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UNM Law Connect

April 2021

We want to feature you in our next newsletter and on social media!

Share your accomplishments and accolades with the Law School community.

Contact [Melissa Lobato](#).

Student News



3L Justice Irons works with faculty & alumni on bill to eliminate juvenile fees and fines

On March 31, 2021, New Mexico Governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham ('87), officially signed into law House Bill 183, which eliminates all administrative fines and fees for juveniles from the New Mexico Children's Code. Justice Irons testified in front of the NM House and Senate and provided his perspective on juvenile fines and fees as a law student. Professor April Land and alumni Cristina Vasquez ('18), Douglass Carver ('09), and Rep. Gail Chasey ('08) played pivotal roles in the drafting, advocacy, and sponsorship of the bill. [Read more.](#)



Savannah Hoover places at the top in 2 Pitch Competitions

3L Savannah Hoover won one of the three top prizes in the Spring 2021 Lobo Rainforest Pitch Competition and placed third in the Comcast Pitch Deck Competition. Savannah's presentation about Modest House, an app that provides tools for New Mexicans to become real estate investors, persuaded panels of experienced industry leaders to rank her among the top in both competitions. Organized by UNM Innovation Academy and UNM Rainforest Innovations, the competitions provide an excellent opportunity for New Mexico university students to pitch and earn funding for their business ideas.



2L Students being published in NM Law Review

Raquel Pinto, Elisa Cibils, and Kathryn Sears have had their work selected for publication in the Summer 2021 issue of the NM Law Review. In the following Winter 2021-22 issue, Mackensee White, Clay Wilwol, and Annie Swift will have their work published. All were written by 2L staff during Fall 2020, then selected for publication by current 3L editors.

Faculty News



Sherri Burr Receives NM Press Women's Top Award

Professor Emerita Sherri Burr was recently awarded the NM Press Women's 2021 Communicator of Achievement Award, the organization's highest honor. Professor Burr demonstrated extraordinary leadership by navigating the organization through the challenges of the global pandemic. While she was leading NMPW, Professor Burr also published a number of books through West Academic and participated in multiple Black History Month presentations in New Mexico and at the University of Houston Law Center. [Read more.](#)



Gabe Pacyniak Receives Appointment to Local Energy Council

Professor Pacyniak was recently appointed to the Albuquerque Energy Council by the Keller Administration. The Council is responsible for implementing a city-wide energy conservation program to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Just another example of how our faculty are serving the community!

Recent Appearances:



Professor Maryam Ahranjani

- Presented at ABA Young Lawyers Division's spring conference on "Women of Criminal Justice: Why Do They Leave?"
- Spoke on the dangers of "prisonization" and "safety" measures and the harm they cause our youth at a Social Justice Lunchbox sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation



Associate Dean Serge Martinez

- Presented a CLE on housing insecurity and the law during the Covid-19 pandemic to the NM Hispanic Bar Association



Professor Sonia Gipson Rankin

- Interviewed on BBC World News regarding Derek Chauvin verdict
- Interviewed on KOAT News regarding Derek Chauvin verdict
- Interviewed on KRQE News regarding Derek Chauvin verdict
- Featured in [*Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*](#) (Social Justice issue)



Professor Cliff Villa

- Interviewed on [KRQE Channel 13](#) regarding the Clinic's filing of a suit on behalf of the Jemez & Laguna Pueblos
- Featured in [The Santa Fe New Mexican](#) regarding the Clinic's filing of a suit on behalf of the Jemez & Laguna Pueblos
- Featured in [The Counter](#) regarding the Clinic's filing of a suit on behalf of the Jemez & Laguna Pueblos
- Featured in [Law 360](#) regarding the Clinic's filing of a suit on behalf of the Jemez & Laguna Pueblos
- Featured in [Bloomberg Law](#) regarding an Equal Protection challenge to a metal recycling plant in Chicago
- Featured in [Bloomberg Law](#) regarding the proposed Environmental Justice For All Act

Alumni News



**Judge Gerald Edward Baca ('87)
Appointed to the New Mexico Court of Appeals**

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed Chief District Court Judge Gerald Edward Baca of the Fourth Judicial District Court to the New Mexico Court of Appeals. Judge Baca has served on the Fourth Judicial District Court since 2013. Before joining the bench, Judge Baca worked in the Fourth Judicial District Attorney's Office. Congratulations, Judge Baca!



Rebecca Kitson appears on BBC World News

Rebecca Kitson ('07) appeared on the BBC World News this week discussing the crisis at the border. Kitson has taught immigration law as an adjunct professor at UNM Law since 2009 and works closely with the Leaffer Border Initiative, the Law School's comprehensive immigration program.

Donor News

Calvin Hyer, Jr. ('72) & Darlene J. Hyer Scholarship

The Calvin Hyer, Jr. and Darlene J. Hyer Law School Scholarship was established by UNM School of Law alumnus, Calvin Hyer, Jr. (Class of 1972) and his wife, Darlene J. Hyer in 2014. It is awarded every three years to an eligible incoming 1L student for all three years with a preference to veterans of one of the US Armed Forces. Thank you, Calvin and Darlene, for the many years you have made this valuable opportunity available to our deserving students!

Upcoming Events



PRESENT THE 18TH ANNUAL
LAW SCHOLARSHIPS CLASSIC

FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 2021
UNM CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF COURSE

Friday, June 4, 2021
UNM Championship Golf Course
Tee Times Available Throughout the Day*

[Sponsorship & Pricing Details](#)

[Online Registration & Payment](#)

Not able to make the tournament in person? You can still be a sponsor and help provide scholarships for students.

Proceeds benefit the UNM Law Alumni/ae Association, which provides over \$75,000 per year in scholarships to UNM Law students.



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