



## ST. THOMAS LAW GATEWAY TO GREAT LEGAL CAREERS

**Dario Melcon**, a 2L student, accepted a paid internship with Pacin & Levine, P.A. in Miami (see p. 5).

**Lourna Joseph**, a 3L student, has accepted a paid internship with Fonte Immigration Firm in Coral Gables (see p. 4).

**Adrian Acosta**, a 2016 graduate, accepted an Associate position with Sutton Law Group, P.A., in South Miami (see p. 4).

St. Thomas Law students who participated in the Karnes Family Detention Center *Pro Bono* Project

## WELCOME BACK TO CAMPUS

The St. Thomas Law Faculty, Administration, and Staff would like to wish you a Happy New Year and welcome you back to campus.

## ST. THOMAS LAW STUDENT EXPERIENCE A LIFE-CHANGING WEEK IN TEXAS AT THE KARNES FAMILY DETENTION

St. Thomas Law continues to provide unique, transformational experiences for its students outside of the classroom. During the week of December 12, 2016, after final exams were over and before graduation, a team of fifteen first, second, and third-year St. Thomas Law students, under the guidance of Professor Lauren Gilbert, spent a week volunteering at the Karnes Family Detention Center, in Karnes, Texas, securing the release of (mostly) Central American mothers and children who had been detained by Homeland Security after seeking refugee status in the United States.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

- January 17:** Breezeway Chatter, Cordero Breezeway @noon
- January 17:** Prayer & Mass Service for Human Trafficking Victims & Survivors, Chapel of St. Anthony @ 12:15 p.m.
- January 18:** "Combatting Human Trafficking in the Sunshine State," Facebook Live @ noon
- January 19:** L & L Jobs & Opportunities in Bankruptcy, Room 104 @ noon

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The St. Thomas Law team included Professor **Lauren Gilbert, Carolina Andrade, Sophia Carballosa, David Cruz, Ashley Emeric, Manon Ferdani, Jackie Gadea, Leydis Gomez, Renzo Iparraguirre, Yailiana Leyva, Veronique Malebranche, Darcy Ruiz, Diego Sanchez, Yohania Santana, Lory Toledo, Belkys Yzquierdo, and Milagros Zepeda.**

The majority of the women and children at the Karnes Detention Center, which is located about an hour southeast of San Antonio, fled their countries because their governments are unable to protect them from horrific gang-based violence, domestic violence, or both. The Karnes *Pro Bono* Project was coordinated by St. Thomas Law's Public Interest Law Society (PILS) vice-presidents Belkys Yzquierdo and Yohania Santana, who together with Professor Lauren Gilbert, recruited, trained, and organized the group prior to and during their week in Texas. While at Karnes, the students were supervised by Andrea Meza, a law fellow at the non-profit agency, RAICES, who oversees the volunteer program at Karnes. The team was also joined by Lory Toledo, a trauma specialist at the Trauma Resolution Center in Miami, who provided services to the women and children in detention as well as support for the students.

The first day, Andrea Meza provided a brief orientation, after which the team was separated into groups of two or three. Most of the team members prepared women and children for their credible fear interviews (CFIs) before an asylum officer. Detainees must pass their CFI in order to obtain release and seek asylum, or refugee status, in the United States. If they fail their CFIs, they have one last chance to convince an immigration judge (IJ) at an IJ Review.

Students listened to the women's experiences, and helped them organize their stories so that they could convince the asylum officer that they had a "credible fear" of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Over the next few days, in addition to CFI preparation, several students helped women prepare personal declarations for their IJ Reviews, and most of the students were able to first observe and then do their own "release charlas" (or talks) for women who were being released from detention.

Two teams of students, Yohania Santana and Belkys Yzquierdo, and David Cruz, Renzo Iparraguirre, and Veronique Malebranche, spent that first day preparing two Salvadoran women and their children, for their IJ Review the next day. These women had failed their CFIs the previous week. If the IJ affirmed the Asylum Officer's decision, they would be deported. If he vacated the Officer's decision, they would be released.

On Tuesday, December 17, the teams successfully represented their Salvadoran clients before Judge Santander, who vacated, or overturned, the Asylum Officer's negative decision. Judge Santander, who met with the teams afterwards, and with another group of students on Thursday, spoke highly of their performance and of the St. Thomas Law students in general. Students described their conversation with Judge Santander as one of the high points of their trip.

Other highlights of the week included Leydis Gomez demonstrating her proficiency in Portuguese in helping Brazilian asylum seekers and Veronique Malebranche, who is from Haiti and fluent in Creole, helping some of the Haitian detainees and also, demonstrating proficiency in Spanish during the release *charlas*! RAICES has been limited in its capacity to serve Haitian detainees, so they were delighted to have Veronique as part of their team that week. They asked her to meet on Thursday in San Antonio with another Haitian woman at Casa RAICES, the transit shelter for women and children. Another highlight was a group release *charla* held in one of the courtrooms. When the legal assistant, Jill, was unable to operate the speaker phone Darcy Ruiz played the role of the phone operator, sending the women into peals of laughter that resulted in the bailiff in the

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next courtroom telling us to quiet down. Visitors are prohibited from carrying cell phones or cameras into the center, so the team could not capture on film what they experienced inside, but they described their experiences as "unforgettable."

## VICTORIA DEL PINO APPOINTED TO ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT



St. Thomas Law proudly announces the appointment of alumna **Victoria del Pino** to the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court. The appointment was announced by Governor Rick Scott on Thursday, December 15.

"I am honored and humbled by the news that Governor Rick Scott elevated me to Circuit Court," stated Judge del Pino.

Judge del Pino, of Coral Gables, has served on the Miami-Dade County Court since 2007. In June 2016, she was sworn in as Secretary of the Florida Conference of County Judges. Del Pino began her career as an Assistant Public Defender in Monroe County, Florida, after which she worked as a family and criminal law attorney from 2000 until her judicial election in 2006.

She was also a Traffic Magistrate/Hearing Officer in Miami-Dade County from 2004 to 2006.

Del Pino received her Juris Doctor degree from St. Thomas University School of Law. She was admitted to the bar in 2000.

## ST. THOMAS LAW REVIEW ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERS

The *St. Thomas Law Review* is pleased to recognize the newest members: **Michael Bogumill, Danielle Capitini, Heather Carnegie, Agnieszka Chiapperini, Danielle DeMahy, Ansell Fernandez, Victor Gabuardi, Luis Garcia, Rosie Gil, Daniel Grammes, Brandon Greene, Elizabeth Irazabal, Candice Izaguirre, Daniel Joseph, Johanne Larosiliere, Yamila Lorenzo, Idelys Martinez, Adriana Obeso, Natasha Rivera, Jacqueline Rosado, Kemil Saab, Brian Saenz, Becky Saka, Frank Samitier, Amanda Spencer, Jessica Vega, Jennifer Weiss, Chanae Wood, and Curtis Wurster.**

## BROWARD COUNTY JUDICIARY AND COURTHOUSE EVENT

On December 12, 2016, several students and Career Counselor Laura Varela attended an exclusive St. Thomas Law School event at the Broward County Central Courthouse. The students spent the morning touring the courthouse and attending court sessions with several of the judges, including First Appearance, Criminal Felony, Felony Drug Court, Criminal Delinquency Court, and portions of a Family Law Trial. Lunch followed with an informal Q&A session with the Judges. Participants included (from L to R)



**Julie Vega (1L); Laura Varela;** Judge Robert Diaz, BCWLA President Stacy Schwartz, Esq.; **Judy Echavez (2L); Christina Arroyo (1L); Joseph Galinskie (1L);** Judge Giuseppina Miranda; **John Jordan (1L);** Judge Dennis Bailey; and Judge Michael Davis. Other Judges who opened their courtrooms but are not pictured were Merrilee Ehrlich, Martin Bidwell, Raag Singhal, Stacy Ross, and Michelle Tobin-Singer.

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## DADE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION & DADE LEGAL AID “OVER THE RAINBOW” AWARD

On December 7, 2016, St. Thomas Law students and faculty attended the *Over the Rainbow* Judicial Reception and Awards Dinner hosted by the Dade County Bar Association and Dade Legal Aid. Members of the judiciary and attorneys were recognized for their dedication to justice and serving others including Judge Adalberto Jordan of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, who received the Chief Justice Earl Warren Award. In attendance were Professor **Gary Kravitz**, **Andrea Arauz** (3L), **Nataline Garcia** (2L), **Daniel Joseph** (2L), **Johanne Larosiliere** (2L), **Judy Echavez** (2L), **Amal Uthman** (3L), and Career Development counselors **Laura Varela** and **Robert Jack**. Pictured (Left to Right) are Brianna Martinez (2L), Alexis Fernandez (2L), Nataline Garcia (2L), and Patricia Peña (2L).



## FEDERAL BAR ASSOCIATION’S HYATT LUNCHEON

On November 17, 2016, a group of St. Thomas Law students attended the Federal Bar Association’s Hyatt Luncheon. Amy Howe, Esq., reporter and former editor of SCOTUSblog discussed the impact of Justice Scalia’s death on the Court, and analyzed the prospects of the Court remaining intact versus potential retirements. Ms. Howe also spoke on the numerous interesting cases before the Court this term and the “courtesy fifth vote” traditionally used to stay a death penalty case, so it can be decided on the merits, but recently used in a different, and perhaps strategic fashion.



Photo: **Laura Varela** (Career Counselor); **Amanda Spencer** (2L); Magistrate Judge Edwin G. Torres, United States District Court; **D’Bria Bradshaw** (2L); and **Claudia Capdesuner** (3L).

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

**Agnieszka Chiapperini**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *A Right Without a Remedy: Time Runs Out Before the Right to File Accrues for Successive Habeas Corpus Petitioners* that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

**Ansell Fernandez**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *Prisoners of the Zip Code: How Single Zip Code Rate-Making Hurts the Public Interest* that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

**Daniel Grammes**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *Protecting Florida’s Marine Life with Conservation Drones*, that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

**Lourna Joseph**, a 3L student, has accepted a paid internship with Fonte Immigration Firm in Coral Gables.

**Idelys Martinez**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *The Shell Game: An Easy Hide-and-Go-Seek Game for Criminals Around the World* that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

**Dario Melcon**, a 2L student, has accepted a paid internship with Pacin & Levine, P.A., in Miami,

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specializing in Plaintiffs' Personal Injury and PIP.

**Becky Saka**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *Driven to Distracted Driving in Florida* that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

**Chanae Wood**, a 2L student, wrote an article entitled *Black & Poor: The Grave Consequences of Utah v. Strieff* that will be published in the *St. Thomas Law Review*.

## ALUMNI(AE) NEWS

**Adrian Acosta**, a 2016 graduate, accepted an Associate position with Sutton Law Group, P.A. in South Miami, specializing in Personal Injury, Criminal Defense, Family Law, and Commercial Litigation.

**Cassandra Jefferies**, a 2004 graduate, was recently named Partner at Kelley Kronenberg in Plantation, representing insurance companies in First Party and Third Party matters.

**Florina Reznik**, a 2014 graduate, has accepted an Associate position at Alan J. Marcus in Aventura, specializing in commercial real estate acquisitions.

## Faculty Announcements

Professor **Raúl Fernández-Caliènes** has written an article that was published in the *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American Biography*, a new work edited by Professor Franklin W. Knight (of Johns Hopkins University) and Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (of Harvard University and its W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research). The work is published by Oxford University Press and is part of three joint projects by OUP and the Du Bois Institute that "create the most complete account of black lives in the Americas ever assembled."

Professor **Patricia Moore** spoke on a panel at the 2017 conference of the Association of American Law Schools on January 5. The panel's topic was "The Roberts Court and the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure." Other speakers on the panel were Judge William A. Fletcher of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Professor Stephen Burbank of the University of Pennsylvania, Professor Sean Farhang of UC Berkeley, Professor Troy McKenzie from NYU, and Professor Judith Resnik from Yale Law School. The panel was moderated by Professor Simona Grossi of Loyola Los Angeles.

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