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Summer 2021

## **The Exhibit, The Litigation Center Newsletter - Summer 2021**

Golden Gate University School of Law

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# THE EXHIBIT

**Golden Gate University School of Law's Litigation Center Newsletter**

## STUDENTS CONQUER THE ONLINE SUMMER TRIAL & EVIDENCE PROGRAM!



This year, the STEP program was hosted virtually for the second summer in a row. We welcomed 15 students who came to the program hungry to learn effective trial techniques in the courtroom and walked out ready to conduct full jury trials from start to finish.

The students who graduated from the STEP program started this summer by committing themselves to an all-day, week-long boot camp, called "Immersion Week". These intense 40 hours are spent teaching students all phases of trial, so on the last day, they present an entire jury trial in front of local litigators.

In the following eight weeks, students learn more complex skills to practice and develop their courtroom advocacy in order to build a solid practical foundation. Students conduct another mock trial at the end of the summer to show off their learned skills. Each student brought unique talent to the program and challenged their professors by asking thoughtful questions and developing creative performances.

This year's program was led by GGU Litigation Center Director Rachel Brockl who led the first ever virtual STEP class in 2020. Instructors included distinguished criminal defense attorney and GGU alum - Curtis Briggs, one of Texas's top civil attorneys - Jody Mask, performance coach - Harriet Schiffer Scott, and many more visiting professors from across the country. The program also featured guest speakers from top Bay Area litigation law firms, District Attorney, and Public Defender's Offices.

Director Brockl drove the program to new heights by creating exciting, new experiences for the students. Two working police officers were designated as strangulation experts and sworn in as witnesses. Students had the opportunity to qualify, voir dire, and conduct direct and cross examinations. In addition, the students attended (both virtually and live) a murder trial in Alameda County, presided over by our very own GGU Evidence Professor Judge Steckler. Director Brockl even arranged a live jury selection exercise for the students, where volunteers from the Bay Area community sat as jurors for a mock court case as students conducted real time voir dire. It was certainly a summer to remember!

### Upcoming Fall Events

The Litigation Center has worked hard to put together a riveting program of events to bring to the GGU community this fall. Turn to page 3 to read more about these exciting seminars! Email [baxterfellow@ggu.edu](mailto:baxterfellow@ggu.edu) to RSVP!

**"Psychology of the Courtroom"**  
presented by Melissa Gomez



**September 20, 2021**  
12:00PM - 1:00PM

**"How to Tell a Story Jurors Can Feel"**  
presented by Brian Panish



**September 8, 2021**  
11:30AM - 1:00PM

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*Save the Date*  
October 22-24, 2021



Volunteers are needed to help with our 10th Annual *In Vino Veritas* Mock Trial Competition taking place October 22-24. We need trial attorneys and judges to evaluate and judge our competition, and we need student volunteers to act as bailiffs and timekeepers. Volunteers will be featured in our fall newsletter. Trials will run as follows:

**Friday 9:00 am-12:00 pm & 2:00-5:00 pm**  
**Saturday 9:00 am-12:00 pm & 2:00-5:00 pm**  
**Sunday 9:00 am-12:00 pm**

Those interested in volunteering should email the Litigation Center at: [invino@ggu.edu](mailto:invino@ggu.edu)



# The Exhibit

## BAXTER OFFICE UPDATES

### WELCOME BACK CLODAGH MAUCLINE AS OUR 2021-2022 JUDGE LEE D. BAXTER FELLOW IN LITIGATION



**Clodagh Mauchline**  
2021 - 2022 Baxter Fellow

Clodagh is an alum of Golden Gate University, and the first person in her family to receive a college degree and J.D. While a student at GGU, Clodagh interned at the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, GGU's Pro Bono Tax Clinic, and the Bar Association of San Francisco.

When she wasn't interning, Clodagh was working as co-captain of the GGU National Mock Trial Team. She competed in four national competitions during her time at GGU, and was the 2020 recipient of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers Award for Most Outstanding Litigator. Since becoming the Baxter Fellow, she has had a leadership role in the STEP Program, co-coached mock trial teams, and mastered *In Vino*.



"It was an easy decision to bring Clo back as a returning Baxter Fellow. During her time as a Fellow this past year, she has made her mark by updating STEP workshops, case files, planning events, and mentoring

students. Her passion for trial work and helping students advance their litigation skills is contagious. Clo enjoys working in academia and has been diligent in balancing her work life with studying for the bar exam and welcoming her newborn baby girl, Capri, this past spring.

Clo cares so deeply about her work product and constantly goes over and above what is required of her. Because of her abilities to clearly communicate and provide support to the Litigation Center family, I am thrilled to announce that Clo will be with us for the upcoming academic year!"

**-Professor Brockl**



### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 IN VINO VERITAS STUDENT DIRECTOR YZABEL TINGA



**Yzabel Tinga**  
2021 IVV Student Director

The Litigation Center is happy to have third-year law student, Yzabel Tinga, back for the second year in a row as the Student Director of GGU's *In Vino Veritas* National Mock Trial Competition. In this position, Yzabel supports Director Rachel Brockl and Baxter Fellow Clodagh Mauchline in planning the competition. Running a mock trial competition is no easy feat, as it takes

hundreds of volunteers to evaluate and judge the competition.

Yzabel's primary duties as Student Director include, volunteer outreach, recruiting real judges to preside, coordinating volunteer schedules, and assisting with the preparation of the competition during trial sessions.



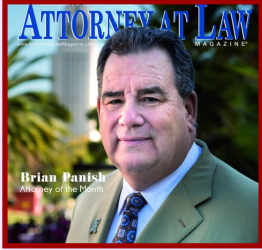
### How to Find Information About the Litigation Center

Visit [www.ggulitigation.com](http://www.ggulitigation.com) to find activities, events, competitions, the STEP application, Litigation Specialization Certificate, In Vino Veritas sign-ups, newsletters, and more!



# The Exhibit

## FALL SEMINAR SERIES



### "How to Tell a Story Jurors Can Feel" featuring Brian Panish

Join us on Wednesday, **September 8, 2021 from 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM** as the Litigation Center virtually hosts one of the most successful civil trial attorneys in the United States - Brian Panish. He has attained jury verdicts in the billions for his clients in personal injury, wrongful death, and product liability cases. Mr. Panish is the President of the prestigious Inner Circle of Advocates, which is comprised of the country's top 100 plaintiffs' lawyers. He has been recognized by numerous publications and organizations as being among the top trial attorneys in the nation. During this inspiring Zoom presentation, Mr. Panish will share the story on how he worked his way up the ladder to become the legendary rainmaker he is today. Mr. Panish will reveal techniques he uses to persuade jurors and will offer candid advice for students aspiring to get into top civil litigation law firms.

### "Psychology of the Courtroom" featuring Melissa Gomez



Do you ever wonder what jurors think of you and what you do in court? On Monday, **September 20, 2021 from 12:00 - 1:00 PM** via Zoom, nationally known jury consultant, Dr. Melissa Gomez, will address the psychological issues that impact jury trials. The discussion will address public attitudes, media trends, political climate, witnesses, attorney behavior, jurors' sense of "fairness", and more. Dr. Gomez holds a PhD in Psychology, and a Master of Science in Education. Over the past 20 years, she has consulted on close to 1000 criminal and civil cases and has spoken about jury-related topics at the local and national level. Dr. Gomez is widely published on the topics of witness preparation, jury research, and juror perspectives. Join us for this fascinating discussion as we explore the impact of psychology on jury trial dynamics.

**To RSVP and get the Zoom information for all seminars, email the Baxter Fellow at [baxterfellow@ggu.edu](mailto:baxterfellow@ggu.edu)**

## JOIN SOCIETY OF LITIGATORS!

**First General Meeting - August 25, 2021 - 12 PM & 5 PM**

The Society of Litigators (SOL) is a student-run organization that teaches litigation skills and hosts panels that pertain to litigation. We often work with the Baxter Fellow and the Litigation Center to host these events. Throughout the school year, SOL also hosts events with other student organizations. Last spring semester, we hosted a panel with the Litigation Center called "Police Accountability in the Courtroom," where we discussed the qualified immunity doctrine and how that applies to peace officers during trial. This panel also included a discussion regarding California Proposition 115, which allows for hearsay testimony to be admitted into evidence by peace officers. Our panelists included both civil and criminal litigators, and even included our very own, Professor Briggs!

During the fall semester, SOL hosts litigation workshops introducing students to trial skills, such as how to write effective jury addresses, conduct witness examinations, introduce evidence, and even how to impeach a witness. These workshops all lead up to the annual 1L Cross & Close competition that is cohosted with the Litigation Center. This competition is open to all 1Ls and occurs in a closed universe. Students are required to work in teams of two to create and deliver a cross examination and a closing argument. It is the culmination of all the skills learned in workshops that are taught during the fall semester. We encourage everyone to participate!

SOL hosts a meeting every other week during the fall semester. The meeting times are usually at noon and 5:00 pm so that the evening and night students have an opportunity to attend as well. We also offer a mentorship program in which we will pair 1L students with upper division students who have similar interests as them. It is a great way to get to know other GGU students that are interested in litigation! SOL's goal is to teach students about litigation and litigation skills, so that they can be successful trial attorneys. We strongly believe that students can become strong litigators with dedication and practice. Email [sol@ggu.edu](mailto:sol@ggu.edu) for more information!



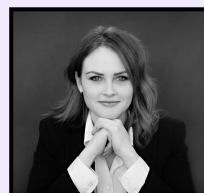
**President**  
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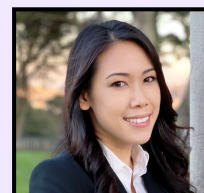
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**Advertising Chair**  
Claudia Wu



**Mock Trial Liaison**  
David Lima

# The Exhibit

## SUMMER TRIAL & EVIDENCE PROGRAM

### 2021 STEP Graduates Reflect On Their Experience This Past Summer



Undoubtedly, STEP was an incredible and life changing experience. Upon entering law school, I was often timid when speaking in front of others. STEP was the catalyst to rid me of the dread of public speaking. The confidence that I have gained from this Program is something I will apply to my daily life, even outside of law school. Aside from this newfound confidence for public speaking, I have also gained confidence in every aspect of litigation. I know that when I get my chance to step inside a courtroom, I can do so with conviction and rely upon the skills taught to me in STEP. Because of my newfound knowledge and assurance gained from this Program, I have recently secured an internship at a District Attorney's Office. Moving forward into this new venture, I feel extremely prepared and confident, solely as a result of having been involved in STEP.

My decision to embark through STEP was for the betterment of my career in every aspect. All of the skills I have gained could not have been accomplished without the incredible Professors and Baxter Fellow. Professors Brockl, Mask, Briggs, Scott, Morehead, Judge Torpoco, Clodagh Mauchline, as well as all other professors and guest speakers involved through the summer program, were inspiring and supportive. While giving important and valuable insight on how to succeed in the courtroom, they also reminded the students that lawyers are people, and people make mistakes. They shared the importance of maintaining strong mental health, and encouraging us to continue hobbies and life outside of being a lawyer. I felt very supported in this Program in every aspect, from the helpful and specific feedback, to the availability of a professor if you needed them. They genuinely want every student to succeed; not only in the program, but after the program ends. There is a lot of work involved in being a student in the STEP Program, which requires dedication, but it is without question worth it. I truly couldn't recommend a better program than STEP. I am incredibly grateful I had the opportunity to be part of it. - *Ashley Llamas, 2L*



The first STEP Program changed my life. It challenged me and helped me grow faster and more than I thought possible. I began the Program lacking confidence and having a lot of anxiety around public speaking. Now that I have made it through the Program, I feel more confident in my abilities as a public speaker, and a future litigator and advocate. This Program is a lot of hard work, but it is well worth it! I am so grateful to my STEP cohort and the professors and TAs that made it possible. - *Kate Sumser, 2L*



I couldn't be happier with my decision to join Golden Gate University's 1st STEP Program. At the beginning of 1st STEP, I was terrified and intimidated. I repeatedly asked, "What did I get myself into?" But I soon came to learn that 1st STEP was a safe space to find my true advocate self. I was pleasantly surprised and touched to find out that all members of 1st STEP truly cared about my progress and growth as an advocate. They gave me honest feedback, provided support beyond the scope of academic life, and always made themselves available (even if that meant staying online late to workshop a direct or cross with me). Each member of 1st STEP was an invaluable resource, and it is

because of those individuals that my advocacy skills have improved exponentially. I have also become more comfortable with feeling uncomfortable, giving me a significant leg up in any courtroom. One of the things I enjoyed most about 1st STEP was writing a motion every week and then arguing that motion in front of a judge. Additionally, being able to immediately put the Federal Rules of Evidence into practice during workshops, made learning about those rules in evidence class much more engaging and comprehensible. Not only did I find my unique advocacy style, hone my trial practice skills, and learn persuasive technique during 1st STEP, but I also forged lasting relationships with the Program's professors, TAs, guest speakers, and other 1st STEP students that have provided, and continue to provide, invaluable advice, mentorship, and support. GGU's 1st STEP Program is truly transformative, and anyone who endeavors to work in law would benefit from the Program in more ways than one. - *Claudia Wu, 2L*

## The Exhibit

# JOIN GGU'S NATIONAL TRIAL TEAM

## THE 4TH ANNUAL GOLDEN GRIFFIN CHALLENGE IS HERE!

### FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2021



Do you want to compete with the GGU National Trial Team and further your litigation skills? Then join the 4th annual GOLDEN GRIFFIN CHALLENGE on Friday, August 27th, which will be virtual this year. Choose a partner and prepare to conduct a cross examination and a closing argument for 10 minutes divided between you. The fact pattern and rules will be released on Friday, August 20th. Four top teams will compete in a final round for a chance to win the coveted *Golden Griffy* and a \$500 prize! A virtual reception will follow to announce the winners and to congratulate all competitors. Invitations to the 2021-2022 National Trial Team will be sent out after the reception, and orientation will take place the following day on August 28th. Learn more and sign up on the GGU Litigation Center TWEN page.

The GGU National Trial Team is already preparing for another exciting year of competitions! Last year, the Team competed in nine mock trial competitions, coming in as semi-finalists in Stetson's National Pretrial Competition, and second place in the San Francisco Trial Lawyers Association competition. This year's coaching staff and faculty are looking forward to another great season of success and accomplishments.



*"I am beyond honored and excited for this amazing opportunity to be a Mock Trial Captain for the National Mock Trial Team. I am looking forward to working with everyone this upcoming season and cannot wait to watch everyone continue to grow into amazing litigators. GGU students are known for their hard work, dedication, and passion and I believe that this will lead us to success in our upcoming competitions. I am very confident that GGU will have a fun and incredible season!"*  
- **Christina Stout, Mock Trial Co-Captain**

*"It is an honor to be chosen as Captain of the National Mock Trial Team. This past year has meant a lot of growth, as the Litigation Center's Mock Trial Program has helped expand the future of trial virtually, preparing us for a new kind of advocacy. I have seen everyone in this program rise to overcome every obstacle 2020 has given us. I am confident that this upcoming year means a stronger team and a year of success! I am eager to start the season and show everyone how adaptive, dynamic, and creative GGU's National Mock Trial Team is."* - **Yzabel Tinga, Mock Trial Co-Captain**



*"Gearing up for mock trial is always a blast! I am looking forward to American University Washington College of Law's new competition: "King of the Hill". As a powerhouse in the law school mock trial arena, I am interested to see how they incorporate some fresh, new concepts into a new mock trial competition. More than anything, however, I look forward to working with another batch of GGU Law trial advocates. Not just because I get a refresher course on character evidence rules, but because I get reminded of one of the reasons why I went to law school in the first place: to be the best, most prepared attorney in the courtroom."* - **Coach Zach Porter**

## TEAM MEMBER FEATURE: 2021 RISING STAR AWARD



"The Rising Star Award," is a new award that was given out at this year's annual Litigation Center Awards Ceremony to Yzabel Tinga. This award is bestowed upon a student who shows both extraordinary effort and talent in mock trial. *"Being given the Litigation Center's Rising Star Award for the 2020-2021 school year was such an honor. To me, the Rising Star Award represents innovation, creativity, a willingness to learn, and constant growth. Regardless of how much experience a person has, the Rising Star Award recognizes*

*those who work hard and advocate passionately. I plan to continue to push myself and compete with my best from yesterday. Let's represent GGU and the Litigation Center to the fullest!"* - **Yzabel Tinga**

## *The Exhibit*

# WELCOME, DEAN CRAWFORD!

*The Litigation Center is pleased to welcome the Law School's new Dean, Colin Crawford.*



Dean Crawford comes to GGU from the University of Louisville, where he served as the Dean of the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law, since 2018.

Prior to his time in Louisville, Dean Crawford was an Environmental Law Professor at Tulane University Law School, as well as teaching undergraduate courses in the School of Liberal Arts, and directing the university's multidisciplinary graduate and undergraduate Development Studies programs.

Dean Crawford earned his Law Degree from Harvard Law School, and obtained multiple degrees in Modern History from Columbia and Cambridge University.

After visiting GGU last year as part of the American Bar Association accreditation team, Dean Crawford said he was drawn to the school:

“I was positively impressed by and drawn to the mission of the school and the longstanding commitment of faculty, staff, and students to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including those for whom a law profession might otherwise be out of reach,” Crawford said.

Dean Crawford is a prolific scholar in environmental, urban development, and land-use law. He also has experience with international programs, having developed and taught courses throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, served as the Project Director for the Environmental Law Capacity-Building Initiative in Central America funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and published books and articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese, languages in which he is fluent. He has also lectured and taught in China, Cuba, France, Japan, Panama, and South Korea, and was a Fulbright scholar in the Dominican Republic.

The Litigation Center was pleased to meet the new Dean this summer when he joined the STEP students and faculty on the first day of STEP Immersion Week. The Dean graciously participated in the the first activity, getting to know the STEP students, and learning more about the Program. He even took part in one of the ice breaker activities, sharing his own fun fact, and watched final trials at the end of the summer. Thanks, Dean Crawford! We look forward to meeting you in person, soon.

## THANK YOU, DEAN CHRISTIANSEN



The Litigation Center would like to extend our most sincere gratitude to the outgoing Dean, GGU Professor Eric Christiansen, for his unwavering support of the Center. He made time to meet with students, show up for program events, and offer his assistance when needed.

Thank you for stepping in as Dean and being an incredible leader during such uncertain times!

## The Exhibit

# PROFESSORS IN ACTION: PART I

Professor Briggs represents BLM activist, Tianna Arata, in the fight for racial justice.

**"This is not just a case, it's a cause." - Curtis Briggs**

Article by Alexis Pettis



In July of 2020, Tianna Arata organized a Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest in San Luis Obispo sparked by the killing of George Floyd by a police officer. The demonstration took place on the freeway, where the police stopped traffic, and assisted protestors onto the road. Nearly 300 people marched in a peaceful protest, and hundreds more watched as the demonstration was live streamed on social media. Things took a turn for the worse when an oncoming vehicle tried to run over the protestors. The vehicle struck one of the protestors, and the man was launched onto the vehicle's hood. While he was still on the hood of the vehicle, another protestor - in an attempt to stop the car - used his skateboard to break the back window. It was then that Tianna Arata received a text message from the Chief of Police blaming Tianna for the chaos, and ultimately had Tianna arrested only minutes after sending the text. Tianna Arata, a 20-year-old, Cal Poly college student, was charged with 13 misdemeanors, including false imprisonment, felony vandalism, inciting a riot, conspiracy, and obstructing traffic. She was one of seven people arrested that day.

Tianna's family reached out to Professor Curtis Briggs, who has defended over 30 BLM cases in the Bay Area alone. "My office is always willing to represent Black Lives Matter supporters who are wrongfully charged," stated Professor Briggs. Having previously read about the incident in the newspaper, Professor Briggs jumped to action. "One of the coolest parts about this case is that almost every attorney [representing a defendant] is a GGU alum," stated Professor Briggs, "and many of them are taking their cases pro bono. We didn't realize it until we stated appearances the first day [in court]."

Tianna's case was set to be prosecuted by the San Luis Obispo District Attorney's Office, but after quickly noticing many instances of misconduct on behalf of the prosecution, Professor Briggs successfully filed a motion to disqualify the District Attorney's Office from prosecuting the case. Now, however, the California Attorney General has stepped in, in an attempt to appeal the disqualification. "The Attorney General is taking a cowardly position," says Professor Briggs, "They are playing every little game possible to distance themselves [from the case] to get the SLO District Attorney's Office to prosecute it."

According to Professor Briggs, although the case seems to be one based on perjury and fabrication, there is still a silver lining. "This is the best thing that has ever happened to my client. It has given us a platform, and a huge opportunity to have a dialogue on human rights, BLM, institutional racism, and police misconduct." Professor Briggs and Tianna Arata now patiently await judgement on the Attorney General's motion for appeal, reflecting on the fact that "this is not just a case, it's a cause."





## The Exhibit

# PROFESSORS IN ACTION: PART II

Very few cases make it all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). In fact, SCOTUS only heard 64 cases during its last term. Professor Louie Castoria's case was the 64th case the Court decided to hear... and he won!



Professor Louie Castoria standing on the steps of the Supreme Court.

### Article by Clodagh Mauchline

Pondering what it would be like to argue before the Supreme Court of the United States is a scenario that has crossed the minds of law students and attorneys alike. However, this scenario is usually – perhaps too often – written off as nothing more than a fantastical daydream. Even Professor Louie Castoria remembers a time, years ago, when he turned to an associate and mentioned that he could foresee the case he was working on, which arose from his representation of the Thomas More Law Center, going all the way up to the Supreme Court. He also remembers both himself and the associate laughing after he made that remark. Despite how fanciful that sentiment may have seemed at the time, he was on to something. Six years later, following a tremendous legal battle that was ultimately decided by the Supreme Court of the United States, Professor Castoria helped secure a victory for his firm's client, in the case of *Thomas More v. Bonta*.

**"You never know what groundbreaking case may walk through your door." - Louie Castoria**

As I prepared to interview Professor Castoria about his victory, I realized the questions I had for him fit into two categories. The first category of questions, naturally, were factual questions about the legal proceedings. The second category of questions were more practical, and were prompted by the extremely unique perspective that Professor Castoria now has. Very few attorneys can say that their case went all the way up to the Supreme Court. Professor Castoria has earned this right, and it is well-deserved. He was there to see this case through from the very beginning to its triumphant ending.

On October 5th, the Litigation Center is hosting an event where we will delve further into the details of the case with Professor Castoria. Many of the compelling details of the legal proceedings will be reserved for the event. However, for those of you who know nothing about the case, I will provide a very basic, crude summary in order to give you some context without giving too much away! My curiosity was piqued from the moment I began preparing to speak with Professor Castoria. The first thing I needed to know was how in the world he became involved with the case. Professor Castoria has over forty years of litigation experience, but the subject matter of *Thomas More* seemed so different to many of the cases he had handled in the past. The initial dispute giving rise to the legal battle was prompted when the California Attorney General (AG) began enforcing, after not doing so for many years, the requirement that each 501(c)(3) charitable organization must turn over its list of major donors. Organizations who had not been doing so – without facing repercussions – were suddenly receiving threatening letters demanding the information. The Thomas More Law Center, along with many organizations, did not believe they should be compelled to reveal this information due to the chilling effect it could have on donations. The Center went to its insurance broker with the demand letter in hand. The insurance broker looked at the Center's insurance policy and determined that the policy was a basic, professional liability insurance policy and that, since the Center was not representing the AG in the matter, this policy at first glance did not seem to provide coverage for the situation at hand. But all was not lost. Included in the policy was coverage for subpoena responses and, although the letters from the AG were not written on subpoena forms, the letters were demands for documents from a government agency, which is the equivalent of a subpoena. This prompted the insurance company to decide that this was covered by the policy. Once that decision was made, a call came in to the New York City office of Kaufman, Dolowich & Voluck (KDV) asking for who they knew in California that had federal court experience. This is how Professor Castoria, a partner in KDV's San Francisco office, became introduced to the case.

## PROFESSORS IN ACTION: PART II

Defending the Thomas More Law Center from the demands of the AG meant filing the lawsuit to stop it. Ultimately, the Supreme Court decided that the regulation compelling charitable organizations to turn over their major donor information was unconstitutional on its face, and ruled in favor of the Thomas More Law Center. Because the court ruled that the regulation was unconstitutional on its face, the ruling applies broad protections to organizations from across the ideological spectrum.

Upon announcement of the decision, Professor Castoria said, “This is a great day for all Americans who cherish their First Amendment rights to peaceful assembly and free speech, the same rights that our Founders exercised in advocating for independence and ratification of the Constitution. In the last year, we’ve seen how volatile the marketplace of ideas has become: attacking one another, stigmatizing people for their cultures and deeply held beliefs, and assaulting the foundations of our society.” During our interview, I asked Professor Castoria to go into further detail about his reference to the volatility of the marketplace of ideas, and his answer resonated with me because of how important a notion I believe it to be to preserve a sense of goodness and decency in our society. He said, “A lot of people these days don’t tolerate opinions that are contrary to their own. Instead of arguing against the position, they argue against the person. You should respect a contrary position to yours, even if you disagree with it, especially if you disagree with it.”



Professor Castoria and I discussed many other aspects of the case, which we will delve into during the October event, but I want to close with important advice that I received during the interview, which I believe all law students, especially those going into litigation, must take heed of. He impressed upon me the importance of humility, recognizing when you have too much on your plate, and having the ability to ask for help when needed. When I asked Professor Castoria how he was able to handle the stress of taking on such a huge case, he told me that one of the most important things he did when he realized the case was going to the Supreme Court was speaking to his managing partner about his workload. Professor Castoria knew he had too much on his plate, and asked for help. They were able to shift things around so that he could focus on his case more. Another thing Professor Castoria mentioned was that early on in the case, long before ever filing the petition to be heard by the Supreme Court, Professor Castoria spoke with his client about bringing in someone who had experience arguing before the Supreme Court to take the lead if the case went all the way up. I was amazed by this because of how difficult I imagined it was to allow someone else to take the reins on the case after all that time. Professor Castoria told me that it was difficult. However, he knew that bringing in someone with experience arguing before the Supreme Court was in the best interest of his client. I believe that in making this decision, Professor Castoria showed incredible humility, which is a lesson many of us can follow suit on.

### How to Bring a Case to the Supreme Court of the United States and Win



The *Thomas More* case took many twists and turns from 2015 to 2021, providing key strategies that can be applied to any litigated case. To find out more, attend this event, presented by Professor Louie Castoria - it is one that you won't want to miss!

October 5th, 2021

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Co-hosted with SOL

Email [baxterfellow@ggu.edu](mailto:baxterfellow@ggu.edu) to RSVP and receive the Zoom information.

# FALL 2021 LITIGATION COURSES

## Overcoming Civil Litigation Obstacles

TUESDAY 3:00 - 4:40 p.m.  
Louie Castoria



Using actual trial court case examples and milestone appellate decisions, students will apply creative strategies in role-playing exercises and written work assignments often assigned to associate attorneys: opinion letters, motions, reports to clients, and appellate briefs. Guest lecturers will provide diverse perspectives on how a recently-admitted lawyer can make a difference. Corequisite: Evidence.

## Trial Advocacy

TUESDAY 5:30 - 8:10 p.m.  
Judge Torpoco



This course is taught by a local practicing judge. Throughout the semester, students will learn the basic skills needed by every lawyer going to court: conducting a direct examination, introducing documents and physical evidence, cross examining witnesses, making and answering objections, and preparing opening statements and closing arguments. The final examination for this course is a full trial. Pre/co-requisite: Evidence.

## Introduction to Jury Selection

WEDNESDAY 6:30 - 9:10 p.m.  
Alex Jakle



You've lived with the case for years, immersed in every little detail. But now it's time for trial: what will a jury think? This course will teach you how to think through your case like a juror and prepare it for a lay audience, how to write and conduct effective voir dire to identify (and strike) problematic or biased jurors, and how to strategically select the best jury you can.

## Mock Trial & Advanced Mock Trial - Competition

TEAM PRACTICES

MON/THURS 6:00 - 9:00 P.M. & SATURDAY 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

\*INVITATION ONLY\*

The National Mock Trial Team competes on a local and national level in mock trial competitions across the country. The Team is invite-only based on your performance in the Annual Golden Griffin Challenge, an intra school mock trial competition open to all upper-classmen who have taken evidence and have taken or are currently taking Trial Advocacy.

## Strategic Jury Persuasion

WEDNESDAY 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Jody Mask



Persuasive storytelling is key to becoming a winning trial lawyer. This advanced "how to" course is for students who want a deeper dive into the science and art of jury persuasion. Students will be introduced to the trial preparation techniques of some of the most successful trial lawyers in the country. Topics will include how to let your story argue for you, successful use of focus groups, combatting juror biases, proper framing, etc. Prerequisite: Trial Advocacy or STEP or permission of the professor.

## Professional Presentation & Persuasion

THURSDAY 4:30 - 6:10 p.m.  
Harriet Schiffer Scott



This class will develop your presentation skills and give you strategies that will make you more confident and persuasive. You will learn and deliver various styles of presentation, learn specific techniques to deliver presentations without rote memorization, and become an engaging storyteller. Come prepared to eliminate nervous tics and self-consciousness when speaking in public, learn to think on your feet, and capture the attention of all your listeners.

## Evidence

THURSDAY 6:30 - 9:10 p.m.  
Judge Steckler



This course is taught by a local practicing judge. This required bar course is a survey of the principles of law and rules governing the admissibility of proof at criminal or civil trials, including direct and cross-examination of witnesses, impeachment of credibility, expert testimony, hearsay, privileged communication, and documentary proof. Prerequisite: Civil Procedure I and corequisite: Civil Procedure II.

## *The Exhibit*

# CORNER OF GRATITUDE

*Students share how the Litigation Center helped them secure desired legal positions.*



Melissa Kern Stewart joined the Litigation Center in the spring of 2020 when she completed the Introduction to Litigation 1L Elective course and was invited to participate in the Summer Trial & Evidence Program (STEP). Melissa brought her confidence and natural public speaking abilities to the table, but she was not afraid to work hard to become an even stronger advocate in the courtroom.

After Melissa's efforts during her 1L year, she was offered an externship position at the Solano County District Attorney's Office this past spring.

Since then, Melissa has had the opportunity to attend and argue at preliminary hearings, probation violations, and bail motion hearings. She has written various motions, including a motion to suppress evidence and an appeal. This summer, Melissa conducted her first bench trial and was assigned her first jury trial, sitting first chair. Following these experiences, Melissa was offered a post-bar position at the Solano County District Attorney's Office, which she gladly accepted.

"The 1st STEP Program was so valuable in helping me prepare for my externship," says Melissa. "Thank you [Professor Brockl] and the rest of the 1st STEP team for helping to get me this opportunity."

- *Melissa Kern Stewart (3L)*

*Congratulations, Melissa! Great job on your accomplishments.*



National Trial Team member, Xavier Torres de Janon, received his law clerk certification to argue in court and was able to practice his litigation skills at the Mecklenburg Public Defender's Office in Charlotte, North Carolina this summer. Impressed by Xavier's knowledge after giving him an on-the-spot-quiz, Xavier's supervisor offered him the opportunity to defend his first full misdemeanor bench trial after working at the office for only two weeks. The bench trial was a success, and Xavier was offered the opportunity to conduct a second bench trial. Xavier attempted to argue an automatism defense, and he ended up getting a sentence from the judge that was better than the plea offer. After his successes, Xavier was approved to handle any bench trial of his choosing during the remainder of his externship.



After watching Xavier argue a bench trial, the managing attorney at Johnson & Nicholson recruited Xavier to come work for him. Xavier now works at the firm in the areas of criminal and immigration defense.

"I wouldn't be in this position without all the workshops and opportunities [The Litigation Center has] created for myself and other GGU students. Thank you!" says Xavier. "I owe a lot of my skills to Clodagh Mauchline, the GGU Baxter Fellow, both from watching her compete as a student, and receiving coaching from her as a graduate." - *Xavier Torres de Janon (3L)*

*Way to go, Xavier! Keep up the impressive litigation techniques.*

## The Exhibit

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

The Litigation Center celebrates the achievements of STEP alum and rising 3L, Sydney Mastey, who was selected as the 2021 recipient of the **Gabriel Fernandez Scholarship**.



Sydney Mastey, 3L  
2021 Recipient of the  
Gabriel Fernandez Scholarship

In February of this year, Litigation Center Director Rachel Brockl, with the help of a generous donor, worked to create the Gabriel Fernandez Scholarship. This scholarship honors the memory of eight-year-old Gabriel Fernandez who was tortured to death over the course of several years by his mother and her boyfriend. The scholarship also stands to commend the work of Los Angeles District Attorney Jon Hatami for prosecuting the case against Gabriel's abusers in the fight for justice.

Gabriel's tragic story gained notoriety in 2020 when Netflix released *The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez*, a documentary focused on the aftermath of Gabriel's death and the dysfunction within the child welfare system.

The scholarship is bestowed upon a GGU law student who shows a commitment to, or outstanding work in, the field of criminal prosecution against child/domestic abuse. An additional essay is required to be considered for this scholarship.

This year, the scholarship has been awarded to Sydney Mastey for her incredible dedication to advocating for survivors of domestic abuse. When Sydney was just 18 years old, her passion for advocacy sparked while working on a community project with a local women's shelter for Domestic Violence Awareness month. Upon completion of the project, she began volunteering at the shelter where she provided childcare for mothers while volunteering in the legal department. This work gave Sydney an understanding of the deep, insidious impact that domestic violence can have on a family.

Sydney went on to join two community response teams: one for domestic violence and one for sexual assault. During her tenure on both response teams, she joined subcommittees and coordinated awareness events for her college campus and the wider community during the months of April (Sexual Assault Awareness month) and October (Domestic Violence Awareness month). She began to see how much could be accomplished through advocacy work. She was inspired to do more. She coordinated with professionals in her community and the local high school to give a presentation to junior and senior students that focused on the importance of consent and carrying out healthy relationships while drawing on personal experience.

After leading the presentation, Sydney wanted to broaden her knowledge of the victim advocacy network. She conducted a research project, consisting of 11 interviews with professionals in her community, including district attorneys, police officers, and employees of the women's shelter and the abusers treatment facility. She was also given the opportunity to observe an abuser's group therapy session. She used the knowledge gained from conducting these interviews to conduct a qualitative analysis of the community's response to victims of violence in order to identify gaps in the system in hopes of bridging those gaps to better serve the community. She presented her findings to the community and at the National Criminal Justice Conference in Baltimore during the spring of 2019.

Sydney's passion for advocacy fuels her determination to specialize in the prosecution of domestic violence cases. During her law school career, thus far, she has worked closely with victims of domestic violence at the Family Violence Law Center in Oakland, and now works as a law clerk at the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office.

**Congratulations, Sydney. We are so proud of you!**

The Litigation Center would like to thank all applicants and applaud our students' commitment to demand justice by speaking up for those who have been silenced. If you would like more information about the Gabriel Fernandez Scholarship, please contact the Baxter Fellow at [baxterfellow@ggu.edu](mailto:baxterfellow@ggu.edu) or the Financial Aid Department.

Special thanks goes out to Emily Carranza, cousin of Gabriel, who supported the inception of this scholarship.

## STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES!

### Accepting Applications: Fall Research Assistant Position

Professor Curtis Briggs and Litigation Center Director, Rachel Brockl, are collaborating on a Criminal Justice Project and are in need of a research assistant during the fall semester. The research topic will focus on communication between defendants and victims in the court process. An ideal candidate is someone who is organized, detail-oriented, and persistent. If you are interested in filling this position and you believe you possess these qualities, email your resume to Professor Brockl at [rbrockl@ggu.edu](mailto:rbrockl@ggu.edu) to apply.

*The Exhibit*

**AWARDS CEREMONY RAFFLE WINNERS**



**Bar Exam Pep Talk with 1st Time Bar Passers (Ian Harris, Lauren Konrai, and Chitana Chou )**

Olivia Wheat  
Keenan Web  
Alison Chan

**Resume Overhaul by Professor Brockl with Free Professional Editor to Review**

Fatima Khan

**A Hornbook of Student’s Choice (Up to \$100 value; provided by Heather Varanini)**

Gwendolyn West



**GGU Law School Diploma Frame**

Daniella Crisanti

**Amazon Giftcard \$25**

Ashley Lotti

**Amazon Giftcard \$25**

Mahtab Hajibabaei



**GGU Coffee Mug**

Elias Hernandez

**GGU T-Shirt**

Zach Porter

**Bottle of Wine**

Xavier Torres de Janon

**SPECIAL THANKS!**



Many events and programs hosted by the Litigation Center could not happen without the unwavering support we receive from the GGU community. We are so grateful! Your support does not go unnoticed.

We are incredibly appreciative of everyone who contributed to the overwhelming success of the STEP program this past summer by taking time out of their busy schedules to assist our students. Your help enabled the students to have an immersive, practical experience that was just about as close to doing real trial work as you can get.

Thank you to the many volunteers who gave several hours of their time to volunteer as **mock jurors** in order for our students to practice jury selection. Thank you, **Professor Louie Castoria**, for connecting us with many of those volunteers. Thank you, **Professor Allison Wang**, for speaking with our students about fall internships, and for providing them with resources to aid in their job search. Thank you to GGU and STEP alum, **Lauren Hauck**, for volunteering as a teaching assistant, despite being in Japan and having to help out during abnormal hours due to the time difference. Thank you to **Officer Joshua Helton** and **Officer Bill Hernandez** for giving our students a realistic experience of working with expert witnesses. Thank you, **Judge Andrew Steckler**, for giving our students the opportunity to watch you preside over a murder trial, and for taking time from your day to speak with them and answer their questions. It was truly one of the highlights of the summer! Lastly, thank you to our **STEP alums, National Trial Team alums, and current trial team members** who volunteered as witnesses for final trials, which enabled our students to focus on showcasing the skills they learned throughout the course of the program.