Mesple Mark D. Miller Shirley Miner Gregory Miskulin Rose Mohan Jennifer Morrison

Dennis Nard

Hon. Robert Oliver Marilyn Olson Janice Pearson Erik Peterson Pat Pinto Beth Pitcock Toni Porter Gregory Powell

Judith Preuss Mary K. Rau Russell Reynolds Susan Richardson Carlyn Robbins Richard Rodriguez

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So, Cite Me!

This synopsis of a recent student comment featured in the *San Joaquin Agricultural Law Review (SJALR)* is part of an ongoing series for Fresno County Bar Association's Bar Bulletin. The *SJALR*, founded in 1991, is the oldest agricultural law review in the nation.

Mandatory Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food: Constitutionally, You Do Not Have a Right To Know

By **Sally Noxon Vecchiarelli** *Editor-in-Chief*22 San Joaquin Agric. L. Rev. 85 *San Joaquin Agricultural Law Review*

In 1962, Americans were introduced to *The Jetsons*. Viewers were captivated by the portrayal of a family living one hundred years in the future in a world defined by technological convenience. Fifty years since *The Jetsons* premiered, technology has evolved to a point where the reality of today looks very much like the dreams of yesterday. Today, there are modern marvels such as cell phones that enable us to video chat, the Internet that

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While it is true that the present luxuries afforded to society through innovative production are ever-present, they overshadow the fear that such technology provokes in some. As the scientific community pushes onward, the fear of the "unnatural" or what happens when man "plays God" makes many people feel apprehensive. Numerous inventions have been the subject of controversy when they first emerged: vaccinations, in vitro fertilization, and the currently debated genetically engineered foods. Every year, vaccinations save nearly nine million lives; in vitro fertilization has given life to five million babies; and in 2011 alone, genetically engineered food yielded over 395 million acres of crops.

For over twenty years, genetic engineering has been used in the production of many foods. Genetic engineering allows farmers to overcome regional hardships, such as the ability to grow crops that are resistant to drought in areas that lack water, or crops that are resistant to certain pests or pesticides, while simultaneously allowing farmers to increase yields. Despite these benefits, there has been ongoing debate over whether genetically engineered food is harmful to humans. Large grassroots groups have formed to urge the government to mandate the labeling of genetically engineered food, to no avail. They ask simply to know if their food is genetically engineered. Their cries seem to have been ignored by the Federal government, for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) claims that there is no material difference between genetically engineered food and its conventional counterparts. In response to the FDA's claims, the interest groups that are against genetically engineered food are now pushing for mandated labels through legislation at the state level, for the purpose of informing consumers.

As the coalition grows in many states, one highly publicized attempt to man-

date the labeling of genetically engineered food occurred in California in November 2012, when the efforts of such groups led to the failed California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act. The initiative reflected the desire of many Americans to have food in grocery stores labeled as "Genetically Engineered." The stated purpose of the California Right to Know Genetically Engineered Food Act, as well as that of other similar initiatives, was to inform people about the food that they purchase, specifically regarding whether genetic engineering had been used during production.

The rationale behind such initiatives is to allow consumers to "choose for themselves whether to purchase and eat such foods." The Act sought to inform the people by forcing manufacturers and producers to label their food as "genetically engineered," even though they have chosen thus far not to use such a label.

This Comment will show that informing the people about what foods are genetically engineered by mandating that labels be placed on such food is not a substantial enough interest to justify the violation of the manufacturers' First Amendment right not to speak. The Comment will do so by first giving an overview of genetically engineered foods, how they have come to appear in the grocery store, and the present debate over the possible health effects. Next, it will delve into the First Amendment implications involved in mandating that manufacturers label their products as "genetically engineered" when they have chosen not to. In doing so, the Comment will explore the alternatives to mandated labeling that are already in place and explain how the current regulatory systems protect consumers from potentially harmful foods. This Comment advocates educating the people about genetically engineered foods and implementing research from a nonbiased governmental standpoint, so the people can trust the results.

The complete Comment is available on line, along with the entire 22nd Volume and the previous volumes at www.sjcl.edu/sjalr.

Alumni Profiles

This year we want to thank and congratulate four classes as we celebrate anniversaries of 10, 20, 30 and 40 years.

1974

Walter C. Johnsen

After graduating in 1974, Walter C. Johnsen's legal career began in the District Attorney's Office. During the later part of his five years there, Walter served on the homicide trial team. He then started his private practice, which he ran for the next 29 years.



Besides his busy law career, Walter has worn many other hats over the years. As a farmer, he grew raisin grapes and raised cattle. As a dad, he coached his son Eric's baseball team. Both Walter's sons, Seth who is 15, and Eric, 14, currently attend Fresno Christian High School.

As an active member of his community, Walter volunteered

for the Sheriff's Posse Search and Rescue, where he also served as a board member. He was additionally on the YMCA Board of Directors.

Did you know...

The Class of 1974 began with 58 members (10 women and 48 men).

Of the 15 who graduated, 4 were women and 11, men.

Since June of 2009, Walter has focused on his position with the Board of Prisons as a Deputy Commissioner of Parole Hearings. In this demanding role he adjudicates parole suitability hearings for life prisoners all over the state of California. Upon completion of his judicial college training, Walter will be sworn in

as an administrative law judge. Although he no longer has time for farming, he still operates a law building and manages his rental properties, in addition to spending time with his sons.

Walter has fond memories of his years at SJCL, with great teachers like John Loomis, who enjoyed throwing in trick test questions about Josephine, his horse. He remembers Judge Eyman and Oli-

ver Wanger as wonderful teachers. "Oliver Wanger is a great, articulate man who we all tried to emulate," Johnsen said. As one of the original library proctors in SJCL's law library when it was at Pacific College, Walter says he and a few other students worked 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, among the donated law books. He was also a member of the first Student Association. "My law school years were a great experience," Walter said.

1984 Carolyn Jean Waters (Baca)

The valedictorian for the class of '84, Carol Waters, had an almost accidental path to SJCL. In 1974 Carol was married to SJCL law professor Robert Perez, so she attended the very first graduation that year as a professor's wife. She never imagined she would graduate from SJCL herself, some 10 years later. Originally a dietitian, Carol realized she knew as much or more about the law as many of the attorneys she worked with at Valley Medical Center, so she kept her full-time job and enrolled at SJCL, spending the next 4 years "studying, eating, working, and that's all."

Of her fellow classmates, Carol said, "We all worked full-time jobs while in law school. We became family." Her first position after SJCL was with the firm of Blumberg, Kirkorian et al, where Carol was only the 3rd woman in all of Fresno to make partner. She then went to Reeves and Chavez et al., in

New Mexico, where she practiced family law for ten years. Carol opened her solo practice in Las Cruces, in an office directly across the street from the courthouse. "It was very convenient. I could be running late and still make it across the street in time for court," she said.

In addition to enjoying another eight and a half years as a family practice attorney,

Carol and her husband Homer built a large cabin at 9,000 ft. in Cloudcroft, a tiny town in a beautiful forest region



71% of the First Class passed the Bar on the first try. Those original bar passers were: Rod Haron, Jerry Henry, Ed Hunt, Paul James, Walter Johnsen, John Mitchell, John Newman, Don Penner, Mio Quatraro, and Leland Sterling.

in New Mexico, where she lived Friday – Sunday. Carol thoroughly enjoyed her work week, Monday – Thursday in Las Cruces, but last year, she decided to retire. She spends much of her time now at the Cloudcroft cabin and has not looked back.

Carol has fond memories of those early years at SJCL. Of her most favorite recollection, Carol said simply, "Just mention the chicken cases...they'll know."

1994

Todd Armas

Todd Armas has divided his time between family law and teaching since 1999. He remembers really enjoying Sal Blanco's International Law class at SJCL. "He was a fun, youthful teacher who, like me, didn't take himself too se-



riously," Todd said. "I kept in touch with him after graduation, and I was hired as an associate at Blanco, Tomassian, and Pimentel in 1998." At the time, Todd specialized in personal injury and civil litigation.

Did you know...

1984 – Joby Dupuis, Kevin Hansen, and Mary Hoagland took 2nd place in the F. Lee Bailey Moot Court Competition at the University of San Diego.

A short time later, he started his teaching career as an adjunct professor at Fresno City College in undergraduate work experience through the business department. In addition, he has taught, at various times: paralegal studies at ITT Tech, and business law at the University of Phoenix and DeVry University. "Teaching gets me out of the office a bit, and keeps things interesting as an outlet for new faces," Todd says.

Since 2005 Todd has run a private practice specializing in family law, landlord/ tenant law, estate law, and some personal injury and civil litigation. His busy schedule allows for little free time, but Todd still makes room for his first love - competitive tennis. He began playing at the age of 12, around the same time he began taking piano lessons. Todd says he's trying to pass on his loves for tennis and piano to his daughter, who is 9, and is finishing up the 3rd grade at St. Anthony's. "My daughter usually requests that I play pop tunes at home," Todd says. "She is just starting tennis and piano now herself."

In the community, Todd is a member of the Catholic Professional and Business Club of Fresno – a social and networking organization, and the St. Agnes Men's Club. He is also a member of the ABA and local Bar Association.

Todd has happy memories of SJCL and group visits to the Red Robin at Manchester Mall.

During his last two years of law school, Todd clerked at the U.S. Attorney's office and was able to litigate his first trial as a law student under a supervising attorney. "The case was about a mailman who was videotaped sifting through mail and 'taking' things. We got the guy," Todd said. "He was convicted. It was a great way to begin my career in law."

Cheryl Browns

In the 20 years since her graduation from SJCL, Cheryl Browns has run her own family practice and business transaction firm. She enjoys her work, but says she makes sure to leave her job at the office, as she is also an avid hiker, scuba diver, and environmentalist.

With the goal of hiking in all 50 states, Cheryl has already trekked the likes of Alaska, Wyoming, Idaho, New Mexico, Florida, New York, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Oregon, in addition to Honduras and Fiji. "While my daughter and I were scuba diving in Fiji, there was a rebel coup!" Cheryl said. "We were underwater when it happened. We returned to our hotel



to find the gates all locked. The other Americans were leaving frantically and telling us we, too, should get out, but we noticed the rebels had taken hostages and occupied the more expensive resorts, leaving our cheaper place alone. We stayed and finished out our trip and had a great time!"

As an ardent scuba diver, Cheryl gives back environmentally by serving as a monthly docent at the Ano Nuevo State Reserve, about 20 miles north of Santa Cruz. She presents what she lovingly calls her "Sex and Violence Among Elephant Seals" talk, as she has for the past 15 years.

In her "free time," Cheryl chairs the Fresno County Bar Association Mandatory Fee Arbitration program, as well as the FCBA Attorney Referral Service. She also works on the Bar Bulletin – which she co-edits, and serves as Pro Tem Judge for small claims court.

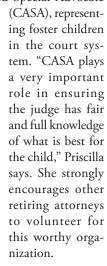
Cheryl has fond memories of her classes at SJCL with Dave Camenson on Tax Law, and Dean Pearson on Torts. "Dave was a fabulous teacher," she said. "He could make tax law funny, but put it in realistic terms and kept it interesting." She also remembers Jan speaking of the light bulb moment her first year. "She told us we would be totally lost for a long while, but that the light bulb would suddenly come on. It was just BOOM, at

the end of my first year, a lovely moment when it finally happened," she said.

Priscilla Craft

Aside from a year of worker's compensation defense law right after graduation, Priscilla Craft worked her entire legal career with the Social Security Administration. After passing the bar, she was hired at the Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, and served as the Hearing Office Director for the last nine years.

Although she retired in 2011, Priscilla remains very busy. She serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate



In addition to her involvement in women's and chil-

dren's ministries in her church, Priscilla enjoys traveling with her husband. They just returned from Italy, France, and Spain, but they also love taking road trips all over the U.S., and visiting their 10 grandchildren in California, Seattle, and Austin.

Did you know...

1994 – 55 year lease contract signed with the City of Clovis for SJCL's new (current) home. Dean Pearson said it was like moving from the outhouse to the penthouse.

Priscilla says she is grateful for the friendships she made in law school.

"Those years were grueling, but I've never met so many wonderful people, including students, faculty, and staff." She has fond memories of her study group: Rosie McGuire, Jim Cipolla, and Jim King. "We were shocked when we defied the odds, and all four of us passed the bar the first time," she said.

Lori Mayfield

During her law school years, Lori Mayfield not only worked at Channel 47 as a full-time news producer, she also clerked at Smurr, Henry (as in Jerry), and Gelegan. "I started my career at Myers & Overstreet while awaiting my Bar results," she said. "After that I began to slowly take over the world!"

The firm morphed into the Mayfield Law Group in the 15 years after her graduation, with comings and goings: Myers, Overstreet & Mayfield, Myers and Mayfield, and then Mayfield and Leath, all the while focusing on commercial insurance and construction defect litigation.

"You need the right frame of mind for construction defect litigation," Lori said. "So many negotiations happen before discovery or depositions, and there are always many parties involved. It's easy to become frustrated." But Lori says she loves her chosen area of expertise.

Since 2011, Lori has been with The Law Offices of David A. Wallis in Sacramento, where she serves as in-house counsel for the family of companies at Nationwide Insurance. Lori admits that she definitely "works a lot", and has little time for much else these days. But she has fond memories of her years in Fresno when she served as a member of the Fresno County Bar Association, a Juvenile Courts Appointee to the EOC, the CCLS Board, and as a Pro tem in traffic court.

Her memories of SJCL are many. "Our 1st year study group included David Alderson, Randy Risner and Eileen Deimerly, and we used "Laws in a Flash" flash cards, a lot. There were always heated and colorful debates. Back then we were all swirling because we didn't



always understand." But it was advice from Dean Pearson, Lori says, that kept them going.

"Jan told us we would all be lost until one day, the light would just come on... and that's what happened. During finals that first year I suddenly realized, I got it." Lori also remembers fondly the rap song she wrote for Sally's Real Property class to help her remember the Rule against Perpetuities.

During her time at SJCL, Lori lived with her aunt, whom she credits with "baby-sitting her through law school." She says she tried to set a good example while living with her two young cousins about hard work and study, but that once she finally graduated, they had both decided they didn't want to be lawyers!

2004 Susan Hemb

Susan Hemb has been in private practice with her husband, Richard (Law '92), at Hemb Law Group, since her graduation 10 years ago. Her areas of practice include family law and bankruptcy, with some creditor work, while Richard handles the areas of probate, estate planning, wills/trusts, and landlord/tenant matters. In addition to their shared law practice, the lawyers Hemb have been partners in marriage for 11 years.

Susan has many interests away from the office, namely traveling with daughter Crystal, who is a competitive barrel racer



date with her then husband-to-be Richard, set up by classmate Christy Nijjer. Susan enjoyed participating in Delta Theta Phi activities, interning at the U.S. Attorney's office with Christina Jelladian, and observing trials before Magistrate O'Neill, "who made some very creative rulings." She also remembers fondly Stan Boone as her supervising attorney, "who made sure we argued every angle of a case."

all over the U.S. Crystal, who will enter Fresno Pacific University in the fall, has convinced Susan to test her own horsemanship by competing in a western riding event herself next September.

In addition to following her daughter's competitions, Susan enjoys working around their 15 acre ranch in Sanger, and caring for their menagerie of animals, including 4 horses, 5 dogs, 1 cat, a rabbit, and other assorted farm animals that Richard enjoys bringing home.

Susan is a member of the Clovis Chamber of Commerce, and is the marketing co-chair with Steve Mortimer of Madera, for the Central Valley Collaborative Law Affiliates. One of her goals with the CVCLA is to promote alternative divorce methods.

In addition, Susan is a member of the Central California Bankruptcy Association, the International Association of Collaborative Professionals, the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, the Federal Bar Association, Fresno County Bar Association, and the Fresno County Women Lawyers.

Susan says her SJCL memories are many, but most prominent is the blind

Michelle Sassano

Michelle Sassano's first jobs after law school were with Motschielder, Michaelides & Wishon, and Myers & Mayfield. Since 2011, she has worked as an associate attorney at Weakley & Arendt, where she specializes in civil rights violations, wrongful death, premises liability and employment litigation. She represents public entities including cities, coun-

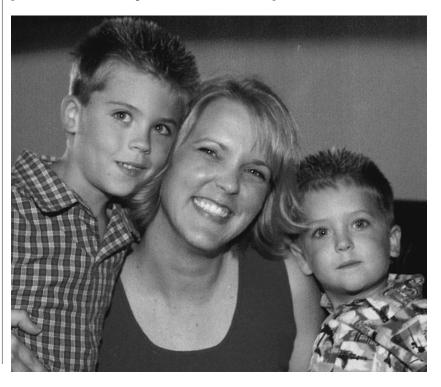
ties and school districts, as well as their employees.

Michelle's home life is busy too. Next month, she and her husband Daryn will celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary. Their two active boys: Michael, 16, and Brandon, 14, keep them jumping with school and sporting events. Michelle is heavily involved with booster clubs and school organizations, including the Liberty High School Mock Trial Team, which she coached to a victory in Madera County this year. In addition to volunteering with the youth group at her church, Michelle enjoys traveling, hiking, camping, and running with friends.

Did you know...

2004 – First cooperative degree program between SJCL and Fresno Pacific University is established.

She says she enjoyed her time at SJCL, and has great memories of all the professors, as well as laughing, hanging out, and of course studying, with her study partners Devon McTeer and Elias Suakjian. Michelle says she values the friendships that started at SJCL.



Thank you for your support!

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Our apologies to Darryl B. Freedman ('93) who was incorrectly listed in the Spring 2014 issue of the Inter Alia. Mr. Freedman should have been listed as a donor of \$5,000+.



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