



**Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center  
 Santa Clara University School of Law  
 Civil Clinical Programs  
 La Voz del Centro**

**A publication for the sponsors, supporters and friends of the Law Center**

**December 2004**

**A Year of Changes, a Year of Opportunities...**

**Contents:**

- A Message from the Director ..... 2
- A Message from Dean Polden ..... 3
- Celebrating The Spirit of Giving ..... 4
- First-year Law Students Impact their Community ..... 4-5
- A Student Perspective ..... 7
- Golf Tournament benefits Law Center ..... 7
- The Law Center Welcomes New Director ..... 8
- KGACLC Hires Workers' Rights Supervising Attorney ..... 8
- Their success, our success ..... 8-9
- Thank you ..... 10

In keeping with the tradition set in past years, change has once again dominated many activities at the Law Center. In 2002, the University purchased the building that the Law Center now occupies, allowing students easier access and giving clients the respect and privacy that they deserve from a law office. In 2003, the Law Center's tenth anniversary, the Workers' Rights supervising attorney, Ellen Braff Guajardo, moved with her family to Fresno and that program was temporarily suspended due to funding restraints. During that year, the educational component was enhanced, and the new dean of the law school, Donald Polden, learned about the services and educational value of the civil clinical program. The year 2004 has been a year of opportunity: in recognition of the creation of a significant endowment, the Law Center was re-named the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center. In addition, the Small Business Development Program was put

on hold when its supervising attorney left, but the Workers' Rights program has been resurrected. The workshop program has expanded, giving first year law students the opportunity to participate in Law Center activities on a significant level for the first time (see First-year Law Students Given a Chance to Empower Their Community, pages 4-5), and a new director, Angelo Ancheta, has been selected. Professor Ancheta will start in the summer of 2005. Lastly, the Law Center was the lead article in the Fall 2004 issue of the Santa Clara Magazine which has a circulation of over 65,000.

The Center's new name, the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center, officially replaced the old East San José Community Law Center last April. For over three decades, George Alexander has played a variety of significant roles at the law school. He served as



The new KGACLC building, located at 1030 The Alameda, San José, California 95126

Professor of Law for 34 years - 15 as Dean. He then became the Director of the Institute of International and Comparative Law, establishing overseas summer programs in more than 14 countries. Thinking back to the 1970s, Professor Alexander reflects, "The law school was a relatively small school. It focused necessarily on its educational program. As we grew in both faculty and student population, we had the opportunity to aspire to offer more than bar-related courses. We had an opportunity to focus on social justice concerns. Everyone agreed to start a social justice program."

**Changes, page 3, column 1**

## A Message from the Director



**A**re you still excited about what you do? Does it bring you a sense of satisfaction, even though you work hard, have too many commitments and at times feel overwhelmed? Law students frequently experience frustration and even depression because they lose their sense of purpose, their self-esteem and their confidence. I am now in my fourth year as Executive Director of the Law Center and have seen the Law Center experience transform students — reinvigorate their passion for the law, energize them because they know they are helping someone who would otherwise get no legal assistance, and restore their faith in themselves as people. In addition, they quickly see the connection between the practice of law and their stand-up classes. Contracts become real when they deal with a client who has signed a contract with onerous provisions - perhaps a contract in a language the client could not read or write. Civil Procedure takes on a life of its own when students need to draft a complaint, file an answer or prepare a motion for summary judgment. I could go on, but you get the idea.

The type of community-based learning that the students undertake at the Law Center has no substitute in my opinion. First, they

are closely supervised by experienced, trained clinicians. This gives them permission to make mistakes, and more importantly, to learn from their mistakes. Second, they are given the opportunity to deal directly with live clients with real problems who have no where else to turn for help. This gives the law students an opportunity to make a difference which, in turn, allows them to regain their sense of purpose, since many come to law school wanting to do something to make the world a better place. Third, they are successful. Most of the cases result in a favorable resolution. This gives the students confidence in their legal abilities. Much of their dissatisfaction with the law, the disillusionment, the frustration disappear when they are at the Law Center.

There is an additional benefit to the type of experience that the Law Center offers, although I have no empirical evidence to prove it. I firmly believe that participation in a community-based clinic like the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center instills in students a commitment to do some sort of pro bono service for the rest of their legal careers. The Law School Mission Statement incorporates a commitment to educating lawyers of competence, conscience and compassion; the Law Center does this in so many ways, from the modeling by the supervising clinicians to the interaction with those who have so much less than they do.

This has been a year of fulfillment, challenges and changes for me personally. I was able to fulfill a commitment I had made to myself in March of 2001 after returning from a faculty trip to El Salvador, which was to take a group of law students to El Salvador on an immersion experience during which we would focus on the human rights and social justice issues of the country. This occurred in January 2004, and it was a life-changing experience for both the students and me. Then there were the continual funding challenges, but next

fiscal year, the generous gift from Katharine and George Alexander will help ease the financial pressures. Working with the two of them has been truly rewarding and gratifying. The faith they have shown in the Law Center is giving it the credibility it needs to attract additional recognition and funding. We have hired a Workers' Rights attorney who will start this coming January. Lastly, I will be leaving the position of Executive Director at the end of this academic year, turning over the reins to Angelo Ancheta, a professor who will be able to give the Law Center the national recognition it deserves. (See "The Law Center Welcomes New Director," page 8, for Mr. Ancheta's background information.) I will miss the staff and attorneys, the clients and students, but I will continue to be involved in several ways - as a supervising attorney in the Tenants' Rights workshops, as a liaison to the legal community and others who so generously support the Law Center, and as a promoter of the Law Center generally.

Thank you all for your support - your words frequently have encouraged me and helped me to realize that the effort is more than worth it; your willingness to donate both time and money has helped maintain the Law Center as a viable entity, and your assistance in so many other ways has invigorated me personally. I wish all of you a happy, joyful holiday season.

*Cynthia*

Cynthia Mertens  
Executive Director

## A Message from Dean Polden



**D**ear Friends:

It is a pleasure to send season's greetings to friends of the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center. It is a time of year for thoughtful reflection on the people who have provided leadership and support of the Center and to be thankful for its accomplishments and its faculty, staff and students.

All of us at the School of Law are particularly thankful for the generosity of Katharine and George Alexander on behalf of the Center, and it was appropriate that their support was recognized at the Law Center's recent Celebration (see p. 4). The event also permitted us to thank several other donors and benefactors who have made gifts of time, resources and expertise that advanced the work and recognition of the Center. Their support will permit the Center to continue to achieve its goals of providing a nationally visible experiential learning opportunity for Santa Clara University law students while meeting important community legal service needs.

The Center has been blessed with great leadership among its faculty and staff and by its board, and they are the most significant reason for the strengthening of the Center's program. Professor Cynthia Mertens has provided terrific leadership and vision for the Center and paved the way for a

successor faculty member who will serve as Executive Director. Angelo Ancheta recently accepted the position, and we are pleased to have him take over next academic year. He is a graduate of UCLA's law school and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and served as the Director of Legal and Advocacy Programs at the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. He brings a wealth of experience in public service and public interest law programs and in legal education to the Center, and I look forward to introducing him to the community of friends of the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center.

I hope you have an enjoyable and healthy holiday season.

Donald J. Polden, Dean

### Changes, from page 1

The Alexanders chose the Law Center as the recipient of their endowment gift based on their belief "that a person with a civil problem who cannot afford legal assistance should have the opportunity to go to a competent attorney in the same way that a person in a criminal case has a right to be represented by a competent attorney." Katharine Alexander further explains, "Civil problems have a significant impact, just as criminal ones do. For example, people who are not familiar with our language or legal jargon but who rely on a salesperson to sign a contract for the purchase of a car can be easily victimized. Over-reaching terms may mean eventually losing the car and therefore their transportation, and perhaps even losing their home and job, thus causing serious harm to the family." Katharine Alexander, who practiced law for 25 years as a public defender for Santa Clara County and taught law-related courses at

San Jose State University, says her husband has a belief that every graduate of law school should be cognizant of justice, fairness, and concern for others. With its new name, the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center will make that belief a lasting reality, as the endowment will produce approximately \$40,000 to \$50,000 in yearly income beginning in July 2005. The Law Center is funded through the law school, grants, individual donations, and now significant endowment income. The operating costs of the Law Center are almost \$1 million annually.

Personnel changes have also occurred. The supervising attorney for the Small Business Development Program, Cindy Thorp, decided to return to private practice with an emphasis on family law and the representation of children. The Advisory Board, staff, law school faculty and administrators, and other interested supporters decided not to fill the Small Business position

but rather to return to the roots of the Law Center by hiring a full-time Workers' Rights attorney. Margarita Alvarez has accepted the position and will begin in January, first working 60% of the time while she closes her private practice, and increasing to 100% in May.

The changes of 2004 have given the Law Center unanticipated advantages. A more stable funding source, a new name, revitalization of its oldest program - Workers' Rights - new personnel, and widespread publicity have enhanced its reputation. The beneficiaries are two: the underrepresented in our community, and the law students who get excellent training under the supervision of outstanding clinicians.



## Celebrating and Honoring the Spirit of Giving



Katharine and George Alexander

**O**n Friday, October 1, 2004, the Law Center hosted its 7th Community, Commitment, and Courage Celebration at the Adobe Lodge on campus. The open-air buffet and pleasant soiree were followed by a memorable program that paid tribute to the recipients of the awards, honored for their contributions to the community and the Law Center's mission.

This year's Community Award went to the law firm of Alexander, Hawes & Audet for its continued dedication to workers throughout California and the nation and for its significant financial and other contributions to the Law Center over the past three years. Katharine Alexander called the law firm partners "a symbol for the students of profes-

sional excellence and community responsibility." At the Celebration, the firm made a commitment to continue to assist the Law Center in years to come.

Robert Nuddleman, recipient of the 2004 Commitment Award, developed his passion for the workers' rights area when, as a Law Center student several years ago, he zealously represented a client who had not been paid his just wages. In that case, Mr. Nuddleman obtained the maximum possible judgment for his client. That was the beginning of what has turned out to be a lasting commitment to advancing the legal rights of low-income clients. Now, as a private employment rights' attorney, Mr. Nuddleman continues to help workers obtain justice.

The Courage Award was especially heart-warming, as the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department asked to join the Law Center in presenting the award to Sandra Sanchez, an immigration client who assisted the Department in prosecuting her employer, a man who attempted to rape and kill her. Ms. Sanchez, an undocumented immigrant, was hired by a couple as a nanny. During her time in the home, she was subjected to intense abuse, which culminated in the threats on her life. She overcame her fear and trauma and went to the police. The subsequent prosecution required her to repeat her story numerous times, thus forcing her to relive the trauma. Yet her courage to speak out in order to see justice served is exemplary. It was truly an honor for the Law Center to represent her in her successful immigration case.



Rob Nuddleman, Carol Koenig & Mike Gaitley

Mike Gaitley of the Legal Aid Society of San Francisco, Employment Rights Program, received the 2004 Eric and Nancy Wright Award for his extensive dedication to the underrepresented in the workforce. Mr. Gaitley has spent countless hours working with clients, students and staff. His dedication to the Workers' Rights Advice Clinic has made it a model program.

The Director's Award was presented to Ruth Silver Taube who has worked as a volunteer attorney for the Workers' Rights Advice Clinic for the past nine years and who willingly agreed to be the supervising attorney for the workers' rights workshops. Her enthusiasm, optimism and spirit have added to the success of both programs.

Congratulations to all of the honorees. Your work, commitment and selflessness make a difference in our communities.

## First-year Law Students Given a Chance to Empower Their Community

**T**he Law Center's vibrant and newly expanded Workshop Program achieves two significant goals: empowering the underrepresented by giving them knowledge about their legal rights in certain areas, and allowing first year law students the opportunity to use their newly acquired legal skills to make a difference in the local community. This opportunity to

positively implement change helps students stay focused on the reason they came to law school. Many students enter law school at least in part to be able to institute social change, but the rigor of the first year curriculum frequently dims or even extinguishes this goal. The workshop program is intended to re-ignite that objective, while at the same time providing valuable information to

large numbers of individuals.

In 2004, over 1,400 participants attended a total of 61 workshops. Three of these workshops were in the immigration area, eighteen in tenants' rights, fourteen in workers' rights and twenty-six in auto fraud prevention.

Continued on page 5

Eighty-eight first year law students were trained as presenters, which required them to attend six to eight hours of class in one of the subject areas. They then went out into pre-arranged community settings in teams of two with an experienced attorney observer to give the presentation. The attendees were generally inquisitive, asking the students numerous questions, and, in some cases, asking them to return to give additional information. The attendees learned about the services provided at the Law Center, and many have sought specific legal advice regarding their problems at one of the Center's advice clinics, staffed by second and third year students working under the close supervision of staff clinicians. There is no question, in the opinion of Ruth Silver Taube, a volunteer attorney who oversees the Workers' Rights Workshops, that first year law students who have volunteered for the

workshops have been conscientious, committed, and articulate spokespersons for the Law Center and its services.

Community centers and agencies throughout Silicon Valley have hosted the workshops. Ms. Silver Taube gives a sample of these when commenting on her experience with the workers' rights presentations: "It was obvious from the questions posed at the Emergency Housing Consortium, the ESL classes, the Justice for Janitors Union local, the South East Asian Community Center, Even Start, and the Day Worker Center, that there is a hunger in the community for knowledge about workers' rights. It makes a difference to the community to learn that workers have recourse to a free Workers' Rights Advice Clinic, to community resources, and to government agencies to assist them." The same can be said about each of the areas covered in the Workshop Program.

The reactions of the students have been as enthusiastic as those of the audiences. Many have requested the opportunity to do additional presentations; some have now volunteered as interpreters in subject areas other than the one in which they have been trained, and all have seen the benefit of sharing their knowledge with those less fortunate. The greatest benefit, however, is that the students see there are large numbers of individuals who have no access to legal assistance and that they can use their education to make a difference.

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Thank you!



## A Case at the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center Made a Difference in my Legal Education



By  
Marco  
Quintana

**B**efore starting at SCU Law, I was often told that many lawyers never see the inside of a courtroom. The idea seemed strange to me - a lawyer never stepping foot inside a courtroom? How could that be? I thought attorneys spent most of their time in court. I now realize that my experience at the Law Center has provided me with the opportunity to do what most attorneys will never get a chance to do - argue a motion before a federal court.

Our client was a wonderful grandmother who was being harassed by a debt collector. The debt collector was sending her threatening letters in an attempt to collect on a debt stemming from her granddaughter's car loan, which our client had co-signed. When her granddaughter stopped making payments, our client was harassed mercilessly by the finance company. Under the direction of Scott Maurer, the supervising attorney for the consumer program, students at the Law Center brought an action in federal court seeking statutory damages and an injunction to prevent the debt collector from continuing its deceptive business practices. The defendant failed to answer the complaint, a motion for a default judgment was filed and this led to my day in court.

The idea of public speaking petrifies me, so the thought of arguing before a federal court

kept me up most of the night before the hearing. Scott Maurer, my supervising attorney, provided a few last minute pointers before we went in. Always maintain eye contact with the judge, he said. Refer to the judge as "Your Honor" or "The Court." Never say "I" but rather discuss the facts of this case or the ruling of another court. Never interrupt the judge, even if you think he or she is wrong and is going off on a tangent. Armed with this advice and my knowledge of the case, I was ready.

Thankfully, there were only a few people in the courtroom that day. As I sat there waiting for our case to be called, I ran down the checklist. Never say "I," maintain eye contact, do not interrupt. Our case was called. The next few minutes are now all a blur. I recall talking but I don't know how articulate I was. I don't know if I followed any of those pointers on the checklist. Maybe I did interrupt, maybe I did say "I." Nevertheless, when it was over, I knew I had successfully argued a motion in federal court. My client was awarded \$5,126. I had achieved a milestone in my law school education.

Students at the Law Center have the benefit of working with experienced, patient and competent supervising attorneys who know how to teach. The supervisors, after preparing the students, are willing to take a back seat and let the students figure out the best way to proceed. Once assigned a case, the client is ours; we interview him or her, contact witnesses, and draft declarations and motions. All contact with opposing counsel goes through us. Of course, the supervising attorneys are always there to guide and direct. They give us the opportunity to learn before we make any serious errors. Additionally, from time to time, we have the opportunity to argue before a court.

There are many things I've learned during my time at SCU Law School, but nothing has been more beneficial than my time at the Law Center. I gained a foundational knowledge of how to negotiate a settlement. I experienced dealing with difficult clients, as well as difficult opposing counsel. I also worked with wonderful clients who were in troubling situations. I had the pleasure of working with supervising attorneys who provided invaluable guidance and support. This experience has prepared me well for the clerking position I now hold with a local attorney. I highly recommend any and all of the courses offered at the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center. You will get practical experience, help clients who would otherwise never receive legal assistance, and gain confidence in your abilities.

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### Teeing up to help out... again

The Santa Clara County Trial Lawyers Association once again held a very successful golf tournament in July, naming the Law Center as the beneficiary. The president-elect of the association, Lawrence Ramirez, presented a check for \$10,000 to the Law Center at its 7th Annual Community, Commitment and Courage Celebration (see page 4) .



## THE LAW CENTER WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR



**A**fter a long and careful search, the Law Center is proud to welcome its new Director, Mr. Angelo Ancheta.

Angelo's most recent position has been as the

Legal Director for The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, a research and advocacy center focusing on racial discrimination issues. In that capacity, he has published a number of academic articles and monographs and has been a clinical supervisor of both law students and graduate students at Harvard. He has also been a lecturer at the Harvard Law School and an adjunct professor at the NYU School of Law.

Prior to his time at Harvard, he was a legal services attorney and nonprofit executive director in both Southern and Northern California, where he specialized in immigration, civil rights, and appellate practice. His legal experience includes over three years as a staff attorney at the Santa Clara County Asian Law Alliance, where he became very familiar with many of the legal needs of the low-income and immigrant communities in the Santa Clara County region.

He also has a number of years of nonprofit management experience, including nearly four years as the Executive Director of the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco. In all of his positions, he has had significant responsibilities for supervising lawyers (including pro bono attorneys), law students, and volunteers.

The staff at the Law Center would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Ancheta.

## KGACLC RE-INVIGORATES ITS WORKERS' RIGHTS COMPONENT WITH NEW ATTORNEY

**I**n 2003, the Workers' Rights supervising attorney, Ellen Braff Guajardo, moved with her family to Fresno and that program was temporarily suspended due to funding restraints. During that time, however, the educational content of the program was enhanced and the Center's Director worked diligently to find the funds to reinstate the program. Filling the position again was not only crucial to meet a real community need, but it also became a mission to give back to the Law Center its historical *raison d'être*. The mission was happily accomplished this December, when Margarita Alvarez accepted the position of Workers' Right Attorney. She will start in January 2005.

As a second generation Latina, Margarita was well aware of the opportunities that were available to her because of the efforts and suffering of those who came before. Her activism began in high school, where she picketed on behalf of the UFW. Her college activities revolved around creating a role for the newly established Chicano Studies Center,

including student recruitment and retention, and curriculum development.

After law school, Margarita worked for a community agency in East Los Angeles, where she had a direct role in providing consumer advice to members of the local community. Because of her education, she was also given grant writing and political responsibilities related to maintaining the organization's funding.

While in civil practice, Margarita served on the Board of Directors of the East San Jose Educational Foundation. This was an organization directing its fundraising efforts toward funding classroom projects in east San Jose schools. She also served as a mentor to students at Gavilan Community College in the Puente Program.

Her solo practice has been a source of livelihood as well as a source of community giving. She regularly takes pro bono cases. She has served as a volunteer attorney at the Law Center's workers' compensation clinics and worked with Law Center students on two cases where the employers were uninsured and representation otherwise impossible to attain.

Margarita has also spent substantial time in activities



on behalf of injured workers in her position on the Board of Governors of the California Applicant Attorneys Association, where she has served as the local President.

The Law Center is very pleased to have Margarita as the supervising attorney for the Workers' Rights area. The protection of disadvantaged, low-income workers has always been an important part of the Law Center's work.



# THANK YOU!

The Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center presents its **Honor Roll of Donors** for the fiscal year July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004. We greatly appreciate your support!

*We do our best to create an accurate list. If your name is misspelled or missing, please contact Sophia Hinojosa at 408.288.7030 x237 or shinojosa@scu.edu.*

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## SOME OF THE SUCCESSES IN 2004



Workers' Compensation attorney Susan Levin confers with some of her students.

### Workers' Compensation Cases

**Congratulations** to 3<sup>rd</sup> year law student **Rowena Joseph**, JD/MBA student **Dallas Dolen**, and then-students now law graduates **Ben Williams** and **Jaci Mankins** for successfully settling a Workers' Compensation case on behalf of their client, Mr. M. Their client developed asthma during his 14 years employment as a gold plater. When he asked his boss for either time off to take care of his health or for a change in his work site, his employer refused. To protect his health, Mr. M. decided not to return to work. When Mr. M. came to seek help at the Law Center in October 2002, he had been without a job or benefits for 4 months.

**Ben Williams** filed for Workers' Compensation benefits. The employer's insurance carrier refused to accept that Mr. M.'s disability was work-related until having him evaluated by a physician of its choosing. The doctor found that Mr. M. did indeed suffer from occupational asthma, that he was in need of on-going medical treatment, and that he required a change of occupation.

**Jaci Mankins** spent a considerable amount of time trying to settle the case. Her efforts apparently paid off at a settlement conference, when a deal was finally reached. However, a month later, the insurance carrier refused to honor the settlement. The defense attorney confessed that she had acted without settlement authority.

In preparation for trial, **Dallas Dolen** had Mr. M. evaluated by another physician, one

who had helped to develop the standards of disability pertaining to pulmonary disorders. He made a settlement demand that was rejected. **Dallas** then filed for a trial date. **Rowena Joseph** prepared petitions for sanctions against the defense attorney and for penalties against the insurance company. She appeared at a settlement conference and negotiated a \$50,000 settlement. This settlement was approved by a Workers' Compensation judge on November 3, 2004.

**Congratulations** to 2<sup>nd</sup> year law student **John Bahkit** and then-student now law graduate **Jimm Erickson** for their successful settlement of another Workers' Compensation claim. Ms. R. was employed by a well-known restaurant chain when she slipped and fell in the kitchen. Her employer refused to report the claim to its insurance carrier or to submit her medical bills for payment. As a result, Ms. R.'s credit was negatively impacted. Ms. R. came to the Law Center as a last resort for relief.

**Jimm Erickson** submitted the medical bills to the insurance carrier and entered into settlement negotiations with it. The next semester, **John Bahkit** appeared before a Workers' Compensation judge and got a settlement approved. The client was properly compensated, thanks to the perseverance and professionalism of the students.

**Congratulations** to 2<sup>nd</sup> year law students **John Bahkit** and **Hilary Stevenson**, JD/MBA student **Diane Liang**, and then-students now law graduates **Alexa Green** and **Forrest Hansen**, for their success in a case involving a client who injured his eye in 1989. His case had been settled in a fashion that permitted him to receive continuing medical care. He also was able to petition the court to reopen his case if his condition deteriorated within a 5-year window from the date of the injury. Mr. V. contacted the Law Center because he claimed that his efforts to obtain medical attention were being ignored by the insurance company after he petitioned to re-open his case.

**Alexa Green** tried to convince the insurance carrier to have Mr. V. evaluated by an agreed medical

examiner. When the carrier did not respond, she scheduled a physical examination by a physician chosen by her and Susan Levin, her supervising attorney. **Forrest Hansen** wrote to the doctor so that he would know the issues he needed to address. The examination results supported Mr. V.'s contention that his disability had increased. The insurance carrier would not offer a sufficient amount to settle the case, so **Forrest** set the case for trial.

Summer student **Diana Liang** negotiated a higher settlement with the carrier, which met the full satisfaction of her client. In the Fall, **John Bahkit** reviewed the settlement papers with Mr. V, and **Hilary Stevenson** made the court appearance to obtain court approval. Mr. V. suffered for several years, but with the help of the students at the Alexander Community Law Center, his case was successfully concluded.



Immigration attorney Lynette Parker advises students during a typical Immigration Clinic.

### Immigration Cases

**Congratulations** to **Kristen Herman** and **Christine Tassos**, both 3<sup>rd</sup> year law students, to then-student now law graduate **Seeta Ambati** and to **Tracy Lingo**, a visiting law student from Louisiana, all of whom successfully represented an immigration client and her children who were victims of severe domestic violence.

The client and her older daughter were severely abused by the husband. Another daughter was kidnapped by the abuser. As victims of crimes

## SOME OF THE SUCCESSES IN 2004 (CONTINUED)

who have cooperated with law enforcement in the criminal investigation, the client and her children became eligible for immigration benefits. Thanks to the skillful and thorough work of all these students, the client has been granted legal status and work authorization. She and her children will also be eligible for possible permanent residence in the United States.

**Congratulations** to 3rd year law student **Hallie Aaron** for her dedicated groundbreaking work on behalf of a victim of trafficking. Ms. E. was 17 years old when she and a younger brother were trafficked into the United States with promises that they could go to school and learn English. Instead, her traffickers put her to work in their home. Among many other tasks, she had to cook, clean, wash clothes and care for children approximately 20 hours a day. She was not paid and was threatened and beaten when she did not perform the work to her traffickers' satisfaction. Her traffickers held her passport. She and her brother were often prohibited from leaving the house and were occasionally denied food. She was totally unfamiliar with the United States and was completely unaware that any services were available to her.

With the help of Law Center students, Ms. E. applied for a T-visa as a victim of trafficking. Immigration approved her petition and granted her work authorization. She is now eligible for services and benefits through the Department of Health and Human Services. All of this would not have been possible without the tenacity, compassion, and dedication of the students.

**Congratulations** to **Sue Lake** and **Sarah Stiefel**, 3<sup>rd</sup> year law students, on a remarkable political asylum success.

On November 26, 2004, Mr. H, a Law Center client, was granted political asylum in the United States. Mr. H. is Mayan from Central America. He fled his country after being stabbed by persons he believes are ex-military, death squad members. In addition, Mr. H. feared returning to his country because he has AIDS/HIV. He feared being

harmed because of his AIDS/HIV status.

Both law students spent many hours preparing an amended political asylum application, the client's declaration, the supporting documents and background country condition documents, and the hearing brief. The government attorney congratulated the students on a well-prepared case. In addition, with the outstanding interpreting assistance of **Margarita Sandoval**, legal assistant for the Immigration Program, both students spent much time working with the client to document his past persecution and his fear of persecution should he be forced to return to his country.

The Law Center's client was advised that he had six months to live. He has survived four months past that time. With political asylum, this young man will be allowed to remain in the United States and live for the remainder of his life without fear.

**Congratulations** to then-students now law graduates **George Heridis** and **Jyoti Rehki** who represented Ms. O. in her immigration case. Ms. O. married a United States citizen. The citizen spouse soon became violent and abused Ms. O. physically and mentally. Because of **George's** and **Jyoti's** advocacy, the woman and her daughter now have legal status in the United States and can begin to build a healthy life together without violence.

### Consumer Cases

**Congratulations** to then-students now law graduates **Molly Ryan**, **Steve Kahn** and **Patrick Moss**, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year law student **Elizabeth Pianca** for their work in achieving a favorable settlement for their clients. The clients, Mr. J. and his father-in-law, Mr. S, are Spanish-speaking immigrants who were deceived by a local car dealership. The dealership had induced these recent immigrant consumers into signing a contract to pay over \$72,000 for a used pickup truck. The contract also required the consumers to pay \$500 for an insurance policy that was never issued to them.

Shortly after the contract was signed, **Molly Ryan** wrote a demand letter to the dealership. The letter caused the dealership to enter into negotiations via its insurance carrier. **Steve Kahn** reached a settlement with the insurance company in the amount of



Consumer attorney Scott Maurer examines the evidence in one of his student's cases

\$10,868.17. The insurance company then backed out of the settlement, claiming the adjuster lacked authority. **Patrick Moss** drafted a complaint, filed suit, and handled all the discovery in the case. **Elizabeth Pianca** then negotiated the final settlement in favor of the clients: \$25,000.

**Congratulations** to then-students now law graduates **Myvan Khuu**, **Tammy Kissman** and 3<sup>rd</sup> year law students **Sheryl Ainsworth**, **Kevin Cogbill**, **Marco Quintana**, **Tim Reed** and **Vivian Ware**, all of whom obtained favorable settlements or judgments for clients who were victims of unlawful debt collection harassment.

State and Federal laws allow consumers who are harassed by debt collectors to turn the tables and sue the collectors for their abuse. (Read Marco Quintana's article on page 7 for a detailed look at one such case.) The students listed above all obtained judgments or settlements for such clients in 2004, and the combined value of those unfair debt collection judgments and settlements exceeded \$25,000.

## **Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center**

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### *Our Mission:*

The Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center educates law students in accordance with the highest professional and ethical standards by serving individuals and communities in need with competence, conscience and compassion, through pro bono legal representation and education.

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